

to the correct position. There is such a difference of opinion disclosed that I think an inquiry by a select committee or a Royal Commission is necessary to delve thoroughly into the matter. If such an inquiry were entered upon, those who have grievances to air could have an opportunity to discuss the matter with the Commission and perhaps their complaints would be proved unfounded. If such an inquiry were launched and the legislation drafted in a more satisfactory manner than it is to-day, it would tend to the simplification of the management of milk control. It is necessary that a board shall be in existence, but it is equally essential that we shall understand the law as it applies to the industry. From what I can gather, the board have a perfect right to agree to or refuse a license as they may deem fit. With the numerous regulations in force and amended from time to time, no one seems to know where he stands. There are so many varied interests to be dealt with that Parliament should see to it that the Act is made more definite without leaving too much power in the hands of the board. In most Acts of Parliament under the provisions of which licenses have to be obtained, there are generally broad principles laid down with which the licensing authorities must comply. That is not the position with the milk board. They can do as they like, and under such circumstances it is easy for a person whose application for a license has been refused, to urge that it has been because of some personal consideration.

Hon. L. Craig: But the board consists of people representing all sections of the industry.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: No fear, that is not so.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: It has been contended that the board are not properly representative of all sections connected with the industry. Whether the board are thoroughly representative or not, in the circumstances I have indicated there will always be a tendency for individuals to allege personal considerations. I do not say that it is at all probable that the members of the board act in that manner. One great complaint has arisen in that a man recently had action taken against him, and the action went on through the courts. It reached the High Court, and one of the judges of that Court said that as this was experimental

legislation it was not proposed to quash the conviction, as the amount involved was so small. He added that he understood that the whole matter, the contents of the Act, would be gone into very shortly, and that all matters would be considered in that way. That was the opinion of the High Court judges, namely that this Act required revising, being only experimental legislation. So I sincerely trust that during the next session of Parliament the Act will be revised and put on an improved footing.

On motion by Hon. L. Craig, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.2 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 27th November, 1935.

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

QUESTION—WORKERS' HOMES.

Land at Daglish and Jolimont.

Mr. MOLONEY asked the Treasurer: 1, Is he aware that there is an area of idle land situated between Jolimont and Daglish, and also near Peel-street, Jolimont, which would be eminently suitable for workers' homes? 2, Would it be possible for the Workers' Homes Board to gain control over this land in order to establish

a workers' suburb which would be close to existing railway facilities and to other settled areas?

The TREASURER replied: 1, Yes. The land in question is University endowment land. 2, The Workers' Homes Board has already been negotiating with the University for the purchase of a considerable portion of this land for the purpose of erecting workers' homes thereon. A subdivision is now in course of preparation and negotiations will be further continued when this has been completed.

QUESTION—ELECTRICITY SUPPLY.

Power House Plant Capacity.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Railways: 1. Is the plant contained in the East Perth Power House of sufficient generating power to provide for present needs, including breakdowns? 2, If so, why was the breakdown which occurred last Thursday not immediately replaced by reserve? 3, Is it possible for effective steps to be taken to obviate such breakdowns in future? 4, As, in addition to our tram and lighting system, very many workshops and factories depend on the East Perth plant for electric power, will immediate consideration be given to the installation of auxiliaries, thereby insuring a temporary standby in the case of breakdowns? 5, If expedited to the utmost, how long will it be before the new generating plant and equipment are installed and distributing electric current? 6, Do the Government Railway Workshops depend on the East Perth Power House for electric power? 7, If so, and in the event of considerably reduced power being available, will he inform the House which consumer, Government or private, would first be cut out?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, No. 2, The interruption to the tramways in Perth on the 21st instant was due to a boiler failure; the only remaining boiler was put into service as quickly as possible. 3, All possible precautions are taken, but until the additional unit under order is installed it is not possible to give any guarantee. 4, See answer to 3. 5, Eighteen months. 6, Yes. 7, This would depend on the circumstances.

QUESTION—PINGELLY WATER SUPPLY.

Collection of Rates.

Mr. SEWARD asked the Minister for Water Supplies: 1, Has a member of the Water Supply Department been sent to Pingelly with instructions to take summons action against anyone failing to pay water rates? 2, If so, in view of the fact that for several years past residents have uncomplainingly paid rates for water which is unfit for human or animal consumption, and of the fact that action such as mentioned in No. 1 would be most provocative, will he cancel those instructions with a view to adopting a more reasonable attitude towards ratepayers?

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES replied: 1, No. 2, Answered by No. 1.

BILL—BULK HANDLING.

Leave to Introduce.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet) [4.37]: I move—That leave be given to introduce a Bill for an Act relating to the Bulk Handling of Wheat by Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd.

MR. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [4.38]: I of the Bill as read out by the Minister, for do not think we should agree to the Title it will be necessary for me at a later stage to move certain amendments, which I shall not be able to do if the Title stands as printed—unless, indeed, I should move to alter the order of leave. The Bill provides for the bulk handling of wheat by Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. The process of the bulk handling of wheat will throw out of employment thousands of men.

The Minister for Lands: How many?

Mr. SLEEMAN: I say thousands of men throughout the State. There can be no doubt about that when we consider all the industries concerned. Lumpers, of course, will be thrown out. The Bill will affect Fremantle, Bunbury, Geraldton, and to a lesser extent Albany and Esperance in time to come. They will be affected of course, including the lumpers.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: Some of them will go out on their own.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Under the Title of this Bill they will go out on their heads—a Bill for an Act relating to the Bulk Handling of Wheat by Co-operative Bulk Handling

Ltd. The member for North Perth says that some of the lumpers will go out on their own.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: They do so now.

Mr. SLEEMAN: It is necessary that Parliament should legislate with a view to providing for those people who will be thrown out of work by the introduction of bulk handling. Men will be thrown out of work at Fremantle, Geraldton, Bunbury, Albany and Esperance. Lumpers at the railway sidings in farming districts will be thrown out of work, in addition to the lumpers at the ports, and in the farming districts. And not only those, but clerks, storemen and railway men will be considerably reduced in number. Many men in the railways will be affected.

Hon. C. G. Latham: They will be increased in number.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Men sewing bags and handling bags for the farmers will no longer be required. What is it proposed shall be done for the labour thus displaced? I am afraid that if something be not done there will be thousands of people thrown out on the scrapheap without any provision being made for them to earn their livelihood in a new sphere. My estimate is that 3,000 people will thus be displaced. Our friends of the Opposition, if they can, are free to disprove that statement, but that is my estimate and I have gone very carefully into it.

Mr. Cross: Is that for the whole year or for half a year?

Mr. SLEEMAN: For the greater part of the year there will be 3,000 people thrown out of employment. That means that 156,000 man-weeks per year will be lost, which, at an average of £3 15s. per week, will amount to £500,000 per annum. According to the estimate in the Royal Commission's report, the cost of bags to the farmer means 1½d. per bushel. That is the most they can claim to save. I venture to say it might be better for the Government to consider compensating the farmer, to pay him 1d. or 1½d. per bushel, rather than have numbers of men thrown out on the scrap heap, men for whom the Government will have to find sustenance, if not work.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: You would compensate them?

Mr. SLEEMAN: I certainly think they should be compensated. It would not be without a precedent; it would not be the

first time that compensation had been paid to those thrown out of industry. I am glad to know the member for North Perth agrees that those definitely displaced from industry should be compensated.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: The member for North Perth is very noisy to-day.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I want to know what is to be done for the men to be displaced; are they to be adequately provided for?

Mr. Raphael: They will have to go on the dole.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I hope not. Moreover, I hope they will not be put on to some of the works on which the Government have been putting men in the past. Men on the wharf who have been handling wheat for the greater part of their lives, men who have done a fair thing by the State, if they are to be displaced now and sent out to the country to some of the places where men working in drains have had to throw dirt 16, 17 and 18 feet—I say those men would not now be able to do that work. Only the best navy could do some of the work the Government are providing at present. It is the same with the miners. Take a man out of the mines, send him away to other work, surface work, and he will crack up very quickly. There are numbers of men at present employed in the wheat industry. If you were to take them away and put them in the drains at Harvey, where dirt has to be thrown such great distances, they would not last very long.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: But the lumpers would last all right on the drainage work.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I do not think they would last as long as would men who are now growing wheat, which is a very healthy occupation.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: Have you tried it?

Mr. SLEEMAN: Like the hon. member himself, I have never taken it on. He leaves it to others.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! There is no occasion for the hon. member to answer interjections.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Very well. Farming is a healthy occupation and there is nothing to interfere with the health of the farmers, but if these people are displaced from industry and sent out to some of the works offered by the Public Works Department, they will crack up very quickly. We want to know what is going to be done for the men to be displaced by the Bill. Before bulk handling

is put into operation, we should provide for those men; something should be guaranteed by the people who are to benefit by bulk handling. But we cannot expect very much from the bulk handling people for the men concerned. Already they have displaced a few hundred men from industry, and we find they are too niggardly to compensate the men chewing dust down at Fremantle, to compensate them even at the rate of 4d. per hour. Before bulk handling comes into operation, something should be done to reduce the hours of employment of the men engaged on the wharf. Increasing his wages is no good to a man whose health is to be ruined in the industry. It is not much good giving a man 4d. or 6d. or 1s. extra per hour, if his health is going to be ruined. The time has come when, as the result of the mechanisation of industry, the hours of labour will have to be considerably reduced. I do not think it is anything much to ask of Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd., who are to control bulk handling, that the hours of men working in the industry, and who eventually will be displaced from industry, should be reduced to four or five hours per day. If Bulk Handling Ltd. are going to save the industry, it is up to them to help the men whose health is going to be ruined. It is of no use mechanising the industry unless those in it are going to benefit by that mechanisation. The time has long gone past when the hours of labour should have been reduced to make up for the mechanisation of industry. A great deal of depression is due to the mechanisation of industry: yet we as a Parliament, indeed all Parliaments throughout the world, seem to be just dragging along in the old row, keeping to the established hours of labour, instead of providing for the people by reducing their hours, and thereby letting those people displaced have a fair share of the work offering. Before the Bill be agreed to it is our duty to see that ample provision be made for the men displaced. I hope the House will support the amendment I am about to move to the motion before the Chamber, and will see that bulk handling is not established in this country until the men to be displaced are provided for. I have been looking up "Hansard" and I find that in September 1932 the ex-Minister for Works, Mr. McCallum, moved a motion similar to that which I am about to move. He stressed particularly the argument I am putting up

now, namely that the men must be provided for. Mr. Collier also strongly supported that, as did also Mr. Kenneally, the present Minister for Employment, who stressed the point that an amendment could be made so as to give the right at a later stage of the debate for a further amendment to be moved providing for those people displaced. I find that the voting was, ayes 16, noes 21. Everyone on that side of the House, with the exception of the member for Guildford-Midland, who was not present, voted for the amendment moved by the ex-Minister for Works. I move an amendment—

That the following words be added to the motion:—“and to provide for the payment of compensation by that company for the men employed on the wharf displaced by the company's system of bulk handling, or to provide employment for those men.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. M. F. Troy—*Mr. Magnet*—on amendment) [4.46]: I sympathise with the desire of the member for Fremantle (*Mr. Sleeman*) to make provision for men who are displaced by bulk handling but I cannot accept the amendment. I do not know how provision could be made to meet his desires unless it were made at the expense of the farmer. The Government appointed a Royal Commission to go into the question of bulk handling and that commission made certain recommendations, which the Government have agreed to accept. Legislation in keeping with those recommendations is the subject of the motion. The hon. member now desires to bring in something that has nothing to do with bulk handling, except as to those men who may be displaced by its introduction. He spoke of thousands of men being displaced. I am unable to accept his figures.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Those figures are far in excess of the figures the member for South Fremantle (*Mr. Fox*) gave in evidence.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not know. They may be right or wrong, but I think they are considerably exaggerated. A Bill which provides for the handling of wheat in bulk could not be made a compensation measure. If the member for Fremantle desires to achieve his purpose, he must move in some other way. There is no doubt the introduction of machinery has displaced labour in every industry, and that is likely to continue. It appears that the progress of industry will not be stayed, and

that labour must be dislocated as the result of such progress.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That is why we all ride in motor cars to-day instead of horse-drawn vehicles.

Mr. Marshall: Speak for yourself.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I have seen the hon. member in motor cars.

Mr. Marshall: I could not afford to hire a car for a mile.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I agree with the Leader of the Opposition. We ought to be contented with simpler forms of living. They would be better for us, but the community is not prepared to have them. Parliament cannot take the community by the scruff of the neck and force things down its throat. The community is made up of people who are our masters; they are the electors. We can talk to them and give advice, but that is as much as we can achieve. The community would not follow us in adopting the simpler forms of living, which may be so much better for all of us. The community is out to get all the material advantages it can. Whenever that is so, there must also be disadvantages. The hon. member's object must be achieved in some other way. One way is to move towards shorter hours in the industry. I was greatly struck by the statement of Sir Frederick Stewart, who, on returning from the Old Country, said that the time had come for the introduction of a 40-hour week in industry in Australia, and that he proposed to put that into operation in his own factory.

Mr. Sleeman: I suggested that.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It was a very courageous statement to make. I do not know how that could be done under this Bill. The position disclosed by the hon. member finds its parallel in the mining industry. Take the Great Fingal Mine. At one time as many men were employed on the surface as are now employed underground. Because of the new plants that have been installed, it is a rare thing to find many men working above ground; they are employed elsewhere. This does not mean unemployment, but rather means more employment in that industry. In numbers of cases the development in machinery has led to much more employment than heretofore, and in all probability in some instances but for the new machinery and the new appliances

the mines in question would have closed down. If we were to penalise every industry by saying that it must carry all labour that is displaced, it would soon go out of existence. Then the last state would be worse than the first. There is only one set of people, if the motion is carried by whom the load represented by displaced wheat handling labour can be carried, namely the farmers. Are they able to carry it? Are they able to pay for labour that is displaced in their industry? I say they cannot do so. I know they cannot. It is no use beating about the bush; they cannot pay their ordinary debts. If wheat were 5s. a bushel I think I would agree with the hon. member's intention. I should say, "Yes, there must be some compensation." But wheat is 2s. 9d. a bushel to 2s. 11d. at the most and that is an unpayable price.

Hon. C. G. Latham: If wheat were 5s. a bushel, employment could be found in other directions.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I know that the farmers are down and out. I am dealing with the administration every day. If the Leader of the Opposition had an unfortunate experience as Minister for Lands, my experience has been equally unfortunate. I do not think I have had a bright day officially since I took over the portfolio.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I think you get into less trouble than I do from you.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I certainly have a great deal of trouble. If I were asked to choose a portfolio, it would not be that of Minister for Lands, except that I would not now like to run away from a difficult task. Hundreds, if not thousands, of farmers are on the dole because of the small amount of their income. In the north-eastern wheatbelt farmers are in desperate circumstances. I ask the hon. member, does he think the farmers ought to carry this obligation when they themselves are in such distressed circumstances? If he represented a farming area, would he, in all fairness and justice, move such an amendment? Of course he would not.

Mr. Sleeman: What was the question?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If the hon. member represented a farming district that is down and out, and constituents who were losing ground year after year, and, despite all their labours, were finding their

homes slipping from them, and who were heavily in debt, would he place this additional burden upon them?

Mr. Sleeman: I see the same thing happening in my own electorate every day in the week. Some of the people there are starving.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: As far as possible the State is making provision for all such people. Would he unload their difficulties upon the farmers? Is it fair or just that we should unload this liability upon people who, we know, in most cases are down and out? Members opposite twitted us with having forced a settlement of the mining dispute and insisted upon a 44-hour week in the industry. The companies were fortunate in that it was not a 40-hour week.

Mr. Marshall: Very fortunate.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The companies were very lucky, in all the circumstances.

Mr. Marshall: If I had been working on a mine then it would have been a 40-hour week, or no work would have been done.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member reminds me of a member of the Federal Parliament who said he would not grow wheat at 2s. 6d. a bushel, but would rather burn the crop and camp down at the creek. Of course he could be told that if everyone burnt his crop, the people who did so and camped at the creek would starve.

Mr. Marshall: It is not very advantageous to be slow-poisoning yourself in the gold-mining industry.

Mr. Sleeman: People might as well die of starvation as choke with dust.

The Premier: No one is starving in this State. The Government see to that.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is not wise to make exaggerated statements here.

Hon. C. G. Latham: There is work offering down there now, but the men will not take it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Our exaggerations sometimes lead to our indictment.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That is the awkward part about talking.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: They lead to our own indictment. I sympathise with the hon. member. The circumstances are such that the Government had to introduce legislation of this character.

Mr. Sleeman: What are you going to do for the men?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: What have we done for the men already? Have we not found employment for a great many people in this and other industries? There have been protests against the mechanisation of industry before now, and there always have been found means of overcoming the difficulty. I regret I cannot accept the amendment. I do not know what reception the Bill will have. The Government are doing what they consider to be their duty in respect to the whole matter. It would be impossible justifiably to load upon a community that is down and out obligations it could not possibly carry. If that section of the people could carry the obligations, I would have no hesitation about asking them to do so.

MR. FOX (South Fremantle) [5.0]: I support the amendment moved by the member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman), and agree with him that the amount of labour likely to be displaced is considerable. The Leader of the Opposition stated that the number estimated by me when giving evidence before the Royal Commission was far less than the number estimated by the mover of the amendment. However, I was then dealing merely with the lumpers actually employed on the shandygaff system of bulk handling in operation at Fremantle then and now. I was not considering the question from the aspect of a really up-to-date and efficient system of bulk handling such as obtains in New South Wales and some of the States of the American Union. According to a statement made by my predecessor in the representation of South Fremantle when in this House, the number of men on sidings who would be displaced by such a system would be approximately 2,000. That estimate was based on the harvest for that particular year, which was much larger than this year's harvest will be or than last year's harvest was. Most of those men would inevitably drift to the city and swell the congested labour market there, making the unemployment position worse. During the last seven or eight years over 800 men have left the Fremantle wharf mainly because of the introduction of labour-saving devices. Allowing £3 10s. per week for each of those 800 men, there is a loss of £144,000 per annum.

That figure gives some indication of the amount of labour displaced by the introduction of labour-saving devices on the Fremantle wharf. First we had the introduction of bulk handling of oil. Nearly every innovation introduced at Fremantle has been ostensibly in the interests of the farmer; but, for all those labour-saving innovations, the farmer is worse off now than he was nine or ten years ago. I make bold to say that even if bulk handling is instituted in its entirety, the farmer will be no better off even though he may get the estimated saving of 1½d. per bushel. Any saving effected would go to the merchants, and not to the farmers. The merchants might give the farmers a little more credit, but that will not do much for the farmers. It is time some provision was made for labour displaced by labour-saving devices. Are we to continue in the present way until we have more unemployed than employed? Then the people would rise up and demand that something should be done. It is nearly time we did something to grapple with the problem, lest such a crisis occur. The city of Fremantle is becoming nearly deserted. At the west end, seven or eight years ago a decent house or shop would bring a rent of £4 or £5 a week. The present rental is about 10s. a week. Not only does the displacement of labour on the water front interfere with men working in that industry, but it has an effect upon every other union in the district and on the business people as well. The Minister said that on the Great Fingal mine there had been hundreds of men working on the surface. I suppose at Wiluna the same position applies. Even though labour-saving machinery has been introduced, the men displaced at Wiluna have derived no benefit at all from it. I repeat, it is nearly time the Government took some action to provide for men displaced. Another problem likely to arise in connection with the introduction of the bulk handling of wheat is the health of the men employed. When the system was first introduced at Fremantle, many men specialised in it, for the first 12 months. Now those men do not care about going on the bulk handling job: in fact, some of them will not go near it. The work has affected quite a number of them. While on the subject let me say that it would not be out

of the way if the Minister for Health had those men examined much in the same way as miners are examined before being given a certificate of fitness to work underground. Many of the Fremantle men formerly employed in connection with bulk handling will not work there at all now. Their health has become affected. We have had several of them examined, and it is found that the dust has affected them. As a result they do not care to work there any more.

Hon. C. G. Latham: They do not get any more dust than a farmer driving a harvester.

Mr. FOX: They get a great deal more. A large volume of dust is created in putting the wheat into the ship out of the truck. A farmer does not get any dust when driving a harvester.

Opposition Members: Oh, no!

Mr. FOX: The Government must make some provision for these men. Adjacent to Fremantle considerable areas of land could be resumed by the Government. Much of that land is endowment land given to the University. It has lain idle for the last 50 years or more; nothing at all has been done on it—no clearing whatever. The Government should be able to make some of that land available for the workers displaced and build homes for them, and also give them a little stock, so that they may be able to make some sort of a living. The Minister for Lands wanted to know where the money was to come from. I am not at all particular where the money comes from. Personally I would rather see nobody above the basic wage than see anybody below it. I am not prepared to face again what I have had to face for the last three or four years. True, the position is much better since the present Government took office than it was previously. Previously we had a terrible time. I repeat, I am not prepared to face now what had to be faced four years ago—unemployed calling every day in the week to see if something could not be done for them.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I have a few Fremantle cases I can send along to you.

Mr. FOX: Perhaps I have a few from the electorate of the Leader of the Opposition that I could send back to him.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I shall be glad if you will.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. FOX: They may not be men of big stature, such as the Leader of the Opposition spoke about on the Address-in-reply, men fit to do any amount of work.

Mr. Cross: For ten bob a week!

Mr. FOX: I hope the House will support the amendment. The mover of it has said that when this question was raised previously, every member on this side who was in the House at the time supported the motion then moved by the member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman). I hope, therefore, that the amendment will be supported, so that some provision may be made for the men to be displaced—made before bulk handling in its entirety is introduced into Western Australia.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [5.10]: I support the amendment, as a gesture. I know that in practice the Government really cannot do anything in this matter. However, I consider that gestures are necessary at this stage, because the same fear exists elsewhere—as, for instance, at Broken Hill—fear of modern machinery. The Broken Hill miners say they will not stand it, but will revive the scenes of a hundred years ago, when machinery was smashed. I wish to remind the House of an action taken by no less a personage than Mr. Montague Norman, of the Bank of England, when confronted with a similar position. I think most hon. members are aware of what I am about to state. What did Mr. Montague Norman do recently when he had to dismiss 2,000 men from the Bank of England because of the introduction of modern appliances which did the work mechanically, taking the place of employees who had served faithfully for many years? He called them up and said, "Gentlemen you can have either £2,000 apiece or £100 a year, whichever you choose."

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: He created a lot of cheap credit.

Mr. NORTH: Undoubtedly there is a great deal of difference between Montague Norman and the Government of this State. The one is in a position to take such action as described. But that gesture is an important gesture to all the world. Obviously, if one bank can take action of that kind, sooner or later other banks will be faced with similar demands; and from the banks those demands will pass to the industrial front, and everyone will be saying, "If I am to be put off my job, I want either a capital fund

or an annuity for life." I quite realise that in a practical sense the Government have no hope of taking action of this kind.

Mr. SPEAKER: May I point out to the hon. member that the amendment does not propose that the Government should do anything. It proposes that the company should do something. If the amendment had referred to the Government, it would have been out of order.

Mr. NORTH: In that case no more can be said, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TONKIN (North-East Fremantle) [5.12]: The Minister for Lands expressed his sympathy with the mover of the amendment and also with the men who are going to be displaced; but he did not promise any relief of the situation. Let me remind the Minister that sympathy without relief is like mustard without beef. The member for Claremont (Mr. North) said this amendment was a gesture, and he thought this was a time for gestures. There is no gesture in this so far as I am concerned; I want something tangible. We have ample precedent for that. The reason why the member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman) has taken action at this stage is that if he fails to do so and the order of leave is agreed to in its present form, we shall be precluded from attempting to amend the Bill in the direction we desire. That is the reason why we take this opportunity of endeavouring to amend the order of leave, so that later on we shall not be out of order and up against the Standing Orders. The Minister for Lands said that the proposal in the amendment would place such a burden upon the farmers as they would not be able to carry.

Mr. Cross: Will the farmers be able to carry on if they get the £30 per head that is to be saved?

Mr. TONKIN: Such arguments as the Minister's are always used in connection with innovations. I hold that this question affects not only the producer and the distributor, but also the consumer. When contemplating the introduction of bulk handling, we have to consider not only the benefit that system will confer upon the farmer, and upon those immediately concerned with distributing the product, but also the eventual effect upon the consumer of the product, an effect that must indirectly come back upon the farmer. We may find the second state worse than the first. If so

much labour is displaced that this country is unable to re-absorb it, the Government will be called upon to find relief for the men displaced; and the result might be that indirectly a greater burden would be placed upon the producer than that which is sought to be lifted by the introduction of bulk handling of wheat. It cannot be assumed that the introduction of a labour-saving device will automatically lead to the raising of our people's standard of living. The object behind the introduction of a system such as this, must be, I take it, to endeavour to make, somewhere, a saving which will go back to the producer of the commodity. The Royal Commission that inquired into this subject was not able to discover what happened regarding the amount supposed to be saved by bulk handling as against bag handling.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The Royal Commission admitted that there was a difference.

Mr. TONKIN: Yes, and so do I. It is quite possible, however, that this saving will not be one to the farmers at all, but will merely result in additional dividends to Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd., and those associated with it.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Well, that is a co-operative movement.

Mr. TONKIN: That is not co-operation in the sense that I believe in it. It will be a good thing for the debenture holders, but from the standpoint of a co-operative movement, it is a washout.

Mr. Sleeman: That company is merely Westralian Farmers, Ltd., nothing else.

Mr. TONKIN: If this company is a co-operative concern I fail to see it. Instead of being for the benefit of the farmers, it is for the benefit of the co-operative company and those associated with it.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I say it is proper co-operation.

Mr. TONKIN: The hon. member and I disagree on that point.

Hon. C. G. Latham: He knows, and you do not.

Mr. TONKIN: The hon. member says so because he happens to agree with the views of the member for Guildford-Midland.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will keep in order and address the Chair.

Mr. Marshall: He is always out of order.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. TONKIN: Bulk handling is supposed to effect economies in the industry—

Mr. Fox: At the expense of someone else.

Mr. TONKIN: But it has never been proved that the saving effected will be passed on to the farmers. In fact, I believe that, in the long run, they will possibly be worse off. At the present time every member of the community has to make sacrifices for the benefit of the farmers, and we have been paying a flour tax for some months. The people of Fremantle have been participating in these contributions for the benefit of the farmers. Now we are asked to accept a scheme that will displace the bulk of the workers at Fremantle and will practically ruin the town. That will impose a further burden on those people and we are asked to accept it without attempting to compensate the workers for their loss of employment. Compensation for unemployment is not new. It is quite new in this State, but it is not a new principle, generally speaking. It is already in operation in Great Britain and the United States of America. Doubtless it is in operation in other countries as well.

Mr. Sleeman: It is in operation in New South Wales.

Mr. TONKIN: It is time we made a start somewhere, and I think the present is the opportunity for inaugurating the principle. We do not claim that the farmers must carry the burden, but we claim it should be possible to establish a fund that will be built up by contributions from various sources. From that fund men who have been displaced from employment will receive compensation. I believe that if we make a start now, we will be able to extend the application of the principle and provide compensation in respect of other industries. We would thus make provision that should have been available years ago. If we are content to say that this industry cannot carry the burden nor can that other industry, we shall never make a start to establish a compensation fund, although such a move is long overdue. This is the time to make a start because the Bill will affect a large number of men and also the largest port in the State. It is because we desire to move amendments to the Bill with that object in view that the present stand has been taken. I support the amendment moved by the member for Fremantle.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	7
Noes	..	..	..	31

Majority against .. 24

AYES.	
Mr. Cross	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Fox	Mr. Clothier
Mr. Marshall	(Teller.)

NOES.	
Mr. Boyle	Mr. North
Mr. Brockman	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Collier	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Seward
Mr. Hawke	Mr. F. C. L. Smith
Mr. Hegney	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Troy
Mr. Kenneally	Mr. Warner
Mr. Latham	Mr. Watts
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Willcock
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Millington	Mr. Wise
Mr. Munele	Mr. Doney
Mr. Needham	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Question put and passed.

Leave given; Bill introduced.

First Reading.

On motion by the Minister for Lands, Bill read a first time.

BILL—RAILWAYS CLASSIFICATION BOARD ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by the Minister for Railways and read a first time.

MOTION—STATE FORESTS.

To Revoke Dedication.

THE MINISTER FOR FORESTS (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [5.25]: I move—

That the proposal for the partial revocation of State forests Nos. 20, 22, 27, 29, 30, and 38, laid on the Table of the Legislative Assembly by command of His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor on the 26th November, 1935, be carried out.

It has been the policy of the Forests Department to recommend for excision from State forests any sufficient areas of agricultural land selected in the course of forest assessment work, topographical survey by the department of subdivisions or land similarly located, following applications received direct or through the Lands Department. The proposal laid upon the Table of

the House involves ten lots of a total area of about 598 acres. If hon. members peruse the plan laid on the Table, they will see how the proposed revocations affect different parts of the forest areas. The blocks range from five acres in extent up to about 20 acres. It has been the policy of the Forests Department to make these small areas available mostly to adjoining land holders. The revocations are always advanced on the recommendation of the Conservator of Forests who considers that the forest policy will not be affected at all by making available these small areas in the several parts of the State.

On motion by Hon. C. G. Latham, debate adjourned.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Doney, leave of absence for one week granted to Mr. Patrick (Greenough) on the ground of ill-health.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Limitation.

2, Adelphi Hotel.

Transmitted to the Council.

BILL—LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—SUPREME COURT.

Further report of Committee adopted.

BILL—MARKETING OF EGGS.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 13th November.

Mr. McLARTY (Murray-Wellington) [5.30]: I intend to support the second reading of the Bill with certain reservations. I supported a measure introduced by the member for Guildford-Midland some years ago—a Bill framed on similar lines to the one now before us. I am willing to give those people engaged in the poultry industry a chance to market their eggs in an orderly manner. There are a fair number of poultry farmers in my electorate,

but I have not received any request from them to support the Bill. Nor have I been requested to oppose it. I have been struck by the lack of interest in the measure. Generally, when legislation of this kind is introduced, a considerable amount of interest is aroused amongst the producers concerned, but so far I have not received a single communication from anyone engaged in the industry in my electorate. Still, I can realise that poultry farmers are anxious to have some measure of control. They have seen the benefits derived by those engaged in the whole milk industry and in the dried fruits industry as a result of having boards to control those industries. Another reason why I feel I should support the Bill is because egg boards are operating in some of the Eastern States and there is a move to create a board in some of the States which so far have not got one. The boards in the East are exercising control over the export of eggs, and in my opinion they must have a considerable influence over the industry in this State. It seems to me that the States that are exporting their eggs under the direction of a board have a greater advantage than is enjoyed by producers in Western Australia. The poultry industry is a growing industry. Of that there is no doubt. The Director of Agriculture, in his annual report, stated that the industry had grown because a number of the unemployed had turned their attention to poultry farming. He also expressed the opinion that, in view of the improvement that had occurred generally, many of those now engaged in the industry because of previous unemployment would return to their ordinary avocations. I do not think that will happen. I believe that those who had to enter the industry because of unemployment have spent a considerable sum of money in it and have put a considerable amount of labour into it, and it is unlikely that they will walk off their holdings because they see a chance of getting employment elsewhere.

Mr. Hegney interjected.

Mr. McLARTY: Yes, outside the poultry industry. They have certainly not made money yet, and are likely to hang on in the hope of doing so. The presence of those men in the industry has had a considerable effect, and is one reason why we

should introduce a board of control. I am sorry that the Minister did not see fit to introduce a Government Bill. True, it might not have followed the lines of this Bill, but it would have been very much better for all concerned had the Minister brought down a Bill of his own. I know the Minister is very reluctant to introduce any legislation of the kind while the case of *James v. the Commonwealth* is pending. I am wondering what the Government's attitude to that case is. If James gets the verdict, a great deal or perhaps all of the marketing control legislation will go by the board, and that will have a very serious effect on certain of our industries, particularly the dairying and dried fruits industries. I hope the Government will be represented at the hearing of the case before the Privy Council. I understand that some of the State Governments are taking action to protect their interests. As the matter is of such vital importance to our producers, I should like to know the Government's attitude to the Privy Council appeal. The member for Irwin-Moore (Hon. P. D. Ferguson) has taken considerable interest in the Bill and, I think, a very kindly interest, and I hope that the member for South Fremantle will see fit to accept the amendments of which the hon. member has given notice. I do not wish to see a number of boards set up as is indicated in Clause 3 of the Bill. I cannot see how the measure could function on the lines proposed by the member for South Fremantle, namely by having a number of boards functioning. I foresee a danger of quite a number of boards springing up with, probably, conflicting interests, and I cannot understand how the measure can operate successfully unless we have a State-wide board such as the butter board or the milk board. Why has the hon. member suggested that we should define areas and permit each area to elect a board of its own? The present indications are that a very strong metropolitan influence would operate which would be to the detriment of the country interests. I suppose the hon. member will argue that the country areas would have a right eventually to bring their own boards into operation. There, again, I see danger of a conflict of interests arising between the metropolitan area and the country. Unless the hon. mem-

ber is prepared to agree to the principle of one State-wide board to control the whole of the industry, I shall not be able to support the Bill. I am prepared to vote for the second reading and will support the amendments outlined by the member for Irwin-Moore.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [5.39]: I do not propose to support the second reading. I think that this Parliament is running mad in constituting boards for what is termed orderly marketing. It seems that we are to do away with all the present organisations and thus disrupt industry.

Mr. Thorn: What about the apple growers?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The hon. member has endeavoured to induce them on many occasions to enter the Primary Producers' Association or some other organisation and give up the selling of their own produce. The apple growers have already built up an organisation of their own. Similarly, many poultry farmers have built up an organisation of their own. The Bill, however, is mandatory; it will prohibit the selling of eggs except to the board. Will the growers be any better off for that?

Mr. Thorn: Of course they will be.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: We hear a lot from some members about orderly marketing and yet, if there were any talk of nationalising industry, those members would stomp the country from one end to the other and say we were going socialistically mad. Still, they indulge in the cry of orderly marketing and advocate the setting up of boards. In my opinion the member for South Fremantle has fallen. Presumably a few poultry farmers at Spearwood, or somewhere else, held a public meeting and called on him to attend, and he was persuaded to introduce the Bill. The member for Murray-Wellington said he was supporting the Bill, and proposed that the board should be State-wide.

The Premier: Do not you think that with the approaching elections we should have some control over eggs?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: There is nothing nicer than a fresh egg, as the Premier will agree. I have not had experience of the other kind, but we never know what is in store for us. I ask members of my party to pause before running riot over the introduction of boards of this kind.

The Premier: This is only one board.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: But requests are being made almost every day for the constitution of boards for one industry or another. We are doing away entirely with enterprise.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Are you in favour of the butter board?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Presently there will be no room for commercial life or for enterprise.

Mr. Thorn: Are you in favour of the butter board?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I know that the butter board is on flimsy ground at present, but I do not think the hon. member knows much about it.

Mr. Thorn: Yes, I do.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: If a board were set up to control the egg industry, how could we prevent eggs from South Australia being marketed in this State, as were some last year?

Mr. Fox: You cannot prevent it.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: How can we have any fixation of prices.

Mr. Thorn: There is no fixation of prices.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: How can we do any better for the producers? Is the intention merely to create another expensive organisation? We know what these boards are: they are an incubus on the producers, who will be under greater expense than they are at present when they can market their eggs and get the top market price. I cannot understand the professions of some of my friends on this side of the House. When any State enterprise is proposed or nationalisation of industry is suggested, they hold up their hands in holy horror, and yet they welcome a Bill of this kind. I will not agree to any scheme to make the selling of eggs to a board mandatory. If my vote will settle the Bill, it will be cast against the measure. I object to a man being told that he must sell his eggs to a board. I have received no request for this legislation and, if we pass it, we shall have someone like the member for Swan, who is a great advocate of orderly marketing, asking for the appointment of a fruit board to sell the whole of the fruit produced. I ask members to be careful what they are doing before they permit a Bill of this description to find a place on the statute-book. I stand for free competition.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE

(Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne) [5.46]: I am definitely going to oppose the Bill, on three grounds, which I submit are very sound. Primarily, if legislation of this nature is to be introduced it should emanate from the Government.

Mr. Thorn: Then why did you not introduce it?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:

There was a good reason. As control of marketing involves matters of Government policy, I think the hon. member responsible for the introduction of the Bill should not have introduced it on this occasion. The member for South Fremantle has modelled his Bill on that introduced by the member for Guildford-Midland a few years ago. In fact, it is almost the same Bill, and I think the hon. member also will agree that it does not break any new ground regarding the alleged benefits to be derived from it. It is claimed by the hon. member, but it cannot be borne out by fact, that the industry in the States where control exists is in a more stable condition than the industry in this State.

Mr. Sampson: They get a better price for eggs.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:

They do not. I shall show the hon. member that the position in the other States, particularly in New South Wales, whose legislation this Bill is modelled upon, is not in the happy position he would lead us to believe it is in. Also there is this contention, that until the constitutional difficulties in connection with marketing legislation are overcome, such legislation should at least not be introduced piecemeal.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Section 92 does does not affect this.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:

It does, and I will prove it. In any case, although the member for South Fremantle is actuated by the very best motives in an endeavour to simplify the matter, as he thinks, for some of his constituents, he will land them in a position that they themselves do not realise confronts them. A considered examination of the problems of this industry would disabuse the minds of many of them of the belief that such legislation would confer benefits upon them. The producers want something different; they are not satisfied with their prices; they want, in the words of the member for Murray-Wellington, orderly marketing. What do those two

words mean? What do they convey? They mean, in the main, the roping-in of producers to enable them to receive a stabilised price by the fixing of the price the consumer shall pay and by imposing a levy on those who are producing towards the cost of the operations of the board.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is not a fair statement.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:
It is.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I will deal with that phase of it.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:

I realise that the hon. member will reply. I will say that the centres of population are a godsend to the country producer, if we stabilise the price to suit the producer on a basis that the consumer pays his quota towards making farming possible. It is contended that the Bill is being introduced, as it was previously contended a few years ago, at the request of the poultry farmers' organisation. This has been contradicted in the Press, but I challenge that statement. Is the poultry farmers' organisation truly representative of the poultry industry? A recent meeting of this organisation was called to consider the desirableness of introducing this measure, and it was attended by 40 poultry farmers. When this Bill was introduced in 1930, over 200 poultry farmers attended. Membership of the organisation is well under 200, that is, town and country, the number of country members outside a 40-mile radius being negligible. That cannot be denied. The poultry-keepers in the State with 150 fowls or over number 560; those with under 150 fowls total 19,085, but the financial membership of the organisation is under 200. The total number of eggs produced in the State is 8,000,000 dozen per annum, those produced within a 40-mile radius numbering 3,640,000 dozen in the town, and 4,360,000 dozen in the country. So that not only is the poultry farmers' organisation not a big organisation in the poultry world, but it represents a minority of the eggs produced. There is ample evidence I can submit to show that the industry is going ahead, and instances can be given where poultry farmers are in progressing circumstances. When introducing the Bill the member for South Fremantle said it was submitted to afford growers some relief, and he added that farmers were not blameless for their position. I

agree with that view, and those who are skilled in the industry should realise that it is a skilled occupation. Unfortunately, those who are skilled are penalised by those who are not skilled, and that is the case in almost every rural vocation to-day; those who are efficient in their work are paying in some measure for the inactivity of the inefficient. In bringing into effect legislation of this character there is always the danger of fixing the price high enough to enable the least efficient in the industry to make a living. That obtains in all branches where there is control, or an endeavour is made to control, by legislation, and so I am strongly opposed to the fixing of a minimum price. I think that those who are efficient should have the opportunity of showing that they have no desire to be loaded with the inefficient.

Mr. Thorn: What is the proposal of the board?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I will deal with that aspect. I will also ask, has the industry been retarded by the present voluntary system? I know the member for Guildford-Midland will say yes to that, and I am assuming the hon. gentleman will reply. In four years the State's production has increased by $1\frac{1}{2}$ million dozen, or 441 per cent. In New South Wales, where a board has operated during the same period, the increase has been under 200 per cent. I was not able to read in the hon. member's speech any suggestion whatever in the way of a proposal to increase the consumption of the commodity.

Mr. Sampson: New South Wales increased its output in an earlier period; we are only just starting to come into the picture.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Our market is still limited and Sydney, as is well known, has provided the best market for eggs in the Commonwealth. It has always been a very good market. There is a way of increasing the consumption of eggs in the metropolitan area, but not by a Bill of this nature. The way to do so is to ensure to the consumer a commodity of the best quality, and in that connection I submit that all that is necessary to assist the poultry industry to increase its output is to introduce legislation to deal with

candling and grading of eggs. It is contended that local prices are not high enough and that the handling charges are too high. The inference to be drawn is that the aim of the board is to remedy this by increasing prices and reducing marketing costs. Prices are governed by interstate parity and any effort to fix the price above this figure will defeat the object we may set out to accomplish. That is happening now with South Australia persistently selling eggs at a price lower than the price of any other State of the Commonwealth. They have a ready market not only in their own State but at times in New South Wales, where the higher price is maintained. The importation of eggs from the other States can neither be legally restricted nor can it be constitutionally opposed, and although by interjection it was said that this Bill does not in any way interfere with the provisions of Section 92 of the Constitution, and although the drafting of the Bill deliberately attempted to overcome the provisions of Section 92, it will be found in the early part of the Bill that the operations of the board will not interfere with interstate trade. In the latter clauses of the Bill it will be seen that there is to be no exemption. Section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution has regard for the freedom of trade between States, and this freedom cannot be restricted by any Act of Parliament. It is not possible for us to prevent eggs coming in from the other States if the prices and the marketing conditions in this State are more liberal. The Commonwealth Government at the moment, instead of upholding the Constitution, desire an alteration. Is it their desire that trade between the States shall be absolutely free? Can any hon. member support the proposal that the Commonwealth, in regard to trade and commerce, shall be absolutely free from State laws, and shall have overriding power over all State laws? Surely that is a position not desired. Should the decision in the case of *James v. the Commonwealth* mentioned by the member for Murray-Wellington, and which is before the Privy Council, be given in favour of the Commonwealth, the Commonwealth will not be bound by the same ties as those by which the States are bound, but will have unlimited powers

in all avenues of trade and commerce for all time. That distinctly has an important bearing on legislation of this type. Section 92, prescribing as it does that trade and commerce and intercourse amongst the States, whether by means of internal carriage or ocean navigation, shall be absolutely free, is the oldest part of the Australian Constitution. Its substance was incorporated in the resolutions adopted by the Federal Convention of 1891, before the Federal Constitution was drafted, and there can be no doubt about the prime contention and desire of that section. It was to ensure that there should be free and untrammelled trade between the States, and naturally the logical interpretation of it was that it was also intended to bind the Commonwealth. State legislation designed to promote the control of marketing through boards and pools but also restricting the combination between the States has been upset when tested in the High Court of Australia, and with legislation of this kind, which must interfere with that section of the Constitution, we are not on sound ground in an endeavour at this stage—particularly when that section of the Constitution is in the melting pot, when a test case is on its way to the Privy Council—to introduce in this Parliament something which interferes with commodities which are a subject of interstate and overseas trade. Members will agree that Section 92 of the Constitution must be preserved.

Mr. Thorn: It is not involved here.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: If it were permissible for me to quote Clauses 3 and 12 of the Bill, I would show the hon. member that it is involved. We cannot by the intervention of a marketing board protect this State from the introduction of a similar commodity from other States. That strikes us very fully in the proposals outlined in the Bill. There must also be a method of shutting out competitive goods if it is to be successful, and at all times we have the insuperable bar of that section of the Constitution. In making a comparison with operations in New South Wales, which the hon. member desires to follow, I have selected a strictly unbiassed journal to quote from, a journal which it may be contended is disinterested in the matter of egg-marketing. It is not a poultry journal, nor does it publish the writing of any interested party. I have selected the Sydney "Morn-

ing Herald" and I intend to quote from the leading article in that journal of the 28th October last, to show just what the operations of the Egg Board in New South Wales are and how they affect the egg-producer in that State.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You might quote from the "West Australian" of this morning.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I did not read the "West Australian" of this morning. This is what the Sydney "Morning Herald" had to say—

There is ample evidence that increasing numbers of poultry farmers are dissatisfied with the operations of the Egg Marketing Board. It is felt that in a time of low prices for the product and of high feed and other costs the board has largely failed to achieve the purpose for which it was established.

Mr. Thorn: Probably the writer of that article is expressing the views of the middleman.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I will show the hon. member to what extent the board is a middleman. The board on its account sales showing its deductions for September last set out that it has charged from 12 per cent. to 13 per cent. to the producer for the marketing of his eggs by the board, and at present with first-quality eggs at a shilling a dozen the board retains, to cover administrative marketing and stabilisation costs, no less than 12½ per cent.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: This is the "Morning Herald" you are quoting from?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, and it has not been effectively contradicted.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It depends to a great extent on your reading of the article.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The board in some instances charges as much as 21½ per cent. Surely that is a heavy price to pay for so-called "controlled and orderly marketing." I find in the Egg Marketing Board's annual report that the figures are self-explanatory and need very little comment. The total revenue for last year was £105,069, while the expenditure absorbed £91,846. This is the Egg Board, a replica of which is to be set up in this State. Of the pool moneys received, consignors to the Board's floors contributed £82,535 at the rate of 1½d. per dozen. Producer-agents contributed £22,128 at the rate of 1d. per dozen. On top of that, when the stabilisation in the 1933-34 period broke

down, the taxpayer of New South Wales became directly involved and it cost the Government £44,741 to keep up the stabilisation part of their accounts when compulsion was suspended. That is a direct charge to the taxpayers of that State and it has to be repaid during the next five years.

Mr. Thorn: They are astounding figures which you have quoted.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: They are true, for they are taken from the balance sheet of the Board's annual report, which clearly shows that in that year the operations of the Board cost the producers £105,000. And this cannot be denied, that prior to stabilisation, in the two years and 11 months of the Board's operations the producer was charged in collections and levies an amount in excess of £290,000.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Yet the producers vote for it every year.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I feel that if the vote taken was not a restricted vote, the Board would not get another mandate from those people. The taxpayer is directly concerned in the operations of the Board and may justly feel that before extensive financial commitments are made, the whole position should be impartially reviewed. Another objection I have to the Bill is that it does not set up any scheme, it does not outline any scheme under which it is to operate. In New South Wales in accordance with a decision of the courts, the Board sells any kind of eggs, because it has the power. That is something not to be desired. Virtually the Bill gives the Board power to do anything which the Board may decide upon. Is that sound? And should it have the approval of Parliament to extend operations in any way and any direction the Board may desire? I think the hon. member is there going very wide of the desires and wishes of the poultry industry, if he contends that such power should be given.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is what I have been working for all my life.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: In connection with the charges made in New South Wales I have shown that the smallest percentage the producer pays is between 10 per cent. and 12 per cent. In this State the percentage is about 6 per cent. Although it is contended by the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Fox), that these charges could be reduced, the question arises could they be reduced with safety to the grower? We

have an example in this State of a firm which in an endeavour to get business reduced its charges to the producer. I refer, of course, to Poultry Farmers Sales Ltd. As members know, that firm did not last very long. As a matter of fact, I think there is over £1,500 still owing, chiefly to the growers.

Mr. Sampson: Under control that could never have happened.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: But they certainly would have had very much more out of the producer. No one knows better than the hon. member that the management of such boards is a job for a man specialised in the business. As therefore it would be necessary to appoint a manager of experience and ability, I presume that we shall again follow the example of the New South Wales Board. It is interesting to note that the salary of the chairman of the Egg Marketing Board in New South Wales is £1,027 per annum.

Mr. Sampson: They handle tremendous quantities.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It has not been shown that if we follow the experience of New South Wales we shall benefit either the consumer or the producer, although it is shown that it means a great charge on the producers.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: You said the Milk Board saved the position.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: But this is not a parallel case, where one is subject to definite control in a definite limit. The other is open and cannot be restricted because it must be subject and open to inter-State trade. Even overlooking the fact that this legislation should be a matter for Government policy decision and introduction, and even instancing the fact that the producer seeking protection by the Bill does not quite know to what extent the Bill will go and does not realise its full effect upon himself, and even admitting that a similar board in another State has not produced the benefits which the hon. member suggested; overlooking all this, all these frailties, there is the bar of the constitutional difficulty. In that connection I should like to mention for the benefit of the member for Toodyay that as this Board is to be a Marketing Board to be vested with the usual functions of Marketing Boards, that is to say with the power of appropriation and the power to sell, it is definitely on the same lines as the Peanut Board in Queensland, whose opera-

tions when tested were proved to be ultra vires. It is the same board exactly, and as I previously instanced, it will be found that in the early part of the Bill the draftsman has endeavoured to cover up that provision and objection, but in the latter part of the Bill, in the second last clause it will be found that no eggs are to be exempt from the provisions of the Control Board. Despite all these objections I think the producer himself, who is seeking protection by these clauses of the legislation, does not quite know to what extent it will affect him. And at any rate until the constitutional difficulties are overcome, until the matter is decided upon by the Privy Council so that we may know where we stand, we would be very unwise to pass legislation of this nature.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford-Midland) [7.30]: The Minister correctly stated that I waited for him to speak. It is right that should be so. It would be wrong for members to exhaust their opinions favourable to a proposal, and then allow the Minister to come along at the end of the discussion to oppose the proposal. I knew the Minister was not favourable to the Bill, and therefore waited until I saw what his objections were, so that I might to the best of my ability endeavour to convince the House that he was wrong in his views. I was disappointed with the subject matter of the Minister's speech. He gave to us what we have had from the Agricultural Department for many years with respect to legislation of this kind. The Agricultural Department have a stock set of arguments and objections. Ever since I have been a member, and have attempted to influence the passage of this kind of legislation, I have met with the same opposition from the same source. That opposition has always attempted to read into these measures the idea that not only are we going to fix prices and stabilise the industry on behalf of the producers, but are going to penalise the consumers by the creation of an organisation that we are pleased to call organised marketing. They always raise the question that it interferes with interstate trade. That is not the point of view. Over and over again I have tried to induce those who are opposed to the organised marketing of our primary products to appreciate the fact that the control from the point of view of

local marketing is only a small matter, that the main objective is to extend our export connections and from our exports not only compete successfully against our competitors in different parts of Australia, but place upon the markets of the world the best we can produce with a view to obtaining for the producer the maximum return from his industry. The Minister has said that the parity of the local price must be in proportion to the interstate price. There is really no serious competition between the States with respect to eggs. Queensland has its organisation, and that State does not fight with New South Wales over eggs, although they differ as to other commodities. It would be right to say that practically speaking there is no competition interstate. There are periods when we send eggs to the Eastern States. That applied recently to the detriment of the egg producers of Western Australia. A firm, company or combination in Victoria decided to get control of as many eggs as possible, and created some kind of organisation. Evidently they sold forward a greater quantity than they could obtain. They sold forward on the export market. The result was they were short in their supplies as required by their contract, and they sent a representative to Western Australia to buy eggs from this market so that they could fulfil their contracts. Misjudgment on the part of the individual and miscalculation on the part of marketing organisations will always more or less interfere with organised marketing in any particular State. This Bill cannot interfere with that. Under the Federal Constitution it is impossible to interfere in any way with the free interchange of commodities between States. That will go on, and it does go on in the Eastern States to the extent that it is permissible in the other States to interchange commodities although they are subject to control by State laws, as this is applied to eggs in Queensland and New South Wales. The fact remains that legislation cannot in any way limit the interchange of commodities between the States. The organisations within the States are so conducted that there is little or no friction or irritation, apart from the special happenings to which I have referred, to disorganise or cause anxiety to the State organisations. This Bill is not very much concerned about the point to which the Minister devoted a good deal of time, namely the powers of the State to

interfere with the Eastern States, and his endeavour to show that the established price of eggs must bear comparison to the Eastern States parity. As a matter of fact, the parity in eggs in Western Australia must bear comparison during the export period with the London parity. We are not concerned in any way with the parity in the Eastern States unless that parity is viewed from the London export price aspect. The Minister also devoted considerable time to Section 92 of the Federal Constitution, and its application to a measure of this kind. It has no bearing on the Bill.

The Minister for Agriculture: Of course it has.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: That section has no restrictive authority over the State in regard to the control and marketing of eggs. It does not operate in any way so far as State activities of the kind are concerned. The section is to restrict the right or the power of the Commonwealth to interfere with our commodities. We have full power to interfere with our own commodities, though we cannot interfere with the free interchange of commodities in the other States.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Would there be any need to do so?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: No, and it is not anticipated in this Bill. All the time the Minister devoted to the Privy Council appeal in its relation to Section 92 represents so much waste effort. It has no bearing on legislation of this kind.

The Minister for Agriculture: You are quite wrong.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It would be just as sound to argue that the section would in some way restrict the power of the Whole Milk Board.

The Minister for Agriculture: The cases are not parallel.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: They are parallel. The Whole Milk Board has power within the State to control milk. The board proposed in this Bill will have similar power, possibly extended a little wider, but similar power to control eggs. When we come to the Dried Fruits Board, we are in conflict with Section 92, and the section does constitute a danger. There is a possibility of the Dried Fruits Board being declared ultra vires because that legislation does definitely interfere with inter-state trade. There is a marked difference between the two cases. The Minister has failed to realise the differ-

ence between the Dried Fruits Board as affected by Section 92—it is contended that the Federal Government have no power to enforce it—and legislation of this kind as illustrated by me in connection with the Whole Milk Board.

The Minister for Agriculture: You do not understand the position.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I am always enthusiastic about Bills of this kind. I do not know whether I am right or wrong, and I am too old to change now, but I have always been an advocate of the right of individuals who control their own production. A poultry farmer should have the right to control his poultry, just as I believe lumpers on the wharf at Fremantle have the right to control their labour. I believe in this control and have always supported it. I have tried to get through legislation for the trades unions to give them control so that they may get the maximum return for that which they supply, namely their labour. It is quite sound to extend that right to the owners of any particular commodity, whose standard of living is determined by the return they get for the commodity they market. If the collective selling of labour is sound, I cannot see that the collective selling of commodities can be unsound. The Minister referred to the poorness of the organisation. That is nothing to be proud of. I am always sorry for a limited organisation in any industry, or for any unrepresented organisation. When I introduced legislation of this kind some years ago I admit there was more enthusiastic support at that time than it is possible to get from the poultry farmers of to-day. I remember a meeting being held at that time in a Perth hall, a meeting packed to the doors. I do not know how many were present, but many hundreds were there. The utmost enthusiasm was shown for the Bill then under discussion. That Bill was ultimately defeated by a narrow majority in this Chamber. I remember also that the whole of my efforts on that occasion proved of no avail. It is true that organisation of poultry farmers is not as good as one would like. It is indeed hard to get all of them together for the purpose of reviewing their disabilities at present. The explanation is that they have lost heart. They have tried organisation over the years. They have been to Minister after Minister, to Government after Gov-

ernment, appealing for assistance to organise the marketing of their product so that their standard of comfort may be increased. But they have been denied assistance of this kind, until to-day the industry is in a deplorable condition. True, the organisation is limited; but that fact reflects no credit on the Agricultural Department as regards an industry valuable to the State while those engaged in it are not strong and vigorous. Numbers of our returned soldiers were able to follow the calling of poultry farmer. Although suffering from disabilities, they were capable of conducting an enterprise of that kind. Again, those described as "C" class men in numerous cases were able to follow this industry with the assistance of their families. It is disabilities of that kind, plus the competition involved in disorganised marketing, that influence me to make a special appeal to hon. members to lift this industry, which is of great value to the State. Someone has quoted figures showing that the State gets a greater return from egg marketing than fruit marketing. I understand there is not a great deal of difference between the value of the two commodities from the State point of view; but the figures supplied by, I think, the member for Irwin-Moore (Hon. P. D. Ferguson) disclose that the marketing of eggs is of greater financial value to Western Australia than is the marketing of fruit. Therefore the industry is one worth organising and worth fostering. The Minister must know that one cannot foster an industry if one has to deal with individuals. What is the difficulty to-day in regard to our wheat marketing? Is it not that there are differences of opinion between wheat farmers in regard to organisation? Is there not a want of unanimity? It is sad to see one organisation declaring something, and another organisation questioning the wisdom of the proposal and trying to create some other impression. While the wheat farmers differ amongst themselves, Ministers and Governments naturally are inactive, and Ministers and Governments find it difficult to understand what is really the point of view of the wheatgrowers. The organisation is not as sound and not as unanimous as is desirable in the circumstances of the wheat industry. And so it is with the egg industry and others. Where

an industry is strong, vigorous, and well-organised, where the members are enthusiastic, they take a keen interest in the general welfare of the industry. One member helps the other. Members meet to discuss the position from a mutual-help point of view, and the entire industry is elevated and the men and women engaged in it are given new heart through comradeship and the sympathetic desire of one individual through the organisation to help and strengthen the other. Let us hope that by getting a measure of this description through, better organisation of the poultry farmers will be achieved. There will be elections and registration, with a view to bringing the poultry farmers closely together so that they may improve the value of their commodity. The Minister pointed out that a sum of £44,000 had to be advanced to the New South Wales Egg Marketing Board in its early operations, and that this money has been practically lost to the State of New South Wales. In other words, the New South Wales Government were called upon to come to the rescue of the board, which at that period had not been able to handle the control of the commodity on sound economic lines. The member for Irwin-Moore is asking that this Bill be extended beyond limited districts to the whole of Western Australia. When the measure was drafted it was drafted with the knowledge that New South Wales had attempted too much in the initial stages, that the New South Wales board was not educated up to controlling the industry throughout the State. The New South Wales board is successful now because experience has enabled it to improve its methods of administration.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: We get the benefit of that experience.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I question that. Because of the attempt in New South Wales to control too wide an area in the initial stages, great difficulties were experienced before satisfaction could be given to those engaged in the industry. I trust the House will not attempt to set up control of the whole of the egg production in Western Australia. I do not think it would be wise for us to interfere to such an extent until we have been educated up to a higher standard of efficiency than we can possibly anticipate during the early stages of the

operations of a board of this kind. It would be unwise, in my opinion, to interfere with the sale of country eggs on the goldfields market, in the early stages. I quite agree, and the Bill provides, that an area should be declared. Probably I had in mind at the time the creation of an area somewhat on the same lines as that created under the Whole Milk Act. There we have a limited area, and the reason why the Whole Milk Act has operated so well from the inception is that it applies to only a limited area. The Whole Milk Board got in touch with the producers in that area.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: There was limitation and licensing. Egg producers are not limited.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I am dealing with the area at the moment, and I have no hesitation in saying that the board created under the Whole Milk Act was able to function to the satisfaction of the producers largely because its members really lived amongst the producers, could constantly get in touch with them, and thus had no difficulty in understanding the special conditions of the particular industry. Under the Dried Fruits Marketing Act we find exactly the same position. It is true that that Act is not limited in its operation as definitely as the Whole Milk Act is. But the Dried Fruits Act, though limited, permits of the board functioning beyond the area prescribed under the measure. The fact that the Dried Fruits Marketing Board does really operate where the production takes place is a great advantage. Western Australia's dried fruits are grown in a circumscribed area, extending not far beyond the Swan Valley. There is some dried fruit production at Katanning, but it is small. The main export quota is produced in the Swan district, and that fact enables the board to keep in touch with the maximum production, the production that counts on the overseas market. Again, the board has succeeded because of the limitation of its area to such a portion as it was capable of inspecting and understanding and administering. I would have no hesitation now in extending the operations of the Whole Milk Board. I would have no hesitation in giving that board additional powers. I said as much on the recent amending Bill. I have to-day the utmost confidence in the Whole Milk Board because it is now an educated board. It understands the milk

industry better to-day. While its operations may be restricted, as a result of the limitation imposed by the Act, we could with advantage to the industry and to producers and consumers extend the board's powers and functions. We could do that with absolute confidence. However, that is merely by the way. The boards I allude to have operated so long that they have got over their initial difficulties, and so understand their respective industries as to give Governments and Ministers the minimum amount of trouble. The Dried Fruits Marketing Act gives the Minister a right of veto over all actions of the board, but he has never brought that right into play, the reason being that the board understand the needs of the industry and that there is a happy relationship between the producers and the board. Thus there is no appeal from the board's decisions to the Minister. I appeal to the House, therefore, not to attempt too much in this Bill. It is not possible to expect that an election will produce the type best fitted to administer a proposition of this kind. I believe in democracy, but I always like to arrange an election so that the man I selected will be the man elected.

Mr. Marshall: No wonder you win Guildford-Midland!

Hon. N. Keenan: That is what may be called orderly electing.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Let me explain. I am associated with a great many marketing operations. It is my pleasure to devote a good deal of my spare time, and possibly more time than I can spare, to activities of this kind. I have found it remarkably difficult to obtain from the producers the kind of knowledge needed to enable one to understand thoroughly their point of view with regard to any particular commodity. It is strange, but nevertheless true, that whilst one has elections and whilst producers have the opportunity to elect their men, the common experience is that when difficulties are encountered one has to go outside the board, which is supposed to be representative of the cream of the industry, to interview other men, not as brilliant in the matter of securing election to boards of this description but in their quiet way having a greater knowledge than others who are more spectacular. That might apply in my own particular case, and I believe it has on many occasions. The fact remains

that in the initial stages of organisations of this description, experience shows that it is difficult, unless one organises beforehand, to secure the sound administration that is essential if success is to be achieved from the very outset. You, Mr. Speaker, know from actual experience, as I do, over a number of years, that when it is desired to organise a union in any particular industry it is the custom to go round and ascertain what men are outstanding in their trade, who are recognised by the employers as being the most competent of the workmen. The custom is to pick out those who are regarded as leaders in their particular industry, and steps are taken to have them elected to positions in the new union so that the most competent men available will be secured to direct operations. That course is pursued wisely, and that is why I am so anxious with regard to this Bill to limit the area of choice. I desire to get together those who are most likely to prove the best type of men to administer. The Bill is different from a previous measure of this description in that it prescribes definitely that there must be one certificated accountant appointed to the board. The reason for that is that experience has shown that without the assistance and direction of a certified accountant, it is most difficult to understand the economics of any particular marketing organisation and to regulate it in comparison to overseas prices. Therefore a man with accountancy knowledge is required. Hence that provision is inserted in the Bill.

Mr. McLarty: But you may have a dozen boards.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I do not think so. If a board for the metropolitan area is created, eggs that come from the country districts will become the property of the board who will direct the operations. In my opinion, there will be no need to extend operations beyond that, provided that the country egg has free interchange on the goldfields. If, with the creation of the metropolitan board, they were to decree that the poultrymen were not to have free marketing rights outside the metropolitan area, then, of course, other boards would have to be created because of that direct interference. Although it is not proposed in the Bill to limit the measure to the metropolitan area, because circumstances may arise making it necessary to extend

operations into other given districts, in this particular instance, it is intended to limit it to the metropolitan area and thus give the metropolitan board control over eggs coming into the metropolis. The object of that is to secure organised exporting, and the maximum quantity of eggs from the country districts to the metropolitan area during the flush period, thus providing the maximum quantity for export overseas.

Mr. McLarty: And there is no provision for the country producer at all.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It is wonderful what has been accomplished, mostly by co-operative organisation, in extending the operations of egg marketing, for the purpose of exporting, to the country districts. At present quite a quantity of eggs are sent regularly during the flush period from Geraldton to Fremantle. After being handled and properly packed in Geraldton, very few of those eggs are found to be below export requirements. In other words, practically the whole of those eggs on arrival at Fremantle are found to be good enough to pass the Commonwealth regulations and inspection, and are exported with eggs from the metropolitan area. I quote that position regarding Geraldton because that centre is a long way from the metropolitan area, and has not the regular train service enjoyed by other country districts. Therefore if that can be done with regard to eggs from the Geraldton district, we can certainly start operations throughout the other country districts and, by organisation, largely increase the quantity of eggs exported, at the same time so controlling the export trade as to guarantee that the quality is right up to standard. What is the difficulty to-day with regard to the export of eggs? It is that there are various exporters operating. One poultry farmer is competing with his neighbour, and so undermining the market in London. At one period, in company with Mr. Bath, I created what we termed a marketing trust. It was a small combination of a few of us with the object of extending the marketing of our eggs overseas. We accomplished quite good results. In those days we were proud if we exported between 4,000 and 5,000 cases a year. To-day one organisation with which I am associated is exporting 22,000 cases of eggs per year. Members will appreciate how the business has extended. The co-operative movement has improved marketing conditions a great

deal, particularly with regard to the country egg. The great trouble is the competition between the various marketing organisations to get, in the first place, the maximum quantity of eggs from the producer. One result of that is that the very attempt to secure the maximum quantity encourages the producer to include his inferior eggs, or, at any rate, to be not quite so careful as he might. Many organisations are handling the eggs, with the result that the producers have been disorganised because of the various buyers who are competing for their output. After that the buyers start competing in the market in London and elsewhere, with results that are obvious. The price of the commodity is reduced in proportion to the competition. Why is it that our wheat in Australia commands a higher price and is more easily sold than other wheat? I am prepared to admit that our commodity is slightly better than that of the Eastern States, but what contributes mostly to our success is our control over our wheat. Generally speaking, there is one large selling organisation in the world's markets. I want exactly the same position in connection with our eggs. I would like to see the principle applied to all our primary products. I have endeavoured to secure the passage of a Bill for the general control and organised marketing of all primary products. I believe that ultimately the Government will introduce a measure of that description. I trust that after the general elections they will appreciate the fact that such legislation is necessary if we are to do better than we are doing at present.

Hon. C. G. Latham: We will do that for you.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I do not anticipate that the hon. member will have that opportunity for a long time to come. However, he will be able to assist.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: At any rate you will not secure its passage without our assistance.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I am afraid I must continue to rely upon the present occupants of the Treasury bench to deal with the matter, during the next few years at any rate.

Hon. C. G. Latham: We will see about that when the division is taken.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: There is a real need for legislation of this description in regard to various commodities, and I would

like to deal with that phase, but I recognise it would be out of order. I have given illustrations to show that the Minister's contention regarding the application of Section 92 is not sound, and therefore that phase is not dangerous. The "West Australian" this morning contained an article strongly in opposition to the Bill.

Mr. Hegney: You do not take any notice of that paper, do you?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: No, but I was going to say that I wish the "West Australian" would practise what it preaches. When the "West Australian" wants to sell its commodity, it sees to it that there is organised marketing for that particular commodity. For instance, I have a most interesting document. It is headed, "Perth Newspaper Proprietors' Association." It sets out that tenders are called, returnable by a certain date, for the purchase of the whole of the waste paper, white and printed, from the offices of West Australian Newspapers Ltd., the proprietors of the "Daily News" Ltd., and the "Sunday Times" Publishing Company. It states that the forms of tender, including conditions, are available at the office of the Association.

Mr. Marshall: No competition there!

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: None at all. There is no danger of competition. These newspapers know perfectly well that if they want to secure the correct value of the commodity they require to sell, there must be no competition. They get together and take the action I have indicated.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It is not a case of do as I do, but do as I say.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Yes, I am talking at the "West Australian," in the hope that I will reform that journal. I hope I shall be able to influence those associated with the paper and induce the editors to endeavour to do as I am doing. I preach collective bargaining; they practise collective bargaining regarding their own commodities. I ask them to combine with me so that we may be a happy effective combination, and following their practice of forming an association so as to eliminate competition in the market for their products, they will join with me in extending that desirable method of organised marketing to the primary producers and the primary products of this State.

Mr. Hegney: They also standardise prices.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Yes. I commend the judgment of the "West Australian." I stand for organisation, and I hope they will see the unreasonableness of preaching one thing and practising another. I hope they will assist in doing something to assist the poor unfortunate struggling poultry farmers of the metropolitan area.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Do not forget the way they operate with their agents regarding the distribution of the newspapers.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I do not desire to rub it in too hard. I believe I am making some impression with my friends in the Press gallery, and I believe they will see the error of their ways. Perhaps to-morrow morning they will indicate that they have reconsidered the article that appeared this morning. I trust they will recognise the advantage to be gained from organised marketing, and endeavour to assist us in extending that most desirable encouragement to this section of our primary producers.

Mr. Thorn: Why not introduce a Bill along those lines?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: That is purely a matter between the newspapers and myself. The Minister, in his desire to convince the House that organised marketing by legislative action in New South Wales had failed, quoted the "Sydney Morning Herald" on the board's operations and the prices obtained for the commodity. I ask the Minister why did he go to the "Sydney Morning Herald"? I had rather he had quoted from "Organised Marketing," the official organ of the Marketing Board.

The Minister for Agriculture: I have that also.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The Marketing Board is a semi-Government institution. It was created by statute; it is controlled to a great extent by the Government, and surely the journal of the board should be the best authority.

The Minister for Agriculture: It is run by the board.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The Minister would not suggest that a board operating under legislation and controlled by the Government would mislead the public?

The Minister for Agriculture: Definitely. You have not analysed the report.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: If I wanted to get the facts regarding the trade union movement, I would go to the "Worker"

not to the "West Australian," and similarly if I wanted information about organised marketing, I would go to the journal of the board that does the marketing.

The Minister for Agriculture: Read the annual report.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I have a copy of the report, but I do not propose to read it now. I have quite a number of papers published regularly by the board, and they give the utmost detail for the benefit of the producers. Here is an instance—

It is emphasised that the pool average price of 1s. 0.419d. per dozen was paid on every saleable egg received, and includes all small pullet eggs, bloodspots, incubator clears, cracks and case eggs.

In other words, the price in New South Wales is substantially more than the price in Western Australia.

The Minister for Agriculture: And always has been, but it is not so high now as it was previous to the existence of the board.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I question that.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It depends upon what period you are referring to.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Before the establishment of the board in New South Wales, the production of eggs in Western Australia was very small compared with the consumption. We had to import eggs to supply local needs, but to-day we have reached an export position; we have surplus eggs for export. Since we have been able to export and New South Wales is exporting, New South Wales continually pays to its producers a higher price than the producers in Western Australia receive. I challenge contradiction of that statement. This should not be so. We are nearer to the British market; our freight is lower; we have advantages that New South Wales has not got, and in spite of those advantages we are not doing as much for our producers as New South Wales and Queensland are doing for theirs. The reason is that there is no competition in sales. In New South Wales one producer is not murdering another. The producers combine for mutual help; there is centralised control and that is bound to improve the quality and value of the commodity. That is what we want here, and it is because we have not got it, because the producers are competing one with another, murder-

ing one another on the market, that we have to suffer the relatively small price for our commodity as compared with the States in which organised marketing exists. I trust that members will appreciate that organised marketing has operated in Queensland and New South Wales for years. If there were weaknesses such as the Minister contended, it would be an awful reflection on the poultry farmers in those States. It would be tantamount to saying that although the board had failed and had been a huge burden on the producers owing to the cost of administration, and although the board had charged an excessive rate for marketing the eggs, the producers were continually re-electing them and declaring in favour of the legislation for controlled marketing. While the Minister was in Queensland it was contended that the control of commodity marketing would not continue.

The Minister for Agriculture: If it is thoroughly organised, not if it is disjointed.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I am proud of what has been accomplished in Queensland. At the outset Queensland experienced a rotten time. I followed events closely because the officer who originated the organisation and controlled it was for many years associated with Westralian Farmers, Ltd., and was supplied by the company to the Queensland Government. That officer was in close communication with me, because I sympathised with him in his struggle, and was proud of what he had accomplished. That officer to-day is the Commonwealth representative in Canada. In the early stages, the Minister knows as well as I do, there was a great deal of dissatisfaction with the organisation. The producers did not understand it. The board tried to do too much, but ultimately it became efficient, and to-day Queensland would never dream of repealing that legislation which gives control of practically all Queensland's products, particularly those raised in quantities for export. There has been a good deal of expansion in organised marketing, but I think the outstanding achievement has been that of New South Wales in egg marketing. I submit that the world is being organised on the basis of centralised and concentrated marketing. We know that the power of Denmark to rule the markets of the world in many commodities is not due to a superiority of commodity or to more economical

production; it is due to the presentation of the commodity, the packing and grading and the regular supplies of a standard quality by a board controlling the whole of the export of that country. The Danish authorities do not allow one firm of exporters to compete with another. That was tried years ago, and it failed. Denmark has re-established itself, not on production, because it had practically the same production years ago, but because it has control by the State and marketing is done under the direction of the State. Why has Major Elliot succeeded? Why is he causing the Dominions so much anxiety? Because he has legislation which gives him control of certain commodities. Britain is actually practising what we are proposing under this Bill. In submitting this legislation we are not ahead of the times. We are not attempting anything that is not understood from a world point of view. We are only following what has been in practice for years in many European countries. It has come into active operation in Great Britain, and Roosevelt in America is struggling hard to get something like control of the commodities of that country. To market successfully overseas, it is necessary to market collectively or under Government control. The Governments to-day are the marketers, and where individuals try to compete with Governments, they fail. We in Western Australia are not succeeding in regard to the relative value of our commodities, because we are not organised at the other end and are not doing the work that needs to be done. Consider the work of Mr. McCann, the trade commissioner of South Australia. Members have no doubt read within the last few days of the changed trade balance and the wonderful buoyancy of South Australian finances on the London market. All this was due, it was explained, to the activities of Mr. McCann in the placing of South Australian commodities on the British market in an orderly organised manner. That is the kind of thing this Bill aims at. We are not concerned about fixing a local price. I hope the board will not attempt anything of the kind. The Dried Fruits Board do not fix the price of dried fruits on the local market. They do organise and control the export. They take control of the commodity and distribute to everybody who retails it, and those people can sell at any price they like. The retailers can com-

pete with one another in the selling of the product locally, but in order that the local market will not be excessively supplied, the board arrange for a given quantity to be left in the State sufficient for the State's need, while the rest is exported. So it is with the Metropolitan Whole Milk Act. The board control the whole milk, and while they guarantee a price to the producer, they do not interfere with the price to the consumer. Any price can be charged to a consumer by the competition of the various distributors licensed by the board.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The price is limited; they cannot charge more than a certain amount.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: But it is a very high limit. Generally speaking there is no real control of the retail price. For the producer, however, the price is definitely fixed. I hope the board would not interfere in that way. I consider the board would show the same judgment as other boards have shown. This is not a question of interfering to any extent with local consumption. The board would interfere to the extent of seeing that the best of the commodity was placed on the market, and made as attractive and saleable as possible, so as to increase the local consumption. They would see that eggs fit for pulp were pulped and marketed according to requirements. All that work would be done by the board, but, so far as my judgment goes, the board would not attempt to direct prices for local consumption. That would be left to the judgment of the distributors. I therefore ask the House to view this legislation as legislation that aims at lifting the industry from its present competitive basis and from which we are not getting the best results. If we give the industry an opportunity of organising, it will be possible to get the maximum return for the commodity in competition overseas, and in this way improve the standard of comfort of those engaged in poultry farming to-day. I hope the House will support the second reading. If there are any weaknesses in the drafting, they can be put right in Committee. I know of course that the Bill is not what we would like it to be, but a private member is circumscribed by the Standing Orders in respect of what he may do. So long as we are careful in the creation of the board, we can leave that board to frame regulations as has been done by the Whole Milk Board, for the

guidance and direction of those engaged in the industry. The result of legislation of this description will be a benefit to the producer without penalising the consumer. It has been done before and it can be done again. Therefore, legislation of this kind is in the interests of the State and should receive the support of members generally.

MR. THORN (Toodyay) [8.33]: It gives me pleasure to support the second reading of the Bill. I do not say that I am prepared to accept it as it is. Undoubtedly it is capable of amendment, but I support the principle and with the member for Murray-Wellington, I should like to see the Bill bring in the whole of the State. I should like to see the farming community provided for and be able to take full advantage of the legislation. The position to-day is that in the Old Country the Minister for Agriculture there is making full provision for controlling all primary products, and the object of the appointment of a board of the nature proposed by the Bill would be to make provision for the proper handling, grading and packing of export eggs. Another advantage would be to ensure and guarantee fresh eggs to the consumers of Western Australia. That is not possible to-day. Under the board every egg would be properly candled and guaranteed fresh. The poultry farmers are asking for this legislation and they are very keen on it. Apart from the main body there are a number of branches. One at Mundaring is very desirous of seeing this legislation passed and they are hopeful that the House will agree to the Bill with certain amendments. I am afraid that chaos will result if we allow the measure to make provision for 50 poultry farmers to hold a referendum and apply to the Governor General to create a board to govern the future of those 50 growers. What we want is a board to govern the whole of the industry. I cannot understand any opposition coming from the Minister or my friends opposite, because one plank of their platform is similar to ours, and that is to make provision for this method of marketing.

The Minister for Agriculture: Not this method.

Mr. THORN: Yes; on page 89 of the constitution, paragraph (c) will be found to read, "The maintenance and encouragement of all pools so that the industry will be able to market the products without interfer-

ence by the middleman." That is the platform of the Minister's party.

The Minister for Lands: That is not in this Bill.

Mr. THORN: We can amend the Bill to make it workable.

The Minister for Lands: Why don't you discuss the principles of this Bill?

Mr. THORN: I am dealing with the principles of orderly marketing. I should say that members opposite would be only too pleased to support this class of legislation. When the previous Bill was introduced, I remember very well that most members on the opposite side of the House voted for the measure, and I should think the member for South Fremantle need not have any concern over the fate of the Bill on this occasion. The industry is growing and becoming very important as well. Apart from the State activities, it is important from the export point of view. Last year according to statistics, we exported 64,000 cases of eggs from this State for a return of £125,000. There is a ready market in London and that makes it all the more necessary why we should have a properly constituted board of control. Other boards in the State have proved satisfactory and there is no reason why a board to control egg marketing should not also be successful. We are all very proud of the operations of the Dried Fruits Act and the Whole Milk Act. The Minister referred to Section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution. I think I am right when I say that the dispute between James and the Commonwealth Government at the present time has nothing to do with Section 92 of the Constitution. The dispute is concerned with the regulation which was passed by the Commonwealth Dried Fruits Board in connection with the export of dried fruits to New Zealand and Canada, and it is not interfering with inter-State trade at all. The point is this, that when the Commonwealth Control Board came into being they opened up markets with Canada and New Zealand at a fixed f.o.b. price, and the board would have nothing to do with those markets because the home market was more attractive. Now that there has been a slump in the home market, it is desired to export to New Zealand and Canada, but those people do not want to export at the f.o.b. price fixed by the Commonwealth;

they want to carry on a cut-throat business at any price that suits them and upset the whole of the arrangements made with Canada and New Zealand. That is all they are setting out to do and that is all they have done. The Bill before us now does not infringe Section 92 of the Constitution at all. It does not prevent inter-State trade and I say that because with the dried fruits legislation to-day there is still dried fruit coming here from the Eastern States.

Mr. Warner: Why?

Mr. THORN: We cannot stop it, and the same applies to the Bill before us.

Mr. Tonkin: Will this Bill affect the marketing of Easter eggs?

Mr. THORN: The hon. member has been used to dictating to school children all his life and he thinks that he is still talking to his pupils in this Chamber. I do not want to be rude to him, but I am afraid he is under the impression that he still wields the cane. I hope the Chamber will give the member for South Fremantle the support his measure deserves. He is making an honest attempt to improve the marketing of eggs in this State and, if he succeeds, the result will be an improvement in the standard for export and also in our packing methods. In every way the consumers will be assured of receiving a sound article. I repeat that I do not think the Bill is satisfactory, but I feel sure members on this side of the House will assist the sponsor of the Bill to improve it in every possible way so that it may become satisfactory and workable for all concerned.

MR. MOLONEY (Subiaco) [8.43]: I feel rather diffident in speaking on the second reading after the able addresses delivered by the member for Guildford-Midland and the member for Toodyay, who extolled the virtues of the Bill. I was inclined to be rather in accord with the sentiments expressed by the member for Toodyay until he pointed out that the Bill was something akin to the Dried Fruits Act. Members have a vivid recollection of that dragnet measure which I opposed.

Mr. Thorn: I do not think you ever read it.

Mr. MOLONEY: There is a desire to secure all these advantages for one particular section of the community at the expense of all the others. I wish I could support

the member for South Fremantle in his initial venture.

Mr. Thorn: We have always been thankful to the Labour Government for having introduced the Dried Fruits Act.

Mr. MOLONEY: Immediately anything is given the sanction of this House and it becomes law, the people are subject to it and therefore it is a matter of analysing what is contained in measures that are brought before us. What will now be the object of the organisation proposed under the Bill?

Mr. Thorn: Collective bargaining.

Mr. MOLONEY: In other words, an organisation will be created for the benefit of a small section of the community only. They desire that it shall apply to a restricted locality. They generally like to fasten a title on the producer, but I do not know whether the individuals themselves come within the same category as the producer.

Mr. Marshall: No.

Mr. MOLONEY: This orderly marketing may possibly be akin to the brown hen mentioned by the member for Toodyay during the time he desired to institute orderly marketing—that brown hen which was responsible for laying 365 eggs in one year, according to the hon. member. I am not prepared to vouch for the accuracy of that statement, but I well remember listening to the hon. member making it. This renowned hen, a small one at that, produced 365 eggs in one year. If all the hens to be found in the restricted locality are equally prolific, certainly the board will have some difficulty in marketing the combined produce. But those I am concerned about are the people who will have to buy these eggs. Under the Bill we are going to organise a board with considerable power that will relieve the producer, or the person who owns the hens, of the product of the hens and place it in the hands of the board to sell; and this board, vested with that power, will apply only to a specified area, and the board we are told will be able to export these eggs, or do what they like with them. And then we are told again in softer tones that they are not considering local consumption.

The Minister for Agriculture: You do not believe that?

Mr. MOLONEY: No, but I am putting it in that soft tone, the way they put on the soft pedal. We are not concerned, they

say, with the local consumer, but only with export. They are looking at it only from the broad point of view, the London parity—with what wonderful words they actuate the people! They are selling in the open markets of the world, but have no concern with the local consumer. There is in the Bill an interpretation of all that comes within the purview of the measure, whether it be a duck egg or a fowl egg, and as to what is meant by egg pulp. I am informed that on that point they were not quoting a very reliable authority. The pulp is yielded from certain eggs which are laid by fowls owned very widely in Perth. I want to ask the sponsors of the Bill whether they have included egg pulp such as is produced by cormorants and other sea and river fowl to be found on our islands and along the banks of the Swan River. If a few cormorants' eggs were collected and added to the pool, probably the quality of that pool would be greatly benefited. So we see the wide ramifications of the Bill. We can find in it many anomalies that do not occur to a person until he makes a close perusal of the measure. And we find what is of greater moment still, that the consumer is the person who will pay—and it will be the local consumer, too. And we are told again that Section 92 of the Constitution Act does not apply to this matter. But do the sponsors of the Bill realise that there must be a free interstate flow of trade, that it is a corollary to Federation, something which is contained in the Constitution? And if we fix the price of eggs at 9d. or 1s. per dozen, or whatever price may be fixed by this wonderful board, for local consumption, how, then, is Section 92 going to apply if we find that, as a result of the high price fixed, the Eastern States decide to avail themselves of the facilities offering in that high price? Will Section 92 of the Constitution apply then? Shall we be able to place a mark against those eggs? Fortunately Section 92 would come into operation and would be a safeguard. It acts as an automatic adjustment; people are protected by it and it is only specious reasoning to say that Section 92 has no application. One has only an indication of it, but we are still told that, despite all this bolstering up under the Dried Fruits Act, the member for Toodyay, said the Act was something to aspire to, and that they are still sending in dried fruits from the Eastern States, despite all the protec-

tion offered. So I say that the sponsors of this Bill have failed to show that it is not something which is being created for the benefit of a few poultry farmers in this State. I have yet to learn that there is any volume of opinion on the part of those poultry farmers to embrace this one opportunity given. One analyses the Bill only to find that it is for the metropolitan area. What a wonderful boon it will give to certain people temporarily to exploit the people of the metropolitan area, and what are we going to do about the country eggs? It seems we are going to place them outside the ambit of the Bill. It is easy to see the avariciousness of Country Party members, who are jealous of the close preserve made in the Bill, and who want to get in their country producers also, that they may have a little benefit from the Bill. The sponsor of the Bill, of course, is actuated by the highest ideals and a wish to protect the producers. But there is a duty on the members of the House to view these things closely, to analyse them and to get them into true perspective.

MR. BOYLE (Avon) [8.55]: In supporting the second reading I regret having to criticise, perhaps strongly. The principle involved in the measure is one that should appeal to the vast majority of primary producers in this State. We have tried for years to bring about a form of protective organised marketing for primary producers in this State in particular, and the Commonwealth in general, but in regard to this Bill I qualify my support by saying that I could not dream of allowing it to go on the statute-book without attempting serious amendment. The Minister has quoted figures to show that 560 poultry-owners have each 150 birds or more and that no fewer than 19,000 owners have fewer than that number, but are producing eggs, thus opening up tremendous possibilities in the way of a board. Simple arithmetic shows that, under the provisions of the Bill, when an owner has 50 head of poultry, 50 such owners may form a board within the prescribed area. That would mean that it is possible, under the Bill, to have no fewer than 400 boards operating in the State, which reduces the proposal to an absolute absurdity. I should like to see the Bill amended on the lines laid down by the member for Irwin-Moore

(Hon. P. D. Ferguson). This principle involved in the Bill is too great to become ridiculous in this fashion. I intend to endeavour to amend the Bill in Committee so as to have the State board provided for, that State board to consist of two members representing the metropolitan area, two members representing all the country outside the metropolitan area, and a Government nominee as chairman. I believe there should be a Government nominee on the board because he is the link between producers and consumers. It is useless to set up a board within the prescribed area, which means a metropolitan board; that is, within the prescribed area. I am sure the framers of the Bill have in mind the prescribed area known as the metropolitan area. That will leave out of calculation altogether the producers of eggs in country areas. That is a position that would be stressed contrarywise by the members who have spoken and who are mostly representatives of metropolitan or semi-metropolitan constituencies. But it must be borne in mind that the egg-production in this State is growing by leaps and bounds, and to my thinking the main production of eggs for export must come from new areas.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: It does.

Hon. N. Keenan: And rotten ones, too.

MR. BOYLE: I do not believe that; it is an exploded idea. The theory that the farmer goes around every few weeks and collects eggs is an exploded theory. Two days ago at Merredin I counted 20 cases of eggs properly packed to go to the coast for export. People who received them would not take them again if they were not up to standard.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: The best export eggs come from Geraldton.

MR. BOYLE: That is a considerable distance from the metropolitan area, but it is an area that would be left out, under this Bill. The member for Nelson says he is resolutely opposed to boards, or to anything of a compulsory nature. That frame of mind belongs to the distant past in respect to the marketing of primary products. Anyone who has given attention to the matter knows that producers have begun to realise they must have some say in the marketing of their products. Too long has it been the belief that one type of person can produce primary products, and that God sent another entirely different kind of person to

sell them. The member for Subiaco spoke about cormorants at Carnac and Garden Island. The cormorants do not live so far away; they are in the city of Perth. I am not talking about cormorants' eggs. I am sorry such a crude attempt has been made to solve a problem which must be solved if producers are to continue to exist. A lot of argument has been adduced concerning Section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution Act. This section lay dormant for many years. It remained quiescent until we wanted a compulsory wheat pool for Australia. The Scullin party brought forward the finest Bill ever introduced for the marketing of wheat, and Section 92 was dug up so that the measure might be laid low. All marketing legislation in Australia of that type must now remain in abeyance until an appeal is made to the Privy Council.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That only applies to Commonwealth legislation.

Mr. BOYLE: Exactly. Section 92 has been held to be valid regarding the interchange of commodities between the States, in that the Commonwealth laws are not affected by that section. That is laid down by a judgment of the highest court in the land, the High Court. Its judgment should suffice for the people of the land. The Statute of Westminster passed in 1927 is often overlooked. The Colonial Laws Validity Act is vitally affected by that statute, which lays down that only in extreme cases will the Privy Council upset a decision delivered by a superior Dominion court. I hold that the fuss made over Section 92 is made by people who wish to destroy any incentive on the part of the primary producer to set up his own board and market his own products. Most of the opposition to boards comes from businesses that are themselves controlled by boards. The trend in commerce to-day is for competing businesses to merge into bigger businesses, and to secure for the controlling boards the best brains that money can buy. Producers should have the right to set up their own boards. Of course this must be done by legislative enactment in order that it may have effect. That is the point to which we are working to-day, namely, to secure the cost of production plus a reasonable profit on the sale of the product. An endeavour is made in the Bill to attain this object, and for that reason I am prepared to support it. The

pennut board in Queensland has been referred to, and has been adversely commented upon. Queensland, although it has had an almost continuous Labour Government for many years, has passed every primary product in the State to the care of a board. These boards are functioning perfectly. Every primary industry in that State is organised and cared for by a board, and every industry is thriving. The Minister says the egg industry is going ahead in Western Australia, and that 8,000,000 dozen eggs were produced last year. At 1s. a dozen that represents £400,000. Surely it is of sufficient importance that such an industry should be placed in the care of a board so that the industry may be expanded and protected. The Minister said that in 1891 one of the principal points in the convention was interstate free trade, that there should be no hold-up in the flow of trade between the States. Many things have happened between 1891 and this year. The Federation that some of us welcomed in 1901 is not the Federation we think it should be. An important section such as the wheatgrowing industry, worth about £25,000,000 a year, is liable to collapse unless something is done to safeguard and protect it. I sympathise with the egg producers. With all its faults, I am prepared to support the Bill on the principle that it attempts to do something that should have been attempted long ago.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. M. F. Troy—Mr. Magnet) [9.10]: I have always been interested in attempts to introduce legislation having for its purpose a special object. Whilst in my department I do not come into contact with this sort of thing, as one who is interested in the production of the country and its welfare, I feel I ought to express an opinion. Very few members who have spoken in favour of the Bill have addressed themselves to the subject matter of the Bill. This is not an affront to the Chair. You, Sir, have been very tolerant to us all. The member for Guildford-Midland made a long speech, and the member for Toodyay and the member for Avon also made speeches. All those speeches might have been on marketing generally, though what we are discussing is this particular Bill. What are the points in favour of or against this legislation? The member for Avon said that the producers were entitled to a payable price for their pro-

ducts. That is admitted. Are we to accept the principle that the producer who sells wheat, wool, eggs and other products must be entitled to make a profit on everything he sells? Is it to be laid down that in the production of one of these products he must not make a loss? Is it urged that when he gets a good price for wool, that gives him a payable price for the whole of his farming operations, or that when he sells his wheat he can be said to have had a successful year's operations? He must also get a payable price for the butter, eggs and other things he produces? Is the community to be subject to an enactment by which everything that is produced must be sold at a payable price?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The poultry farmer does not produce wheat and wool.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This Bill is confined to egg-producers, not to poultry farmers. It says that any egg-producer coming into the restricted area shall be controlled by the board. That is the object of the Bill, and upon that issue the House must decide. Of course, the poultry farmer is entitled to make a profit out of his industry. Is it not possible for poultry farmers to organise so that they get a payable price without such drastic powers as are asked for in the Bill? The Bill provides that in any area in which are located 15 egg-producers, a poll may be demanded. That poll may elect three producers, and with two Government nominees they will comprise a board for the control of the product. Why the three producers and two Government nominees? What have the Government nominees to do with it? If the argument is that the producer must control the sale of his products, why are the Government nominees on the board? What interest do they represent? What good purpose do they serve? I assume they are only there as a pretence, to pretend that those two persons can out-vote the three producers. It cannot be done. The Bill provides that three members of the board shall constitute a quorum. If the Government nominees are absent, there are only the three producers left. Those three can do anything under the Bill, anything with the product of any person who produces one egg. The Bill contains extraordinary provisions. The board can control eggs that are used in the household. A person has to get permission to use eggs. The board may exempt eggs for use in households. Why should

power be given to any board to exempt eggs that a person uses in his own household? Why should those three persons be given power to exempt? There is nothing those three people cannot do, under the Bill. These are the objectionable features. Those in favour of the Bill have all talked about what they call orderly marketing. What can we assume may be done under this proposed legislation? The three producers, a majority of the board, will dictate orders. Naturally they will dictate orders in their own interests. If 50 egg producers in the metropolitan area demanded a poll and secured the formation of a board under this authority, every egg coming in from the metropolitan area would be their property. What would happen to the country producer then?

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: That is what we are all asking.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The country producer would have no liberty of action whatever. Those three would control the metropolitan market absolutely. And recollect that this legislation is termed fair and equitable! Of course it is not by any means. Personally I will not support legislation prohibiting the country producer from getting his share of this market. He is as much entitled to his share of this market, and of any other market in Western Australia, as anybody else. The people who drew up this Bill were not in a reasonable frame of mind.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: It is exactly the same Bill as you supported three or four years ago.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. I opposed it, and in almost the same language.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You voted for it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I opposed it.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: You supported the second reading.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If I did, it was subject to amendment, and considerable amendment. I have read my speech made on that occasion, and I could speak in almost the same language to-night as I did then. If this legislation did pass, it would not be Constitutional. The member for Avon (Mr. Boyle) said the Federal High Court was the final authority. That is all very well on the platform, or from a

soap box; but it is no good for facing the facts as they exist, those facts being that the Federal High Court is not the highest authority, but the Privy Council is. Whereas the member for Toodyay (Mr. Thorn) asserted, on some authority, that Section 92 did not operate in regard to legislation of this character, nearly every other authority in Australia possessed of knowledge and experience and qualifications says it does. The Federal Attorney General definitely states that in his opinion all this legislation is unconstitutional.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Not purely State legislation.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, not the State legislation; but what is the good of this measure if it is confined to the State? On the goldfields the eggs sold are South Australian eggs.

Mr. Sleeman: They would not be very fresh eggs.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have been surprised that egg producers down here have not taken advantage of the goldfields market. If in Western Australia the price of eggs is put up by the proposed board, South Australian eggs will come in and capture the market. South Australian vegetables have come here and taken possession of our market. South Australia would capture the Western Australian egg market also under this legislation, which would make eggs dearer. Perhaps eggs are unduly cheap now. I am not going to dispute that. But all this talk of orderly marketing is not conducive to orderly marketing at all. Its only purpose is to give one section of the community certain statutory powers. It never had any other purpose; or it may have had other purposes, but that is its chief purpose.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It helps to level up the position.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It empowers one section of the community to exploit another section.

Mr. Boyle: Sir George Pearce said that in 1931.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If the principle is fair and everything is above board, let us have it all round. Let us have a statutory board for every trade and every calling, and let everybody fix his own price. Then there can be no objection.

Mr. Moloney: And let every trade and every calling have a majority on its board, too.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. Will hon. members supporting the Bill agree to that? If this legislation is passed on the principle of a fair reward for labour and the securing of that reward, let us have it all round.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You have it all round.

Mr. Sampson: The price of labour is fixed by the Arbitration Court.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There is nothing about the Arbitration Court in the Bill. There is nothing in the Bill about proving a case. There is nothing in the Bill about an independent authority. If these things were in the Bill, I could have no possible objection to the measure. But the Arbitration Court here in the Bill is a majority of people who will fix a price for themselves. Is that consistent? Of course it is not. These hon. members will not go to the Arbitration Court. They can capture this House easily on a vote to submit all these matters to an independent board.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: You have that power. You can do it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Hon. members opposite get cold about that. They object that such a proposal is not practical. It is too practical, and that is the trouble about it for them. What are these people trying to drive us to? To legislation giving them undoubted privileges at the expense of people who have no such privileges. The member for Guildford-Midland talks about his orderly marketing. Will he propose such legislation for boilermakers and shop assistants?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: No. They are given preference to unionists.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is all right. We give these other people preference to unionists also. Whether these other people like it or not, they are in it here. And so are the boilermakers. Any poultry farmer, any man who runs a few fowls and sells the eggs, will be within this Bill by compulsion.

Mr. Sampson: It is by decision of the majority of producers.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The member for Guildford-Midland clamours about this kind of legislation. For the sake of consistency, if the principle is to be applied here, it must be applied all round.

Members supporting the Bill cannot expect that large sections of the community shall give privileges which they would not expect for themselves, or which they have no possible hope of securing.

Mr. Sampson: You approved of a similar measure in 1925.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I did, in a weak moment.

Mr. Sampson: No; in your youth and prime.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I did, but there was this with regard to it, that it was Government policy. I have learnt a lot since then.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You have got and are getting more conservative as the years go by.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. I become more reasonable and more just. In the Bill to which members opposite have referred I inserted a veto by the Minister. Any action of the board could be vetoed by the Minister, and he could terminate the board at any time. That power would have been included in all legislation of this type with which I might have been associated. I apologise for addressing myself to this subject, which is hardly mine; but I speak because I see that by pressure and propaganda certain sections of the community want to put it right over us—not by reasonableness but by pressure of propaganda. I quite agree that the producer is entitled to a fair return for his labour.

Mr. Sampson: And he cannot get it otherwise than by this legislation.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not think the hon. member knows much about the subject.

Mr. Sampson: I know a lot about it. I supported you on your previous measure. I ought to know a good deal about the matter.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Legislation of this character gives such powers that the board can do virtually anything with another man's property. There can be such injustice under this legislation that no talk of orderly marketing should excuse it.

Mr. Sampson: Control has been introduced in the House of Commons.

Mr. Marshall: That is a good reason why we should reject it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Bill asks for such extraordinary powers that I cannot see how any member can support it. Had the persons who introduced

the measure been reasonable and said, "We are prepared for an ordinary board with ordinary powers, with producers' representative, consumers' representative, and independent chairman," there might have been reasonableness in their demand. To demand that these producers shall dominate the position and have these extraordinary powers, such as are given to no one else, makes the measure impossible. That is my attitude regarding this legislation.

Mr. Sampson: And it is a wrong attitude.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [9.31]: One gets wiser as one gets older or else gets more foolish.

Mr. Marshall: You cannot be getting older.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The hon. member will never be intelligent, no matter to what age he lives. I was struck by the Minister saying that he will not support the Bill, and I have before me a copy of "Hansard" in which a speech by the Minister on the 16th October, 1930, is recorded. The Marketing of Eggs Bill was before the House at the second reading stage and on page 1088 in his concluding remarks, the Minister said—

I am prepared to support any reasonable legislation for the organisation of the industry, but proper protection must be provided for the community, and the people of the country must have an equal opportunity with other producers in the market of the city. If that is done I shall have no great objection to the measure. The first step in legislation of this kind should be to give producers power to organise for export, and I do not mind if it is made compulsory. Give them power to organise for export and leave the local market alone.

Then the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) interjected, "That is impossible. Control is necessary to secure the maximum exports." Then the Minister for Lands, who was speaking, of course, in his capacity as a private member, continued—

It would be much easier to frame acceptable provisions governing export than to secure approval for some of the provisions of the Bill. If opportunity be given to the producers to organise their products for export, much will have been accomplished in their behalf. If the hon. member amends his Bill in that direction, he will secure my support.

When the motion for the second reading of the Bill was put, the division list, recorded on page 123 of the same volume of "Hansard," shows that the Minister voted with

the "ayes" in favour of the Bill being read a second time.

The Minister for Agriculture: And you voted with the "noes."

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I did, because I considered it impossible to effect the alterations to the Bill that I regarded as necessary.

The Minister for Agriculture: You are more optimistic now.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am not. I agree with the Minister for Lands that the Bill is not perfect. He and I could do much to improve it during the Committee stage. I am perfectly satisfied that unless we give some statutory power to producers, particularly the primary producers, not only in this State but elsewhere, to fix the prices for their goods, their financial position will be absolutely hopeless. The primary producers are the only people who have to go to those who purchase their products and ask what price they will pay for them. If we go into a shop in town to make a purchase, the goods are at marked prices and if we do not care to pay the prices so fixed, we do not secure the goods. It does not matter what the primary producer produces, be it wheat or wool or anything else, the fixation of the price for his commodity is entirely in the hands of the purchaser. The time has arrived for action to be taken. We have improved the conditions of other sections of the community and we must give some consideration to those under which the primary producers are labouring. The Bill represents one means by which it can be done. It is perfectly true, and I make the admission candidly, that I voted against a similar Bill that was before Parliament in 1930. I did so because I did not think we would have an opportunity to include the amendments we desired.

Mr. Wansbrough: And at the time you believed in world parity.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I did not believe in anything of the sort, nor have I ever advocated world parity prices. In Australia we have fixed the price for almost everything. We fix the price of labour and the people who manufacture articles fix their own prices, not individually, but collectively. All that is desired in the Bill is to give those who produce the commodity the opportunity to fix the price at which they will sell to the public.

Mr. Moloney: Yes, sell at their own price.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: And that is reasonable. The only protection the people have is the importation of eggs from the Eastern States. Eggs have been delivered here very cheaply from the other side.

Mr. Moloney: The Bill will not stop that.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: But the public will have a very effective policeman. There will be no unduly high prices fixed for eggs because the policeman will be there in the shape of imported eggs. Neither the member who introduced the Bill nor anyone else can interfere with the importation of eggs.

The Minister for Agriculture: Then where will the grower get his added margin?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: What margin does the Minister refer to?

The Minister for Agriculture: The margin that is indicated in the Bill.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The intention of the measure is to supply the market with the class of commodity that the people require and to make it available at a reasonable price. To-day some producers are sending eggs to market that are not sufficiently attractive and the Minister knows that it is not the best eggs that determine the ruling price, but the worst eggs. That is what is happening to-day. What we desire is that the good egg shall bring a good price and the bad egg shall be used for other purposes.

The Minister for Agriculture: Yes, for election purposes.

Mr. Sleeman: At York.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Preferably at Fremantle, if necessary. I hope the House will afford an opportunity for the Bill to be discussed in Committee when we can deal with it clause by clause and so enable the Minister for Lands and me to do what we desire. I have read the hon. member's speech on the earlier Bill and I do not suggest that I find fault with one word he said.

The Minister for Lands: It was consistent with what I have said this evening.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That is so. I think it would be very unwise to set up a whole lot of boards to control the marketing of eggs in various parts, because that would mean varying policies. There must be one controlling body and if necessary we can protect the interests of the purchaser.

ers. The best policing influence is that if we fix prices that are unreasonably high, those who desire to deal in eggs will import all they require from South Australia. We know what is happening on the goldfields. Eggs are imported from the Eastern States and they compete more than favourably with our eggs.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: But we are sending enormous quantities of eggs to the Eastern States.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That is because you are sending them good eggs upon which they can rely.

Mr. Thorn: And at a reasonable price.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Whether that price is adequate for the producers I cannot say. I know that the Minister for Lands is anxious that people shall have eggs at a reasonable price so that the poultry farmers may pay their way and pay to the Lands Department the rent owing on the land they occupy. Anything we can do to assist the industry should be done. I hope the Minister will assist in doing what he desired in 1930, namely, pass the motion for the second reading of the Bill and see if we cannot knock it into shape in Committee.

The Minister for Agriculture: So long as it is your Bill at the finish, you will agree.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Certainly not, I do not desire to be selfish. If the Committee by a majority agree to certain things, I shall not be annoyed. It will not be my Bill at all, but at the same time I do not want it to be the Minister's Bill. If it were, then I know what would happen to it. It would get the axe where the chicken got it.

MR. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [9.40]: There are a number of poultry farmers in my electorate with whom I have come into contact recently and I have ascertained that, with one exception, they desire the Bill. Some of them are operating in a fairly big way, but others are not so extensively established. When a somewhat similar Bill was introduced a few years ago, I supported it and I shall be consistent and support the present Bill. The poultry industry is important seeing that it acts as a consumer for wheat and by-products. That being so, it is worthy of being built up and preserved. One argument advanced was that it was intended to fix a standard price. I think the

Minister for Lands argued along those lines. If that is the position, I think it will be a good thing for the industry and for the consumers as well. I have visited all the floors in Perth and Fremantle and have seen how the eggs are dealt with. From what I saw, I regard it as essential, from the point of view of both the consumer and the producer, that eggs shall be graded and tested. If that is essential for export, it should be also essential for the consuming public. Eggs can be purchased in many retail shops in the metropolitan area, and from time to time consumers are supplied with eggs that are bad. As was pointed out this evening, it is certainly not the high standard egg that fixes the price. In view of these factors the Bill is essential in order to organise the industry so that the consumers will secure their supplies at a price that is fair and reasonable, and the producers will receive a return that is at least payable. Certainly 6½d. is not a reasonable return to the producers. The member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. McLarty) pointed out that many persons who had formerly been employed in industries from which they had been displaced as a result of the depression had received assistance to purchase small holdings upon which they could run a few head of poultry. Many of those men are now making a living, but at 6½d. they certainly cannot buy feed and live reasonably. If the Bill be agreed to, the board that will be established will have control of the market, and they will at the same time conserve the interests of the consumer. The member for Avon said that it was a bogey to allege that rotten eggs were received from the country. I have seen eggs on the floor and the persons in charge said that 25 per cent. of those received from the country had to be rejected because they were rubbish. By inculcating into producers the need for marketing better eggs, possibly that percentage could be minimised or eliminated. It can readily be realised that on a wheat farm the same care would not be taken in producing the eggs because the farmer would not have the time to rear good birds and produce eggs of a reasonable standard. By propaganda on behalf of the board, however, the industry could be raised to a high standard. There is much to learn about poultry farming and it could be made one of the foremost industries of the State. In fact in America it is one of the most important industries. Therefore it behoves us to give

the industry all possible assistance. There might be need for amending the Bill in Committee, but the intention behind the Bill is sound and I shall support the second reading.

MR. FOX (South Fremantle—in reply) [9.47]: Almost every member who has spoken has agreed with the principle of the Bill. If there are any anomalies, they can be rectified in Committee. I was surprised at some of the opposition from the Government side of the House. I cannot dissociate primary producers from workers in any other industry. The poultry farmer, or primary producer, has no one to whom he can appeal. The worker has the Arbitration Court. He can appear before the court—he has only his labour to sell—and the court fixes his wages at what is considered would give him a reasonable standard of comfort. As I said, the poultry farmer has no one to whom to appeal. The only alternative to passing this measure would be for the Government to bring down a price-fixing Bill to fix the prices of all commodities including eggs. That might give the poultry farmer some protection. There seems to be no prospect of legislation of that kind being introduced, and the House is therefore justified in passing the second reading of the Bill and giving the poultry farmer an opportunity to get a fair return for his labour. The member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) said that the passing of the measure would do away with all the existing organisation for the marketing of eggs. That statement is not correct. If the Bill be passed, the present organisation can be used. The board could utilise the services of the agents for marketing the eggs, but they would be employed on a commission basis. The member for Nelson made some wild statements. He has a perfect horror of socialism, but I have heard him speaking of giving the farmers free super and free wire netting, and no doubt if a Bill were introduced to provide free transport for fruit from his electorate and other fruit-growing districts, he would support that also. The Minister for Agriculture considered that the Bill should have emanated from the Government. In moving the second reading, I made a similar statement, but the Government have not introduced a Bill. Why the delay? When members now on the Opposition side were in power, the Government of the day did not introduce a Bill,

and the present Government have not introduced one, and it is not the fault of the poultry farmers that legislation has not been introduced. For that reason I acceded to the request of poultry farmers to bring this Bill forward and thus provide an opportunity to stabilise the industry. The Minister also stated that the measure would land poultry farmers in a position that they hardly realised. I think we should regard the poultry farmers as hard-headed men who have learnt their lesson in the school of experience. They know exactly what it costs to produce eggs; they know of the experience of the boards in Queensland and New South Wales, and if they are satisfied to have a board here, why should not we provide the opportunity? Let me give some reasons why they want a board here. The Minister said that a board would not be of any advantage to them. When selling eggs to cool storage, the price advanced at times was 6d. per dozen. The price finally paid to the producer was 7d. per dozen, and the particular agent refused to issue a statement of accounts. The producer also sought to store eggs for himself, but the owner of the plant refused to allow him to do so, and eventually raised the price to 9d. Another man came along and eggs were cool-stored for him. He had to pay 18s. for four cases and 4d. per case for storage. When he sold the eggs he cleared 1s. 2d. per dozen, but the man who sold straight out received only 9d. Another complaint is that at the sale of rejects only 7d. per dozen was paid and some of the eggs were sold to cake manufacturers at 8½d. Agents are supposed to sell the rejects on a commission of 5 per cent. and pay the balance to the producer. In this instance the producer got 7d. and those sold to cake manufacturers realised 8½d. and the agents made a profit of 25 per cent. Thus members can see that the producers are being exploited all along the line. As to the making of pulp, I am told by the producers that 10 large eggs make 1 lb. of pulp. For those 10 eggs the agents paid 5-5/6th pence and sold the pulp for 8d. per lb., thus making 35 per cent. on the turnover. Thus it is no wonder that the poultry farmers want an opportunity to conduct their own business.

Mr. Marshall: The consumer is not getting much of a go, either.

Mr. FOX: No.

Mr. Marshall: He is paying through the nose for eggs.

Mr. FOX: Another instance might be given. One grower sent in lots of 55 dozen eggs to two different agents.

Mr. SPEAKER: I hope the hon. member is not introducing new matter in his reply.

Mr. FOX: The Minister said that the producers did not realise the position into which they would land themselves. I wish to show the position that they wish to get out of. Would that be in order?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is permitted to reply to discussion but not to introduce new matter.

Mr. FOX: The Minister also stated that the Poultry Farmers' Association had only 200 members. The reason, I suppose, is that they are too poor to pay their fees. That applies to many unions. If a man cannot pay his dues regularly, they accumulate and he finds it hard to meet his liabilities. Quite a lot of poultry farmers are not making as much as is the man working on sustenance, and they are making nowhere near the amount being received by a man on Government relief work. If a man is not making as much as he would receive on sustenance, he could not be expected to pay much in the way of fees to an organisation. That is one reason why the membership of the association is so small. Perhaps also insufficient organising is undertaken. The Minister said that the bulk of the eggs were produced within 40 miles of the metropolitan area. While wheat farmers are producing eggs as a sideline, poultry farmers are producing them as a sole means of living, and consequently the poultry farmers in the metropolitan area should receive a little more consideration than the producers of eggs in the farming areas. In Committee, however, we might be prepared to extend the operation of the measure to the whole State. There was no intention to deal with the importation of eggs from South Australia. In fact, it could not be done under the Bill. Not many eggs are being imported at present, but if they were brought in, they could be stamped and people would know that they were buying South Australian eggs and not those locally produced. For the last 12 months quite a lot of organisation has been undertaken to induce people to buy local products. If the Bill becomes law there is no reason why that campaign should not be continued to induce people to use locally-produced eggs. One of the strongest arguments in favour of establishing a board here is the effect of the board's

work in New South Wales. Let us consider what the producers think of the board. After over six years of board control more than 80 per cent. of the producers in the area covered by the board—100 miles west of Sydney—favour a continuance of the board. The proclamation declaring eggs a commodity under the Act was issued in July, 1928. The first poll was taken in September, 1928, and of 1,557 who voted 1,149 voted for and 387 against. The board commenced to function on the 27th May, 1929. The second poll was taken on the 11th December, 1931. Of 2,291 who voted, 1,605 voted for and 538 against. The last poll was taken this year, and 1929 voted for and 492 voted against. About 80 per cent. of the producers voted for the continuance of the board. I should like to quote the prices that have been received in Western Australia, and compare them with prices received in New South Wales. I have been given these figures by a producer in the Fremantle district. During the last 12 months his average has been 9.8d. per dozen, whilst in New South Wales in 1933 the price was 1s. 0.62d. per dozen; in 1933-34, 1s. 0.09d. per dozen and in 1934-35, 1s. 0.065d. Those figures go to show that there is something wanting in Western Australia, and I hope members will assist me to provide that requirement by carrying the second reading of the Bill.

Question put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	..	19
Noes	..	..	..	..	19
					—
A tie	..	..	..	..	0
					—

AYES.

Mr. Boyle	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Brockman	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Seward
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Fox	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Hegney	Mr. Warner
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Watts
Mr. Latham	Mr. Doney
Mr. McLarty	

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Collier	Mr. Raphael
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Keenan	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Kennelly	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Troy
Mr. Millington	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Moloney	Mr. Wilcock
Mr. Munster	Mr. Wise
Mr. North	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Nulsen	

(Teller.)

Mr. SPEAKER: So that the Bill may have further consideration, I shall cast my vote with the ayes.

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Sleeman in the Chair: Mr. Fox in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Appointment of Marketing boards:

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: I move an amendment—

That in lines 3 and 4 the words "within an area to be defined in the petition" be struck out."

This amendment is the forerunner of several others having a similar bearing, and they are likely to prove the crux of the Bill. As the Bill is at present, provision is made for a certain number of egg-producers to ask that a poll be taken so that they may decide by a certain majority that they want a board set up. They will be entitled to have their wishes complied with. I would point out, however, how dangerous that could be. I gathered from the remarks of the member for Guildford-Midland that it is his intention that, for a start, the operation of the Bill, if it should become law, should be confined to the metropolitan area. Let us suppose that 50 producers within a radius of five miles of the metropolitan area decide to petition for the appointment of a board and they have their wish complied with. We know that 80 or 90 per cent. of the eggs are marketed within the metropolitan area, and the board would have control. To show how dangerous that would be, may I ask members to look at Clause 11, Sub-clause 5, which would give certain powers to that board. This sets out—

The board shall not refuse to accept from any producer any such eggs which are of the prescribed quality or which conform to the prescribed standard; provided that delivery is tendered in accordance with this Act within such reasonable time as may be fixed by the board.

It is conceivable that a board representative of egg-producers within a four or five-mile radius of the G.P.O. might in their own interests fix by regulation such terms and conditions that the eggs have to be delivered within the area where they are to be

marketed. That would be irksome to those egg-producers who are 50 or 100 miles from the marketing centre. It would be wrong for Parliament to agree to the Bill as it stands because of the danger that would exist to the egg-producers who live a considerable distance from the metropolitan area, which is the centre of marketing. Unless the sponsor of the Bill is prepared to accept this and other amendments it is proposed to move, the Bill will be jeopardised altogether. I am not prepared to place in the hands of a small section of the producers the power the Bill proposes to give as it stands. I urge the member for South Fremantle to agree to the amendment.

Progress reported.

NOTICE OF MOTION—HEALTH ACT.

*To Disallow Meat Inspection Regulation—
Discharged.*

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly) [10.13]: There is a notice of motion standing in my name reading—

That Clause 4 of the Meat Inspection and Branding Regulations under the Health Act, 1911-33, appearing in the "Government Gazette" of the 1st November, and laid on the Table of this House on the 13th November, be and is hereby disallowed.

A similar motion was moved in another place, and was carried there. Consequently there is no necessity for me to move the motion in this House. I move—

That the Notice of Motion be discharged from the Notice Paper.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 10.15 p.m.