

# Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 22nd September, 1925.

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

## PETITION—WESTERN AUSTRALIAN BANK ACT AMENDMENT BILL (PRIVATE).

Mr. NORTH presented a petition from the Western Australian Bank, praying for leave to introduce a Bill to amend the Western Australian Bank Act.

Petition received and read, and the prayer of the petition granted.

## BILL—WESTERN AUSTRALIAN BANK ACT AMENDMENT (PRIVATE).

Introduced by Mr. North, and read a first time.

*Referred to a Select Committee.*

On motion by Mr. North, Bill referred to a select committee consisting of Hon. W. D. Johnson, Mr. E. B. Johnston, Mr. Marshall, Sir James Mitchell, and the mover; to report on the 29th September.

## QUESTION—SOLDIER SETTLEMENT.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Lands: 1, How many settlers under the soldier settlement scheme have taken up holdings since the commencement of the Act in 1919 for (a) wheat and sheep farming; (b) the pastoral industry; (c) mixed S.W.; (d) dairying; (e) intense culture; (f) fruit culture, and (g) pigs and poul-

try? (2) How many in each of those classes have abandoned their holdings during each of the six years?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, (a) 2,746, (b) 233, (c) 887, (d) 529, (e) 222, (f) 506, (g) 148. (2) \*Properties—1924-25: (a) 50, (b) nil, †(c to g) 226, total 276. 1923-24: (a) 51, (b) 8, †(c to g) 169, total 228. Previous years: (a) 39, (b) 8, †(c to g) 148, total 195. Grand total: (a) 140, (b) 16, †(c to g) 543, total 699.

\* The number of soldier settlers concerned is approximately 829.

† Separate statistics under each of the enumerated headings have not been kept.

## BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1. Fremantle Municipal Tramways and Electric Lighting Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Minister for Lands.

2. Racing Restriction Act Amendment.

Introduced by Mr. Sleeman.

## BILL—INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

*Third Reading.*

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

## BILL—ENTERTAINMENTS TAX ASSESSMENT.

*Message.*

Message from His Excellency the Governor received and read recommending the Bill.

*Second Reading.*

HON. S. W. MUNSIE (Honorary Minister—Hannans) [4.50] in moving the second reading said: There is no need to detain the House at any length, for the only new principle in the Bill is that we make definite preparation for the allotment of the money. It is specified that, practically, the money will be in excess of that already granted for the maintenance of hospitals and charitable institutions. Irrespective of what form of taxation we introduce, we are bound to receive objections from some people. Since the notification appeared in the Press that I intended to introduce the

Bill in order to get this money for hospitals, I have received complaints from various quarters protesting against the imposition of the tax, principally from the standpoint that if we did not collect it, the workers would be relieved. I believe the use to which the money we shall collect will be put will relieve the working class to a much greater extent than they would be relieved by the non-collection of an amusements tax. If the Federal Government relinquish the amusements tax—and I saw by yesterday's newspaper that they intend to complete that portion of their programme, at all events—they will relinquish it up to 2s. 6d. as from the first of next month. If that be so, I expect to collect under the Bill for the balance of the financial year about £16,000, whereas for a full financial year the amount will be about £25,000. On the 12th March of this year a deputation representative of the hospitals and charitable institutions, and accompanied by Mr. Seager, representing the Union Theatres, Ltd., waited on me and asked if I would use my influence, conjointly with theirs, to get the Commonwealth Government to relinquish altogether the taxation on amusements, with a view to the State taking over that taxation and devoting the proceeds to hospitals and charitable institutions. I promised that I would do what I could in that direction. Subsequently, when the Prime Minister (Mr. Bruce) came to Western Australia those people endeavoured to wait upon him with the same end in view. Unfortunately he had not the time in which to meet them, so Senator Pearce received them on the 23rd of the same month. Of course he pointed out that the matter would have to be considered by the Commonwealth Government, and that the taxation on amusements could not be relinquished in one State without being relinquished in all the States. At present the Federal Government propose merely to relinquish the amusements tax on amounts up to 2s. 6d., but I am hopeful that in the near future they will relinquish the balance and so permit me to collect that also for our hospitals and charitable institutions.

Mr. Clydesdale: I hope they do.

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: I hope so, too. The Bill provides for taxation on amounts from 9d. up to 2s. 5½d.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It re-imposes the Federal taxation?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Yes, but reduces the minimum from 1s. to 9d. The amounts collected in this State last year on tickets from 1s. to 2s. 6d. were:—Racing, £1,711 10s. 2d.; theatres, £1,937 3s. 9d.; pictures, £15,610 18s.; dancing and skating, £2,386 15s. 10d.; concerts, £388 12s. 1d.; miscellaneous, £1,917 4s. 4d.; total, £23,952 4s. 2d. Under the Bill the estimate given me by the Commissioner of Taxation for the unexpired portion of this year is £16,000, and for a normal full year £25,000. The penalty clauses in the Bill are not nearly so severe as are those under the Federal Act. I have dropped a good many of them, and I believe that what remain are quite sufficient to overcome all expected difficulties. Various people are questioning whether I intend to exempt, as is done under the Federal Act, concerts for charitable purposes. That is provided for in the Bill; such concerts will be exempted, as they are under the Federal Act.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Does that cover any entertainment for charitable purposes?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE: Yes, for charitable purposes. I hope members will assist me to get the Bill through as quickly as possible. It is provided that the Bill shall come into operation by proclamation, and I wish to be able to proclaim the tax on the day following that on which it is relinquished by the Federal Government, which I have reason to believe will be from the 1st of next month. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Sampson, debate adjourned.

## BILL—ENTERTAINMENTS TAX.

### *Second Reading.*

HON. S. W. MUNSIE (Honorary Minister—Hannans) [5.1] in moving the second reading said: There is little to be said on this Bill, which is necessary to impose the tax provided by the Entertainments Tax Assessment measure. Where the payment for admission, excluding the amount of the tax, is not less than 9d. and not exceeding 1s., the rate of tax will be 1d. Where the payment for admission exceeds 1s. but does not exceed 2s. 5½d., the rate will be 1d. for the first shilling and ½d. for every sixpence or part of 6d. by which the payment exceeds 1s. The Federal Act imposes no taxa-

tion upon admission charges of less than 1s., and the reason I have gone below that is because the Commissioner of Taxation advises me that it is necessary to do so. I inquired as to the amount of extra revenue that would be forthcoming if sixpenny entertainments were taxed. The Commissioner of Taxation assured me that, from his experience when the Federal Government collected tax on sixpenny shows, we would receive not more than £1,000 a year. I also considered it inadvisable to tax sixpenny shows because often when the charge is 1s for adults, the charge for children is 6d., and if the tax had been imposed upon sixpenny tickets, children's tickets would become subject to the tax. The Commissioner informed me that he was experiencing difficulty with entertainments that charged 1s. admission. While patrons were charged 1s. for admission, they received a halfpenny worth of sweets and the admission charge was said to be only 11½d. Thus taxation was evaded, and it was considered necessary to start with ninepenny tickets in order that the whole of the revenue might be collected. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Sampson, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.**

*In Committee.*

Resumed from the 17th September. Mr. Lutey in the Chair; the Minister for Justice in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 54, 55—agreed to.

Clause 56—Amendment of Section 91:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Why does the Minister suggest this amendment? The present Act has worked well and I have not heard any suggestion of need for amendment in this direction.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: This will bring the postal voting provisions into conformity with the provisions for ordinary voting. If a blind man goes to a polling booth to record his vote the presiding officer marks the ballot paper for him, and the scrutineers also see that the vote is recorded as the elector desires. The amendment will make the provisions for postal voting by blind people similar.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Is there any reason for it?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: There is as much reason for having the safeguard for postal voting as for ordinary voting. Blind people are often suspicious, and it is only right to ensure that a vote so cast shall be as desired by the elector.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 57 to 60—agreed to.

Clause 61—Vote of person whose name is not on roll used at polling booth but entitled to be enrolled:

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: This clause provides that people who are not enrolled may vote subject to certain safeguards, but I do not see included as one of the safeguards the production of a receipt for the claim. The clause is a departure from present procedure. What is the necessity for the change?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: This is one of the provisions of the Federal Act, and though I do not claim any special virtue for it on that account, it may happen that a person who has lived in the one house for 30 years has, through a clerical error, or printer's omission, been removed from the roll. Such omissions give rise to serious heartburning. In my electorate there were two persons of the same name and occupation living in the same street. The houses were not numbered and the registrar, thinking the names referred to one and the same person, struck one of them off the roll. On election day the first man to arrive at the booth got his vote, but the second was not permitted to vote, though he was able to prove that a mistake had been made. One of the men went to the war and was killed. The Defence Department notified the Electoral Department of the fact and the second name was then struck off the roll. When an elector can prove that he is entitled to vote and that, through no fault of his own, his name has been omitted from the roll, he should be allowed to vote.

Mr. NORTH: Subclause 7 provides that any person making a false declaration under this section for the purpose of voting at any election shall be liable to three months' imprisonment, and another portion of the Bill provides for compulsory voting. A man might plead that his contravention of Subclause 7 was due to the law requiring

him to vote. I suggest that the words "for the purpose of voting at any election" be deleted.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: This clause deals only with persons claiming the right to vote if their names are inadvertently omitted from the roll. There are provisions elsewhere to deal with any person making a false declaration. No man will suffer punishment for not voting if his name has been omitted from the roll. Under compulsory voting no man whose name was not on the roll would be compelled to vote.

Mr. George: What would you do in the case of a man who was on two rolls but did not vote?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The revision of the rolls would indicate that.

Mr. George: No. He might call himself by two different names.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: That kind of thing cannot be avoided. If such a person voted twice he would pay the penalty. There is no great harm in a man being on two rolls, so long as he does not vote as two individuals.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 62—Compulsory voting:

Mr. DAVY: I do not suppose there is any chance of convincing the Minister that this is a bad provision, but I must challenge the principle. We are becoming too casual about increasing the burdens that rest upon our citizens.

The Minister for Justice: Do you call the franchise a burden?

Mr. DAVY: The Minister desires to make it a burden, to convert a privilege into a duty, the failure to exercise which will involve a man in an offence against the law. We have too many laws that cannot be enforced, and it is a bad principle to add another in support of which no decent argument can be adduced. For purely selfish reasons, and to remove election troubles, we are adding this further burden. If we have any room left for the infliction of further laws upon the people we should reserve that space for matters of real importance. I shall vote against the clause.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I hope the Government will not proceed with this clause. It will dragoon the people into going to the poll, and everyone who stays away will be fined £2. There is no hurry for this piece of legislation. I fear we cannot have a State election for 18 months. Why should we not wait until we see how the Federal provisions work at the next Federal election? We can then find out how many people are fined £2 for not going to the poll. If this clause does not apply to the Upper House it will be absurd. It should apply to both Houses if it is going to apply at all, but I hope it will not be carried.

Mr. THOMSON: I am opposed to the clause. It will lead to a lot of expense.

The Minister for Justice: From the administrative point of view, certain advantages will be derived from it.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: You mean the revenue from the fines?

Mr. THOMSON: Further staffs will have to be employed by the department to deal with those who absent themselves from the poll. A lot of annoyance will also be caused to electors. Of course, if people do not want to vote, they can easily make their votes informal but they would still be compelled to go to the poll. I suppose every elector who does not record his vote will receive a "Please explain." The sending out of these notices will involve expense to the department. It would be wiser to wait until the Federal elections have been held.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The penalty provided is the maximum, and probably one-tenth only will be imposed in those cases where it is necessary to inflict the fine. The cost of sending out the notices will not exceed £150. In a great many cases a sufficient excuse will be found for absence from the poll, and nothing more will be heard of them. We already spend from £250 to £300 in cleansing the rolls and checking them. Under the new provision a good deal of this expenditure will be saved.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	25
Noes	..	..	..	11
				—
Majority for	..	..	..	13
				—

## AYES.

Mr. Angwin  
Mr. Chesson  
Mr. Clydesdale  
Mr. Collier  
Mr. Coverley  
Mr. Cunningham  
Mr. George  
Mr. Heron  
Miss Holman  
Mr. W. D. Johnson  
Mr. Lambert  
Mr. Lamond  
Mr. Maley

Mr. Mann  
Mr. Marshall  
Mr. McCallum  
Mr. Millington  
Mr. Munzie  
Mr. North  
Mr. Pantou  
Mr. Sampson  
Mr. Sleeman  
Mr. Troy  
Mr. Willcock  
Mr. Wilson  
(Teller.)

## NOES.

Mr. Angelo  
Mr. Barnard  
Mr. Brown  
Mr. Davy  
Mr. Griffiths  
Mr. E. B. Johnston

Sir James Mitchell  
Mr. Stubbs  
Mr. Teesdale  
Mr. C. P. Wanebrough  
Mr. Latham  
(Teller.)

## PAIRS.

Mr. Hughes  
Mr. Kennedy

Mr. Lindsay  
Mr. Thomson

Clause thus passed.

Clauses 63 to 69—agreed to.

Postponed Clause 44—Amendment of Section 44 (a):

The CHAIRMAN: Clause 44 was held over for further consideration to ascertain whether it could be consequentially amended. That can be done, and I will proceed to put it.

Clause put and passed.

New Clause:

Mr. ANGELO: I move—

That a new clause, to stand as Clause 57, be added, as follows:—

57. A section is inserted in the principal Act, as follows:—

*Postal Vote Officer enabled to vote in absence.*

91a. (1.) If any person appointed as a postal vote officer is himself an elector having the right under this subdivision to vote by post, and there is not a magistrate or postal vote officer before whom he can conveniently attend to vote by post, he may, for the purpose only of enabling his own vote to be taken, delegate by writing under his hand to any other elector his power and duty as a postal vote officer.

(2.) For the purpose of taking such vote, the delegate shall be deemed a postal vote officer appointed by the Minister, and when signing his name on the counterfoil, indorsement, or otherwise, and in taking the elector's declaration shall describe himself as "deputy postal vote officer appointed under Section 91a."

(3.) Every postal vote officer delegating his authority pursuant to this section shall

forthwith report the matter in writing to the Chief Electoral Officer.

Under the parent Act a person is entitled to vote before a postal officer if he has reason to believe that he will be more than seven miles away from a polling place on the day of election, and protective provisions are made regarding those who take the votes. The Minister is concerned with giving every person entitled to vote an opportunity to exercise the franchise. An anomaly exists regarding postal vote officers. Each postal vote officer can take a vote from an elector but cannot record his own. The effect is not felt in the metropolitan area, but it has a considerable bearing in the sparsely populated areas. In my electorate there are 100 postal vote officers, one for each station. They are 30 or 40 miles apart. The amendment will enable the postal vote officers to exercise the franchise instead of being penalised for their honorary work. This point could not have been considered when the parent Act was passed.

Mr. CHESSON: I support the amendment. It is unjust to penalise a postal vote officer, because he does this work in an honorary capacity. I brought this matter before members on an earlier occasion and I am glad that the amendment has been moved.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The amendment will be of great assistance in the outlying districts. It will enable an honorary postal vote officer to make a declaration before an elector, whose appointment as deputy ceases when he has recorded the vote. There is very little danger in the proposal, the benefits of which will largely outweigh any such possibility.

Mr. TEESDALE: I hope the Minister will recognise the importance of this proposal in the interests of the outback areas and that he will extend this measure of consideration, because under the existing conditions a station manager, who is a postal vote officer, can take the vote of his wife but cannot record his own vote, unless he rides to the next station 40 or 50 miles away. Although many of my electors ride that distance on such an occasion, it is scarcely fair to ask a man, who has carried out an honorary duty, to do so.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I have no objection to the amendment. People who are sufficiently public-spirited to undertake honorary duties of the description referred to should not be

penalised by being disfranchised. We could get over the difficulty by appointing an additional postal vote officer, but it would mean appointing two where one could do the work.

Mr. Teesdale: It would mean two sets of books, too.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: That is so.

The Minister for Lands interjected.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: We do know that in some instances postal vote officers have been sufficiently biased politically to take the votes of people whom they considered likely to vote in one direction, after which they cleared out so that they would not take the votes of other people who, they considered, would exercise the franchise in favour of those of another political opinion. We have to trust to people to carry out their duties in a proper way, but if an officer is shown to be distinctly partisan and the department learns of it, that officer will not be reappointed.

Mr. Teesdale: Yes, you should pass them out if they do that sort of thing.

New clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

## **BILL—PRIMARY PRODUCTS MARKETING.**

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from 8th September.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [5.45]: I do not think the Minister has given sufficient consideration to this very important work, else he would not have brought down so comprehensive a Bill including, as it does, almost everything that by agriculture can be produced from the land. That is not at all necessary. If the Bill were reduced to the marketing of dried fruits and relatively imperishable products it would be very useful, but I do not believe it can be of any great assistance to the producers of anything else. Certainly it is impossible to have a pool controlling the sale of highly perishable foodstuffs. The Bill is a copy of the Queensland Act, almost word for word. There the principal sales made by direction are sales of pineapples and bananas, both capable of keeping very well. And, of course, there are the canning factories as well for the pineapples, while

the bananas largely go to big centres of population. Moreover, there is not sufficient of those fruits grown to create a glut, and so there is no great variation in the supply. In Queensland an attempt was made at selling through the pool highly perishable food, such as tomatoes, but I believe that failed.

Mr. Sampson: The weather was unseasonable.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: In the first place, it is not possible for people to produce fruit of anything like uniform quality. That is not always the fault of the grower, for our climatic conditions vary tremendously. In one part of the State producing apples and oranges the season may be quite good, while in another part of the State it may be unsatisfactory. Those climatic variations make a great deal of difference to the softer fruits. Again, it must be remembered that we have less than 30,000 acres under orchard, and those orchards are spread over 10,000,000 acres of land. At Mt. Barker first-class apples are produced, as they are also at Bridgetown, more than 100 miles distant from Mt. Barker, while both centres are very long distances from Perth. I do not quite see how we can regulate the sale of fruit which, in this country, must vary tremendously in quality. The man who cannot produce every year fruit of the highest quality would suffer under a Bill such as this. I believe in a pool, if possible, in respect of some of our fruit. Apples are exported in large quantities, so there is no need to pool them. The people who are doing the exporting are securing good results. There is a great deal of fruit that ought to be sent to a factory, but unfortunately the static nature of the business in this country makes it impossible, and so whenever we endeavour to get a factory going we fail, if only because the fruit has to travel 200 or 300 miles to reach the factory. I speak of fruit, but the Bill applies to wheat, oats, hay and everything produced on a farm. I do not quite know how potatoes are to be dealt with, nor how we can have a potato pool.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Something is wanted in respect of the potato market. It is most unsatisfactory at present.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, of course, when the price is high it is bound to be unsatisfactory to the consumer.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You would not suggest that the market is organised; why not, then, try to organise it?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: What does the hon. member mean by organising? It would be utterly impossible to organise the sale of potatoes. The crops to be harvested in a month or two will supply more than the local market can take, and so in a measure will have to be exported. As a matter of fact, the coming crop will not keep, so what are we to do about it?

Mr. A. Wansbrough: If you do not organise, the producer will be exploited.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: And if you do organise, what will happen? Will all potatoes be sent to the pool, irrespective of whether the pool can sell them all? If we have a surplus of a thousand tons that we cannot use, and that surplus be sent to the pool, it must be wasted. Who is to pay for that thousand tons? I believe it will be highly unsatisfactory. Then, too, the season's requirements are limited, and it follows that the man who can harvest his winter crop of potatoes early will strike a very good market indeed. Is there to be no reward for his enterprise in producing his potatoes at the right time? Are those potatoes to be held up for the pool? No one could be served by such a pool. I do not object to a voluntary pool, if the farmers agree to establish it—in which case they might well be helped—but I object to the industry being jeopardised by such a pool as is contemplated in the Bill. While doing no good, it would do considerable harm. There would be no regard for the man particularly careful to grow good quality potatoes, no protection to the man who grew them at the right time. That is wrong. Take grapes: there are on the Swan men who get prime muscatel grapes a fortnight before the average producer can put his fruit in the market. Is there to be no reward for those men who grow their fruit at the right time?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The Bill provides for arrangements being made to suit them.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No, it provides for a pool. Under the Bill you cannot have it both ways. The man who grows grapes at the right time should be rewarded by the special price offering at the time his fruit is ready. Whole districts are earlier than other districts. The Swan, which is the great table grape producing

district, is much earlier than are the hills districts; the fruit ripens earlier and so gets a better market. I am entirely opposed to the Bill in its present form, although I should be willing to consider a Bill for the marketing of dried fruits, which are not perishable and which, to a great extent, will some day be used in this State. The Bill provides for Ministerial control in very large measure. There is to be no compensating Government help. Under the Bill the Minister will be all-powerful and able to interfere in many directions that I think wrong. He can limit the duration of the pool. There is to be a pool for practically every variety of produce: apples, pears, grapes, eggs, vegetables, wheat, oats, hay, chaff, virtually all the commodities grown by agriculture. God knows how many people will be employed, one way or another. The board cannot be expected to do its work without being paid, and there will require to be half a dozen or more separate staffs dealing with the various products. Moreover, we must remember that the present marketing arrangements are good, a great deal more satisfactory than ever before. Our exporting business is being done very well indeed. Mr. Barker has a co-operative company, and other firms are paying strict attention to the exporting business. Then, I believe, the sales through the market are being very well carried out; at all events, very few complaints are now heard, as against the numerous complaints with which we were familiar in the past. The public, of course, complain that they cannot get fruit cheaply, but if they will buy from shops paying big rentals they must expect it to cost them a pretty high price. The trouble is that the back districts, mining, agricultural, and pastoral, cannot get half the fruit they want; indeed, one half the people of the State cannot get sufficient fruit. There is a difficulty that requires to be solved. If we could but arrange for the internal marketing of fruit, we should get over that difficulty and greatly assist the growers. I have seen tons of soft fruit wasted, notwithstanding that people all over the country were in want of fruit and could afford to pay for it at reasonable prices. Of course, they could not buy it at the prices demanded in Hay-street, apart from which they could not get it delivered to their homes from those shops. Out on the remote gold-fields, for instance, in the electorate of the member for Menzies, the people get short supplies of fruit. So, too, in the wheat belt

there is mighty little fruit available. It is true we now send out by slow railway train, wagon-loads of fruit that is sold as the trains wait at the stations. A great deal of fruit is sold in that way, but not enough. People in the back country are not supplied with vegetables in adequate quantities, and vegetables could be sold in the same way if growers showed sufficient enterprise to carry their wares to the people willing to buy. This is highly perishable produce, and may be dealt with under the measure. I am reminded by the member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) not to forget the North. There is a special provision by which the people of the North can have fruit carried by boat cheaper than it was formerly carried. If the people of the North would provide tropical fruits for us in return, we would be very grateful to them. I do not know why the Minister desires to say who should be elected to control the industries to be dealt with under this measure. He really wants to say who shall manage the farmers' own business. He might provide that a member of Parliament should be on the pool which, of course, would be quite wrong. The provision will certainly limit the choice—

Mr. A. Wansbrough: Would you give him the right to put a profiteer on the board?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not happen to know profiteers as well as does the hon. member. If I did, I might be able to answer his question. A profiteer is not necessarily a man who takes a higher profit than he should when selling something over the counter. A profiteer might also be a man who does not do a fair thing at any time, whether he is working at delivering goods, building a house, or at anything else. Such a man could be a profiteer although he did not buy or sell anything, and it is from profiteers of this description that the country is suffering. The Minister might say that we are to have two wheatgrowers on a board dealing with the marketing of apples or oranges. The Minister is to decide the method of election, and to approve of any financial arrangement if accommodation be required from a bank or financial house. The Minister would have power to prohibit the sale or export of produce. He could say, "We are not quite certain about the wheat crop for the coming season, and must retain in the State sufficient wheat to meet the State's requirements for seed and bread during the coming year." In that way he

might hold up a couple of million bushels of wheat for the people of the State.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: Would not he be justified in doing so?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Certainly he would be if he paid for the wheat, but not otherwise. If the export value of wheat to-day is 4s. 6d. a bushel, and it was necessary to hold a couple of million bushels of wheat for home requirements, that wheat should not be held at the expense of the farmers; it should be held at the expense of the State.

Mr. Panton: We could pay for it in the same way as the millers pay for their supplies now.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Millers have to buy prior to the 1st November all the wheat they want for the year.

Mr. Panton: But they pay for it only as they use it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, and that means a considerable saving to the millers.

Mr. Panton: I agree with you there.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The interest thus saved by the millers represents a good many pence per bushel, but they pay a price higher than the export price because of that.

Mr. Panton: They pay from day to day.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But the average price paid by millers is better than the export price.

Mr. Panton: That can be accounted for.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Millers pay 6s. 6d. a bushel and the average export price is 5s. 10d. The interest alone, over many months, would come to 3d. per bushel.

Mr. Lindsay: They pay the export price.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You are either mixed or you are misrepresenting. The pool does not operate over the full season and you are quoting a full year.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am not mixed. The millers pay 6s. 6d. for their wheat, and they would have to pay more if it was held for them.

Mr. Panton: That is because the millers buy their wheat six months ahead.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The millers are entitled to pay for the handling of their wheat and the interest on the money it represents. I do not know that the farmers growing wheat are anxious to have a wheat pool under this measure. I do not know of any farmer who favours a compulsory pool, though there may be some. At



present they have a voluntary pool, and they are not asking for legislation of this description. The Bill provides that the Commissioner of Railways may refuse to carry produce, I suppose if directed by the Minister or one of the many boards, but he cannot refuse to carry it if it is to be shipped to the Eastern States. Since reference has been made to the wheat pool, I think voluntary co-operative marketing should be encouraged, and the Government might have introduced a simple measure providing for the election of boards to control various branches of primary industry, protecting the boards in the matter of responsibility for the amount of money they required to do their work in a proper manner, and providing for the necessary meetings of shareholders, auditing and so forth. That is all that is necessary. Voluntary pools have been conducted even without legislation. The Government should help, too, not because their action in so doing would cheapen produce bought by the people locally, but because it is important that the agriculturist should be encouraged and assisted to get the best possible price for all that he grows, particularly for the portion that is exported from the State. If the producer could be helped to find the best market in the world at the cheapest price possible, it would represent a gain to the community. The only real money we have is the money derived from our primary industries, and this money is necessary to all the people because it means work, trade and comfort for everybody. So, the Government can rightly and reasonably help with the marketing of the portion of our produce that is sent away as well as the portion that is sold locally. The Minister proposes to take power to assist where necessary, but I should like to see the co-operative selling of produce encouraged and assisted by the Government. When I was in office I was always willing to do so, but the trouble was to find the best means to reach the local market economically and to place our small quantity of export fruit on the markets of the world. In this country we have to produce a surplus for export in order to ensure sufficient for our own requirements. We shall not have enough butter for ourselves until we get an exportable surplus. So, with all produce, we must reach the export stage before the people of this State can be reasonably supplied at a reasonable rate. The import cost is always greater than the export price of any commodity common to

the whole of Australia. If we did not grow wheat in this State, it would cost us far more to procure supplies than the export value of the wheat we send away, and that applies to all other produce. The sooner we produce locally all our own foodstuffs requirements, the better it will be for the State, and everything the Government can do to break down the need for importing should be done. I know that the Minister is willing to help in that direction, but I cannot agree that this Bill is going to help anyone. I consider it a very bad Bill. I have some idea of the cost of operating the Act in Queensland. It is enormous. I am informed that the cost is not borne by the grower. If it were not for the Act, the grower would get every penny of money that the committee of direction are able to get, and it would be his own money. In Queensland a big rebate of freight charges has been secured, but that is because the fruit is transported in truck lots. Many trucks are consigned laden with bananas and pine apples, and I am told that even train loads are despatched. The growers would get a rebate on such quantities, whether they had a marketing Act or not. By sending truck loads much money has been saved, but the committee of direction can be maintained only at considerable cost. So far as I can judge, the money has not gone back to the farmers. Certainly the profit and loss account in Queensland is not calculated to encourage us to adopt similar methods for controlling the marketing of our produce. We must not delude ourselves into a belief that the measure will deal with fruit only. The Minister, of course, will tell us it is optional with the growers whether they come under the measure or not. He will tell us that before he will agree to the formation of a board and the establishment of a pool, 66 per cent. of the growers must sign a petition. That is very good so far as it goes, but there are many small growers scattered about the country whose interests are not identical, and who certainly have nothing in common with the people who grow produce in a large way for the market. The Minister will also tell us that if there be a danger of the 66 per cent. deciding unwisely, 25 per cent. of the growers can even then sign a petition protesting against the formation of a pool, and that after such a petition nothing will be done. That is an additional safeguard,

of course, extraordinary though it seems, because it will mean that one-fourth of the people in an industry can, by petition, prevent a majority of the producers from taking advantage of the measure.

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

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Bill applies not only to the marketing of fruit, but to the marketing of primary products generally; and I hope it will not pass. No good can result from it to either the growers or the consumers. Something must be done to bring the grower nearer to the consumer, admittedly a difficult matter. I am not blaming the Government in that connection. During the years I was in office, I had that idea in my mind; but all I can see that the Government are able to do is to render assistance, financially and otherwise, to the producer who is willing and able to supply our own people at reasonable cost. We are a luxurious people and so our marketing is done in the most expensive way. I wish all the people of Western Australia could have all the fruit they desire to have. Then we should have a healthier community, and should get our fruit supplies more cheaply. Fruit is as necessary as bread. Though the world is hungry, it is difficult to market anything except prime necessities. Our job is to induce the people of this country to produce, and it is also our job to help them to market their products. If we want to benefit the producers of dried fruits, which are not a highly perishable product, let us do it as it has been done in Victoria and South Australia, by a separate Act. We should not include all classes of products in one measure. It is not for us to say that the producers will not take advantage of this legislation unless they want to do so. In a community of 350,000 people it is difficult to dispose of highly perishable products. Unfortunately the cities of the Eastern States have grown up at the expense of Western Australia, and our growers are left without adequate markets for their products. I hope that the Minister will be reasonable, and that he is still to be persuaded to turn this Bill into a dried fruits marketing Act. As regards other products, I fear great harm would result from the forcing of this measure through Parliament.

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) [7.36]: I recognise that from his point of view the Minister for Agriculture has made an honest endeavour to meet the many requests put up to him for a compulsory fruit marketing Bill. Candidly, however, I have received from many of our people statements of numerous objections to the measure in its present form. When the Minister was approached on the subject last year, it was by those interested in the dried fruits industry. We know that the Commonwealth has passed a Dried Fruits Export Control Act, Section 13 of which prohibits the export of dried fruit save in accordance with the determinations of the board under that Act. So as to bring our position into conformity with that under the Commonwealth, this Bill has been brought down. The dried fruit producers were having a parlous time. Prior to the commencement of repatriation they had been able to sell their dried fruits at satisfactory prices. Repatriation meant the establishment of dried fruit culture on a wide scale, with the consequence that the local market speedily became swamped. Thereupon the Federal and State Governments set out to assist the growers, whose position was serious. Both Victoria and South Australia have passed legislation dealing with dried fruits. I may say that no one was keener or more persistent than the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) in advocating a measure on the lines of the Queensland Fruit Marketing Act. However, our Western Australian growers are strongly opposed to such legislation. They maintain that its operation will prove too costly, and they urge that the incidence of this particular measure should be restricted to dried fruits. I acknowledge that the Minister has introduced into the Bill certain provisos to enable growers to protect their own interests and to combine. However, quite a number of growers have worked up considerable connections of their own. It has taken some of them as long as 10 years to do so. I refer now particularly to apple-growers. Some of these have established an extensive trade with private customers, direct from the orchard to the consumer. The arrangement is most satisfactory to the orchardist and to the consumer, because the middleman has been abolished, together with his profit. A clause in this Bill proposes to prohibit the orchardist from

supplying such customers, and to compel him to put all his fruit into a pool. I sincerely hope that such was not the Minister's intention, but that is the effect of the clause. Apple-growers, particularly at Mt. Barker and Bridgetown, after suffering severely through lack of storage facilities, have erected up-to-date and extensive cool stores of their own, thus safeguarding their interests and enabling themselves to build up a large export trade. Last year about 400,000 cases of apples were exported, representing a considerable accession to the wealth of the State as a whole. By virtue of the cool stores, those growers have already done what the Bill proposes to do in order to protect the interests of growers. By co-operative effort they have provided the necessary facilities. Therefore, they are absolutely opposed to the measure, and rightly so. The Bill contains a provision empowering the Minister to veto the control which the boards, if elected, would possess. I do not interpret the Bill exactly as the Leader of the Opposition does when he says that it would be possible for a wheat grower to be a member of the board controlling the potato pool, and a person interested in potato growing to be on the wheat pool board. I take it that only those engaged in the particular industry will be eligible to represent the growers in that industry on the board created to deal with their products. The Bill will give the growers opportunity to control their "products" which, in the interpretation clause, is set out to mean "fruit, grain, cereals, vegetables or other produce of the soil of this State, or dairy produce or eggs, and includes any article of commerce prepared otherwise than by process of manufacture from any primary product." Having given the growers an opportunity to vote, by a two-thirds majority, in favour of a board to control their product, a proviso is inserted in the Bill that will enable the Minister to prohibit any action, or proposed action, on the part of the board which he considers is, or will be, detrimental to the public interest.

The Minister for Lands: The Bill provides for giving them a monopoly and then you want to give them full power to rob the people. What then?

Mr. THOMSON: That is the greatest fear the growers have regarding this clause.

The Minister for Lands: That is a monopoly!

Mr. THOMSON: For that matter, there is nothing to prevent the growers, if they like to co-operate, having a monopoly without the necessity for any pool at all.

The Minister for Lands: Quite true.

Mr. THOMSON: In plain terms this may be called compulsory co-operation, but to give the Minister power to veto anything that may be done by the board, is going too far. The object of this move is to protect the producers, and if, following upon the necessary 66 per cent. of the growers voting in favour of a board to control their produce, that course is adopted, they will then find that the Minister reserves the right to interfere. The Minister may say, "Last year there was a glut and you growers lost thousands of pounds; this year there is a bumper harvest but we will not give you an opportunity to recoup yourselves for the losses sustained last year." I do not say the Minister would adopt that attitude, but it would be possible in view of the proviso. If the Minister insists upon the proviso I will have to vote against the second reading of the Bill. I want to see the dried fruits industry protected and I hope the Government will agree to the Bill applying to that industry only.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: What about fresh grapes?

Mr. THOMSON: I understand the hon. member is dealing with that question.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It was really the fresh grape growers who, agitated most for the Bill.

Mr. THOMSON: I will assist the hon. member to secure protection for the growers of fresh grapes. There is another difficulty that I hope the Government will assist to remove. In view of the proposal that there shall be a pool, it will be obvious that the man who grows grapes of an early variety which, coming on the market before other grapes are available, would ordinarily procure him a higher price for his product, will be deprived of that opportunity. If the Bill be given effect to, that man will be placed on the same level as other growers whose grapes ripen later on in the season. That being so, there would be no encouragement for a grower to go in for the earlier types.

The Minister for Lands: Does that not apply to every pool?

Mr. THOMSON: I can see difficulties ahead in dealing with fresh and soft fruits. Protection should be afforded the grower of

grapes of both the early and late varieties. Perhaps that difficulty could be overcome by giving the board power to fix a period. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that we are not suffering from over-production. From an export point of view we are suffering from under-production of prime fruit. We are unable to take advantage of our geographical position in relation to continental markets through failing to produce sufficient fruit to insure independent shipping. If we were in a position to export sufficient fruit to fill a ship we would be in a much better position than that in which we find ourselves to-day when we provide part shipments only. Sometimes our fruit arrives overseas in competition with the fruit from other States. What are termed "glut" periods in apples, are almost wholly due to the quantities of inferior fruit placed upon the market in the height of the season. The fault here is not in the markets, but in the orchards. If the Bill be passed as it is at present, fruit growers' associations like those at Mt. Barker and Bridgetown, including the Balingup and Mullallyup branches, which have evolved most efficient methods for handling their products, will find themselves compelled to hand over their business to an irresponsible body who would be in control of their activities. Under such conditions the growers could not secure as advantageous terms as in the past. Let me contrast the position in Queensland with that obtaining in Western Australia. Under the provisions of the Bill all the money has to be provided by the growers and the Government do not propose to assist in any way whatever except to veto anything a board may do. In Queensland the statement of income and expenditure for the 12 months ended 30th June last year showed that the expenditure totalled £33,938, while the income consisted of an appropriation by the Government totalling £33,861.

Mr. Sampson: Nothing of the sort.

Mr. THOMSON: I have the report of the Director of the Council of Agriculture.

Mr. Sampson: That is a different thing altogether.

Mr. THOMSON: On page 35 of the report there is the balance sheet of the Queensland Producers' Association.

Mr. Sampson: The Council of Agriculture has nothing to do with it.

Mr. THOMSON: That shows what it costs the Queensland Government. For salaries and wages, printing and stationery, rents,

rates and insurances, and so on, the amount was £11,763.

Mr. Sampson: Not a penny from Government money.

Mr. THOMSON: But the expenditure included the following: Council of Agriculture, members' fees £1,267; members' travelling expenses, £1,003; members' rail fares, £1,069, making a total of £3,339. Then there was an expenditure of £12,305 under the heading of district councils, the items including members' fees £1,442; members' travelling expenses, £1,603; elections, £299; postages and miscellaneous expenses, £283; agents and field representatives' salaries, £4,804; agents and field representatives' expenses, £2,817; and secretary's honoraria, £994. Then there are the following items: Local producers' associations, postages and sundry expenses, £413; secretary's honoraria, £2,882; making a total of £2,395; newspaper subsidy, £3,000; depreciation, office furniture and fittings, library and office alterations, £233; giving a grand total of £33,938. I am prepared to admit that that is not under the Committee of Direction, but nevertheless that shows what expense the Government incurred in view of the Council of Agriculture created under the Primary Producers' Organisation Act, 1922.

Mr. Sampson: That must not be confused—

Mr. THOMSON: The hon. member will not confuse me. It means that in order to establish this organisation in Queensland it cost the Queensland Government nearly £34,000, and yet in Western Australia the growers will have to carry the whole of the responsibility, and on top of that the Minister will have the right of veto. I hope the Government will agree to several important amendments. I shall not oppose the second reading if the Bill can be confined to dried fruits. It would then be of assistance to the growers. To be acceptable, the Bill must protect the grower and preserve the trade that has been built up over a number of years. Moreover, the Government will have to consider the improving of transport. There is in the Bill no provision for that. Provision should be made also for the proper packing of fruit, and for its careful handling. In Committee some drastic amendments will have to be moved, but in the meantime I appeal to the Government to confine the Bill to the dried fruit industry. Growers of other fruits say they do not want the Bill, that it is an interference with their

liberty. I trust the Government will accept reasonable amendments when they are proposed.

**MR. SAMPSON** (Swan [8.2]: The need for organisation in respect of fruit marketing is generally felt, and that feeling is by no means limited to Western Australia. The difficulties suffered by fruitgrowers are world-wide and everywhere the need for organisation is admitted. Because fruit is of a highly perishable nature the difficulties of marketing are intensified. Amongst those difficulties are the damage occasionally caused by hail, and the limitations of transport to market. The need for improved roads in this State is very real, and here again the growers have a difficulty to face. As for hail, growers of stone fruit often suffer great losses through such a visitation.

The Minister for Lands: The Government can scarcely control that.

**Mr. SAMPSON:** No, and I am glad it is not intended that the Government through this measure should attempt to control the marketing of fruit. There is a wide-spread idea that that is the intention of the Government; but, as pointed out by the Minister for Agriculture, the measure is not for the purpose of providing facilities for the Government to control the marketing of fruit, but rather to allow the growers themselves to do it.

**Mr. Thomson:** Except that the Minister reserves the right to veto the action of the board.

**Mr. SAMPSON:** The lack of concrete proposals in respect of fruit marketing is always a pronounced feature at fruit conferences. At such conferences pious resolutions have been carried, but the final result has meant very little if any advantage to the growers. The Bill embraces provisions under which the marketing of primary products will be controlled.

The Minister for Lands: Not "will be"; "can be."

**Mr. SAMPSON:** Very well. The Bill gives to the growers an opportunity that has for long been sought. In respect of prices secured for fruit, we have had a comparatively good season, and as a result there is in some quarters a disinclination to embark upon a method of control. The Bill is modelled largely on the Queensland Act. I am glad of that, and accordingly I think some reference to the method of control ex-

ercised by the Committee of Direction in Queensland is justified. The Committee of Direction, with one exception, are a body of growers elected by the growers to establish a policy for correct marketing and the stabilising of prices. There are ten members on that committee. The annual conference of the Committee of Direction and the Associated Local Producers' Association met in Brisbane on the 27th August last. The outstanding feature of that conference was the desire on the part of the delegates for unity. The report and balance sheet for the twelve months showed a profit of approximately £9,000. That is a complete answer to the statement that money is provided by the Queensland Government in order to enable the growers to market their fruit. As a matter of fact, money is provided for the Council of Agriculture, an organisation that has for its object the development, the advancement and the care of primary production in Queensland. The Committee of Direction has the very special duty of controlling fruit marketing. I admit that some small sum of money may be necessary here to inaugurate the boards it is proposed to set up, but I do not expect that the establishment of those boards will be either difficult or expensive. It has been said that the establishment of a number of boards will prove cumbersome. However, I fail to see how a board established for, say, the control of wheat marketing, could function in respect of, say, an egg pool. Again, confining it to the fruit industry, I cannot see how it would be possible for a board having for its object the control of citrus to control the marketing of apples and pears or stone fruit. So a number of boards will be necessary, but each will have its definite work to do and I am convinced that no great expense will be necessary. Reverting to the Committee of Direction's conference held in Queensland, let me point out that the sum shown as a credit balance was largely secured because of the savings effected by transport and the rebates secured from agents. At the conference there were representatives of 94 local associations and special reference made to the pineapple crop, which had been a record for the year. The packers alone were supplied with 141,000 cases, and for the summer crop the growers secured 3s. 9d. per case, while for the winter crop they got 4s. per case. Prior to the inauguration of con-

trol the prices were very much lower and, in addition, thousands of cases of pineapples were allowed to rot. At one time 80 truck loads of pineapples could be seen rotting outside the premises of the canners. Under the control of the committee such a thing is not possible, for there is full organisation. The committee through its office advises the growers when to send in their fruit and the pineapple farms are kept so well picked up that as the fruit ripens it is sent in. This is in contradistinction to the practice before the inception of the committee, when the fruit was sent in just as it suited the individual growers. We see here an example of the benefits that accrue from control, from thoughtfulness in respect to the sending forward of this product. At the conference alluded to a motion carried unanimously affirmed "that the pineapple section appreciates the work of the Committee of Direction." That in itself is a full answer to many of the adverse criticisms of the operations of the Committee of Direction. When the Provincial Press Association was in Brisbane a few weeks ago an invitation was received to visit the State cannery and there see pineapples being processed. The State cannery was established in 1920, largely for the purpose of relieving the market of surplus fruit, particularly from soldier settlements. Although the State cannery has been run at a loss, it must be admitted that since the Committee of Direction has been operating an encouraging feature in respect of the cannery is the improved demand in England for the cannery's products. Again, the loss in the year 1923-24 was £6,300 less than in the previous 12 months, and members of the Press Association were advised that there was every chance of better figures being forthcoming as the trade develops. The factory has handled 240,000 cases of pines for soldiers, and other lines dealt with are citrus fruit, peaches, apricots, apples, tomatoes, Cape gooseberries and strawberries. I mention these lines because some people believe that fruit production in Queensland is limited to pineapples and bananas. On the contrary, every fruit that can be produced in Western Australia is grown in Queensland, and there, of course, certain tropical fruits are grown that up to the present have not been produced in this State. It has been said that pineapples are not a perishable fruit. They are a perishable fruit, and because of the operations of the

Committee of Direction it is estimated that the growers have been saved not less than £60,000 in the last 12 months. In the marketing of bananas sales have largely increased, and at the conclusion of the conference, as showing the feeling of growers, votes of thanks were passed to the director, Mr. McGregor, the manager, Mr. Thomas, and the manager of the Committee of Direction, Mr. Ranger. An important point concerning the work of the Committee of Direction is the development of markets. Under C.O.D. methods, new markets are assured, and during the time I was in Queensland Mr. Ranger was on his way to New Zealand to endeavour to secure a market there for Queensland fruit. Under the disorganised state of markets in Western Australia that would be no one's duty, and new markets would be practically impossible because there would be no funds provided for the purpose. The Committee of Direction are self-supporting and have a good credit balance, and consequently are able to look out for and develop other markets. In New Zealand there are great opportunities for the marketing of fruit; and as a direct result of Mr. Ranger's visit I believe that trial shipments of various fruits are to be made. Recently the committee of direction suffered a serious setback. The High Court decided that the committee did not have the powers which they believed they possessed. An injunction was issued directing the committee not to interfere in respect to interstate trade and, in certain cases, even to trade within the State. The Minister, in framing this Bill, has realised the importance of not coming into conflict with Section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution Act, and accordingly has limited the operation of the measure so that it will not affect interstate trade. In Queensland a number of deputations have waited on the Minister for Agriculture, and he has promised that the intention of Parliament to give the growers opportunities to control their own fruit marketing will be provided. To do this an amendment of the Act is necessary and consideration is being given to the question.

Mr. Davy: Have not they got that right now?

Mr. SAMPSON: The High Court decided that the power which they exercised was not conferred by the Act.

Mr. Davy: But have not the growers the right to control their own marketing now in Western Australia?

Mr. SAMPSON: No.

Mr. Davy: Why not?

Mr. SAMPSON: While a majority of the growers may agree, there is always a minority who, by acting disloyally, can thwart the wishes of the majority.

Mr. Davy: This Bill is to give the right to the majority to exercise force over the minority?

Mr. SAMPSON: The Bill is designed to give the right to the growers to control their own products. The Queensland Minister has promised that the Act shall be amended. He realises that when Mr. Gillies, the then Minister for Agriculture, brought down the Bill, Parliament intended the growers to have full control in respect of marketing. It came as a bombshell to the Committee of Direction when the High Court decided that they did not possess this power. I wish to show how wide-spread is the need, and how general the recognition of people throughout the world of the need for controlling fruit marketing. There is in Queensland a Primary Products Pools Act under which it is competent for pools to be established, but under the Fruit Marketing Organisation Act there is no such power, and I question whether the establishment of pools will provide a full solution of marketing problems. The Bill before us does not limit the operations of the different boards to the establishment of pools. It will be competent for the boards to deal with fruit as they think fit, subject to certain restrictions which, if they appear to be unfair, may be amended in Committee.

Mr. Thomson: But the prices will be pooled.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is unnecessary that pools should be established. The boards will have power to do as they think best in the interests of the growers. That is how I understand the measure before us; it is not limited to the establishment of pools.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Clause 10 would make that almost necessary, but still that can be put right.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Minister assures me that the Bill is not limited to the establishment of pools, and I am glad to know that is the case. Sometime since the League of Freedom, a Queensland organisation that to some extent opposed the Committee of Direction, investigated the question of the cost of producing fruit. They delegated certain members to meet the agents in Brisbane, and it was mutually agreed that fruit—ap-

ples, peaches, etc.—should be sold at not less than 4s. per full case and 2s. per half case. No fruitgrower would view that decision without feelings of great alarm, because it is impossible to produce reasonably good fruit at those figures. If growers are to remain on the land it is essential that they be permitted to earn a living wage. The Queensland Acts permits the growers to help themselves by uniting, by opening up new markets, by stabilising prices, and by developing a greater demand for fruit. It is stated that a Federal Act will be necessary to render this measure complete, but that is a matter for the future. In Queensland consideration is being given to the deletion of Section 3 of the Act, which precludes the operation of the Primary Products Pools Act. Organised marketing, it will be admitted, is of advantage to producers and consumers alike. It does not matter at what price fruit is sold in the markets, it is always a very high price when it reaches the consumer. The object of the Committee of Direction, and I take it the object of any board established under this Bill, is to bring the producer and the consumer as close together as possible. To show the very chaotic conditions of the fruit producing industry, let me refer to the area under orchards in Western Australia as disclosed by the Commonwealth Year Book. In 1915-16 the area was 21,805 acres; in 1919-20 it had declined to 19,815 acres; in 1922-23 there was a further decline to 19,405 acres. I do not think one word more is necessary to show how urgent it is to have organisation and to give the growers an opportunity to control their industry. It is impossible at present for the growers to obtain a fair return. The area of orchards per thousand of population in 1915-16 was 69 acres; in 1919-20 it was reduced to 61 acres; in the following year it was 59 acres, in the next year 57 acres, and in 1922-23 it had declined to 56 acres. There is further proof that fruit growing is not a profitable industry. There is a further indication of the great need for assisting fruit-growers, and it is idle to state that the growers can club together and help themselves. To do that appears to be impossible; there is no one to organise the growers and do the necessary preliminary work. It has been proved time and time again that unless statutory power is given, any efforts will be of no avail. As I have shown, there has been a steady decline in the

area under orchards in Western Australia. As regards factories, the figures relating to Western Australia for certain years are as follows:—In 1891, 175 factories, 12,198 employees; in 1915, 780 factories, 14,631 employees; in 1920-21, 817 factories, 15,409 employees; in 1922-23, 1,199 factories, 19,097 employees. Our disabilities in regard to secondary industries are well known; nevertheless the figures show considerable increases in the number of factories and also in the number of employees. During the last five years the increase has equalled 47 per cent. On the percentage basis Western Australia has made a greater advance than any other State of the Commonwealth. That is surprising, because we all know that it is extremely difficult to establish a factory in Western Australia. The percentages of increase in the number of factory employees between the years 1918-19 and 1922-23 are as follows:—New South Wales 24.4, Victoria 26.73, Queensland 7.28, South Australia 24.39, Western Australia 47.77, Tasmania 25.18; Australia, as a whole 23.64. That, notwithstanding the almost insuperable difficulties encountered, shows the progress Western Australia has made in secondary industries; and yet during the same period the area under fruit has steadily decreased. It requires very little argument, therefore, to establish the soundness of the assertion so often made at fruitgrowers' conferences that the industry requires organisation. In Victoria an "eat more fruit" campaign was initiated some time since, under the auspices of the Railway Advisory Board, who realised that if more fruit was eaten, the lot of the fruitgrowers would be better and that the greater need of fertilisers and other supplies would benefit the Railway Department. At present the "eat more fruit" campaign in Western Australia appears to be no one's business. There is no Committee of Direction, there is no organisation that has any money to spend with the object of developing the fruit-eating habit, and consequently the health of the people and the welfare of the fruitgrowers must suffer. Sir Arbuthnot Lane, an eminent English surgeon, said that an enormous amount of misery would be prevented if right foods were eaten, and Sir George Newman, the Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry of Health, England, has also made some enlightening statements in regard to food—

One of the commonest of human complaints or disorders is constipation. Now, in nine or more cases out of every dozen this bondage, with all its further and more serious consequences, is due to improper food. Eczemas are skin diseases that are caused by worry and improper food, and 90 out of every 100 cases can be cured if people will feed on a rational diet.

Admittedly a rational diet includes fruit. The eating of fruit should be a habit; fruit should not be regarded as a luxury. Control is not an innovation. In South Australia and Victoria there is already control over dried fruits. I will show that there is control in other countries as well. In 1923 New Zealand, which is generally regarded as a Conservative country, enacted the Dairy Produce Export Control Act. A poll was taken, and a majority of producers decided that the Act should be brought into operation. The board under the Act is a body corporate with perpetual succession and a common seal, and has full power to make contracts; and it exercises control over the export of dairy produce. The board further has power to make arrangements for the handling, storage, pooling, shipping, and insurance of products, and generally to do all such matters as are necessary for the due discharge of its functions in handling, distributing, and disposing of New Zealand dairy products. The position of dairy farmers in New Zealand is well known. The Dominion has a splendid reputation for its dairy products. Nevertheless, control has been found necessary there; and consequently the measure to which I have referred was brought down in 1923. In South Africa there is control over fruit shipment to eliminate the waste of fruit coincident with lack of co-ordination between growers and shipping companies. In South Africa, accordingly, legislation has been passed to set up a Fruit Shipping Control Board. As regards the Commonwealth, the "West Australian" of the 16th inst. mentioned that the Minister for Markets and Migration, Senator Wilson, dealing with the Bank Rural Credits Act shortly to be brought into operation, said—

The machinery provided in the Act will allow the producer to obtain all the advantages of a compulsory pool as regards his exportable surplus, and at the same time complete control remains in his own hands. The operation of the Act would stimulate the growth of co-operation generally amongst producers.



Further, on the 18th inst., Senator Wilson, attending the meeting of the Australian Fruit Council, is reported as saying—

Several proposals were laid before me by way of a scheme for the re-organisation of the council along the lines of direct control of each section of fruit culture by the growers of that section.

A recent issue of the "Sydney Mail" published a discursive report of the annual conference of the Farmers' and Settlers' Association of New South Wales. That report was published because problems of vital interest to farmers were discussed. Voluntary pooling of primary products was referred to and discarded. Delegates were agreed that pool marketing was successful only when on a compulsory basis. That was a very definite statement. The Bill before us avoids the error which I claim was made in connection with the Queensland Fruit Marketing Act. The Queensland measure was brought in without a vote of those concerned having been taken. The Bill before us contains a provision whereby it is not competent for control to be introduced unless a two-thirds majority of registered growers of the particular product concerned vote in favour of control. There is further consideration in that a month is to be allowed to pass before the board actually functions, during which period it is competent for 25 per cent. of the registered relative growers to lodge a petition, and in the event of that being done the board would not be constituted. There can be no question, therefore, as to the liberality of the Bill. There will be, I hope, an obligation on the part of all growers to enrol, so that they may all vote on the question of control. I realise that in fruit there are several grades, and should a pool be formed, perhaps it will be necessary to establish a fancy grade, a special grade, and possibly a first and second grade. However, that is a detail. I know there are difficulties in regard to the measure, but in view of the need which exists for organisation I hope the House will look with favour on the Bill. As has been stated, the board's powers are not limited to pooling. It would be competent for the board to fix minimum prices which would assure a living rate. If that were done, considerable good would be secured. In addition it would be competent for arrangements to be made whereby the market could be relieved of a certain quantity of fruit. That fruit could be processed

—made into jam, or possibly dehydrated. The board would thus have power to remove from the market a portion of the glut, and could also advise growers to utilise a part of their production in the home town—a market which is often overlooked. Again, some arrangement of percentages for exports overseas could be adopted. When he introduced the Bill the Minister referred to the wheat pool and said that because of the compulsory clause in connection with the wheat pool during the early months, the continued successful functioning of the board under the voluntary principle was made possible. I know that the Bill will be opposed and that it is being condemned in many quarters. However, I was at a meeting in the Upper Swan district last night, when a motion was carried unanimously supporting the Bill to control the marketing of grapes. The difficulties regarding the marketing of grapes are exactly similar to those relating to the marketing of citrus, or stone fruits.

Mr. Mann: Are there not two sections in the Upper Swan?

Mr. SAMPSON: There are those interested in dried fruits and those who are fresh fruit producers, but I believe that most are both dried and fresh fruit producers. References were made in the "West Australian" the other day to the rapidity with which apricots ripened, and it was stated that when the too generous rays of the sun ripened apricots within two or three weeks, a glut was bound to occur. However, that does not say that under a board of control, the difficulty would be greater. Surely the growers are more likely to secure reasonable returns if their interests are safeguarded by a board instead of each grower playing a game of chance.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: But the consumer has to pay the piper.

Mr. Davy: He will pay the piper under this Bill all right!

Mr. Marshall: What about the growers?

Mr. J. H. Smith: They are 99 or 100 per cent. against it in my district.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is obvious that some growers do not desire the measure.

Mr. Thomson: They are very much against it.

Mr. SAMPSON: It should be realised that provision is made for two-thirds of the growers concerned having to vote in favour of control before this legislation can be given effect to.

**Mr. Mann:** What would be the effect of one district coming under the pool and the next district remaining outside the pool?

**Mr. SAMPSON:** That is a detail and I understand it is possible to remove certain districts from the control of the board.

**Mr. Thomson:** That is not so, according to the Minister.

**Mr. Mann:** Would that make the control effective, if one district were outside, and another inside the pool?

**Mr. SAMPSON:** What we have to consider is what will make fruit growing sufficiently attractive to retain in the industry those already engaged in it. I have shown how the number of growers has decreased, and how the area under orchard has decreased as well.

**Member:** What is the reason?

**Mr. SAMPSON:** Fruit growing does not return a living wage.

**Mr. J. H. Smith:** What about the fruit-growers at Bridgetown?

**Mr. SAMPSON:** I admit that some are doing very well, but to gain that end a grower must be something of a genius. I was sorry to note from the article in the "West Australian" that there was a distinct feeling displayed against the introduction of the Bill. Even newspapers are organised. Organisation is essential in these times. To-day the man who stands alone is the man who may fall, whereas the man who stands with others has the chance of succeeding. The Bill is not a communistic measure; it is still from the individual's efforts that success will come. On the question of the rapid ripening of apricots, I would like to mention that some three years ago I had an opportunity of inspecting the Victoria Docks refrigerating works in Melbourne. I was assured by an officer in charge that it was possible under the improved conditions to hold stone fruits in suspense for a period of up to three months. That being so, it would appear that the solution of the glut caused by the rapid ripening of apricots rests not in denying to the growers the advantages of co-operation and organisation, but in providing them with an opportunity whereby modern refrigeration facilities are possible. Refrigeration experiments are being carried out all over the world, and the advance I have mentioned has already been made in Melbourne. The "West Australian" advances

no alternative proposition. This is characteristic oblique criticism not justified by the circumstances. It is the duty of everyone to assist to re-establish this sinking industry until, equally with those engaged in other industries, those participating in it can enjoy a reasonable share of the good things of life. If that spirit animates the discussion we will beat out on the anvil of argument a Bill that will provide the growers with reasonable returns. In a new country like Western Australia the spectacle of a decreasing area under fruit is a calamity. It calls for immediate attention; it is not a matter of considering the interests of some particular grower or some particular orchardist. Why should the growers of primary products not have the right to control their industry? No other industry, unless it be dairying, is in such a position that the demand for assistance is so insistent. I believe that under the Bill a measure of assistance could be given to the dairying industry. When we consider the difficulties that dairymen have to face, any help that is possible should be given to them. I believe that the appointment of a board having for its object the welfare of the growers, and the consideration of matters tending to alleviate the lot of those engaged in the industry, would do much to overcome existing difficulties. During the last election the Premier, who was then Leader of the Opposition, referred to the Brisbane "Courier" and stated that it was the most conservative paper in Australia. There may have been some truth in the statement for certainly it is regarded as one of the most highly respected newspapers of the Commonwealth. The articles appearing in its columns are always well written, and it is truly regarded as a leading organ of public thought in Queensland. When the Premier referred to the paper as being most conservative, I was inclined to agree with him.

**Mr. Davy:** All compulsion is conservative. Conservatives have always been in favour of this type.

**Mr. SAMPSON:** No. At the time I refer to, the Brisbane "Courier" strongly criticised the Fruit Marketing Act. It has since had experience of the legislation in operation and I would like to read an article that appeared in the paper dealing with that aspect.

**The Minister for Lands:** You will require all the information you have to convert a lot of your own people.

Mr. SAMPSON: This is what the Brisbane "Courier" stated—

Nothing tests the value of an organisation so effectively as results, and judged by that standard the Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing has certainly justified its existence. Now the really interesting fact is that the committee, although it had to find a market for a very vast increase in production, has secured considerably higher prices than obtained before the control was instituted. Hitherto, in the three or four weeks of glut, the pineapple grower was at the mercy of the fluctuating markets, and had to accept whatever price he could get. As far back as 1923, or much earlier than that, it was stated that the limit of production had been exceeded and that heavy slumps were inevitable. But the report shows that a vastly bigger output is being marketed now at a considerably increased price, approximately an improvement of 3s. a case. With nearly twice the supply marketed, and a general average improvement of 3s. a case in price, there is some ground for the assertion that the pineapple industry has benefited to the extent of nearly £60,000 by careful organisation. The section of the report relating to bananas is even more interesting. Supplies have increased by considerably more than 100 per cent. The actual figures show that the consignments to the Southern markets for the season of 1925 were 122 per cent. greater than those of the 1923 season and 103 per cent. greater than those of the 1924 season. In other words Sydney and Melbourne took 189,488 cases in the first six months of 1923, 207,111 cases for the same period of 1924 and 450,554 cases for the corresponding period of 1925. Despite all that the market was not only maintained but allowing for fluctuations, an increased price was obtained.

Mr. Mann: How much did the Queensland Government lose last year on the canning of pineapples?

Mr. SAMPSON: Since the committee of direction has been operating, the loss on the cannery was £6,300 less than in the previous 12 months.

Mr. Mann: But what was it during the previous 12 months?

Mr. SAMPSON: A lot of money has been lost on the State cannery, but that is altogether beside the question. Under the Committee of Direction the loss has been reduced by over £5,000, notwithstanding that the growers have received 3s. 9d. per case in summer and 4s. in winter, representing a 50 per cent. advance on previous prices. This report continues—

From time to time we are told that competition has decreased because of the methods of the committee, but that statement cannot be substantiated in face of the increased supplies that have been marketed. The big broad fact that concerns all of us is that organisation

is essential to enable the growers to market their increasing supplies. In the banana industry especially supplies are increasing enormously, and unless some agency undertakes the distribution and seeks new markets disaster lies ahead. We have pointed out many times that settlers are placed on areas and told to go ahead producing fruit without any guarantee that they will be able to market their produce. In this report we find several warnings to that effect. We are told, for instance, that it is absolutely essential to find overseas markets for a considerable proportion of the pineapple production; that 5,000 to 10,000 cases of bananas must be exported every week to absorb the supplies, that greater support must be given to Queensland jams or there will be a heavy surplus of deciduous fruit, and that an export market must be found for the citrus fruit. Herein lies the great advantage of such an organisation as the Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing. Those who are opposed to the operations or the committee might object that its methods are dictatorial, that its expenses are heavy, or that the compulsory principle is not democratic. After all those are details. The really big thing is that our fruit supplies are increasing rapidly and that ruinous stares the producers in the face unless there is efficient organisation, and unless it is somebody's business to study farm economies, and to find new markets. The main concern of the farmer is not so much what he can grow but what he can grow that will find a market at a profit. To do that there must be an organisation whose duty it is to collect authentic data, to watch the markets and to replace haphazard marketing with scientific co-operation. There may be many causes for a good deal of the discontent that appears to prevail in some of the districts; the committee may not be as tactful as it may be; it might not suffer objectors gladly; or it might not co-operate as extensively as some growers would like with the agents. The really big fact, however, is that co-operation alone can save the industry in periods of glut, and that better distribution, better marketing, and a better knowledge of export conditions are essential if the growers are to market their fruit. That is what the committee is doing.

The Bill before us will inaugurate a new era for growers, giving them an opportunity to control, which at present they do not possess. It is not limited to fruit, and under it even egg producers will be able to organise. Remarkable results have followed the organising of egg and poultry pools in Denmark, where the returns have increased from £500,000 to £5,500,000 in the course of a very few years. A definite proposition has been placed before the House, and it is now competent for producers to improve their status. The Bill contains no taint of communism or socialism.

Mr. Pantou: Then it is of no use to your side.

Mr. SAMPSON: It provides means for self-organisation, self-help and ultimate robust activity amongst the growers. In Committee it will be possible to amend certain provisions, but I am convinced that in its broad principles the Bill is sound, and that its adoption means the difference between chaos and order, organisation and dis-organisation. I will support the second-reading.

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [9.10]: Last session I asked the House to appoint a select committee to go into the subject of fruit marketing. The question is a big one, and I considered that if we were going to have legislation such as is now before us it would involve a lot of preparatory work to find out what others were doing, and learning where successes had been attained, and trying to extract from those successes the fundamental principles on which they were based. Denmark is the country from which most of this class of legislation has emanated. On finding that the House would not grant me that select committee I set about getting together what information I could. Amongst other pamphlets I received was a history of co-operation in Denmark. This was issued by the United States Bureau of Agriculture. It starts off in this way—

The most consistently successful co-operative system in use anywhere in the world is in Denmark, and it is on the Danish system that the most successful American co-operatives are founded, and it was the principles of the Danish system that are embodied in the Sapiro Standard Contract and Marketing Plan. It is almost unbelievable, but true, that a Danish farmer, with 16 acres of land, with his products handled co-operatively, makes a more comfortable living with less work, less investment, and much more general satisfaction than his American brother makes with ten times the land.

Aaron Sapiro was the attorney for the Marketing Bureau of California, an eminent lawyer. He found there had been no comparative study of those co-operatives that had been successful, those that had been partially successful and those that had been failures. He set to work to make an intensive comparative study of the various systems operating in various parts of the world. He studied the systems of Denmark, of the Continent generally, and of the local co-operatives, and he found there were certain fundamental principles, some six or seven. He found also that the successful co-operatives had utilised all

those fundamental principles, that the partially successful had utilised only two or three of them, while the failures had adopted only one or two of the fundamental principles, and in many cases none at all. He analysed the position and drew up a plan that was brought into operation in California. He retrieved the position of the California co-operatives—those people have been marketing co-operatively for about 30 years—and brought them out of a state of bankruptcy into the greatest possible success. The first of the fundamental principles that he discovered was that there must be a legal acreage minimum for each State represented in most cases by not less than 50 per cent. of the commercial acreage of the growers of the product, whatever it might be. In California and various States operating under this particular plan, only the products of those who sign up and agree to belong to the co-operative agency are handled by that body. They will not handle the produce of outside growers. By securing 50 per cent. of the acreage they get control, and it has proved to be successful. They obtain control of the marketing and handling of the bulk of the products, and have been able to regulate and stabilise the market. It must be remembered that this co-operative marketing is not a process of holding up; it is a matter of regulating instead of having the dumping process that was in vogue in past years. We propose that if a certain district agrees to come under the marketing Act, all growers in that district shall be forced to come under the agreement. The difference between that and the plan I am laying before the House is that in America only the product of those people who agree to come into the concern is handled. In Maine potato growers found themselves in a parlous condition and undertook a four-months' campaign. They persuaded about 75 per cent. of the growers to participate in the benefits of the co-operative body, and to-day there are between 80 and 90 per cent. associated with that body. The second fundamental is a legal, ironclad, binding contract which cannot be broken and which is enforceable in the courts. At first difficulty was experienced in enforcing the contracts owing to the varying laws in the different States, and several cases were lost in the courts. In Queensland it has been necessary to bring in an amendment of the Primary Products Pools Act to give the committee of direction power to sell the fruit. It was proved that, although they had power to

acquire the fruit, through some legal quibble, they could not sell it. That is why I asked the Minister by way of interjection whether this Bill would enable the board or committee of direction to sell the produce after it had been acquired. The third fundamental is a State-wide, seasonal pooling system in which every grower participates equally on the basis of variety, quality and grade. Recently there have been a lot of protests from our apple-growers, who at great expense have built up a very fine connection and have got a brand of their own. They are much afraid that they will be interfered with by this measure and are quite up in arms about it. It would have been advisable to organise a campaign amongst the growers to educate them to the necessity for such a Bill. The fourth fundamental is an organisation upon a purely commodity basis in which every organisation handles only the products of its members. Outsiders do not come in at all. The fifth fundamental is organisation under a long term contract with member growers, and the sixth fundamental is the employment of commercial experts to handle the business of the organisation. Given these factors, such an organisation becomes the dominant selling agency in the markets, controlling supply, time of shipment, and the quality of the product. Under the Californian plan the selling organisation does not become incorporated until it has obtained its legal acreage minimum. In this respect the Californian plan differs from the local so-called co-operative organisation, because under the Californian plan an organisation makes sure of the fact that it has a sufficient volume of business actually to dominate the market before setting up its machinery for doing business. Last session I endeavoured to secure an extensive inquiry to find out what had been done by other countries and what had led to their success, with a view to adopting similar principles. Now we are experiencing protests from all over the country which I quite expected would be the outcome of having no proper inquiry and of failing to educate the growers to the necessity for legislation of this kind. Let me show how successful this Sapiro contract has been. In the United States something like 40 different products are marketed in 28 States, and there are 27 States which have the standard Co-operative Marketing Act on their statute-books

to enforce the contracts. Recently I received a paper from the prairie provinces, the back page of which is headed "Co-operating with the Farmer." It states—

The Saskatchewan Department of Agriculture endeavoured in every way possible to co-operate with the farmers of the province, and for the purpose of giving better service the activities of the department are administered through various branches, each in charge of a trained official. You are invited to take up your farming problems with these men or directly with the head of the department. Co-operation and markets:—This branch is at the service of those desiring information or assistance in marketing on co-operative lines, the whole range of farm products, including among other things livestock, poultry, eggs, and field crops. Superintends the organising of co-operative marketing associations.

The Government are not interfering with the activities, but they are county agents co-operating with the farmers, assisting them to organise and get the movement going. The farmers themselves do the bulk of the work, but they receive a little agricultural leadership from the county agencies to assist them in their campaigns and organising generally. The Department of Agriculture in the United States issued booklets dealing with methods of marketing citrus fruits, merchandising poultry, marketing lumber and livestock, co-operative cattle selling, fruitgrowers of Florida, potato growers, cranberry growers, and strawberry growers. Reference has been made to stone fruits. In America it is possible to handle stone fruits because they have the market. The objection raised by the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) regarding stone fruits can be quite understood. Perishable lines like apricots and strawberries are not easily handled and a big market is necessary to absorb them. The wonderful development of co-operation in America was realised by Mr. Theodore who, when he was organising the council of agriculture in Queensland, made these remarks—

The American and Canadian systems of rural organisation. His ideas upon the matter have to a large extent been assisted by a study of the conditions relating to the organisation of farmers in Canada and in America, and one had to give consideration to the experience of those countries which had advanced vastly farther in that respect than any other agricultural country in the world. The United States and Canada had, through the organisation of the farmers and development of agriculture, increased the status of farmers farther than any other country in the world, and they in Queensland would be foolish to ignore

the experience of the American farmers or overlook the benefits they had gained for themselves through that form of organisation. In America the organisation was known as the American Farm Bureau Federation. In every agricultural centre, large or small, in the United States there was a local farm bureau. It might comprise only 20 members, or it might comprise 1,000 members, each one of them farmers. Those were linked up with what were known as the county federations. They had their State executives in every State, and they again were linked up with what was known as the Federation of Farm Bureaux, with headquarters at Washington.

Mr. Theodore copied that largely in organising the council of agriculture in Queensland. I have heard it said there was an ulterior motive behind the action of the then Premier of Queensland. If any man shows disinterestedness, there are always some people who wonder what he is going to get out of it, so we can afford to take no notice of those remarks. The fact remains that there has been created in Queensland an organisation of which the Government bore the whole of the cost for the first two years. This year they are bearing one-half of the cost and they will continue to bear one-half of the cost during the next two years. By these means they have enabled the farmers to get a more thorough grasp of what co-operative marketing means, as well as the organisation of the industry generally. I have had handed to me a book issued by the committee of direction entitled "The First Milestone; Growers benefit by control; Progress Record." According to that book, things are very good with the Queensland producers. "Scrutator," of the "West Australian," went to inspect Queensland conditions, and came back with somewhat modified views as to the success which had been claimed. Mr. McGregor came to Western Australia from Queensland and drew a bright coloured picture of conditions in his State. "Scrutator" wrote as follows:—

There is some analogy to be discovered between the marketing of pineapples and the marketing of grapes; and, again, between the marketing of tomatoes and of our highly perishable stone fruits. To take first the case of pineapples, the canneries are, as has been stated, the key to the position. There is a limited demand for fresh pines, and the factories must be looked to to absorb an increasing proportion of the output. Similarly, with grapes, drying for the home and export market is an important element in the situation. There are also the wineries, and a distillery has recently been started, and under some effi-

cient system of organisation the utilisation of these for the absorption of the surplus products of the vineyard might be made the determining factor in securing a remunerative return to the grower. One is impelled to the conclusion that the C.O.D. in Queensland has succeeded in securing a higher price for pineapples from the canneries than might otherwise have been obtainable, and by handling in bulk it has been enabled to effect a reduction in transport charges. A similar organisation in the great industry should be able to regulate supplies in accordance with the capacity of the fresh fruit market to absorb them, and to insist that only fruit of a specified grade should be despatched thither. Incidentally it may be remarked that in this latter important particular the C.O.D. in Queensland does not appear to have accomplished much. The vineyard areas of Western Australia are fairly well concentrated, so that the task of organisation should be relatively simple.

I hold that the position of the grape growers is one of urgent necessity. They themselves have notified their acceptance of the principle of co-operative marketing. On one occasion I attended a meeting of growers in the Upper Swan district, which meeting decided that protection was required against Eastern States dumping. The growers said that the disposal of low-grade dried fruits was their big problem: hence the erection of a distillery was a crying need. They approved of a measure on the lines of the Queensland Fruit Marketing Act. They considered that dried fruits exported and imported should come under the Act. They held that city markets should be made available as a depot adjacent to the cool stores, that the sheds at Fremantle should be improved, even if they were only louvred. They strongly objected to the statement, which had been made without authority, that distribution by railway vans was a failure. They said that, on the contrary, the system was a success, and no doubt would be even a greater success in the coming season.

The Minister for Lands: The sheds at Fremantle have been louvred for 12 months.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I am glad to hear it. Reverting to what has been done in the United States, there are in the American Union 14,000 farmers' buying and selling agencies on a co-operative basis. It behoves us to take a lesson from the Americans, and bring in legislation on principles which have proved so successful. I omitted, in opening, to draw the attention of the House to the fact that the Sapiro Association organised the cotton, tobacco, and rice industries, as well as many others which were at the time in a bad condition. The history of what has

taken place in the Southern States reads like a fairy tale. The booklet of the tobacco interests concludes with these words—

The history of co-operative marketing reads like a fairy tale. It is the golden rule of agriculture. Co-operative marketing, in the modern sense of the term, grew from seed planted in American soil—a soil which history has ploughed and harrowed for that purpose. The tender sprout was transplanted to Denmark, where it flourished and became the wonder of the world. From Denmark scions were taken to California, where the growth of the new system changed the whole complexion of the Golden State. And from California the modern type of co-operative marketing was taken into the South, the East, and the West, until to-day we have farm communities everywhere which co-operative marketing has transformed into happy and prosperous neighbourhoods.

These things seem to me well worth impressing on the House, because I do not think the Bill before us is one that will meet the situation, though it may be adapted to the needs of the growers of dried fruits. Something much more comprehensive is required to deal with the industry generally. A campaign of education should be undertaken to make our growers aware of what co-operative marketing means. Compulsion means that if a proportion of the growers agree, the whole lot are brought in. That is quite different from the American idea of co-operation. In America co-operative companies are formed, and only the products of members of the co-operative company are pooled. From a member of a Western Australian association of growers, a hard-bitten farmer and fruitgrower, knowing the game from A to Z, I have received a letter expressing the hope that a Bill will be passed giving a certain measure of control. The writer further states—

The Act, to be acceptable, must protect the growers, preserve the direct trade they have built up over long years, improve transport, prohibit the sale of inferior fruit, cut out unnecessary middlemen, and compel proper packing of fruit and careful handling.

What the fruit marketing industry requires is standardisation, proper packing, and protection of the fruit. During the war I made an offer to certain fruit growers to handle their fruit while the glut was on, a matter of three months. I proposed to establish an agency here in Perth, and to guarantee to clear their fruit so long as they sent me fairly decent quality. When the thing at once became self-supporting, I said I would relinquish the management. I asked for nothing for my trouble, thinking that the situation called for some special effort. Those

to whom the offer was made began to wonder what I was going to make out of it. They could not believe that I was actuated simply by a desire to assist them. They thought there was a nigger in the woodpile somewhere. They dilly-dallied so long that I withdrew my offer. From such an incident one may realise the difficulty of getting people to see the position. Whilst I admire the enthusiasm of the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) for the Queensland Marketing Act, I think we should, as suggested by "Scrutator," go slow in the matter. There are many different kinds of fruit to be considered. What will suit one kind will not suit another. The Bill might be applied with a fair degree of success to the dried fruits producer, but it is very doubtful whether the measure would prove acceptable to the apple-grower or to growers of other fruits. There seems to be a good deal of uncertainty amongst growers generally as to the measure. They have not made up their minds on it. During the war there was a compulsory wheat pool, but circumstances forced that on us; we could not help ourselves. Not only the farmer, but the man in the street, is beginning to object to so much compulsion. We are told that these compulsory measures are for the general good, and that someone has to suffer. But one can understand the attitude of, say, the Mt. Barker fruitgrower, who grows a fine article, puts it up splendidly, and has got top prices in the London market hitherto. Naturally, he wants to know how he is going to get on under the measure, and what is going to become of the trade he has built up during so many years. His opposition to the Bill is perfectly comprehensible. I believe the measure will be useful to the growers of dried fruits in the Upper Swan district, and to that extent I shall support the Bill. Otherwise, I feel sure that my suggestion of last session was right, and that there should have been a select committee to inquire into all the ramifications of fruit growing. Certain gentlemen on the other side of the House remarked at the time that I was only seeking publicity. My idea was to help the Minister and the industry. Any remarks I make to-night are offered in no cavilling spirit. Something radical will have to be done to place the marketing of fruit on a proper business footing, and to do away with the growing of a mass of stuff which simply has to take its chance on the market. I cannot

support the Bill except with the limitations which I have expressed.

On motion by Hon. W. D. Johnson, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—WATER BOARDS ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from 1st September.

**MR. LATHAM** (York) [9.35]: There is necessity for the establishment of water boards in the country districts. In the past, agreements have been entered into between the Government and the people of districts where water supplies have been established. For the moment I cannot see the necessity for varying those conditions. The Bill provides authority for the Government to establish water supplies by using rock catchments for dams and reticulating the surrounding country from them. I appreciate the necessity for adequate water supplies in the agricultural districts. The difficulty experienced by the farmers in some districts is due to the fact that the land is not suitable for dams because the country is porous and the salt is close to the surface. In some instances the contractors have agreed to put dams down to a depth of nine feet, but have reached salt water at eight feet.

Hon. G. Taylor: Were not trial holes put down?

**MR. LATHAM**: Yes. But it is difficult to say what the soil is like beneath the surface unless a thorough test is made. Usually there is little time for that when the contractor comes along, because he is generally anxious to get on with the job. When the catchments are on reserves held by the Government, they should be used as proposed by the Minister. Reservoirs should be constructed and the water drained off the rocks. There are one or two provisions in the Bill which the Minister should explain more fully. It is provided that there shall be a water rate not exceeding £50 per thousand acres and not exceeding 1s. per acre. There should be some differentiation between the light and the heavy lands. I admit that possibly the forest country could carry a charge of 1s. an acre, but it is impossible to expect people on our light lands to pay such a charge. Provision is made for people  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles away from the pipe line to be

exempt from the payment of a water rate. There may be some difficulty even in good times in collecting water rates from those holding heavy land, but there will be still greater difficulty in collecting from those who are trying to develop the light lands.

The Minister for Lands: If sheep are being run on the property, the water will be very handy.

**MR. LATHAM**: But it is impossible to run sufficient sheep on light land; it is different with heavy land.

The Minister for Lands: It is possible to carry a good number of sheep.

**MR. LATHAM**: I hope the Minister is correct, because then we will have solved the problem of the settlement of our light lands. I showed the Minister some light land recently and I do not think he was very pleased with it. I want to make the position of the Minister for Lands easier, and if the Bill will assist him in settling our light lands, I will extend every assistance in that direction. Is it really necessary to have the statutory authority set out? Could not agreements be made as in the past?

Hon. J. Cunningham: There is no provision in the Water Boards Act or in the Goldfields Water Supply Act for entering into agreements in connection with agricultural water supplies away from the 50-inch main.

**MR. LATHAM**: Perhaps so, but an agreement between the Government and the people concerned must be binding. If that be not so, the Government could bring in legislation.

Hon. J. Cunningham: That is what the Bill is for.

**MR. LATHAM**: The measure merely provides statutory authority for imposing the charges I have referred to. There are only two or three clauses that require attention. Another is that in which the Government seek authority to provide water supplies along the route of the pipe line. That is a very sensible proposal because if everyone drew water from the pipe line at the one time, the man at the end would secure very little. If the landowner himself does not provide tanks, the board can do it and charge the cost to the landowner.

Hon. J. Cunningham: A similar provision appears in the Goldfields Water Supply Act Amendment Act 1911, and it has worked smoothly.

**MR. LATHAM**: It would not be right to do anything that would prevent the Gov-



ernment from going on with the work of providing water supplies. At the same time I trust that the maximum charge provided in the Bill will not be the only charge made. If a water supply costs 6d. an acre, I hope that only 6d. an acre will be charged.

Hon. J. Cunningham: That is dealt with in the Bill.

Mr. LATHAM: But the reference made is to the maximum charge only.

Hon. J. Cunningham: You cannot fix the rate until you know the cost of the extension.

Mr. LATHAM: The Honorary Minister has not said that the rate shall exceed £50 per thousand acres.

Hon. J. Cunningham: It is clear and definite in the Bill that there shall be a maximum of 1s. an acre or £50 per thousand acres.

Mr. LATHAM: So long as the Minister will go on with the scheme for providing water supplies we cannot well oppose it, knowing as we do the necessity for water supplies in the country districts. I hope that when the legislation is passed he will get on with the job and see that water is made available as promptly as possible. The Minister made a good point when he stated that the small number of sheep in the agricultural areas was due to the fact that water supplies were not available. For that reason, if the Government have catchments available in reserves held by them, they can make use of them for reticulating the district and providing the necessary water supplies. I hope that if amendments are considered necessary to the Bill, the Minister will accept them in the spirit in which they are submitted. The representatives of the farming communities should be in the position of knowing best what is required for those districts. I trust the Minister will agree to some scheme whereby the light lands will not have to pay as heavy a charge as the forest country.

Hon. J. Cunningham: There is provision in the Bill to meet that position.

Mr. LATHAM: I take it the Honorary Minister refers to the clause dealing with the unimproved values. I have worked it out on that basis and I do not think it will be cheaper under that system than by means of a direct charge. I hope that the Minister will not impose on the occupiers of light lands such a rate as will result in their throwing up the holdings because of their inability to pay the water rates. The necessity for water

supplies in the country districts is such that we must support the Bill and I hope that once it is passed, the Minister will get on with the job, and provide the water supplies as early as possible.

On motion by Mr. Griffiths, debate adjourned.

## BILL—GOLDFIELDS WATER SUPPLY ACT AMENDMENT.

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from 1st September.

MR. LATHAM (York) [9.58]: Although the Bill is a small one, I oppose the second reading. The object is to increase the water rates from 5d. to 1s.

Hon. J. Cunningham: It does not raise the rates at all.

Mr. LATHAM: The Bill seeks to delete "5d. per acre" and substitute "1s. per acre." Under the agreements entered into with the goldfields people, it was thought that the maximum water rate to be charged would be 5d. The Minister now proposes to increase that to 1s. per acre. Provision could be made in the Bill setting out that for any reticulation after a certain date, the charge should be made according to an agreement entered into between the department and the settlers. Here the Minister proposes to increase the rate without improving the position.

The Minister for Lands: Would you apply the same thing in the metropolitan area?

Mr. LATHAM: Yes, for an augmented service. We have heard sufficient about the metropolitan water supply in recent years to know that we are giving a more efficient service for the additional money spent, and of course, the people should pay for it. But under the Bill something will be taken from those people, because we are tapping the main more frequently.

Hon. J. Cunningham: We are taking nothing at all from them.

Mr. LATHAM: The Minister could have arranged for provision that in respect of any new reticulations after a given date, or reticulations laid under any agreement entered into, the rate should not exceed 1s.; instead of which the Minister is taking power to charge up to 1s. in respect of services already initiated. Of course, he may not do so, but still the power will be there. On those grounds I oppose the second reading.

**MR. LINDSAY** (Toodyay) [10.1]: I may be very dense, but I cannot agree with the member for York. Obviously under the Bill the Minister could increase the rate over the whole of the area at present supplied, but I scarcely think that is his intention. In the newer agricultural areas out towards Bullfinch there are several extensions for which 6d. to 10d. is being paid. If it was the intention of the Minister to raise the rate from 5d. to 1s., why did he not at the same time make the rate in those districts 1s.? I understand that when the water scheme is extended to any new district the cost of the extension is carefully estimated and a rate is struck to cover interest and sinking fund and working expenses. The Bill has been introduced to obviate the difficulty of going around and getting agreements signed by every individual settler. Still, no doubt the Minister will give the House the assurance that it is not intended to raise the rate in those districts already supplied. I support the Bill for more reasons than one. It is necessary that there should be further extensions in newly settled districts, particularly those within reasonable radius of the goldfields water scheme. It is unfortunate that there is not left in the goldfields main sufficient surplus water to supply all the districts requiring it. However, there is a certain surplus, which is being used for further short extensions. Some time ago I made strong efforts to get a fairly large extension for my own district, tapping the goldfields water scheme. I was informed by the engineers that if my district were supplied with the goldfields water it would mean pretty heavy cost, because the water would have to be pumped; while there were newer districts, drier than ours and closer to the main, that could be supplied more cheaply than could we. Therefore, the engineers said, they were not going to give us the water, but were going to give it to those other people. I agreed with the justice of their proposal. The Bill is to overcome difficulties encountered in setting up these water schemes. Although the settlers recently connected agreed to pay 1s. and were pleased to do so, still, on principle, it is not right that a newly settled agricultural district should be asked to pay sinking fund in the early days of its settlement. In a newly settled district where water is badly wanted, where not the whole of the land is cleared, where the paddocks are not

fenced, and where sheep cannot be raised, the settlers cannot make the profits they will earn when the land is fully improved. So, I contend, they should not be charged sinking fund on their water scheme. The settlement of an agricultural district is different from that of a mining or even a timber area, inasmuch as while timber and gold are wasting assets, the value of an agricultural district improves year after year.

The Minister for Lands: The payment of sinking fund on their water scheme would not affect them to any extent.

**Mr. LINDSAY:** The greater the development in an agricultural district, the greater the value of that district, not only to its residents but to the State. It is not fair that in the early stages of development we should charge agricultural pioneers sinking fund on their water supply.

**Hon. J. Cunningham:** No charge is made for sinking fund in respect of water from the 30-inch main.

**Mr. LINDSAY:** No, but there is a charge for extensions from that main. I do not say you should not make the people pay the whole cost of their extensions. What I am asking is that in the early stages of development they should pay only interest and working expenses, leaving the sinking fund to be spread over a longer period of years. It is in the early years of agricultural development that money is valuable and production is low. However, I cannot agree with the member for York. I do not think the Bill was introduced for the purpose of raising the rates in districts already served.

**Mr. Latham:** I did not say it was. I said it could be done.

**Mr. LINDSAY:** Under the Bill it could be done, but I do not think the Minister intends to do it. He introduced the Bill in order to facilitate extensions from the goldfields main to newly settled land, and to that extent he has done right. The people themselves are prepared to pay for the water they get, even if the rating amounts to £50 per thousand acres. Notwithstanding that rating, the value of the land served by the water will increase considerably in the course of a few years, and with further development those people will be more than compensated for what they have to pay in water rates. I will support the second reading.

**MR. BROWN** (Pingelly) [10.10]: To a certain extent I will support the Bill. Settlers along the pipe line ought to consider themselves extremely lucky in being in touch with a permanent water supply. Other districts have to depend entirely on rock catchments, and even then their supplies are seriously affected by the rainfall. A little time ago I visited the dry areas, where at one time we thought it was impossible to grow wheat, but which we have now discovered to be probably the richest of our agricultural land. The objection to the Bill appears to be that the Minister is taking power to charge 1s. per acre or £50 per thousand acres. Under the other water Bill the settlers will have to pay £50 per thousand acres, and even then will have no certainty of an adequate water supply. On the other hand, the people along the pipe line have that guarantee, the only drawback being that it is left to the discretion of the Minister to charge up to 1s. per acre.

**Hon. J. Cunningham**: The cost per acre will be governed by the capital cost of construction.

**Mr. BROWN**: I agree that the Bill is necessary. If 1s. per acre be required to cover the capital cost and the sinking fund, the Minister should have power to impose that rating. The owners will never object to paying 1s. per acre when they reflect that the value of their land is greatly enhanced by the water. I do not say that there will not be strong objections to the other Bill on the score of its financial imposition. However, every acre of land in the district to be served is good, and all that is required is an adequate water supply. Then the settlers, in addition to growing wheat, will be able to grow stock. The residents of those outer districts would be only too pleased to be attached to the goldfields water supply, even if they had to pay a rating of £50 per thousand acres. Moreover, this is going to make for the development of the State.

**Hon. G. Taylor**: Then it is a national question.

**Mr. BROWN**: It is a national question. So long as there is sufficient water in the main, it would be advantageous to connect every farm possible with it. I do not know whether the goldfields at present require so much water as they did in the past, but if they do not the Government should be only too pleased to supply agriculturists who would consider it a blessing to be connected with that wonderful scheme. I shall support

the proposal so long as there is a proviso that the board will not charge more than is absolutely necessary.

**MR. THOMSON** (Katanning) [10.16]: I am surprised that some members should be willing cheerfully to embrace the opportunity to give the Government a chance to increase their charges. I pay a tribute to the sincerity of the Honorary Minister as to his endeavours to do his duty in this respect. Every member has received sympathetic consideration from him. We recognise the difficulties of his position. At the same time if we give the Government the right to charge 1s. per acre, quite a large number of people at present paying 5d. may have to pay the increased rate without receiving any additional advantage. I refer to those people who already are supplied from the scheme. When it is desired to extend the mains from the goldfields scheme the people in a given area enter into an agreement with the Minister to pay a certain amount, say, up to 1s. per acre.

**Hon. J. Cunningham**: In the first place they petition for an extension and a two-thirds majority is necessary. It rests entirely with the people themselves.

**Mr. THOMSON**: That is quite correct. Under the measure, so long as the pipe line is within a given distance of a holding, the farmer will have to pay the rate levied in the district whether he uses the water or not. The people already being supplied have agreed to pay a maximum of 5d. per acre, and the Government, when they entered into an agreement on that basis, were evidently satisfied that 5d. an acre would be a payable proposition.

**Hon. J. Cunningham**: We are not rating up to 5d. per acre in the districts east of Northam and west of Southern Cross.

**Mr. THOMSON**: Nevertheless the people being supplied can be rated up to 5d. per acre. If this Bill be passed, the departmental officials may consider further charges necessary, due to the decline of the goldfields consumption. They may say, "Although we have an agreement to charge you a maximum of 5d. per acre, we regret very much having to increase it, but under this measure we are permitted to levy up to 1s. per acre." Those are the people I wish to safeguard. Those already being supplied and having an agreement to pay a maximum of 5d. per acre are entitled to be protected

If it is desired to serve a given area and the Government find it necessary to charge 1s. per acre, the proposal could be submitted to the people, and if they agreed it would be a voluntary contract between them and the Government.

Hon. J. Cunningham: One district at present is rated up to 1s. per acre. Two-thirds of the people petitioned for the extension and agreed to pay the 1s. per acre.

Mr. THOMSON: Those people have voluntarily undertaken to pay the 1s. per acre. Provision should be made in the Bill that when further extensions are made a water board should be appointed and entrusted with the administration in that particular district. Then, when the stage was reached that interest charges had been met and the capital cost could be reduced, it might be possible to reduce the charge to 8d. or even 6d. per acre. The Water Supply Department pool the whole of their revenue and expenditure, and while one section of the scheme may have paid for itself over and over again, high rates have still to be paid because of the heavy capital expenditure.

Hon. J. Cunningham: The experience is that the department have to go to the rescue of water boards, take over the liabilities and run the affairs where the boards have failed.

Mr. THOMSON: Perhaps so. I hope the Minister will not press for the increased charge. Though it may not be the intention of the Government to increase the rate to 1s., it should not be possible to impose the increase upon people with whom the Government have agreed to a maximum rate of 5d.

Hon. G. Taylor: Under this Bill we would really be sanctioning an increase of 7d. per acre.

Mr. THOMSON: That is so. I hope the Minister will agree to the insertion of a clause to protect the rights of people who already have a water supply.

On motion by Mr. Davy, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 10.27 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Wednesday, 23rd September, 1925*

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

### SELECT COMMITTEE—MAIN ROADS BILL.

*Power to admit Press.*

On motion by Hon. F. E. S. Willmott, ordered: "That the Select Committee on the Main Roads Bill, during the taking of evidence, have power at their discretion to admit representatives of the Press."

### BILL—AUCTIONEERS ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by Hon. J. Nicholson, and read a first time.

### BILL—CITY OF PERTH.

Report of Committee adopted.

### BILL—INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

*Second Reading.*

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.37] in moving the second reading said: I do not intend to speak at any length in introducing this Bill. It is not necessary that I should do so. With the exception of an omission and a few minor additions, the Bill is practically in the same form as it was when submitted last year. It was then discussed almost clause by clause by hon. members, and was recommitted several times for further discussion. I think I shall have done enough if I explain the differences between the former Bill and the one now before the House. When we get into Committee—I am assuming we shall get into