

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 5th November, 1941.

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

ELECTORAL—SWEARING-IN OF MEMBER.

The PRESIDENT: I have received the return of a writ for the vacancy in the Metropolitan Province caused by the death of the Hon. J. Nicholson, showing that James Gordon Hislop has been duly elected. I am prepared to swear-in the hon. member.

Hon. J. G. Hislop took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1. Lotteries (Control) Act Amendment.
Introduced by the Chief Secretary.
2. Administration Act Amendment.
Introduced by Hon. H. V. Piesse.

BILL—PUBLIC TRUSTEE.

Third Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [4.40]: I move—
That the Bill be now read a third time.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East) [4.41]: Before the Bill is read a third time, there is a point I would like the Chief Secretary to clear up. I was under the impression that the appointment of a public trustee would meet the difficulty that now exists whereby people in the country are unable to get wills dealt with at the Supreme Court in the same way as people in the metropolitan area can get them dealt with. I am given to understand that there is considerable doubt as to whether the Bill will facilitate country people similarly.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Will not the Bill to amend the Administration Act, of which Mr. Piesse has given notice, cover that point?

Hon. H. SEDDON: This is a Bill to appoint a public trustee, and I understood that, amongst other things, it did make provision to meet the difficulty I have mentioned. It appears to me that this would come more within the scope of this measure than of an amendment to the Administration Act, but I would like the Chief Secretary to deal with this aspect of the appointment of a public trustee.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West—in reply) [4.42]: I am afraid that offhand I shall not be able to answer the hon. member very fully. The Bill does provide that clerks of courts and other persons may be appointed as agents for the public trustee, and in that way they would be a very great advantage to people in the country, but I do not know of anything in the Bill which would permit of some of the proceedings that now have to be dealt with at the Supreme Court being delegated to those particular persons with authority to act.

Hon. G. Fraser: They could receive the applications.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Seddon has not given details of the particular matters he has in mind.

Hon. H. Seddon: In the metropolitan area people can go to the Probate Office and get matters dealt with by officials of the Supreme Court.

Hon. G. Fraser: Yes, personal application.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am afraid that, in many cases, it will still be necessary for application to be made in Perth regardless of whether a public trustee is appointed or not. Those cases would be of such importance that it would not be possible to delegate the authority to a clerk of courts or other person. I am sorry the hon. member did not raise the question earlier.

Hon. H. Seddon: I was under the impression that it was dealt with in the Bill.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is dealt with to the extent I have stated. We have made provision whereby the clerk of courts may, in certain cases, act as agent for the public trustee.

Hon. A. Thomson: I think I raised the same question.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I regret that I cannot offer a better explanation, but the House will recognise that the question raised by Mr. Seddon is much more important than the mere appointment of a clerk of courts as agent for the public trustee in certain cases.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Mr. President—

The PRESIDENT: Order! The reply of the Chief Secretary closes the debate.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

BILL—PUBLIC SERVICE APPEAL BOARD ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [4.46] in moving the second reading said: Before proceeding to explain this small Bill, may I take the opportunity of extending congratulations to the Hon. Dr. Hislop on his success in the recent by-election. The hon. member is taking the place of one who for many years played a very prominent part in the activities of the Legislative Council, and who, with his professional knowledge, was frequently found to be of very great assistance to members in the course of their deliberations. I feel sure that the new member will prove a worthy successor and I take this opportunity of extending my congratulations to him.

This Bill may be termed a war-time expedient, its purpose being to enable the employment of temporary officers in the Public Service for a longer period than five years without a break in service, and at the same time protect the rights of those permanent employees who have enlisted in any of the various arms of the fighting services. As the Act stands at present, any person employed in the service as a temporary officer, who completes five years' continuous service under certain conditions, obtains the right to permanent employment. Owing to the large number of enlistments by permanent employees it has been found necessary, in order to carry on the administration of the various departments of the Public Service to seek the assistance of outside personnel in a temporary capacity and to rely

to a greater extent on the services of temporary employees who have been employed for a number of years even prior to the outbreak of hostilities.

It is considered desirable that these employees shall continue as temporary officers to be employed at least for the duration of the war, without dismissing them before they have completed a period of five years' continuous service, but at the same time not to give them any legal rights to permanency because they have exceeded the five-year period, because, to do so would probably create problems and difficulties on the return of enlisted officers during and after the war. Thus, the rights of permanent employees who have enlisted will be protected.

Any officer of the Public Service who enlists for active service is assured that his position or an equivalent position will be available to him on his return to the State. Consequently, if it be found necessary to employ a large number of temporary employees whose services might extend beyond a period of five years, after which they would have a legal right to permanent appointment, it can well be understood that the Public Service will, to an extent, be inflated when hostilities end. The proposal in the Bill has the support of the Civil Service Association, the Public Service Commissioner and the temporary employees, and it is submitted to Parliament for the necessary approval to overcome what could develop into a difficult situation for everyone concerned when enlistees from the service return to their civil occupations. 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—METROPOLITAN MARKET ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [4.54] in moving the second reading said: The purpose of the Bill is to

amend the Metropolitan Market Act, which was passed in 1926 for the purpose of establishing a public market in the metropolitan area. The Act prescribes a certain area for and stipulates the practices in relation to the marketing of produce.

Subsection 2 of Section 12 provides that sales by auction—except for the sale of grain, straw, chaff, hay, etc., on Government railway premises—shall take place only in the metropolitan market, and that the sale of certain produce by hawkers or stall keepers shall not take place within a prescribed distance of the market. A certain weakness has become apparent. It has been found that there is no power to prevent the erection or conduct of markets where goods may be sold by private treaty on a commission basis or by agents on a fixed handling charge. Power is sought by the Bill to remedy this weakness.

The Bill also seeks certain powers regarding the wholesale sale of fish. The danger of markets conducted by private treaty being opened in opposition to the Metropolitan Market Trust's tenants was recognised as early as 1927, a year after the Act had been passed, and approaches were made to the Government at that time to amend Section 12, but it was considered preferable to defer the matter until experience had been gained showing how the Act would operate in practice.

Until early last year, no actual difficulty was experienced by the trust in this direction, but then the authorities became aware that certain tenants were considering the non-renewal of their leases of trust premises with the idea of erecting their own markets nearby for the selling of goods by private treaty. By this means not only would such markets compete with other agents in the trust area who are required to pay a rental for the space used by them, but such outside markets would be able to take advantage of the centralisation of selling interests created by the trust without any charge therefor, to the ultimate disadvantage of the trust itself.

A company dealing in fish actually purchased a block of land in Wellington-street for the purpose of conducting a market by private treaty, and the secretary of the trust was notified that the company did not intend to renew its lease, which expired in June, 1941. For a number of reasons the company has, however, renewed its

lease for a further three years, mainly because it was doubtful whether premises could be erected during war-time by the date the lease expired. This is a clear indication of the direction in which the company was proposing to act, and it is known that other companies are considering similar action. It is apparent that the weakness of Section 12 is now being exploited to such an extent that there is a definite threat to the trust and its tenants.

The amendments proposed will give the trust control over all markets in the metropolitan area where produce is sold wholesale by private treaty, as well as at present by auction. Private treaty will include sales made by agents on commission or by brokers for a fixed charge, except in the case of certain types of produce, such as potatoes and onions, the sale of which may be carried out in the railway yards. Care has been taken to define "market" and "agent" so as to avoid interference with any existing premises at present selling produce wholesale, or with the activities of trading concerns where produce is purchased by a company or person and sold, either retail or wholesale, in the ordinary course of business.

The proposal in the Bill dealing with the control of the sale of fish provides that no person except the original owner may sell fish wholesale within the metropolitan area unless such fish has previously been sold by auction at the market. This provision is deemed necessary owing to the operations of one or two firms which practically control the supply of large fish in the metropolitan area. These operations, it is believed, have resulted in an unnecessary rise in the price of fish to consumers.

Special premises have been built by the Market Trust for the fish trade. It is recognised that because of the nature of the business such premises must be constructed according to defined hygienic requirements and be situated at a reasonable distance from other businesses and habitations. For some months the trust has been caused considerable concern by the action of certain fish merchants aimed at preventing the free operation of marketing by auction, and the setting up of a central place in the city for use as a fish market and distributing centre.

A practice had developed whereby fish merchants who had purchased large fish by

auction in the metropolitan market had been refused supplies of other lines which could not be purchased in the markets unless all fish were bought from the firms concerned. That is something of which this House should take particular notice. Since the outbreak of war, however, the method adopted by the firm in question has been to place its consignments of big fish in the metropolitan market, but to stipulate a high reserve price, thereby raising the price of such fish and making a profit for itself but not for the fishermen. There again we have another method whereby the price of fish to the consumer can be unduly raised.

The proposal in the Bill will nullify any such undesirable practices, will give some protection to the fishing industry and consumers, and will render possible the required control over the sale of fish through a central hygienic market. Besides preventing doubtful trading methods, it will assist the Chief Inspector of Fisheries in ensuring that only mature fish are sold. The amendment will not interfere unduly with existing practices where normal trading methods are followed.

A large sum of money has been invested in the metropolitan market so that produce can be sold under hygienic and convenient conditions, the capital invested to date being £208,108, comprising £65,000 for land purchase, £101,352 from loan funds, £19,000 loan from the Superannuation Board, and £22,756 from reserves. That is a large sum of money, but I am assured that the market has enabled people of the metropolitan area to have a better service than they had before. Repayments to the Treasury amount to £130,458, comprising £114,545 interest, £7,027 sinking fund, and £8,886 profit. I mentioned those figures to give the House an idea of how important it is that the Market Trust should be afforded the protection it seeks.

From time to time the trust has provided new buildings and facilities for the marketing of new products. The erection of fish markets is one instance, and a more recent addition has made special provision for the marketing of eggs. It will be realised that a valuable asset has been established which is supplying a splendid service to the people of this State, and it is essential that the control sought by this Bill should be granted. Not only should the trust possess powers for the adequate

control of markets themselves, but protection in the manner provided for in this Bill should also be afforded to the trust and its tenants. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. W. J. Mann, debate adjourned.

BILL—INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. SIR HAL COLEBATCH (Metropolitan) [5.6]: Following the example of the Leader of the House, and without unduly offending against the rules of debate, may I take this, my first, opportunity of extending a very warm welcome to the colleague of Mr. Bolton and myself in the representation of the Metropolitan Province. Our former experience of a doctor in the House was a pleasant one for members and, I venture to say, a very profitable one from the point of view of the State. In his immediate predecessor, the late Hon. John Nicholson, and in the previous medical practitioner we had in the House, our dear old friend the late Dr. Saw, Dr. Hislop has ideals to inspire him.

Speaking to the second reading of the Bill to amend the Industrial Arbitration Act, I am prepared to accept the assurances of the Minister and of other members who have spoken that there are machinery clauses in the Bill that are desirable and will make for the smoother working of the Act; but without any qualification I want to tell the Minister that I am entirely opposed to those clauses that are of a highly controversial character and which involve the worst class of controversy, that of a party political nature. Only a few minutes ago we passed, without discussion, a Bill to suspend the operation of a certain Act during the period of the war.

Does not the Government realise that this is a suitable time to suspend any efforts it may have in mind to advance some purely class legislation? Do Ministers realise the extremity and the danger that confront this country at the present time? Do they read the speeches of the Prime Minister? Do they think that this is a suitable time to provoke discord by endeavouring to extend

privileges to certain classes, those classes being the ones they rely upon for their political support? It has been generally accepted that during wartime controversial legislation should be avoided and I venture to say that in this House and in another place members who hold political views contrary to those indulged by the Government of the day have refrained from hostile criticism. They have confined themselves, where criticism seemed to be necessary, to criticism of a constructive character. There has been no party political opposition to the views of the Government. That being the case, why should we have trotted out to us over and over again these highly controversial party political schemes? Without hesitation I say that that is not playing the game.

We have in this Bill an alteration of the definition of "worker," an alteration which is intended to extend the operations of the Arbitration Act to all sections of the community. There is a specific reference to domestic servants.

The Chief Secretary: Do you suggest that is not playing the game?

Hon. C. B. Williams: He has already told you that.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: I suggest it is not playing the game to introduce controversial party political matters at the present time. I do not suggest it; I affirm it.

Hon. C. B. Williams: So you want us to send our men oversea and not try to improve their conditions? We will improve conditions, war or no war!

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: I do not intend to say anything further on this matter of domestic servants, but point out that in extending the operation of the Arbitration Act to all classes of workers—

Hon. C. B. Williams: It should have been done before!

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: —very little consideration has been given to the possible effect on a great many industries. I am not one of those content to accept arbitration as the fixed policy of Australia with so much confidence that I am prepared to give it an indefinite extension.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Communists do not believe in it at all.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: That is the position. We have it, but I am not prepared to believe that it has been such a wonderfully good thing that I am willing to give it an indefinite extension. We have

heard about the fixed policies of Australia. I do not think these are times in which it is suitable for anybody to talk about fixed policies. We live in a world of very changing circumstances. We do not know what is going to happen. I would be prepared to accept and extend any policy that had proved itself, that had definitely been shown to be something good, that would advance our interests. What are the fixed policies of Australia? On what is the economy of this country based? To my mind the three leading principles on which the political economy of Australia has been based, at all events for upwards of a third of a century, are these: First of all, extensive borrowing. I suggest that altogether apart from the necessary heavy borrowing for war purposes there has been a very drastic alteration in the conception of what the country can borrow since the inauguration of Federation. Before Federation it was the generally accepted principle that no State could borrow money unless there was a reasonable assurance that its investment would pay interest. Latterly that idea has been altogether abandoned. Money has been borrowed quite recklessly with very little regard to whether the work on which it was expended could pay interest.

Hon. G. W. Miles: That has been done by your Government too.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: And with still less regard as to how it could be repaid. The second point—

Hon. C. B. Williams: On a point of order, Mr. President, are we discussing an amendment of the Arbitration Act or a Loan Bill?

The PRESIDENT: I take it that the hon. member will connect his remarks with the Bill.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: I am speaking of the Arbitration Court as one of the essential features of the political economy of Australia. I say that that is the second essential feature. What has been its effect? Its effect has been to ensure higher wages and fairly generous conditions of employment—but to those people who are engaged in naturally sheltered or politically privileged industries and with very little regard to the effect such privileges would have on those industries of the country on which we rely for the major portion of our wealth production, and which have to face world-

wide competition. The third principle, if it can be described as such, upon which our Australian economy has been based has been the elimination of all outside competition by tariffs and prohibitions. I do not think that even Mr. Williams will raise any objection when I say that we cannot separate those three considerations. We cannot separate the tariff from the principle of arbitration in Australia. In fact, it has been claimed over and over again by the Labour Party that those two factors must work together and are complementary to each other.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Not those in sheltered industries.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: I would be prepared to accept and extend the operations of these particular principles if I felt that they were making for the progress, prosperity and stability of Australia; but have they done so? Leaving out of consideration altogether the present extremity of the war, what is the position? We have an impoverished countryside. We see cities bloated with population. There is a tragic decline in the birthrate, with a consequent suspension of increase in population. No State is able to afford decent educational facilities for its children. Many States are compelled to rely upon the exploitation of the vices of their people in order to obtain money necessary to carry on charitable institutions. How can anyone pretend that Australia's economic policy founded on these three fallacies, as I term them, has been a success? Has that policy made for the progress that we should have with a country possessing such magnificent resources and, I venture to say, the unrivalled personal characteristics of its people? I say it has not. The policy has been unsuccessful or certainly not so successful as to induce me to vote at a time like the present for the future extension of that policy.

I know there has been a great deal of talk about the Australian standard of living. I have had some experience of the standards of living in other countries whose natural resources in comparison with population are very small compared with our own. Viewing the position in that light. I say that in Australia we have not a high standard of living. We have a high standard of spending for certain sections of the community, but we have not what any rea-

sonable person would describe as a high standard of living. I do not suggest any amendment of the course we have followed whilst the war is in progress, and a great many problems are occupying our minds. But when hostilities cease, it will be time to examine this Australian policy of ours to ascertain whether it is desirable in the future to extend it or to curtail its application. After the war are we, should circumstances make it possible as at the moment seems highly improbable, to indulge in a further orgy of borrowing money so that we may extend our Australian system in order to provide still higher wages and shorter hours for people engaged in certain industries, irrespective of what the effect may be on other industries, with utter disregard of the actual value of the articles produced by those industries?

Shall we in the future extend our policy and adopt the methods suggested by the present Minister for Customs in the Federal Government, who says that his policy is Australia first, Australia second and Australia third? I think it will be necessary for us when the time comes, to inquire as to whether we have not been following false gods in the past, and whether it is not essential for us to cry a halt, investigate these matters and see exactly how the policy has operated. We should view the position not from the standpoint of those engaged in naturally sheltered industries but from the standpoint of the interests of the State as a whole and of the people generally. We read this morning that it had been decided that a vessel is to be constructed for the purpose of investigating the possibilities of fishing off our shores.

Hon. C. B. Williams: That is because we have a Labour Government in charge of the Commonwealth, not a mixture of a Government.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: Let Mr. Williams be fair! The vessel is to be constructed in Western Australia because the State Government—I am not criticising it; probably it has done the right thing—has decided to contribute a certain proportion of the taxpayers' money in order that the Western Australian tender, which was higher than those received from other States, might be accepted. I do not wish to go into the details of the matter, but we know there are many considerations connected with our industrial methods which make the cost of

production in this State higher than it is elsewhere in the Commonwealth. Are we to contemplate extending that policy? Are we to extend it to apply to all other industries? Are we, by so doing, to make it more difficult for all our industries to compete against those operating in the Eastern States and make the industrial conditions harder here than they are elsewhere?

Then again, we hear a good deal about the establishment of new industries in Western Australia. We are all very glad when we hear that a new industry is to be started. Let members think for a moment of the tobacco industry. It was founded by a foreigner—a man of great enterprise, an entirely admirable citizen. Not very long ago I spent a day in the tobacco-growing district, and while there I found out two things. The first was that there is not a single person engaged in the tobacco industry who is not a foreigner.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Who is to blame for that?

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: The few Britishers who had been engaged in the venture had withdrawn from the operations. I found out also that there was not one of those foreigners who could carry on for a single season were he subject to the conditions that prevail in all the privileged industries throughout Australia. Let us pause for a moment. I do not ask members to retrogress in our industrial legislation but merely to refrain from taking any further step forward; at any rate, not until we analyse the position as it stands. Unless we do so, and if it is still sought to extend these increased advantages to all workers, I, for my part, am not prepared to do so.

Take the position of our gold mines. Today they are threatened with the necessity of closing down largely because of the internment of a considerable number of Italian workmen. We find, too, in our cities and to a far greater extent in Melbourne and Sydney, the great metropolitan centres of the Commonwealth, that nearly every fruit shop is run by a foreigner. We have to ask ourselves where this is leading. I have not one word to say against these foreigners; I believe they are good people. We must ask ourselves, however, if the restrictions we are imposing upon industry in Australia are not having the effect of preventing our own people from developing and carrying on industry in its varying

forms. There is one other point I desire to mention. I do not think that any member of the Labour Party would dispute the assertion that I made a few minutes ago to the effect that the operations of the Arbitration Act are bound up entirely with our tariffs, duties and prohibitions. I do not think that statement can be disputed.

Hon. C. B. Williams: We are getting along much better now than we did formerly.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: Are we to throw out of our minds altogether the agreement arrived at in the Atlantic a little while ago between the President of the United States of America and the Prime Minister of Great Britain, an agreement that contemplates world-wide co-operation, world-wide understanding and world-wide trade? In view of that and of the fact that we rely for our very existence on the assistance that the United States will render to Great Britain and to us in Australia, are we to throw in the face of the President of the United States the assertion that we are going to continue the part of the isolationist, and that we are to follow a policy of Australia first, Australia second and Australia third, irrespective of what the effect may be?

Hon. C. B. Williams: What are we fighting the war for?

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: Are we to adopt that policy, indifferent to the rest of the world? I have no hesitation in saying that it will not work. No such policy will help us; it is not playing the game. We shall have to consider by and by whether Australia's policy has been sound or unsound. I say it has not been a sound policy, and I am not prepared to advocate any extension of it now. I say that those who have built up this policy are not entitled to say that the war-time period is a suitable occasion for extending it. For that reason, while I shall offer no opposition to the second reading of the Bill because I accept the statement that it includes certain machinery clauses that are of value, I shall take the strongest possible opposition to its several provisions that are of a highly controversial and party political character.

HON. C. B. WILLIAMS (South) [5.28]: I support the second reading of the Bill and I certainly do not propose to drag into the debate references to America or the fiscal policy of Australia. There is one

thing about which I am satisfied and I want to make it clear. It is that if the people of Australia and those of other countries are not to derive any benefit as the result of the present war, it is a pity it ever started and the sooner it stops the better. If a referendum of the people of the Commonwealth were to be taken now, members would soon ascertain that the working-class people are not going to march to the slaughter every 25 years to maintain the capitalistic system as it has operated in the past. We know what we got out of the last war. We know what the miners got out of it. Today the mine worker is getting not a bad cut out of the wealth that he produces, and he will stick to what he gets. The provision objected to by Sir Hal Colebatch was not in the Arbitration Act years ago, when the seven-weeks strike occurred. That upheaval was precipitated because there was no provision in arbitration law for review of an award which was regarded as definitely experimental. In one week the Arbitration Court increased the hours to 48, and in the next reduced them to 40. I pay the gentleman who made that award the compliment of saying that he is one of the best Arbitration Court judges in Australia. I refer to Mr. President Dwyer. However, there was a strike that lasted seven weeks. If something experimental had been introduced into the mining award, the court should have had power to review it. Then the industrial trouble would have been avoided.

As regards the inclusion of domestics under the Industrial Arbitration Act, I was astonished at the references of one hon. member to conditions obtaining 27 years ago. As regards the protection of persons working, my ideas are the same now as they were 27 years ago. I am not referring to any conversation I had today when I say that I was approached with a suggestion that Western Australia's mining industry should be placed on the same basis as that of South Africa; the white men were all to have white-collar jobs in the industry and blacks or Chinese were to do the work. War or no war, the white people of Australia have never listened to that balderdash about importing coloured labour. I need only to refer to the effects of employing coloured labour in our North-West. Only one industry there is without an award of the Arbitration Court.

Take the case of Queensland. What Australian State went ahead faster than Queensland did when it abolished coloured labour and sent the Kanakas back to where they came from? I myself have worked amongst white foreigners for 30-odd years. I recall that 40 years ago Irishmen were against Britain. We have, however, got down to commonsense views. Notwithstanding that Irishmen fought for home rule, those of them that have come here have shared in our prosperity. Moreover, thousands of young Irish-Australians are fighting for this country today. Yet their fathers were looked upon as foreigners, and even now some foolish Irishmen look upon us as foreigners.

War or no war, we must keep our people satisfied. In eastern Australia there is nothing but strife and trouble. If industrial arbitration is made easy of approach, there is far less trouble. As regards Australia's fiscal policy, God would have to help Western Australia if the freetraders had had their way! Probably we would all have been serfs like our farmers are now—kept in serfdom by political representatives. The State bank of this country has written off millions of pounds for the serfs of this country, the farmers. For 25 years, more or less, except for one weak Labour crowd that got into office, the Country Party and the Nationalists have controlled the Commonwealth Bank. They control it today, despite the fact that there is a Labour Government in office. Both those parties unite to down the little Labour Group in this Chamber.

The wish of every sane and sensible man in this community is to make the relations between employers and employees solidly good. Western Australia has had very little industrial unrest. The only trouble that has occurred in the mining industry for some 20 years was the result of an alteration in the weekly working hours. Had the power which has been referred to in connection with this Bill been included in the arbitration law of that time, the industrial trouble would not have arisen and the miners would not have lost seven weeks' work. You, Mr. President, are always checking me, but when you tolerate members reading six or seven pages of speeches prepared for them outside this Chamber—

The PRESIDENT: Order! The hon. member must not reflect on the Chair.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I would not do that for all the world, Sir; and you know it. But I have to listen to certain people here. I am bound by the rules of the Labour Party, but those rules do not bind me when I think something wrong is being done. I object to outsiders sending speeches here that I have to listen to. Hence my interjections.

There is a war on, and who is fighting the war? The working class—to the extent of nine-tenths of the enlistments. Sir Hal Colebatch referred to the aftermath of the last war. Do we not know the wonderful wages English workers got through that war—the coal miners, for example? And three or four years later there were millions of people who did not care whether the Ship of State floated or sank. In this country of ours we have had men who got work only when they went to Northam to learn to fight for Australia. Are not servant girls entitled to a decent crust if they can get it? Surely they should be brought under the Industrial Arbitration Act! The miners lost a lot of money, and they could strike against the provision to which exception is taken in industrial arbitration awards. The lumpers could do it tomorrow, and so could the engineers—strike in a revolutionary way that would lead to slaughter. I have sat here all the evening while people elsewhere were overcoming difficulties that we could not overcome. Those difficulties were fixed up to the satisfaction of both parties.

If this Bill is described as a political measure I am unable to agree with the statement. The workers are fighting for this country, and their rights must be safeguarded. There will be a revolution after this war just as there was after the last one, if justice is not done to the soldiers, if after this war they are treated as were the soldiers of the first world war. It has to be remembered that the people of Australia are the descendants of 500,000 soldiers who fought in the first world war. Soldiers cannot be bulldozed with politics. There will be in this country a party stronger than all the other parties, and that is the soldiers' party. I do hope the House will not agree with Sir Hal Colebatch. I know about Protection, for I have lived in Victoria. I know the harm Protection has probably done to the mining industry. If we give the farmers everything free, they can never make a crust while all the world goes in for

growing wheat. In our North-West there is not trade union labour but black labour.

I know all about the foreigner. We in the mining industry have foreigners as unionists, and we treat them as unionists. A foreigner may be an individualist when among 10 or 12 of his own countrymen, but the foreign miners are good unionists. As regards what is happening here today in the firewood industry, carts with loads of firewood travelling along the Guildford-road for 16 hours a day, foreigners are doing that work. They are out in the bush at 5 o'clock in the morning. Sir Hal Colebatch referred to the mining industry in this connection. This work is done by foreigners because Australians will not do the work in the bush under the conditions prevailing. Internment of aliens has brought about the present position. After all, the country is at war and we cannot let the aliens loose. When they are interned, somebody appeals to the trade union movement. The gold mining industry is not suffering so much from a shortage of labour. The trouble is that the work is not being done by men who can do it. A man will not work in the bush for £4 a week when he can get £7 in the mining industry.

It is useless to go on talking about the foreigners. A Bill dealing with potato growing will come up for discussion. Fifty per cent. of those growing the spuds are foreigners. The Labour Party has nothing to do with that. It was a Government of 40 years ago that imported the foreigners. Still, we would rather see our foreigners at work. In two or three generations they breed young Australians. They inter-marry with Australians. I hope the House will not take the parochial view. According to Mr. Baxter, this Government is not putting up anything of value. Other leaders of the Opposition in this Chamber have not got sour, and Mr. Baxter should not get sour. If they lose today, they should be prepared to come again tomorrow. I hope the House will not defeat the Bill. We know what that will mean. I support the second reading.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East) [5.45]: We have just listened to an impassioned speech on arbitration by Mr. Williams.

Hon. C. B. Williams: You will get the price of wheat up next week.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I think all members are in favour of the arbitration system. It would have been a good thing for the nations of the world if they had been able to adjust their differences by means of arbitration.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Why deny that privilege to one section of the community?

Hon. A. THOMSON: Ever since I have been in Parliament I have supported arbitration. It is, however, a disadvantage in that to a great extent it rather suggests one-way traffic. As indicated by Mr. Williams, we find that militant unions decide these questions for themselves. When employers go to the Arbitration Court and a decision is given by that tribunal, they are bound by the award no matter how disagreeable it may be. The employers can be fined and a heavy penalty imposed upon them if they close their doors. Because of a breach of the Industrial Arbitration Act they can be fined heavily. They must not lock out the workers. I know the same principle applies to members of unions, but, when it is a question of handling 5,000 or 6,000 men on the goldfields, a very big concentration camp would be required to hold them.

In this Bill the Government is providing that the books of the different unions shall be audited at least once a year. It would have better shown its bona fides if it had inserted a proviso to the effect that a percentage of the fees collected by the unions each year should be lodged with the Arbitration Court as proof of the good faith of the unions concerned. Were that done I think a great many of the stoppages that occur would not take place. The union concerned would know that the court when imposing a fine would be able to draw upon the funds of the union that had been deposited with the court. I have held that opinion for many years. I am not averse to the Industrial Arbitration Act. The statement Sir Hal Colebatch has made this afternoon that the Arbitration Court and the high protective tariff of Australia go hand in hand, is perfectly correct. When the tariff was imposed we were told that this was the new protection, and was brought down so that when the manufacturers obtained an increase in the price of their goods the workers also would benefit. I do not take exception to that; it is the settled policy of Australia.

There is not much sense in Western Australia kicking against that policy, for it is one we have to accept.

When dealing with the definition of "worker," Mr. Williams was kind enough to indicate that, in his opinion, members of the Country Party and the Nationalists had always combined to defeat the objects of one section of the community. I point out that on innumerable occasions in this House and outside, the Labour Party has combined with the Nationalists to defeat the object we have been trying to achieve on behalf of those whom we represent in Parliament. I stand by that statement. Recourse to "Hansard" will prove that that has been so, time and again. When the hon. member attacks one section of political thought he should remember that just as those he represents are being fought for by their supporters in Parliament, we have endeavoured to improve the position of those whom we represent in Parliament.

Hon. C. B. Williams: The whole thing is paltry. What about the business of the fortnightly pay?

Hon. A. THOMSON: Sometimes mistakes are made. If I made a mistake I did so on the evidence that was submitted to us. I am quite willing that every man should receive his pay weekly.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Then why did you vote as you did?

Hon. A. THOMSON: It is the intention of the Government by this Bill to amend the definition of "worker." Judging by the statement of the Honorary Minister it proposes to bring under the Act not only domestic servants but farm workers. I issue this challenge to the Government. I am prepared to support the Bill for the inclusion of farm workers provided the Government will see that the farmers are enabled to live under the same happy conditions that are expected on behalf of those who work for them. The Arbitration Court would, if the Bill became law, stipulate that men who were working for the farmers must do so under certain conditions and at certain rates of wages. If by law we are going to impose upon farmers the burden of paying the basic wage to their employees, I want similar provision made for the farmers themselves. The industries associated with farming have to face world competition, just as have our secondary industries.

I wonder, when the war is over, how we shall be able to meet the competition from outside. I hope it will be possible for us to do so. Mr. Williams said that Australians will not do certain classes of work. Sir Hal Colebatch was correct in what he said about the tobacco industry. Fears are entertained in other directions, too, that industries are likely to be captured by Italians and other foreigners. I think the explanation is afforded by the fact that our people say they are satisfied to work only under Arbitration Court conditions. If we want to develop this country, I am afraid we shall not be able to stick strictly to the law so far as the number of hours worked per week is concerned.

I have always maintained that our arbitration laws, if carried into effect in the strictest possible sense, are ideal. Whilst, however, we can make an employer pay wages according to the award that governs his industry, we cannot impose penalties on a large body of men. I am inclined to support the proposal to include domestic servants in legislation of this kind. I often wonder why domestic service is not looked upon with favour by young women. A good deal of that dislike is probably caused by what may be termed the social inequality of the position. A girl who is working in a shop is thought to occupy a higher social position than does one who works as a domestic. That is all wrong, and is the fault of the people concerned.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Do you think arbitration will alter that?

Hon. A. THOMSON: I do not know, but the Government thinks it will. We know how difficult it has been to get domestic servants, and that that position has endured for a long time.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: This will make things worse.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Is it the view of Parliament that the girl who has become a domestic should not live under the same conditions or obtain the same kind of employment as is the case with the girl who goes into a shop or a factory? If all are to be given an equal opportunity something must be done to improve the position so that girls who choose to follow the occupation of domestic service may not look upon that occupation as something which is lower in the social scale. Some years ago a man who had several daughters said to me, "I am going to

the city because I cannot get employment for my girls in the country." I said, "Plenty of employment is available here. Mrs. so-and-so wants domestic help, and another woman also requires it." He said, "I will not make servants of my girls." There we have the truth of the matter. If we could raise the standard of domestic service I would be prepared to give this proposal a trial. Reverting to the question of foreigners, I find that most of our city refreshment rooms are gradually getting into the hands of such people. The fruit shops are already in their hands. I wonder how long that sort of thing will continue?

Hon. C. B. Williams: So long as Britishers patronise them!

Hon. A. THOMSON: It is not possible to obtain fruit anywhere else.

Hon. C. B. Williams: There are a few Englishmen in Barrack street. The name of one of them is "Brown."

Hon. A. THOMSON: I shall not labour the question. When the Minister is replying to the debate, I hope he will set out the policy of the Government so far as farm workers are concerned, and indicate how it is proposed to raise the standard of domestics. If he can satisfactorily reply to those questions, the chances are I shall vote for the inclusion of those amendments in the parent Act. I am to a great extent in accord with the sentiments expressed by Sir Hal Colebatch. I do not think the present time is opportune to bring forward amendments to the Arbitration Act. As far as possible we should not introduce anything contentious. However, the Government has introduced this amendment. Mr. Williams twitted me on one occasion with having voted against him. I can twit him with having voted against the farming community.

Hon. C. B. Williams: No, not once!

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. C. B. Williams: I ask Mr. Thomson to quote one instance. He cannot get away with that.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I suppose the hon. member can make mistakes.

Hon. C. B. Williams: I never once voted against the farming community.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Mr. Thomson must accept the statement of Mr. Williams. I must ask Mr. Thomson to proceed with his remarks on the Bill.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I accept Mr. Williams's statement. I will support the second reading of this measure. There are certain clauses about which I am not as happy as I might be. I accept the challenge offered by Mr. Williams and the Government.

On motion by Hon. L. B. Bolton, debate adjourned.

BILL—POTATO GROWERS LICENSING.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. H. L. ROCHE (South-East) [6.3]: I support the Bill as introduced by the Minister. It provides a framework for those engaged in the industry to set about the organisation of that industry. The producers of the commodity concerned will be in a better position not only to protect themselves but to protect the consumer. The aims and objects of the Bill are purely to further the prospect of, or opportunity for, organisation. It does nothing to establish marketing boards or to control prices. It will not, as some critics have suggested, increase the price to the consumer. There is no reason why the price of potatoes to the consumer should be 2d. a lb. Organisation on the part of the producers might do much to eliminate unnecessary charges which now occur between production and the final distribution through the retailer. If a price of £8 10s. per ton is guaranteed to the producer or he is able to obtain such a price, it is equivalent to about seven-eighths of a penny per lb. The excessive cost which the consumer is at times compelled to pay is, apart from adverse seasonal conditions, largely the result of intermediaries who take their toll from the products after the producer has received the minimum amount extended to him.

Although this Bill has nothing in it to make provision along those lines, I would suggest to members who oppose the measure, that we have to face the certainty after this war, and possibly before the end of it, of greater control and regimentation of our industries, and possibly greater control of our daily lives will have to be exercised. Industry will have to avail itself of greater, for want of a better term, "paternalism" by the Government, which will

enable its members to organise and control their production to guarantee a reasonable return. I am not opposed to trade unionism, or to unionism of any kind—

Hon. C. B. Williams: You will have to help your crowd along a lot.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: —by any section of workers or producers. Some of the staunchest supporters of unionism and its principles, as applied to some sections of the community, can very well assist any efforts made to organise the producers of such a commodity as potatoes. To date, those producers have been disorganised and exploited without any resultant benefit to the consumer. It seems obvious, if production is to continue, that there must be a reasonable return to the producer. He must be protected, and must be given such conditions as will afford him a guarantee of an Australian standard of living.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I do not think there will be much opposition to the Bill.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: There has been some. I will not dwell on this subject. It is only common justice that these people should be given the opportunity to organise; and I feel sure that before many years have passed, this House will be called upon to go even further than this, not only for these producers but for many others.

On motion by Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [6.10]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 11th November.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 6.11 p.m.