

The CHAIRMAN: I understand there is no reference whatever to hawking in the Bill before the Committee. The mover will understand that every amendment must be in accordance with the subject-matter of the Bill. Anything irrelevant cannot possibly be accepted. I am sorry, but I must rule the amendment out of order.

Mr. DONEY: Very well. I will not move for the insertion of the new clause.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

*House adjourned at 9.34 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Tuesday, 16th September, 1941.*

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

### QUESTION—BETTING FINES.

Hon. W. J. MANN asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Is the Government aware of the wide disparity in fines inflicted by the Fremantle and Perth Police Courts respectively for betting offences? 2, If so, does the Government consider that such a state of affairs should be permitted to continue? 3, What steps does the Government propose to adopt to remedy this obviously apparent unequal administration of the law? 4, When does the Government intend to introduce legislation for the control of starting price betting?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, The Government is aware that much larger fines are imposed in Perth than in Fremantle with respect to betting offences. 2 and 3, Section 211 of the Criminal Code gives a discretion to the court and allows penalties in betting offences ranging from a caution to a fine of £100. Fines imposed vary in accordance with the discretion exercised by each particular court. The Government does not and cannot contemplate any interference with the discretionary administration of the courts. 4, This is a matter for consideration of the Government.

### PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

*Hon. C. F. Baxter and the Inspection of Machinery Act Amendment Bill.*

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [4.35]: I desire, Mr. President, to make a short personal explanation.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member may proceed.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: When moving the second reading of the Inspection of Machinery Act Amendment Bill last week, I unfortunately overlooked, through carelessness, the fact that the third amendment is not in order. As the Bill is worded that provision will be useless. Consequently, I have had placed on the notice paper an amendment that will express my intention. Further than that, on the day following that on which I was aware of the discrepancy, I wrote to the Minister for Mines so that he would not be misled. By telephone, I also informed the Under Secretary for Mines of the mistake. Having read the speech I made, I discovered that I had unfortunately digressed and dealt with electrical winders and motors, which are covered in Section 53 of the Act. What I should have referred to was engine-drivers' certificates. I do not know how I came to use the other words. I certainly did not desire to mislead the House, and in case my speech has been remembered or read in "Hansard," I hasten to correct the error I made. The Mines Regulation Act already contains provisions regarding certificates for winding engine-drivers, but such provisions are not included in the Inspection of Machinery Act, which is the enactment governing such matters. It has always been my practice not to mislead members, and I regret that I should have made the mistakes I did.

## **BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT.**

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

### **BILL—RESERVES (No. 1).**

*Third Reading.*

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [4.40]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

**HON. W. J. MANN** (South-West) [4.41]: When the Chief Secretary moved the second reading of the Bill, I asked if he could tell members the width of Irwin-street. Apparently that information had not been supplied to him at the time. Just before the House met this afternoon, I perused the litho, which had been laid upon the Table of the House, and I found that the present width of Irwin-street at the St. George's-terrace end is 61 feet, and at the Hay-street end 60 ft. 9 in. The proposal is to add 10 ft. to the width of the thoroughfare, which will make it 71 ft. wide at the St. George's-terrace end and 70 ft. 9 in. at the Hay-street end. In view of the fact that Parliament has decided that the new Government offices are to be erected on portion of Government House Domain, heavy traffic will traverse Irwin-street in the future, and there are no other streets that can be availed of for that purpose until we reach Victoria avenue. Before the Bill finally leaves this House I think we should go into this phase a little further. I say at once that I am sorry the R.S.L. is interested in this question because I would rather do anything other than enter into conflict with that body, which is one of the most estimable brought into being as a result of the 1914-18 war. On the other hand, we must safeguard the future and we should, if at all possible, ensure that Irwin-street is made as wide as possible. What would have been said had Forrest Place been made a narrow thoroughfare? As it is, Forrest Place is wide, and worthy of the city. At the present time, Irwin-street does not loom very large as an important street in the city, but one day it may.

**Hon. L. B. Bolton**: It is too narrow now.

**Hon. W. J. MANN**: Yes. One day Irwin-street will come into its own as a thorough-

fare of major importance. In all probability the R.S.L. will build right up to the Irwin-street frontage. Should that be so, we will have a two- or three-storey building constructed right up to the boundary of a very narrow street, which will not be in conformity with what should obtain in a city like Perth. With great reluctance, I suggest to the Chief Secretary that the third reading of the Bill be postponed until we can obtain further information. It is only right that I should point out that a 71 ft. wide street in that position, with the prospect of heavy additional traffic in the course of a few years to come, is hardly in keeping with the requirements of the city, and the position calls for careful consideration.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West—in reply) [4.45]: The stage at which Mr. Mann should have raised this point was when the Bill was being considered in Committee.

**Hon. W. J. Mann**: I did not have the information then, and you could not give it to me.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY**: I informed the hon. member that he could get the information from the plan that had been laid on the Table of the House. This matter has received the serious consideration of Government departments, the Town Planning Commissioner and others interested. While the objective of very wide streets may be most desirable, we know that it is not always possible of accomplishment. With regard to Irwin-street in particular, it would appear that a considerable time will elapse before the necessity arises to cope with the heavy traffic to which Mr. Mann alluded. I see no reason why we should hold up the measure. Irwin-street, with the additional 10ft. will be as wide as most other streets in the city.

**Hon. W. J. Mann**: Nothing like as wide as St. George's-terrace.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY**: The hon. member would not suggest it should be as wide as St. George's-terrace?

**Hon. W. J. Mann**: No, I would not.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY**: I do not see the necessity for increasing the width proposed.

**Hon. W. J. Mann**: Another 10 feet would make a lot of difference.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY**: Mr. Mann is entitled to his opinion, but this question has been considered by all interested in it.

As the proposition has received their approval, I do not see why we should object at this stage.

Hon. A. Thomson: If I may be permitted—

The PRESIDENT: Order! The mover having replied, the debate is closed.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time, and *passed*.

### **BILL—MENTAL TREATMENT (WAR SERVICE PATIENTS).**

Read a third time, and *passed*.

### **BILL—PROFITEERING PREVENTION. ACT AMENDMENT.**

#### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 11th September.

**HON. A. THOMSON** (South-East) [4.48]:

I have carefully scrutinised the remarks of the Minister who moved the second reading of the Bill in another place and also those of the Chief Secretary when he presented the measure in this Chamber. I would have felt much happier regarding the legislation had those Ministers given Parliament more definite information indicating the reason the Government deems it necessary to effect the proposed alterations to the Act. At the outset I want it clearly understood that I am not desirous of shielding profiteers. Under the Commonwealth regulations, much has been accomplished in the prevention of profiteering. It seems to me too much to ask Parliament to agree that the time within which the Price Fixing Commissioner must institute proceedings shall be unlimited. The Act is operative for the period of the war and six months afterwards. I do not know what may arise in the future, but I am aware that the Federal regulations override the powers vested in the State Price Fixing Commissioner. Reference to the Act shows that the Commissioner has extensive powers as regards holding inquiries. He may appoint persons to enter and inspect any place and so forth. Such powers are very wide. Bearing in mind that a man obstructing the Commissioner is liable to a penalty of £200 or imprisonment for six months, we must realise that the Act is drastic. Doubtless every member of the House will cheerfully support stringent proceedings and

heavy penalties against wilful profiteers. I shall support the second reading of the Bill, with a view to submitting an amendment which I have placed on the notice paper. In my opinion the laying of charges should not hang indefinitely over a person accused of profiteering. In making that statement I am not defending profiteers. However, on reviewing the conduct of business operations since the outbreak of the war, we must acknowledge that great credit is reflected on the State Government, and certainly on the Federal Government also, for their policing of the Act.

The statement was made by the Chief Secretary that under the present legislation it is just possible for profiteers to escape. If that is so, I am surprised, since the passing of our Act occurred in 1939, that that weakness was not discovered before. I should be helped towards making a decision if the Chief Secretary would definitely cite cases where it was impossible to prosecute by reason of inquiries having extended beyond the period of six months at present allowed. All we have been told is that, as the Act stands, some profiteer may escape. Let us assume that possibility, as to which nevertheless I have great doubts, no Minister either here or elsewhere having giving any definite reason for the proposed alteration. My amendment allows 12 months instead of six. Surely a period of one year should be ample. When the Chief Secretary closes the debate, I hope that instead of giving us something that may possibly happen, he will adduce the reasons actuating the Government in introducing this measure. Meantime I support the second reading.

**HON. SIR HAL COLEBATCH** (Metropolitan [4.54]: The only objection I have to the Bill is the indefiniteness of the time limit. It is a well-established principle of law that whenever a time limit is set to anything, that limit should be definite, so that everybody may understand exactly what it is. The Bill states—

Provided that . . . proceedings may be commenced at any time within six months after the completion by the Commissioner, his servants or agents of investigations and inquiries into any alleged offence against this Act.

That really means nothing. Nobody can tell when those investigations are completed. On the other hand, I do think that a profiteer in war time must be regarded as an enemy of the State, and that any obstacle

in the way of his detection or successful prosecution should not be allowed to stand. For that reason I shall support the second reading, but I hope that members will then agree to amend the time limit, making it any time during the continuance of the Act. We shall then have something definite. I do not think injustice will result to anyone. The difficulty of prosecuting a long period after the date of the offence is just as great as the difficulty of defending a case a long time afterwards. It is quite certain that in the event of a person being prosecuted for an offence alleged to have been committed a couple of years ago, the court would require that the proof should be absolute before he was convicted. I see no reason for the suggestion that if a man succeeds in covering up profiteering actions for six months or even 12 months, he should not be prosecuted. I trust the time limit will be made definite. In my opinion a time limit during the operation of the Act is all that is required.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West—in reply) [4.57]: I am asked by Mr. Thomson to give reasons for this amending Bill. I was under the impression that I had given reasons when introducing the measure. Really the matter is quite simple. The present position is that under the Act proceedings may be commenced within six months of the commission of the offence. One can quite understand that in some cases a knowledge of the offence, or even suspicions of malpractice may not come to the knowledge of the authorities until at least five months after the commission of the real or alleged offence. In those circumstances there would be only one month for the making of the necessary investigations. If those investigations demand that inquiries be made outside the State, it stands to reason that there will be every possibility of the offender being immune from prosecution simply because of the expiration of the period of six months.

Hon. A. Thomson: Have you had any such cases?

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY**: Yes; we have within recent time had two cases where the Crown Law Department has advised that unfortunately, owing to effluxion of time, it would be futile to take proceedings. There have been hundreds of cases where proceedings have been saved through the persons concerned having made the necessary ad-

justments in accordance with the desires of the Price Fixing Commissioner. Undoubtedly the State Act and the Commonwealth regulations have been administered very competently; but that is no reason why, as pointed out by Sir Hal Colebatch, if persons do succeed in covering up their operations for a period they should be immune from prosecution.

Hon. J. Cornell: Why not adopt the view advocated by Sir Hal?

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY**: So far as I am concerned, and I believe the Government as well, Sir Hal's proposal would be willingly accepted.

Hon. A. Thomson: That is all right.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY**: There is little difference between the proposal in the Bill and Sir Hal's suggested amendment. If there is any logic in the argument submitted by the hon. member, the time limit is so indefinite that it might run on beyond the period for which the Act is in force. There is reasoning behind the suggestion that it is far better to have some definite period than to have a time that might be described as indefinite. Consequently, if in the Committee stage, Sir Hal moves an amendment as indicated, I shall be quite prepared to accept it.

An amendment prepared by Mr. Thomson appears on the notice paper. He desires to fix a definite date. What is the difference between his 12 months and the period of six months appearing in the Act? It may be that some offence will come to light eleven months after it has been committed. If the hon. member had his way, we would still be in the same position as we are today. Another member said there was no need for a State Act dealing with the prevention of profiteering. He expressed the opinion that the Commonwealth regulations were quite sufficient to cover the position. It is admitted that those regulations cover a multitude of commodities, but they do not cover the whole range. From time to time new regulations are issued for the inclusion of additional commodities. Suppose eventually the Commonwealth regulations covered the whole range of commodities that would be covered by the State Act! I submit that would be no reason why we should not amend our Act so that we might deal with those things which are not covered by the Commonwealth regulations. All the circumstances are in

favour of the Act being amended, if not on the lines laid down in the Bill then on the lines suggested by Sir Hal Colebatch.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

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

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 28:

Hon. Sir Hal COLEBATCH: I move an amendment—

That in lines 3 to 5 of the proposed new proviso to Subsection 1, the words "within six months after the completion by the Commissioner, his servants, or agents of investigations and inquiries into any alleged offence against this Act" be struck out and the words "during the continuance of this Act" inserted in lieu.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I take it that the Act will remain in force for six months after the war. Suppose an offence is committed five months after the termination of the war!

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: In that event, new legislation would require to be introduced.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Were that not so, I can see a flaw in the amendment.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am sorry Mr. Nicholson is not with us this afternoon, but I should say that any proceedings that were commenced prior to the period when the Act ceased to operate would be gone on with. If it was not possible to initiate a prosecution within the specified time and the Government thought the matter was a serious one, no doubt the prosecution would be gone on with by other means.

The CHAIRMAN: A wide interpretation can be given to the words "six months after the war." I point out that the 1914-18 war did not cease until 1921. The question is not when hostilities cease but when all the peace terms have been ratified.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The term of the Act could always be extended.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 4, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

**BILL—ABATTOIRS ACT AMENDMENT.**

*In Committee.*

Resumed from the 11th September.

Hon. V. Hamersley in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 6:

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported on this clause, to which Mr. Craig had moved an amendment to strike out proposed new paragraph (c2).

Hon. G. FRASER: I support the clause as it stands. While it seems to me that butchers' shops are likely under this proposal to represent a colour scheme, no doubt it is worth a trial and may be of value to the public. I know that in eating-houses mutton very rapidly becomes lamb; but when lamb becomes mutton I do not know. I am rather worried as to the method by which it is intended to put signs on the carcasses to show what the meat is intended to represent. Perhaps the Minister will explain what the intention is so that people will know when a carcass is cut up whether the inspector has passed it as lamb, hogget, or mutton. Unless something like that is done such an amendment to the Act as is now proposed will be valueless. I should also like to know what kind of paint will be used in describing the class of meat offered for sale. No doubt the Health Department will take that into consideration.

Hon. G. B. Wood: The branding of meat is nothing new.

Hon. G. FRASER: This new scheme will mean the employment of a good deal of colouring matter, and I should like to be assured on the point I have raised.

Hon. J. CORNELL: This is more than an innovation: it is the greatest conundrum I have ever had put before me. I understand that meat embraces all forms of animal flesh other than that of rabbits, etc. What indicates the quality of meat? At the abattoirs the meat is passed by inspectors as being free from disease, but when it comes to a question of quality I defy anyone to determine that point until the meat is being eaten.

Hon. G. B. Wood: In the case of lamb or young mutton you can tell the quality by the teeth.

Hon. J. CORNELL: But the head has gone by the time the meat is cut up for sale!

Hon. G. B. Wood: The age of the sheep is determined by its teeth.

Hon. J. CORNELL: And the quality is determined only when the meat is eaten. An old ewe may be fattened up quickly and the resultant meat may be quite tender. I think that in this legislation we are reaching for the moon, and our time could better be employed in other directions.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I hope this provision will be struck out. The proposal is the most ridiculous of which I have ever heard. It was said that this is in the interests of the producers. It is a boomerang that will hit the producers. I wish to trace the meat from the yards to the shops. A bullock is sold at auction and knocked down to a wholesale butcher who knows his business. It passes into the Government Abattoirs and is slaughtered under supervision. Every carcass is examined and condemned if necessary. This is where the boomerang hits the producer.

Hon. G. Fraser: And the consumer.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The producer. If the carcass is condemned as unfit for human consumption, the value of that carcass is assessed for fertiliser purposes, plus the value of the hide, and the purchaser then has a claim on the producer for the difference. The carcass and hide may be worth £5 and the wholesale purchaser may have paid £15, in which case the producer has to make good the £10 difference. After each carcass is examined, it is sawn down the centre, branded and put into cool storage. For many years frozen beef was faced with the problem of "bone stink." The freezing forced the animal heat into the bone, which created an unbearable stench. That difficulty was solved by a slow process. It was put from the slaughter house into an adjoining room, slightly cooler, and so on until the animal heat was taken out, instead of being forced into the bone. The carcass is then passed by a qualified health inspector. He has the wholesale butcher on the one hand and the retail butcher on the other, and this third party comes in without any qualification. The health officer has to be qualified, but this grading officer may be a person without qualification. The latter fixes, in his opinion, the grade of the beef. To do any good he has to paint the carcass all over. If a carcass were painted green all over and offered to a North of Ireland buyer, she would not care what the

quality was. Coming to the butcher's shop, there is only one way to handle a carcass, and that is to cut it up in the recognised method. This would be all right if consumers could come into the shop and see the quality colour on the carcass and say, "I will have a bit off that." The carcasses, particularly in the summer time, have to be cut up, and the pieces of meat are spread all over the shop. I have known members of the Jewish community go to a saleyard, have a bullock killed under their own supervision and then branded on the quarter; the kosher butcher goes to the shop and sees that the meat is cut off. They prefer the forequarter where the possibility of disease is less. If that is to be introduced into retail butchery, what will the price of meat be? The position for the producer is bad enough now at Midland Junction or Robb's Jetty. The market is so limited that 50 bullocks or 500 sheep will knock the price down below anything like its value, because we are such a handful of people. In the metropolitan area there are about 200,000 people to be provided for.

Hon. G. B. Wood: How much difference per head do you think 500 sheep would make in the market?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: It has happened in Sydney, where there are at least three times as many people as here. There they have a very equitable arrangement. The Sydney Meat Company studies the market and when it sees cattle and sheep being sacrificed buys the extras up at proper market rates. The producers pay the Sydney Meat Company so much per cent. for studying the market. There is no such system here to protect the grower. He is at a disadvantage all along the line. The market can easily be flooded and the grower placed at the mercy of the buyers. If the control of the quality of meat is to be taken out of the hands of the producer, the wholesale butcher or the retail butcher, who know their jobs, and put in the hands of someone else who possesses no qualifications at all, that means another cost to be met. It is ridiculous to put a clause such as this in the Bill.

Hon. G. Fraser: It would give the consumers what they were paying for. They are not getting it now.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: How are the people to tell? Are the bullocks to be painted—

Hon. G. W. Miles: From stem to stern.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES:—from head to tail? Is the carcase of one quality to be painted one colour and a carcase of another quality some other colour?

Hon. J. Cornell: You would want all the colours of the rainbow.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: What would happen when the marks disappeared in the cutting-up process? We would be as we were. If I could see any good resulting from this, I would support it wholeheartedly because I do not like to see a Bill like this being approved. It brands us as not being capable of legislating in matters of this description. I oppose the clause.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: I rise to make a statement as well as to support the Bill as it stands. Last week I was entirely in support of the amendment, but during the intervening time I have made inquiries from one or two butchers, and this quality grading is approved by many good butchers, and the difficulty is not so great as it appears to be.

Hon. J. Cornell: You are right off. You go along and buy a bullock.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: The difficulty so far as the abattoirs are concerned is not so great regarding the branding, but it did seem to me foolish when applied to the shops. The Bill has not been framed without the authorities ascertaining whether it is practicable. Animals have been cut up in shops in order to see whether it was feasible. One or two people on whom I place great reliance say that meat had been cut up in their shops and sold under those conditions. It is not discoloured all over to give it the appearance of a rainbow, but has distinct markings, which are not very conspicuous; nor will it affect the quality of the meat. The person who wishes to buy high quality meat and pay the price demanded should be allowed to do so. It is contended that the producer will not lose by grading, but there are wholesale and retail people who are not in the habit of paying the highest prices. Under this proposal, meat which has been passed as quite healthy by the inspector but is not of that high quality required by the public, would not be so branded. The provision is worth a trial.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I oppose the amendment. There is no reason why the department should not be given an opportunity to do something that will be highly desirable not only from the point of view of the pro-

ducers but also that of the consumers. Some butchers ring in inferior mutton as lamb, and genuine lamb suffers in consequence. It is only right that the consumer should know the quality of the meat he is buying. Lamb is usually sold by the quarter, and the marking would still be visible. The producers have long desired such a system of grading.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I support the provision in the Bill. This is a move in the right direction and any difficulties that occurred could be overcome. A point that was greatly emphasised last session when meat was the subject of discussion was that there was no protection for the consumers—that butchers were buying second-grade meat and charging top prices for it. A provision of this sort should be a corrective. No difficulty is experienced in branding or grading meat for export, and I fail to see why a plea of difficulty should be urged against the proposal to apply similar conditions to meat for local consumption. The consumer will be protected and the producer may secure a price in conformity with the quality of the meat.

Hon. Sir Hal COLEBATCH: I support the amendment. I should be very sorry to support any provision for the appointment of additional inspectors, thereby increasing the cost between the producer and the consumer and imposing additional burdens on the taxpayers, unless I was satisfied that some good would result. We are told that carcasses are inspected and branded for export. Of course they are, but what analogy is there between that and the branding of a carcass that goes into a butcher's shop and is cut into 500 pieces? Does Mr. Fraser believe that every lamb chop would be branded?

Hon. G. Fraser: Yes.

Hon. Sir Hal COLEBATCH: Then I would not give much for the meat. A good many of these proposals have two objects in view—one to create jobs for additional inspectors and the other to squeeze out the small man by increasing costs against him and thus ensure the survival of the fittest. The branding of eggs has that effect; all the purchaser knows is that when the egg was branded it was all right. Much the same thing applies to meat. We shall have the extra expense of inspection and the carcass will be branded somewhere, but it is problematical whether purchasers will get a part that is branded. We are told that similar

legislation has been passed in Queensland. The people of Queensland have long been deprived of the privilege of a House of Review to check the imposition of addition burdens on taxpayers, with the result that taxation there causes great embarrassment not only to the people of that State but also to the Commonwealth Government. Members should note the extraordinary wording of the proviso, which contemplates conflict between the Minister for Health and the Minister administering the Abattoirs Act. We are told that where any regulation made under the Health Act is inconsistent with any regulation made under this Act, the former shall prevail. That in itself is sufficient to condemn the proposal. It indicates that there will be two sets of inspectors. I cannot support any proposal to increase the number of inspectors unless I am convinced that the additional ones will be of some benefit to the producer or the consumer, and I am not in the first stage of being so convinced.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Not long ago country members were up in arms against certain regulations relating to carcasses of sheep sent from outside the metropolitan area for sale in the metropolitan markets. They contended that the regulations would destroy the business of growers located at some distance from the city who wanted to kill a few sheep and send them to the Perth market. Yet they are prepared to support this proposal. Surely it is incongruous to support an amendment of the law which will be entirely incapable of application! It would be better to find some way of improving the present antiquated method of meat distribution by wholesalers in the metropolitan area. Members must have seen the meat dumped on the floor of a lorry and covered with a tarpaulin. If legislation were brought down to ensure distribution under more hygienic conditions, the meat would probably be of better quality when it reached consumers.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: But for the exaggerated statements of Sir Hal Colebatch, I would not have spoken again. He objects to the proposal on the ground that it would increase the cost between the producer and the consumer. Practically no cost would be involved. I would not mind branding lambs at 2d. per head, although I do not think it would cost that much.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Who said that only lamb would be branded?

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Well, lamb or any other carcase meat. I have seen meat being branded at the markets, and I do not think that any charge was made for the branding.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I support the amendment. I cannot understand the attitude of some members of the Country Party, particularly Mr. Wood. He has today given notice of a question about the cost of handling lambs at Robb's Jetty being 11d. per head more than in other States.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: That has nothing to do with this proposal.

Hon. G. W. MILES: The hon. member said the branding and grading would not cost anything. It would cost something, and somebody would have to pay for it. More inspectors would be required. Who would pay for them? As Mr. Holmes pointed out, if a carcase is condemned, the grower has to foot the bill, and members will find that the grower will have to foot the cost of this grading. Time after time I have had to do my best to protect the Country Party from some of its own members. I am doing so again today.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: To hear the differing views of members on this point has been most interesting. I was particularly struck by Mr. Holmes's remarks, coming as they do from a man who has been associated with the meat industry for a lifetime. Nevertheless, I incline to the opinion that he is out of date; he is living too much in the past and has no regard for the future in this particular matter.

Hon. J. Cornell: In other words, he is becoming academic.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There is nothing academic about this subject, although there might be about the discussion that has taken place on it. One might imagine that the grading of meat is something new.

Hon. A. Thomson: It is being done every day.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: As a matter of fact, we are in that respect behind the times, as we have been for many years. Sir Hal Colebatch suggested that because grading of meat is carried out in Queensland we ought to do it here, but he did not altogether agree with that argument because in Queensland there is only one Chamber. I cannot see any connection between those two

matters. It is a fact that grading of both local and export meat is being carried out in Queensland. Furthermore, it is being done there in the way that is provided for in this Bill. Queensland, however, is not the only place where this grading is done. It is also carried out in the United States and Canada. I am surprised that Mr. Holmes apparently does not know how this grading is done. It is done with a brand, a very neat instrument easily manipulated.

Hon. W. J. Mann: You are dealing now with marking, not with grading.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I have here one or two illustrations which clearly indicate what is intended. Members will note the words "First Grade." This brand can be put on the carcase of an animal from stem to stern, as one hon. member suggested, in less than half a second, just by means of a roller stamp run down the carcase, which will not be in any way disfigured. Members may inspect the illustrations if they so desire. I have also an official production issued by the Department of Agriculture of the Dominion of Canada, which contains some letterpress associated with the illustrations. This also may be inspected by members. The provision was not brought forward without its having been first submitted to the business people most intimately concerned. It was submitted to the various sections of the Primary Producers' Association, who from time to time during past years have made representations for the introduction of legislation of this kind.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Quite right.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Almost invariably when these matters have been discussed here, this Chamber has turned them down. The Master Butchers' Association agrees that the Bill is desirable and so does the Price Fixing Commissioner. The representatives of the consumers agree that it is not only desirable but essential in their interests. On the question of expense, the branding and grading will be done by the abattoirs inspectors and it must be done immediately after the animal is slaughtered or before the head is taken from the carcase. Even if there were some logical objection—

Hon. A. Thomson: Which we have not had yet.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No. Is it not time we said to ourselves that this is

worth trying in the interests of the producer?

Hon. J. Cornell: The Minister has not yet told us when and how the average consumer will benefit by this legislation.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am informed that the producer will reap a benefit.

Hon. J. Cornell: I am referring to the people who will eat the meat.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member knows that serious complaints have been made about the subterfuges practised by unscrupulous traders. The Bill will apply only to stock at Government abattoirs; it will not apply to places such as Agnew, where there are no Government abattoirs. It will give an opportunity to the producer to obtain a higher price for the better class of carcasses that he sends to the abattoirs.

Hon. L. Craig: The producer will not get it. He sells the animal on the hoof.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No doubt Mr. Craig will agree, once the system is put into operation and has proved successful, that it will be of benefit to the growers producing the better class of meat. I cannot understand the spirited opposition of some members to the provision.

Hon. G. Fraser: The ridicule!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. I could understand those members unconnected with the meat industry being somewhat at sea on the matter. I hope this State will fall into line with other countries with respect to this legislation.

Hon. L. CRAIG: The Minister has told us a pretty story, but I still remain unconvinced.

Hon. A. Thomson: It is a true one.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Perhaps so. I have come this afternoon from a meeting of the Finance Committee of the Royal Agricultural Society. I submitted the Bill to many members at that meeting. They were practical farmers and big landowners; not one approved of the measure. The Minister produced evidence showing that in Canada and the United States the stamping of carcasses is almost universal, but he did not say anything about the system of purchasing in those countries. We are all aware that the meat trade of America is controlled entirely by meat trusts, the Armour and Swift companies. There it is necessary to grade meat because literally thousands of retail butchers buy meat in the carcase from

the trust. I have been through the works and have seen thousands of carcasses graded. A retail butcher comes in with a hand cart and has a free choice. He selects the carcass he requires and takes it to the only door out of which he can pass with his cart. At that door are scales and a man sitting by them. In this State the conditions are totally dissimilar. Numerous butchers buy meat on the hoof.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Not so many.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I did not say "many." I said "numerous," and I do not think the hon. member will dispute that. What do we find? There are buyers of different qualities of meat, qualities that they themselves determine. Butchers go to the abattoirs and put their own stamps on carcasses which they consider to be first-class. Then there are butchers who have a different class of trade, who want to buy inferior beef, and do.

Hon. G. Fraser: But charge top prices for it!

Hon. L. CRAIG: Surely the hon. member would not pay top prices for inferior meat and then go back to the same shop! Good trade is built up by competition, by supplying good quality commodities.

Hon. G. Fraser: You have to remember that the suburban householder has no choice.

Hon. L. CRAIG: That is not so. No buyer—housewife or anybody else—continues to pay top prices for inferior articles. People who did that would be stupid.

Hon. A. Thomson: Then there are many stupid people!

Hon. L. CRAIG: We cannot protect people against themselves. Quality is a hard thing to determine. Shakespeare has said the quality of mercy is not strained. One might add that the quality of meat is not strained; it depends on the pasture. If this Bill referred specifically to lamb I would be willing to give it a trial; there are at least seven or eight grades of lamb alone. But the Bill refers to all meat. The Minister says that it is not proposed at the beginning to mark certain meat. That is what he hopes. He cannot say that such will be the position. If one kind of meat only is referred to, let the Bill say so. I have questioned the head of the stock department of one firm and he said he could see no good in the Bill. This practice does not obtain in any other State except Queensland where it is applied to beef. There is a big export

trade in beef from Queensland and that is the main reason for meat being branded.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: The Minister said that the master butchers wanted this.

Hon. L. CRAIG: And the Price Fixing Commissioner wants it too. It would ease his position. He would be able to ask, "How many blue lambs were bought last month and what was charged?"

Hon. G. B. Wood: Is not that a good thing?

Hon. L. CRAIG: Not necessarily. It may be a very bad thing. One inspector could not do this work. No fewer than 10,000 lambs go through Midland Junction in one day in a peak period, in addition to sheep. From now until the end of November there are likely to be no fewer than 7,000 lambs in the market on Wednesdays. In addition there will be from 4,000 to 5,000 grown sheep. The inspector will be required to determine the quality of each carcass before its head is off and to run a roller up and down it. I do not think it is possible for him to do that efficiently.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Without extra cost.

Hon. L. CRAIG: All costs eventually go back to the producer.

Hon. G. B. Wood: How much would it cost per lamb?

Hon. L. CRAIG: The hon. member said he would not mind if it cost him 2d.

Hon. G. B. Wood: I did not say that.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I suggest it would cost not more than a halfpenny.

Hon. G. B. Wood: At how much a pound would that work out?

Hon. L. CRAIG: Multiply that by 350,000 lambs and see what it comes to. I hope the Committee will not consider that Western Australia can be compared with Chicago or Queensland. This is just an imposition. It will cost money and I can see no benefit accruing to anyone concerned. It will be most difficult to sell second-grade lambs. The difference between a prime lamb and one not prime is a matter of 2s., 3s., or 4s. If there is a danger of lamb being marked with a red streak showing that it is not first class, the discrepancy will be doubled or trebled because people will not feel inclined to buy meat that is detrimentally marked.

Hon. G. B. Wood: You would sell it under false pretences?

Hon. L. CRAIG: It is a matter of the psychological effect on the buyer. If meat is branded as being not first-class, people

immediately say, "I do not want second-grade meat," although as a matter of fact the difference is very small. People will want to buy blue-streaked meat and not yellow-streaked meat.

Hon. G. B. Wood: They will buy yellow-streaked meat if they can get it cheaper.

Hon. L. CRAIG: No.

Hon. G. Fraser: It all depends on the type of boarding-house one runs!

Hon. L. CRAIG: I would like to ask the hon. member what he would say if he were staying at a high-class hotel and received meat with a yellow streak on it. He would say, "I have come to a first-class place and I expect to have blue-streaked meat." I hope the amendment will be passed.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I thought I knew something about the meat business but after having listened to the Chief Secretary I have come to the conclusion I have been living in a fool's paradise. I have no axe to grind except in the cause of sanity. For that reason I oppose the provision. To brand meat for export is good, but any man with commonsense must know that it is not possible to brand meat when it is cut up into pieces. What are we going to gain from this? The producer will have to pay for another inspection. The wholesale butcher will be unable to use his own judgment but will have to leave it to some other person—competent or incompetent—to decide whether a carcass is first, second or third quality. There are all sorts of complications. The branding of a big bullock—I am referring now to the application of this measure to beef—may be all right when it is meant for a man running a restaurant or an hotel business. But how is the matter to be followed up? All the grader—who has no qualification as far as this Bill is concerned—has to do is to decide upon the quality of the beef. The wholesaler and retailer know the value of the commodity to each of them and fix a price accordingly. Of what use is the inspector? This will merely provide a job for somebody at the expense of the grower.

The Chief Secretary: What about the consumer? Is he not entitled to know he is getting what he pays for?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: How are we going to protect the consumer? I have already explained that when a carcass is taken into a shop it is cut up into separate joints. How are the consumer's interests to be safeguarded unless the inspector stands by and

marks every pound of steak and every mutton chop as it is cut off the carcass? The whole thing is farcical, and Parliament will be held up to ridicule. If I could see any benefit to be derived from the measure, I would accept it with both hands.

Hon. A. Thomson: Let us give it a trial!

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: And make ourselves look ridiculous! If the Committee wants to make itself appear ridiculous I will pass the Bill as it stands: if it desire to claim it is still sane, it will agree to the amendment.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	10
Noes	..	..	..	12
				—
Majority against				2
				—

#### AYES.

Hon. L. B. Bolton	Hon. J. J. Holmes
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. W. J. Maun

(Teller.

#### NOES.

Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. H. V. Plesse
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. W. H. Kitson	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane	Hon. C. F. Baxter

(Teller.

Amendment thus negatived.

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

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

*Death of Hon. J. Nicholson.*

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [7.31]: It is with deep regret that I have to announce that I have received advice of the passing of our colleague, the Hon. J. Nicholson. I feel sure that in the circumstances the House will agree with my desire to postpone any further discussion of parliamentary business to night. I move—

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

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 7.33 p.m.*