

have given to closer settlement ideas and we call that opening up the country.

History proves that the experiments have been confined to that kind entirely, and no attempt has been made to determine whether larger estates are producing the requirements of the State or carrying all the people possible. I think it would be unwise for the Government to consider any further inroads being made into our rapidly diminishing forest areas. Until the Government has made a thorough investigation into the whole of our alienated lands to determine whether they are being used in a manner conducive to carrying the largest possible population and producing the greatest amount that can be produced, it will not have done its full duty, because these matters are of vital importance to any further land settlement of this State. The fact that all wealth comes from the land imposes, in my opinion, a special obligation and trust on those who direct the development of our land resources. Any Government failing to acknowledge the need for amendment of the Closer Settlement Act, to provide further settlement in some of our already settled areas, and the better utilisation of our land resources is failing in the trust reposed in it.

I shall look with a great deal of interest to any contribution this Government may care to make in this direction, as it is a matter of great importance to the State. We do not want a Government which leads the people up the garden path for any particular advantage it may gain, but one with a fair amount of courage to do what it thinks should be done, and not emulate the great contortionist who sat on a high fence with both ears to the ground. We want people who are prepared to make decisions and put up with the consequences when they next face the electors. I am satisfied that in the eight months this Government has been in office it has not done very much worth while. In the matter of land settlement, it has only followed in the footsteps of its predecessor, and has offered nothing new.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.53 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 25th November, 1947.

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

QUESTION.

SERVICEMEN'S LAND SETTLEMENT.

As to Ben Ord Estate Contracts.

Hon. A. L. LOTON (on notice) asked the Honorary Minister :

(1) What contracts have been let by the War Service Land Settlement Board for clearing on the Ben Ord estate?

(2) What was the contract price per acre for—

(a) knocking down,

(b) burning up,

(c) combined price for (a) and (b)?

(3) What was the percentage payment agreed on or paid for knocking down in question (2) (c)?

(4) Was any penalty clause for non-completion of contracts inserted in the above contracts? If so, what are the conditions of the penalty clause?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied:

(1) Clearing contract for approximately 4,000 acres, subject to measurement, has been let to Bulldozers Pty. Ltd., A.N.A. House, Perth.

(2) Contract price was £2 5s. per acre for the completed job.

(3) Contract provides for progress payments not exceeding 60 per cent. of the value of any clearing effected.

(4) Contract provides that, in the event of the contractor failing to complete all clearing required by him on or prior to the specified completion date, the Minister may, in his discretion, cause such clearing to be completed by a third party at the expense of the contractor.

RAILWAY OMNIBUSES, PURCHASE AND DELIVERY SELECT COMMITTEE.

Extension of Time.

HON. H. L. ROCHE: I move—

That the time for bringing up the report of the Select Committee inquiring into the "Landliner" and "Cheetah" omnibuses, be extended until Tuesday, the 2nd December.

I move the motion because a report, together with certain information that the Committee desired from Victoria, has only just come to hand, and the Committee is not yet in a position to submit its report.

Question put and passed.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Milk Act Amendment (No. 2).

Introduced by the Honorary Minister.

2, Judicial Proceedings (Regulation of Reports).

Introduced by Hon. E. M. Heenan.

BILLS (4)—THIRD READING.

1, Royal Style and Titles.

2, Fisheries Act Amendment.

3, University of Western Australia Act Amendment.

4, Factories and Shops Act Amendment (No. 1).

Passed.

BILL—DRIED FRUITS.

As to Amending Committee's Report.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I move—

That the Bill be recommitted to enable the Chairman of Committees to amend the report made on Wednesday, the 19th November.

Question put and passed.

In Committee.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: When this Bill was before the Committee on Tuesday last, we dealt with Clauses 1, 2 and 3. Clauses 1 and 2 were agreed to as printed, and Clause 3 was amended by the insertion of the word "daily". Progress was reported and leave asked to sit the next day. On that day, we considered Clauses 4 to 38, which were agreed to as printed. When I reported the Bill to the House on the second day, I stated that the Bill had been agreed to without amendment. That report was incorrect because Clause 3 had been amended by the insertion of the word "daily." I now ask leave of the Committee to amend my report to read—

That the Committee has agreed to the Bill with an amendment.

Leave granted.

Bill reported with an amendment.

BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had disagreed to the amendment made by the Council.

BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had disagreed to the amendment made by the Council.

BILL—STREET PHOTOGRAPHERS.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to amendments Nos. 1 and 2 made by the Council and had disagreed to amendment No. 3.

BILL—LICENSING (PROVISIONAL CERTIFICATE).

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—CHILD WELFARE.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to amendment No. 1 made by the Council and had disagreed to Nos. 2 and 3.

BILL—WHEAT MARKETING.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 19th November.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East) [4.51]: I support the Bill and congratulate the Government on submitting it to Parliament. The Royal Commission appointed by the former Premier (Hon. F. J. S. Wise) has, in my opinion, produced an excellent report, one which, on careful perusal, will be found valuable to the wheat industry. We know that the voluntary pool brought into existence by the co-operative movement in Western Australia was a great financial success and that the bulk handling scheme financed by Western Australian Farmers was very profitable to farmers of this State, despite the considerable opposition to the inauguration of the scheme that was experienced.

There was a good deal of opposition from Labour long before the plan received approval and before bulk handling became a real activity in this State, following the evidence gained by the appointment of a Select Committee under the chairmanship of the late Mr. Angwin or "Billy" Angwin as we all affectionately called him. The scheme has been of great value, not only to Western Australia, but to the whole of the producers in the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth was only too pleased to have the services of Mr. Thomson as general manager of the pool and of the bulk handling scheme here, which was regarded as a purely temporary one.

Ministers, backed up by Dr. Sutton and the Agricultural Department, felt that we should have nothing but cement silos. Those were built at a very much reduced cost and have proved very satisfactory and of in-

estimable value to Australia, particularly during the war that has just concluded, because folk in the East had practically no experience of the handling of wheat. I would prefer Western Australia to work entirely on its stability and finance with regard to the marketing of its wheat. While the Australian scheme has proved of value to the farmers, the action of the Commonwealth Government has not been satisfactory to the producers of Western Australia. I would like to give one or two reasons for the dissatisfaction of farmers. We find that the Commonwealth Government, or the Minister in charge, disposed of wheat to New Zealand at a price much less than one-third of the amount for which it could be sold today. The amazing thing is, so I am informed on creditable authority, that by virtue of New Zealand being able to purchase our wheat at 5s. 5d. a bushel—

Hon. G. W. Miles: It is 5s. 9d. a bushel.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Thank you! They have, as a result, been able to eliminate the sale of flour gristed in Australia for export. Owing to the cheap price at which New Zealand flourmillers have been securing their wheat, they have been able to put the Australian flourmillers out of the market in the islands. One can hardly say that that was a just price. I would like to refer to one or two items that appear in the report of the Royal Commission. It states in one portion—

It should be a basic principle of the pool that the board of trustees should act on strictly commercial lines freed from political influences. In other words, the pool should at all times act as a sales department for the wheat industry.

If the pool had been acting in the interests of the farmers and on a strictly commercial basis, we can hardly imagine that a contract which was entered into for the sale of Australian wheat to New Zealand at such a low price would ever have been considered. Further on, at page 9 of its report, the Commission makes this very pregnant remark—

If the pooling system of marketing wheat is to operate successfully and with reasonable chance of permanence, the most positive steps must be taken to prevent the crop being used by any Government as a pawn in the business of internal or external politics.

Here is an amazing thing which occurred. We know there was a drought in the East-

ern States and that thousands of bushels of wheat produced in Western Australia were sent there, particularly to New South Wales, at a price very much below the market price. It cannot be claimed that the Commonwealth Government in regard to that transaction saw that there was what might be termed decent reciprocity between the people of New South Wales and Western Australia. New South Wales received the wheat. The pool, as a whole, had to bear its share of the cost of rail-age, handling and freight to New South Wales, and the consumers in that State paid the same price that was being paid by the consumers in Western Australia. I contend that was not a fair deal to our farmers here. While the pool bore all that expense, it meant a direct loss on every bushel of wheat that was grown in this State. This sort of thing seems to be rather the rule than the exception so far as Western Australia is concerned. I had the honour of being a member of another place in 1915. In that year I asked a question of the then Premier, Hon. J. Scaddan. In 1914-15 we had a drought and suffered the unfortunate experience of having to import maize and wheat for the feeding of our stock. On page 1911 of the 1914-15 copy of "Hansard" it will be seen that I asked the following question of the Premier:—

(1) What amount was paid for Customs duty on the shipment of maize recently imported by the Government?

(2) Is it the intention of the Government to ask the Commonwealth Government for a refund of this amount so that the farmers of this State may be supplied with this maize at the cheapest rate?

(3) Is it a fact that this shipment was held up by the Customs for the payment of a very small amount?

The Premier replied as follows:—

(1) The duty on the maize amounts to £10,031 18s. 6d.

(2) It is the intention of the Government to continue their efforts to secure a remission of the duty on the maize.

(3) No. The Customs authorities have assisted the Industries Assistance Board in every possible way.

The Commonwealth Government in 1915 was adamant in its attitude towards Western Australia, which was compelled to import maize and wheat from, I think, the Argentine. Since the inception of Federation we find that the Federal authorities have

given very little consideration to Western Australia. Hundreds of thousands of tons of material which is sadly needed for the building of homes for our people and thousands of tons of food requirements that we also require have been held up on the wharves of New South Wales. We hear a great deal about being good Australians, but that seems to apply only to the people of this State. We have always had to put up with what we are given. What I have quoted is a typical example of the consideration we have received from Canberra. To be fair, I point out that it was not a Labour Government that was in power in 1915, but it seems that all Governments in the Federal sphere are anything but helpful towards this State.

The Financial Agreement was entered into in 1918. The Commonwealth Treasurer had the audacity to desire to stop the per capita grant in the case of every man who had volunteered for war service. I point out that a greater percentage of men in this State volunteered for service than was the case in any other State of the Commonwealth. It was only through the fight put up by the late James Gardiner, the Treasurer in this State, that the Commonwealth Government agreed to continue to pay that to which we were justly entitled. I note that in the handling of wheat one of the problems of the coming year is the unfortunate position of our railway service. The Wheat Commission proposed that there should be short haulages wherever possible by road to such places as Northam and generally not more than 100 miles in extent.

I had hoped that some scheme could be evolved so that all wheat produced on the lower Great Southern could be exported through Albany. By a system of express wheat trains to that port it should be possible, as we do not want our wheat to lie in the bins owing to lack of transport, to use the port of Albany. With some of my colleagues we waited upon Mr. Braine, who is managing the bulk-handling system. After close examination of the position Mr. Braine regretted that it was unfortunately too late to make any provision for bulk handling at Albany. We therefore had the spectacle of wheat grown in the district within 80 or 100 miles of Albany being diverted either to Bunbury or sent to Fremantle for export. We were told that it was not prac-

ticable to use Albany owing to lack of bins there.

Transport is essential. It is very important that Western Australia should have its wheat put on the world markets at the quickest possible date. I am afraid that owing to the unfortunate position of our railways we will have in our district full bins of wheat that should be going oversea to feed the starving people of Europe. At all cost we must avoid unnecessary delays in the transit of wheat to the various ports. I have no desire to rob any particular port, but I feel that the lower Great Southern offers possibilities of quick transport to Albany. We have three flour mills in the district—at Katanning, Wagin and Narrogin. They are working three shifts a day and providing flour for the starving people of Europe. Thousands of tons of flour have already been railed to Fremantle that should have passed through Albany.

If Albany were used in connection with the export of wheat and flour, that would greatly assist the already overloaded railway system and tend to expedite the export of our products to the world markets. Last August I asked that plans of the Albany harbour be laid upon the Table of the House. I trust there will be no more delay in preparing a scheme which would enable the Bulk-handling Committee to provide for the export of bulkwheat from Albany next year. Unless some definite forward step is taken we will find we shall be in the same position next year as we are in now. Because of the high price of bags, Albany has been looked upon as one of the ports that might continue to handle wheat in bags, seeing that a certain amount of bagged-wheat is required for the stabilisation of ships' cargo. I point out that every bag of flour produced for export in the Great Southern could more economically be shipped away from Albany. That would assist the railways because there would be a shorter haulage to the seaboard. I am sure that thousands of miles of unnecessary haulage on the railways could be saved by this means, and the system would also enable our products to reach the world markets with the least possible delay. I congratulate the Wise Government on appointing the Commission which did such a good job. We were fortunate in having a man like Mr. J. H. Teasdale who, without

exception, seems to have a greater knowledge of the handling of wheat than any other person in Australia.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [5.14]: I support the second reading of the Bill although I would prefer to see our wheat handled by a Commonwealth pool. As one who has some knowledge of farming, I feel that our producers would derive more advantage from a Commonwealth pool than they would from State pools operating against each other. I have been disappointed that no speaker in either House has made any reference to the question of improving the quality of wheat that is to be exported, and the plans for bringing that about. It is very necessary that that question should be brought up on every possible occasion. Some little while ago we had a visit from the most prominent man dealing with the quality of wheat and flour known to the British Empire. I refer to that eminent chemist, Dr. Kent-Jones. He was brought over to New South Wales by the master bakers of that State to report on the quality of flour to be produced. He came with an absolutely open mind and made a very exhaustive report, and one of the opinions he expressed was that the farmer was losing money under the present system of marketing wheat on the f.n.q. standard, and it would pay the farmer to classify or grade wheat for sale abroad.

Hon. A. Thomson: You have got a job to convince them of that, unfortunately.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: There has been no attempt as far as I can see to refute that statement. We cannot afford to ignore the opinion of such an eminent authority. At present it does not matter so very much because the world is starving, and there is a record wheat harvest to be exported. According to statistics, the Old Country takes about 50 per cent. of our export wheat and the remainder goes to other countries. Unless some improvement is made in our system of grading, other countries will refuse to take our wheat in future because they realise that they are entitled to the most modern methods of milling.

The Honorary Minister: Do you think they will pay more for it?

Hon. C. G. Latham: They would pay less for some.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Yes. Unless we can produce an article that will compare favourably with that available from other countries, such as America, we will not be able to sell our wheat or flour. I would like the Minister to deny my statement when I say that the decent farmer, who is anxious to serve his country and grow the best quality wheat, is being penalised under the present system. The opinions of Dr. Kent-Jones are supported by our own authority, Dr. Sutton, who at one time recommended the f.a.q. standard but has now abandoned it and agrees that an improvement should be effected. He, too, says that we should grade our wheat.

The Honorary Minister: He took a long time to change his mind.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I am not dealing with bread but with wheat marketing. We are heading for disaster unless the farmers and the authorities concerned take steps to examine the position. To the credit of the New South Wales Government, the Minister for Agriculture, Mr. Graham, recognises the position. They have a record crop in that State and they intend to try out a pilot plant this year as an experiment. Three weeks ago the Minister for Agriculture there promised a conference at Wagga, which was attended by master bakers, local authorities, farmers and Government representatives, to examine the proposal, make a trial with the pilot plant, and see how it would work out. We cannot afford to ignore expert authorities on this question. We know, and millers will back me up in the assertion, that farmers in this State who grow good wheat receive the same return for it as the other farmers who prefer to fill their bags with any product they like to grow. There are some varieties that return heavy crops.

The Agricultural Department, however, must be credited with the work done in trying over the years to breed a wheat that will combine the glutinous quality together with prolific production. Some success in that direction has been achieved, but unfortunately there is a percentage of farmers who, justly arguing that they have had a hard time, say, "We are not concerned with the quality of our produce and we want the highest price we can get from the product that will give us the

best return." That is a short-sighted policy which will eventually prove disastrous to growers in this State.

Hon. A. Thomson: That can apply to normal farming everywhere.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: That applies in New South Wales, which is a large producing State, where a big proportion of the wheat grown is the variety known as Bencubbin, which was produced here, but is absolutely useless for flour for breadmaking purposes.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I think you are badly informed.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: But Bencubbin wheat is grown in New South Wales.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You are not referring to Gallipoli wheat, are you?

Hon. A. L. Loton: The Bencubbin type came from the West.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It was first produced in Western Australia.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: It has been proved entirely unsuitable there. The point is that the department, the Westralian Farmers Ltd. and local farmers generally should view this question seriously, and the Minister and the Honorary Minister should discuss it with their departmental officials. The evidence is overwhelmingly in favour of such a course. It is true that we can get a high price for our wheat at present, but we cannot hope to maintain that. We cannot afford to supply importing countries with the standard we exported formerly. This is the only country in the world that markets f.a.q. quality wheat, and other countries have found that they cannot afford to do that. We should most certainly examine the position as quickly as possible with a view to saving the farmers from themselves. I defy anyone to produce any evidence to confute the opinion of Dr. Kent-Jones whose strongly expressed recommendations cannot be ignored. With regard to the Agricultural Department, I think it was a disaster when Dr. Samuels was promoted and transferred to the Mines Department. We lost a wonderful man from the departmental work in relation to wheat research. Unfortunately his investigations have not been continued, because I understand his position has not been filled yet.

The Honorary Minister: Why did you not do something about it when your Government was in power?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: All these things have happened since the previous Government left office. I think Dr. Kent-Jones came to Australia long after the Labour Government was thrown out. I think he arrived in April of this year.

The Honorary Minister: No, he arrived before April.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I am being enticed off the track!

Hon. A. Thomson: Are you blaming the present Government?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I am blaming nobody. I can understand the viewpoint of the farmers but they have got to be told the truth that they are standing in their own light. While he was in New South Wales, Dr. Kent-Jones tried to interest farmers in the matter. One of the growers won a prize at the Sydney Show for some excellent wheat but it was of a type that was absolutely useless for breadmaking purposes. Dr. Kent-Jones interviewed the farmer and found him to be a very practical man who was quickly put on the right track. He is now just as keen as are others to see the altered system introduced. Members can appreciate how the misapprehension arises in the minds of farmers. It is a very serious question.

The bread problem is a different matter altogether. If we improve the quality of wheat for bread manufacturing purposes, it will have a big effect on the world market. It will help to build up a better market with Britain and other countries, with flour for breadmaking purposes and we will have the softer wheats which are ideal for biscuit manufacturing. Gluten wheat is no good for making bread, consequently millers have to buy doubtful f.a.q. quality grain. Wheat comprises good and bad hard grain and good and bad soft grain. Consequently, under the f.a.q. system these types are all mixed together. I am satisfied that the Government should follow the example set by the New South Wales Government and that something should be done to induce the farmers generally to grow better class wheat. It may be that only three grades are wanted. It would be in the best interests of the farmers if every assistance

were given them and they were taught what to do.

When the world famine is overcome and the marketing of wheat is again on a normal basis, we will not be able to afford to continue, in the way we have been doing. Furthermore, our interests will best be served if we see to it that rubbish is not exported as in the past. Countries within a few miles of us, such as Java and the islands to the north, who used to take any rubbish we sent to them, will now take only proper quality flour, and if they cannot get it from us they will procure it from the United States of America or Argentina. Therefore, we must do everything possible to protect the farmer in his own interests, for the State is capable of producing the best wheat in the Commonwealth.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (East) [5.27]: I regret that this Bill was not on the statute book three years ago. Had it been, the wheat farmer would be much better off than he is today.

Hon. A. L. Loton: And the State would be better off in consequence.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Not only would the wheat farmer's position be improved but it would have meant last year the circulation of about £3,000,000 which would have been paid to the farmers and through them would have reached the rest of the community.

The Honorary Minister: It will mean more like £4,000,000 this year.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am hopeful that the Commonwealth Government will continue its operations and that if that should be so, Western Australia should reap some benefit from the Federal operations. New South Wales and Victoria in particular will export a large quantity of wheat at the increased prices, and the farmers of this State will also benefit. As a matter of fact, I understand the present fixed price is 17s. 6d. a bushel for sales effected with both England and India. In the past our concern has been whether the necessary shipping would be available to move the wheat. I understand from the latest Press reports that there is every possibility of shipping being forthcoming and that there is a vessel in Sydney today that is prepared to load wheat for the Old Country. We ought to

be able to get our wheat away—if we can get the crop to the market.

This legislation does not deal with that phase but with the handling and selling of wheat, and it will not become operative unless and until the Commonwealth ceases acquiring wheat under Section 51 of the Constitution Act. If I understand the Minister aright, the Government's intention is that this measure shall be placed on the statute-book and availed of only if the Commonwealth ceases to function in the field of wheat acquisition. The real trouble facing us is to get the wheat from the farms to the ports. New South Wales has an unheard-of quantity of wheat and has difficulty not only in harvesting it but also in storing it. In some cases, efforts have been made to build up mounds of earth, stack the wheat and cover it with tarpaulins, if these are available. If the record crop is anything like the reports we have heard, it will be a total impossibility to secure sufficient tarpaulins to cover the wheat. New South Wales, unlike Western Australia, usually has very heavy thunderstorms in the summer months, and these are likely to add to that State's difficulties in keeping its wheat dry, clean and wholesome.

I wish to say a few words in reply to Mr. Gray, who has blinded the House with science. He spoke of the recent visit to Australia of Dr. Kent-Jones. I had the privilege of meeting Dr. Kent-Jones some years ago and spending a day with him in his laboratory at Dover. I have heard some doleful tales about the quality of our wheat, but that was not the way Dr. Kent-Jones spoke during the day I spent with him. He told me that for some years Western Australian wheat contained a considerably greater quantity of moisture than in other years. That is easily explained. If we have a wet season, or a reasonably good season, the crops are much heavier in the eastern districts, which are dry, than they are in the more western districts. In consequence, we get a drier and harder wheat. On the other hand, if the season is dry, we get less wheat from the outside areas and heavier yields in the other portion of the State, and consequently we get more moisture in the wheat produced there.

I spoke to Dr. Kent-Jones about Glueclub wheat, which at the time was being bitterly

condemned by the then Director of Agriculture of this State. My desire was to ascertain from him whether he found any disadvantages in that wheat. He replied that he did not know exactly what I was referring to, but that there was no disadvantage in Western Australian wheat compared with Victorian wheat. He mentioned that Victoria exported a wheat known as Gallipoli wheat, which was not giving the same out-turn in bread as the Western Australian wheat was providing. Mr. Gray said that Bencubbin wheat is regarded in New South Wales as being of poor quality. I remind Mr. Gray that 37 per cent. of the wheat produced in Australia is Bencubbin wheat. Certainly, it was bred here on the experimental station at Merredin. That wheat today is a good bread-producing wheat.

There are better varieties but, after all, one has to consider the returns which the farmers get. In the past, when prices of wheat and of other farm products were not high, farmers grew for bulk, provided they could get a fair average quality production. I cannot see any advantage to be derived by adopting the Canadian system. There the wheats are graded hard, first, second, third, fourth and fifth. All of Canada's wheat is tested in a laboratory. It is tested for moisture, gluten content and practically everything else. The testing, of course, is followed down to the by-products. In Western Australia we have produced a good, fair average quality wheat which, if used by competent bakers, will produce excellent bread. I say that advisedly, so that Mr. Gray may hear me, because he has continually fought the battle of the bakers in this Chamber.

Some of the bread produced in Western Australia is of very poor quality. True, we get some very good bread, but there are bakers who produce a very bad quality bread. But do not blame the wheat simply because some bakers do not know their job. I could produce some bread to Mr. Gray, who is an expert baker, and ask him whether he considered it to be of good class—bread made from the excellent wheat we produce in this State. Certain varieties of hard wheat, such as Comeback and others, are very poor yielders. Their yield is only half that of wheat we term fair average milling quality wheat. Farmers cannot be

blamed for not growing a poor yielding wheat. As a matter of fact, No. 1 hard Manitoba wheat is an extremely small producer. The other grades are certainly better, until the No. 5 grade is reached. That, I believe, is the bulk of the output of some of the Canadian provinces.

For the life of me, I cannot see why we should change our system. It would be well if we could produce the same quantity per acre of first-class wheat about which Mr. Gray speaks, but it cannot be done. Dr. Kent-Jones advised me to tell the farmers of Western Australia to continue producing white wheats, as England was getting enough red wheats from Canada. The white wheats of Australia produced good flour and were beneficial in blending with Canadian wheat. Besides spending a day with Dr. Kent-Jones, on his advice I visited some mills on the Thames River. Some of those mills produced flour only for biscuit-making. The wheat was carefully analysed and carefully handled.

I heard Mr. Gray mention that Australia was the only country that sold a fair average quality wheat. I might agree with him there; but in Great Britain itself any variety of wheat was sold. There was no first, second, third or average quality. Anything that could be got hold of was sold. I was informed by the scientists in charge of the laboratory that up to 14 per cent. of moisture was contained in English wheats, which had to be washed and artificially dried before milling. The scientists pointed out that not only was a reasonably higher price paid for that wheat over and above that for imported wheat from Australia, but it proved costly because of the handling involved. Australia produces an average quality of wheat better than any wheat produced elsewhere in the world. I do not say that better wheats are not produced elsewhere, but on the average our quality, which is known as fair average quality, is very high. I do not think it would pay any farmer under present conditions to grow other than this quality wheat, because otherwise it would be necessary to revert to the bag system in order to ensure that we could find storage for each of the qualities of wheat.

The Honorary Minister: We would want four different kinds of bins at each siding.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Once that system was adopted, it would also be necessary to employ an expert to determine the various qualities of wheat. In some years if the season were wet or late and if the wheat were stripped early, it might contain a great deal more moisture than it would contain if it were stripped at Christmas time. We are fortunate in this State, because we have a dry summer for harvesting and the wheat ripens fairly hard. If fault be found with Bencubbin wheat in New South Wales, that must be due to the fact that the wheat is grown in what we might term a high moisture atmosphere.

All wheats will absorb moisture. As a matter of fact, the older members of this Chamber know that in the days when wheat was exported in bags there was always an increase in weight at the out-turn at the other end; and in consequence it was said that it produced a considerable profit for the exporter. Bulk-handling does not work out in the same way, because wheat can be packed tighter in bulk. As members are aware, bags cannot be packed so tightly as to prevent air from getting between them. Therefore, we do not get the same results from wheat in bulk as we would from bagged wheat.

Western Australia, I am pleased to say, is in a fortunate position. We have built up a bulk-handling system which has cost neither the farmer nor the Government one penny. All that it did cost the Government of the day was a little expense in trying to prove that it was unwise to install bulk-handling facilities. The Government failed dismally, as did the Commonwealth Government when it tried to condemn our bulk-handling facilities. It is the cheapest method of handling wheat in the world. I say that advisedly. No other country can transport its wheat from the farm to the ship's hold cheaper than we can. As I say, the system did not cost the State one penny, because the cost was met from the savings effected through not having to purchase sacks from India and by reducing handling charges.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: We are fortunate to have bulk-handling this year.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: We have always been fortunate in that respect. I cannot understand why the Government even today makes a surcharge of 9d. per ton for

transporting wheat in bulk. Originally, the Midland Railway Co. made a surcharge of 1s. 6d. per ton, but the company found the freight so profitable that it decided to discontinue it. So the farmer who is in the happy position of being able to have his wheat transported over the Midland line gets it carted cheaper than if it had to go over the Government railways. The bulk-handling company from time to time has even provided trucks, yet the Government continues to exploit that company in every way it possibly can. I am hoping that when the reconstruction of our railways is completed, at least some recognition will be given to Westralian Farmers Ltd. and those associated with it, for providing the bulk-handling facilities, which not only benefit the farmer but also the railways. The system has been responsible for circulating more money in this State than would have been possible if we still had the bag system.

Hon. G. Bennetts: A wise move by the Labour Party.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Even the water-side workers complained and a Royal Commission was appointed to try to prove that this was a failure and a costly scheme. Mr. Angwin was chairman of it. They protested too much. They were fearful it would reduce employment at the Fremantle wharves. As a matter of fact, trade will bring trade, so that if wheat can be exported cheaply it brings other trade in return. In the long run there is no loss to any port because of the use of up-to-date methods. The only thing I find when I go to Fremantle is that there seem to be so many ships arriving that they cannot be handled expeditiously. I am glad this Bill will be placed on the statute-book. It will not be used this harvest because the Commonwealth Government has entered into contracts to sell the wheat, which will be acquired, as in the past, under Section 51 of the Constitution.

I hope the Commonwealth Government will pay a reasonable price for the wheat. If it gives us the Australian price for flour, plus the export value, we will be all right and should be well off, except for the increased taxation. I am anxious to give the farmer an opportunity to clear his indebtedness. I regret to say there are still

a number of farmers carrying substantial indebtedness. If they could clear their debts and build up reserves to replace their worn-out machinery and equipment, the agricultural industry of this State would be on a good wicket. When depression periods come—and they will come—they would then be able to go along to the financial institutions and ask for relief.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: To the Commonwealth Bank.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I hope there will be other banks than the Commonwealth Bank, but that is in the lap of the gods and for decision by the High Court. I hope we shall not be deprived of the use of the facilities that have been available to us in the past. If the farmer can be given a sufficient amount to enable him to clear his farm of debt, he will be very happy. This State has developed its agriculture rather slowly because the land is not quite as productive, in the early stages, as is that of the Eastern States. But it does improve as the years go by. The trouble is that we have tried to hasten too much and people have spent money on their farms only to find, at harvest time, that the price has been low or the season bad. If we can put our industry on a good footing now, the farmers of this State will be far better off than those in any other part of Australia. I hope this legislation will enable them to market their wheat as cheaply as possible and ensure their getting the full returns to which they are entitled.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. G. B. Wood—East—in reply) [5.50]: I am naturally pleased at the reception accorded the Bill, and because so many members have spoken to it. Collectively, we have gained a lot of information from the remarks that have been made. The Bill is far more important than might be thought. As Mr. Latham said, it will not be required for the coming harvest because, in view of what Mr. Pollard has said—although I am not altogether sure that he said he would reintroduce the National Security Regulations—he will still carry on with wheat marketing. I believe that our wheat will be acquired by the Commonwealth Government.

Hon. C. G. Latham: He has sold it.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I am not sure how much he has sold, but the point is important. It is not so dangerous if only this year's wheat is sold, but if Mr. Pollard makes a long-term contract, for five years, with England or any other country, we will get into a very dangerous position. The Commonwealth Government will say, "We have made these contracts and we shall acquire your wheat for the next five years." I discussed this matter with the representative of the British Ministry of Food, Mr. Hewitt, when he was here, and he said, "We want your wheat for five years." I said "What are you going to pay for it?" He said, "We will pay 10s. or 11s. a bushel." I said, "What do you base that on?" He said, "On the basis of what England is paying Canada." I said, "Will you pay that for the next five years?" He said, "Certainly not. If wheat went down, England would not pay that." That shows the danger of the Commonwealth Government making long-term contracts with other countries. It can say it has a hold on our wheat, and we have to accept what price it likes to offer.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: It has no hold unless it grows the wheat.

The HONORARY MINISTER: There is something in that, too. I have no desire to see England paying the full price of wheat, if the Commonwealth Government likes to stand the racket. But I have every objection to the wheatgrowers subsidising any other country, whether it be England, India or New Zealand, with cheap wheat. We ought to fight that to our utmost. If Mr. Pollard wants to make a good fellow of himself with New Zealand by making wheat available to that country at 5s. 9d. a bushel, then the taxpayer generally should have to pay the difference, and not the wheatgrower. It is desirable that this Bill be on the statute-book for the next harvest. It has taken a long while to get through both Houses. No-one knows what will happen with the harvest following the present one. Members have congratulated the Government on bringing down this measure. Of course, it was introduced following the report of a Royal Commission.

It should be particularly pleasing to members to know that the suggestion for a Royal Commission, or some other inquiry into the set-up of the wheat industry, first came from this Chamber. During the closing hours

of last session we moved to introduce legislation to provide that nothing should be done until a full report was made as to the desirability, or feasibility, of a State board. I agree with both Mr. Thomson and Mr. Latham that it would be in the interests of Western Australia to have a State board. I would be quite prepared to take a chance on the tremendous advantages which would accrue during the next few years under a State board. I think they would far outweigh the disadvantages of the Commonwealth scheme. I think Mr. Logan said the farmers wanted a Commonwealth scheme. They do, but they do not want just any sort of scheme.

Hon. C. G. Latham: They want it, provided there is grower-control.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes. I do not think the growers understand the implications of the Commonwealth scheme. There should be grower-control so that the farmers would have the prerogative of selling their wheat to the best advantage, and not under political control. I believe that with a State board and a State stabilisation scheme, we would save from £3,000,000 to £5,000,000 per annum. Last year it worked out at about £3,000,000, and I think, with the present position of wheat, that we would save about £4,000,000 or £5,000,000, which would be to the benefit of the farmer. Mr. Latham raised the question of using this money for a stabilisation scheme.

It is a crying shame we are missing this opportunity in Western Australia—not only in regard to wheat but other commodities too—with the result that the farmers are unable to use this money for the liquidation of their debts. Instead of the money being put into a pool to be used later by someone else—perhaps not the people now producing the wheat—it would do far more good if it were given to the present farmers for the liquidation of their debts. However, that appears to be a matter not within our province. It is regrettable just the same. I want to reply briefly to Mr. Gray. He has rather put me on the spot as to what we are going to do. There are two sides to the question he raised, and since he brought the matter up during his speech on the Address-in-reply, I have gone to considerable trouble to investigate the matter of the grading of wheat.

I find that Dr. Kent-Jones is playing an almost lone hand. He has very few followers. I know that Dr. Sutton is one of them today, after his long advocacy of 35 or 40 years of the f.a.q. standard. I even raised the matter at the Agricultural Council in Canberra. There was very little support for the movement. Mr. Gray has not told us how the scheme could be introduced in a country like Western Australia where there is practically only bulk-handling. There would be all sorts of complications. The wheat could not be sent to Perth to be graded; it would have to be done at the farm or the siding. I believe that the disadvantages would outweigh the advantages of the scheme he suggests. However, I can assure him that I will make further investigations to see what is being done in New South Wales and to find out if it is worth while going into the scheme.

A challenge to this Government to be the leader in this matter in Australia was thrown out by Mr. Gray. Well, I am not keen on leading us into something that is not desirable. Mention has been made of bulk-handling at Albany. I assure Mr. Thomson that the Government has in mind the matter of establishing bulk-handling facilities at that port, but the subject is entirely wrapped up with the harbour scheme. It is of no use erecting bulk-handling facilities at the deep water jetty so that wheat has to be carried by a conveyor for two or three hundred yards, when, later, a wharf may be built and facilities, such as those at Geraldton, made available, with the result that ships could come right alongside the storage bin at the wharf. The matter has not been lost sight of, and I think that before very long some announcement will be made in connection with bulk-handling facilities at that port.

The question of handling the wheat from the siding to the port is causing anxiety at present. The scheme put forward by the Railway Department makes provision for all the wheat to be at the ports by October or November, and it is desirable that the wheat should be brought down from the sidings to the ports by the end of June, in view of the position in England. It is problematical whether the railways can do it, even if a considerable quantity of wheat is moved by road transport. It is a source

of worry to those concerned with getting the wheat to the ports. There is also the problem of carrying superphosphate back to country areas, and the wheat bag position presents another difficulty. Mr. Gray eulogised what has been done in New South Wales, but in my opinion that State has let Australia down in the matter of handling wheat. No State in the Commonwealth has had greater opportunity than New South Wales to install sufficient bulk handling facilities to deal with any crop that might be produced.

Hon. C. G. Latham: They started long before Western Australia did.

The HONORARY MINISTER: In Sydney in 1921 I saw bulk-handling facilities being installed, but now in New South Wales, they are putting 25,000,000 bushels of wheat out on the ground, and are taking our bags to help them through. That has been the subject of considerable discussion between Mr. Pollard and myself, and I am not happy about the present position. Had New South Wales followed what we have done in the matter of bulk-handling facilities, the present position would never have arisen. I wish to mention those people who, in Western Australia, have guided the destinies of the wheat industry. We have been fortunate in having men like the late Mr. Monger, Mr. Thomson, Mr. Teasdale, Mr. Braine and others. They have done a wonderful job for this State.

Today our bulk handling facilities are paid for and are most efficient. It seems hard that Western Australia, having done such a great job in this respect, should be penalised through our wheat bags being taken over by New South Wales. I do not know whether the position will right itself in the next month, but at present it is causing grave concern. At my office at the Department of Agriculture, I have a great deal of information about the carriage of wheat and superphosphate, and what is being done all the time, as well as information about the wheat bag position. That information and any other relating to the wheat industry is available to members at my office.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Construction:

The HONORARY MINISTER: I move an amendment—

That a new paragraph be added as follows; “(c) wheat which the board refuses to accept on the grounds of inferior quality.”

This amendment is necessary to overcome the position under Clause 22, where a grower would be unable to dispose of any wheat of inferior quality. If the amendment is agreed to, it will be possible for the board to organise an unofficial pool for this wheat, and arrange for its sale direct to a produce merchant or allow the grower to dispose of it as stock feed.

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

Clauses 4 and 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Interpretation:

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of the definition of “public notice” the word “daily” be inserted before the word “newspaper.”

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

Clauses 7 to 12—agreed to.

Clause 13—Appointment of deputies:

The HONORARY MINISTER: I move an amendment—

That Subclause (5) be struck out.

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

Clauses 14 to 18—agreed to.

The HONORARY MINISTER: A sub-heading was omitted when the Bill was drafted. I move an amendment—

That following Clause 18 the words “Division 2—General Powers of Board” be inserted.

Amendment put and passed.

Clauses 19 and 20—agreed to.

Clause 21—Licensed receivers of board:

The HONORARY MINISTER: I move an amendment—

That at the end of Subparagraph (ii) of the proviso the words “but this proviso shall be

read subject to the provisions of paragraph (a) of Subsection (2) of Section forty-one hereof” be added.

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

Clause 22—agreed to.

Clause 23—Effect of delivery of wheat to board:

The HONORARY MINISTER: I move an amendment—

That in line 5 of Subclause (3) the words “trusts, contracts” be struck out.

This amendment is necessary because only the trustee and not the beneficiaries claiming under the trust instrument should be entitled to participate in the distribution of the net proceeds. All contracts relating to the wheat will be nullified by Clause 32, and therefore no person claiming under a contract should be entitled to participate in the distribution.

Amendment put and passed.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I move an amendment—

That in line 13 of Subclause (3) the word “from” where it secondly appears be struck out and the word “at” inserted in lieu.

This relates to what a grower is entitled to after allowing for certain deductions and rail freight. The wheat might be kept at the siding. Under the clause, however, it would have to be railed before the grower would be entitled to the proceeds, less the rail freight.

Amendment put and passed.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I move an amendment—

That in line 14 of Subclause (3) the word “railed” be struck out and the word “received” inserted in lieu.

The amendment will cover all wheat and not merely the wheat that is railed.

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

Clauses 24 and 25—agreed to.

Clause 26—Issue of certificates:

The HONORARY MINISTER: I move an amendment—

That the following proviso be added to Subclause (1):—“Provided that the board may at

its discretion issue more than one certificate to the same grower where his deliveries are spread."

A grower might spread his deliveries over two or three months and, without the amendment, he would have to wait until all his wheat had been delivered before he could get a certificate. Under the amendment, he will be able to get a certificate for a proportion of his wheat.

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

Clauses 27 to 29—agreed to.

Clause 30—Sale of wheat by board:

The HONORARY MINISTER: I move an amendment—

That the proviso be added to the end of paragraph (e).

A proviso is included at the end of the clause, but it relates to paragraph (e) only and not to the whole of the clause.

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

Clauses 31 and 32—agreed to.

Clause 33—Power to enter and search:

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I protest against the granting of some of the powers proposed under the clause. Any member of the police force authorised by the board may at any time enter and search any place where any wheat acquired by the board is suspected to be. The board may also authorise any person to enter any premises where wheat may be and inspect stocks, accounts, books and documents relating to any wheat. The Honorary Minister should inform us why such powers have been included.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Why should this power be given to the police? A search warrant can always be obtained on the signature of a J.P. The wheat would have been put on the premises by servants of the board.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The wheat in question would have been acquired by the board and, for the time being, would be the property of the board.

Hon. A. L. Loton: The clause refers to any wheat.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Wheat might have been withheld from the board, and surely it should be empowered to call in the police if the circumstances were sus-

picious. This is merely a safeguard to prevent improper practices.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Minister's reply is not satisfactory. I cannot understand the object of the provision because it relates to wheat owned by the board. The ordinary process of law would be available to the board at any time necessary to exercise it. Apparently the draftsman had an idea that some criminal might deal with the wheat, perhaps poison it.

The Honorary Minister: What is the objection?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The provision is an unusual one.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I am not satisfied with the explanation. The reference in the clause would include any wheat on the property.

The Honorary Minister: No, it would relate only to wheat acquired by the board.

Hon. A. L. LOTON: Why should the board have authority to order the police to make an inspection?

The Honorary Minister: Why not, if it is wheat acquired by the board and not delivered?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: There is nothing extraordinary about the clause. A similar provision was included in the legislation dealing with wheat during the 1914-18 war and proved very useful. While the board was getting a search warrant, the wheat might disappear. As one interested in wheat, I congratulate the Government on having included this provision.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The clause definitely relates to wheat acquired by the board and not delivered. Suppose a thousand bushels had not been delivered and the farmer had hidden it and the board was suspicious. It would call in the police to have a look without any search warrant. It is a safeguard for all the growers' wheat and is to counteract the action of unscrupulous farmers who will not deliver their wheat.

Hon. G. FRASER: If the Honorary Minister reads the clause he will find that the point raised by Mr. Loton is correct. Subclause (1) refers to wheat acquired by the board but Subclause (2) refers to documents relating to any wheat.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 34 to 41—agreed to.

Clause 42—Ballot as to continuance, discontinuance or modification:

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: I have no intention of moving an amendment, but I would ask the Minister whether he is satisfied that the method of voting provided is the best that could be arranged. I think it is a mistake to depart from the ordinary principles of voting, which are that a man says yes or no. In this case, if he wants to say yes, he can make either one of two marks on the ballot paper; if he wants to say no, apparently he does nothing. It would be much better and more in accordance with the ordinary methods of voting if Subclause (7) provided that the elector should say yes or no to each of the questions.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I think that the framers of the Bill thought out the simplest way of voting knowing the experience of farmers in other ballots. If a voter is in favour he puts a "1" or an "x" in the square.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: And what does he do if he is against it?

The HONORARY MINISTER: He does nothing. It is only an affirmative vote.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: What is the objection to saying yes or no?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I have not a great objection. It is just another method, that is all. I think it is a matter of opinion which is the right way.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I agree with Sir Hal that there is nothing simpler than inserting either the word "yes" or the word "no." There can be no possible shadow of doubt then as to the voter's intention. A man might have palsy or his hand might shake when he was endeavouring to put down a "1" and it might be construed as a cross.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The point is that there are two marketing proposals on which to vote and there would be no object in inserting the word "no." The voter is asked to give an opinion as to which he thinks is the better of two schemes.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4, Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—GAS UNDERTAKINGS.

Received from the Assembly and, on motion by Hon. G. Fraser, read a first time.

BILL—INDUSTRY (ADVANCES).

Second Reading.

Order of the Day read for the resumption from the 19th November of the debate on the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—NATIVE ADMINISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban) [7.55] in moving the second reading said: This is a short Bill, which proposes to give the Governor the power to revoke or vary proclamations made in regard to prohibited areas—that is, areas which natives may not enter without a permit if they are not in lawful employment. Section 42, which it is proposed to alter, reads—

The Governor may by proclamation whenever in the interests of the natives he thinks fit, declare any municipal district or town or any other place to be an area in which it shall be unlawful for natives not in lawful employment to be or remain, and every such native who after warning enters or is found within such area without the permission in writing of the protector or police officer shall be guilty of an offence under this Act.

The City of Perth has been proclaimed a prohibited area, but within a certain portion of that area natives congregate and attend the dance hall which is used for the uplifting of the natives. However, it is a prohibited area and the Governor having made the proclamation, it stands for all time under the present measure. The Bill, however, will give power to the Governor to revoke a proclamation. It will also enable him to declare any place a prohibited area, the amendment proposed being the deletion from the section of the words "municipal district or town or any other place" and substituting the words "place or area specified or defined in the proclamation." In the future, the Governor may revoke or vary any proclamation or declare any portion of a city, municipal district, or townsite a prohibited area. The purport

of the Bill is the welfare of the natives, the intention being to keep them out of towns and undesirable places. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

**BILL—COMPANIES ACT
AMENDMENT (No. 2).**

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 19th November.

HON. J. A. DIMMITT (Metropolitan-Suburban) [7.58]: I have no desire to speak at any length on this Bill. I think it has much to recommend it, in that it seeks to delete Subsection (5) of Section 147. I think that the history of the introduction of this subsection is well known to members. It was introduced actually to avoid repetition of a plan for evading taxation that was indulged in by a member of a company some years ago. It was done without any regard to the effect that it would have on a co-operative company or some of the smaller companies of which the directors are only small shareholders. I think the elimination of this provision will have a desirable effect and enable directors to trade with their own companies as they should be allowed to. I am hoping that the Minister will not proceed with his proposed amendment.

The Minister for Mines: I do not intend doing so.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: I am glad to hear that. I support the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

House adjourned at 8.3 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 25th November, 1947.

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

QUESTIONS.

LAND SETTLEMENT.

As to Esperance District.

Hon. E. NULSEN (on notice) asked the Minister for Lands:

What action toward the extension of land settlement in the Esperance District is in train?

The MINISTER replied:

The Director of Land Settlement has had prepared a plan for the establishment of a demonstration farm on the plains north of Esperance, and this matter is at present under consideration. Soil surveys will be carried out in conjunction with Commonwealth Scientific Industrial Research officers, and the extension of land settlement in the district will depend on the result of these investigations.