

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

Clause 14—agreed to.

Clause 15—Section 34 amended:

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I move an amendment—

That in lines 6 and 7 the words "determined by the Minister from time to time" be struck out and the word "prescribed" inserted in lieu.

This was agreed to for the reason that a determination of the Minister would not be laid on the Table of the House, whereas the word "prescribed" ensures that whatever is desired will be done by regulation, and will be tabled and therefore can be objected to.

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

Clauses 16 to 18, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 4.30 p.m. on Thursday next.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 10.29 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 9th October, 1952.

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

QUESTIONS.

WATER SUPPLIES.

(a) As to Annual Loss.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Minister for Works:

What is the actual annual loss to date, or the estimated annual loss where a full year's figures are not yet available, in connection with each of the reticulated water supplies listed in my question of Tuesday, the 23rd September, 1952?

The MINISTER replied:

The annual losses for the year 1951-52 and the estimated annual losses for the current financial year in respect of those reticulated water supplies where the full year's figures are not available are as follows:—

Reticulated Supplies (1951-1952).

Concern.	Financial Result after providing Interest and Sinking Fund Charges.		Remarks.
	Profit.	Loss.	
Dwellingup Water Supply	£ 61	£	Rating commenced 1st July, 1951.
Margaret River Water Supply	362	Rating commenced 1st July, 1951.
Pinjarra Water Supply	919	Rating commenced 1st July, 1951.
Kulln Water Supply	560	Rating commenced 1st July, 1951.
Mt. Magnet Water Supply	705	
Port Hedland Water Supply	6,405	Trucked fresh water scheme.
Brunswick Water Supply	423	

Reticulated Supplies (Full Year's Figures not Available—Estimated Result Only).

Concern.	Financial Result after providing Interest and Sinking Fund Charges.		Remarks.
	Profit.	Loss.	
Wittenoom Water Supply	£	£ 1,440	Rating commenced 1st January, 1952.
Dalwallinu Water Supply	....	1,040	Rating commenced 1st January, 1952.
Boddington Water Supply	....	1,000	Rating to commence 1st November, 1952.
Kojonup Water Supply	....	715	Rating to commence 1st November, 1952.
Morawa Water Supply	....	3,530	Rating to commence 1st November, 1952.
Mingenew Water Supply	50	....	Rating to commence 1st November, 1952.
Yarloop Water Supply	....	200	Rating commenced 1st January, 1952.
Port Hedland Water Supply	....	6,320	Fresh Water Reticulated Scheme ex Turner River.

Hall's Creek has not yet a reticulated supply. Preliminary work only has been carried out in connection with the water supply.

Kodj-Kodjin area and Merredin to Bruce Rock are part of the Comprehensive Scheme.

Work on the Carnamah Water Supply has closed down owing to lack of funds.

Wellington Dam-Narrogin—No revenue is being derived from this source (part of the Comprehensive Scheme).

Bullfinch relay and Toodyay relay to increase supply. These are part of the Country Areas Water Supply (G.W.S. Section) and no separate figures are readily available to estimate a financial result.

(b) As to Extensions and Government Policy.

Mr. PERKINS asked the Minister for Works:

Is it still the policy of the Government that the Goldfields Water Supply extension south from Merredin to Kondinin and Corrigin and the pipeline connecting Narrogin to the Wellington Dam should have equal priority?

The MINISTER replied:

It is the Government's desire to supply water to both areas as soon as possible.

Owing to the uncertainty of finance, it appears that the position will have to be reviewed from year to year as finances become known.

(c) As to Knungagin Reservoir.

Mr. CORNELL (without notice) asked the Minister for Water Supply:

(1) Is it a fact that water from the Knungagin reservoir has been cut off and that consumers connected thereto are unable to obtain supplies?

(2) If the answer is in the affirmative, what is the reason for cutting off the water from the dam?

(3) If water is at present cut off, how long will it be before supplies are again available to consumers?

The MINISTER replied:

The hon. member was good enough to give me prior notice of his intention to ask these questions and therefore I am in a position to give the following replies:—

(1) Yes. Consumers supplied from it are being supplied from Barbalin reservoir. This is often done for certain periods annually, depending on the respective storages.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

(3) I am unable to say when the supply will be resumed from Knungagin. The behaviour of Barbalin and Knungagin dictates future procedure.

HOSPITALS.

As to Mortuary, Wyalkatchem.

Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister for Health:

In view of the fact that the mortuary at Wyalkatchem hospital has been condemned by the District Supervisor of the Architectural Division, and that in the opinion of the Principal Architect a new one is necessary, will she make urgent representations to the Treasury for funds to carry out this very necessary work?

The MINISTER replied:

The department desires to carry out extensive improvements to Wyalkatchem hospital, including new operating theatre with sterilising room, etc., new labour ward with preparation room and sterilising room, hot water service and comfort cooling in labour ward, preparation room and operating theatre, sewerage, foul water drainage and new morgue, of which the morgue is perhaps the least important item.

The work will be done as soon as funds are available.

HEALTH.

As to Food Processing Substances.

Mr. NEEDHAM asked the Minister for Health:

On Tuesday, the 12th August, 1952, I asked if she had read the article in "The West Australian" of Tuesday, the 27th May, 1952, entitled "Danger of Some Substances Used to Process Food" to which she replied, "Yes. Inquiries have already been made and a reply is awaited!" Has a reply yet been received? If so, what is the nature of the reply?

The MINISTER replied:

No reply has as yet been received.

EDUCATION.

As to School Accommodation, Tuart Hill, and North Wembley.

Mr. W. HEGNEY asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Have tenders yet been called for the erection of three additional class rooms at Tuart Hill school respecting which Treasury approval was given on the 30th April, 1951?

(2) If not, can he state when tenders are likely to be called?

(3) If unable to reply to (2) in the affirmative, will he explain why additions referred to are not to be carried out?

(4) Can he give any indication as to when a school—either brick construction or prefabricated—is to be erected at the corner of Dodd and Harbourne-sts., North Wembley?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) No.

(3) Four pre-fab. classrooms were completed at Tuart Hill in July, 1952, and this made the accommodation position at Tuart Hill satisfactory, having regard to commitments elsewhere. The position was explained to the hon. member in letters dated the 13th March and the 21st May, 1952.

(4) A new school (two "Bristol" units and ancillaries) to be erected on the site at the corner of Dodd and Harbourne-sts., North Wembley, has been included on the building programme for 1952-53.

MARGARINE.

As to Nutritional Values.

Mr. STYANTS asked the Minister for Lands:

Further to the questions re nutritional value of margarine answered by him on the 7th inst—

- (1) Will the nutritional value of margarine sold in this State, with the addition of vitamins "A" and "D," be equal to that of butter?
- (2) If not, in what way will margarine be deficient in nutritional values as a food for human beings?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) It is considered by nutritionists that the value of margarine sold in this State with the addition of vitamins "A" and "D" would approximate butter. It is not intended that margarine as sold should be a complete substitute for natural butter.

(2) Answered by (1).

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Bovell, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Mr. Totterdell (West Perth) on the ground of ill health.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Acts Amendment (Confessions by Natives).
- 2, Prices Control Act Amendment and Continuance.

Introduced by the Attorney General.

BILL—POLICE ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—EDUCATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—NURSES REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver—Subiaco) [4.44] in moving the second reading said: This is a short Bill to amend the Nurses Registration Act and I am sure that members if they read its provisions carefully, will approve of the measure. For many years past, as members will be aware it has been the practice in this State and elsewhere to employ nursing assistants in hospitals. These are employees who perform certain duties that do not require the services of a fully qualified nurse. It is now recognised, not only in this State but elsewhere in Australia and other parts of the world, that this field of service is essential and can be performed by attendants other than fully qualified nurses.

In America a survey conducted several years ago by the American College of Surgeons showed that of all the nurse's tasks performed on the average patient in a general hospital, two-thirds of such tasks would be within the capabilities of a nursing aide—that is, one who was trained to a level less high than that of a trained nurse. This means that the survey showed that only one-third of the nursing tasks required the services of a highly trained nurse. In this State the staff in many hospitals consists of one or two fully trained nurses and the rest of those employed in the wards have acted as nursing aides for many years and are now most capable girls and women. In Victoria these nursing aides are now given a short but very useful and popular form of training suitable to their peculiar duties.

The Bill now before members is designed to give nursing aides in this State a similar advantage. It is realised that many employees at present described as nursing assistants have already gained considerable skill in this field as a result of practical experience. The Bill recognises this fact and the board will be empowered to register any person who produces satisfactory evidence of competency, provided that the individual applies for enrolment within six months of the commencement of this amending measure. This is a recognition that will give the standing the services of these aides deserve. Nursing aides will be required to enrol annually, as is the case with other classes of nurses already recognised.

Here let me make it clear that the nurses' unions in this State are entirely in favour of this amendment and the

Nurses Registration Board advocates it. I have in my possession letters that I can produce to members in support of that claim if so desired. The Act as it stands places limitations upon the wearing of nurses' caps. With the increase in the number of classes of nurses now recognised, it is necessary to provide for different types of caps and badges for the several classes. It is therefore proposed to amend the Act so that in future the various caps and badges will be prescribed by regulation. This will give more elastic control and obviate further amendments to the Act, should other classes of nurses be recognised in the future.

Due to the frequent amendments that have been made to the Act, the power to approve of training hospitals or the prescribed courses of training has variously been vested in the board or in the Commissioner of Public Health, who is the chairman of the board. The position in this respect is becoming unwieldy and for that reason all such references have been deleted, and the whole of such power is to be provided for in the part of the Act which deals with power to make regulations. I trust the explanation I have made is clear to members and I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. R. G. Hawke, debate adjourned.

BILL—BUILDING OPERATIONS AND BUILDING MATERIALS CONTROL ACT AMENDMENT AND CONTINUANCE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 7th October.

HON. A. R. G. HAWKE (Northam) [4.50]: The proposal is to make amendments to the existing Act and continue the measure as amended for a further 12 months. The types of buildings that will continue to be under control in the event of this measure becoming law will be industrial, commercial and social. As the Minister pointed out in his second reading speech, there is power, by way of regulation, to permit classes of buildings to be removed from control, that provision having been inserted in the Act by an Amendment made in 1950.

The proposed 12 months' continuance of what will remain of the Act was justified by the Minister on the ground that the quantity of building material likely to be available next year would not be sufficient to meet all requirements in relation to all possible classes of building within the State. He pointed out that the establishment of the oil refinery at Kwinana and the development of that area would constitute a heavy drain upon the building materials and also upon building tradesmen and contractors. I agree

with the Minister's point of view, and consider that there is not only justification but also a substantial need for continuing sufficient legislation for at least another 12 months to ensure that control may be exercised over building materials when intended for use for industrial, commercial or social purposes.

If all control legislation were now abolished those who wished to obtain building materials for the erection of commercial, industrial or social structures would be able, because of their greater financial resources, to obtain the larger proportion of the building materials available, leaving far too few of those materials available for use in the erection of what is still the State's most urgent need, namely, houses. Furthermore, those people would be able to obtain very easily, because of the prices they could afford to pay, the services of the great majority of building contractors and, through them, the services of the great majority of tradesmen for employment upon the erection of industrial, commercial and social structures.

In the course of his remarks, the Minister took some trouble to draw a picture of the number of houses that had been built in the financial year 1946-47 as compared with the number constructed during the last completed financial year. The comparison was one that required explanation to indicate why the number completed in 1946-47 was as low as indeed it was. However, the Minister made no attempt to amplify his statement in any way. Anyone who recalls the concentration upon the war effort that took place in the preceding years realises that, by the year 1946-47, this State had only to a slight extent recovered from the war effort and of necessity could not possibly be in a position at that time to construct any large number of houses.

The war did not end until the second half of 1945; a considerable number of service personnel were not demobilised until many months afterwards, and a number of them following demobilisation made no attempt to return to their usual employment. They had quite a lot of money on hand or at credit and took the opportunity to move around, acclimatising their minds, as it were, to civilian life, before they re-entered employment; and therefore their services as workers or producers were not available until, in many instances, a long time after the war had ended and a considerable time after they had been demobilised.

I do not wish to enter into further detail regarding that situation, mainly because it is well known to everybody who wishes to view the whole picture and make allowances for the actual and unavoidable facts of the situation in the year 1946-47.

In his speech, the Minister, by way of justifying a continuation of control legislation in respect of industrial, commercial and social classes of buildings gave some particulars to the House covering applications for permits to build such structures. In that portion of his speech, he had this to say—

It is rather interesting to note the number of industrial permits still outstanding in this State. I have a list of outstanding applications. Many of them have been lodged for four or five years, and probably the cost of construction would have been considerably lower than it would be today. These buildings include three banks of an estimated cost of £9,375.

I break away from the quotation to say that the Minister's statement about the banks must have left in a state of mental wonderment those who listened carefully to what he said. It is almost impossible to imagine that the estimated cost of constructing three new bank buildings would be £9,375.

The Minister for Housing: I was referring to additions to banks.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: If, as the Minister now suggests, they were not to be new buildings, but only additions to existing buildings, one is not able to get any sort of idea of the extent of the additions, and so I pass on to the next item in his speech. That referred to 13 garage and service stations, at an estimated cost of £27,000, which would represent just over £2,000 each, if in this case the stations were to be new buildings in the whole 13 instances. The next item was six public halls at an estimated cost of £56,000.

The Premier: I think a number of districts are anxious to build public halls.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The next item was 22 industrial projects at an estimated cost of £360,000; six institutions and hostels, £171,000; 12 large offices, £1,269,000; 58 shops—42 in the metropolitan area—at a total estimated cost of £296,000; 14 picture theatres and gardens, £194,000; 28 hotel alterations and additions, £273,000; five new hotels, £251,000, or an average of £50,000 each.

If we look at these estimated costs in connection with items where a comparative estimate on today's basis can be made, we will agree, I think, that the estimated costs taken out five years ago could justifiably be increased five times to bring them into line with today's costs. It is on this point that the Minister, if he had wished to do so, could have carried his comparison between the number of houses built in this State in 1946-47 and those constructed during the last financial year a step further. He could have told the House the actual cost of building in 1946-

47 a 5-roomed brick house in the metropolitan area and could have compared that figure with the actual cost of building a similar house during the last financial year.

If the Minister had done that he would have shown to the House and, through the House to the country, that 5-roomed brick houses were built by the Government in this State in 1946-47 at an actual cost of £986. An equal type and class of house built in this State during the last financial year would have cost, in my opinion, not less than £4,000, and probably more. As a matter of fact, I think it is perfectly safe to say that the State Housing Commission did not build during the last financial year a house comparable in quality with those built by the Government in this state in 1946-47.

That is a very interesting and important phase of the housing situation and one to which the Minister could devote some attention, in view of the fact that he was enthusiastic about telling us how many houses had been built during the last financial year, compared with the number erected five or six years previously. The cost of houses in Western Australia has reached a figure in regard to purchase price, where they are offered for sale, and in regard to rentals where they are available for letting, which is now considerably beyond the financial resources of a large number of people in this State.

We know that today rentals of at least £3 per week are being charged for houses which are not worth £1 per week, and for which it would have been impossible to get more than 10s. in 1939. We know that houses in this State are costing at least £3,000 to build today which, in 1939, would have been constructed for £400. It can be said that costs of everything have risen; that wages are ever so much higher than they were; that the cost of all building materials has increased, and that there is no escape from the present situation in regard to costs. That is an easy way of facing up to the situation, if it is in fact a facing-up. It might be more correct to say that it is an easy way of avoiding the position.

I am inclined to think that the Government ought to have a searching investigation into building costs, particularly in regard to housing. This is necessary because if house-building costs go still higher, or even if they remain where they are now, we will find an increasing number of people unable to pay in full the rentals demanded, unless by doing so they allow the storekeeper to go short of full payment for what he provides. These people will not be able to become homeowners, as I am sure everyone in the House would desire.

At present, because of the high cost of buying a home, and because of there being no houses available for renting, many working men are being forced into a most difficult and unenviable position. They have only one option in respect to escaping from the overcrowded conditions under which they and their families have to exist, and that is to purchase a small house. In many instances the house is of poor construction and poor quality materials, and is being purchased at a price entirely beyond their present financial resources, and which is sure to be beyond their financial resources in the future unless, in some isolated instances, they win a lottery or a Tattersall's consultation.

These people either have to go on living with their families in overcrowded conditions, suffering all the inconveniences, worries and strife which develop from that sort of living, or else they have to sign an agreement, the terms of which bind them to pay so much by way of deposit, so much monthly by way of payment of interest and some small repayment of the balance of principal. The great majority of these people are not in the race ever to become the owners of these homes when they sign these agreements, because not only do they have to take upon their shoulders the financial burdens to which I have referred but, in addition, they have to meet the rates and taxes and maintenance charges, or else allow the houses to depreciate because of no maintenance being carried out on them from year to year.

In this regard the Government is storing up a great deal of financial trouble and burden for the State in the future. It is, I believe, beyond doubt that in the years to come there will have to be a substantial writing down of values and of contract prices in connection with many of these houses. Either that, or else many of the men who, under duress, are compelled to sign agreements to purchase the houses, will have to give them away, as it were, because of inability to keep up the progress or monthly payments as they fall due. Therefore I suggest that a most searching investigation be carried out in regard to house-building costs, and that every effort be made to see that they are reduced, because the present level of such costs is not only uneconomic, in my opinion, in respect to the great majority of families, but is such as to prove ruinous to a great many of them in the future.

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING (Hon. G. P. Wild—Dale—in reply) [5.17]: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the observations he has made, but I am afraid I cannot agree with him on one or two points—particularly in relation to costs. We know they have gone up tremendously in the last five or six years, but to speak of them as being four times

as much as they were is, I think, stretching things a little too far. I would agree that the costs have gone up about 100 per cent. There is no doubt about that.

If the hon. gentleman thinks the costs of houses in Western Australia are too high it would be as well for him to have a look at the position in a State which has a Government of the same political colour as his—New South Wales—to see what the costs are there, and the rents that are being charged. He will find that the costs we have to face up to in Western Australia, and the rents we have to charge, are considerably less than they are in New South Wales. I would also like to ask: What is the alternative? We have to house these people—it is a social problem today—and under most difficult conditions of shortages of material and labour.

In these trying circumstances we have built houses, in astronomical numbers I am pleased to say, but not sufficient of them I admit. What is the alternative? If we build smaller houses to reduce the cost they are not large enough for families, and in many instances we come up against the local authorities. We, at the Housing Commission, are endeavouring to keep prices down as much as possible. About three months ago, for the first time for a long while, we called tenders. The results of doing this supports our contention that we should continue with this legislation. It also serves as a rebuttal of one or two Press articles, and the statements of some people such as the secretary of the Builders' Congress and the secretary of the bricklayers or brickmakers' union. Mr. French, who suggested a week or two ago that we should throw over these controls.

When we called tenders for multiples of five houses, we did not receive tenders for half of them. Yet, some people glibly say there is a recession in the building trade and that there is going to be unemployment. Only last week I was in touch with Mr. Baden White, of the Commonwealth Employment Service, in an endeavour to secure carpenters, but he said that he had not any on his books and could do with quite a number if he could get hold of them. All this talk about a recession in the building industry, when we are trying to build 7,000 houses a year at present and are shortly to embark on building another 330 a year for three years at Kwinana, is simply tommyrot.

Mr. W. Hegney: How many applications for homes are outstanding with the Housing Commission?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: A large number, and we are receiving as many applications today as we received five or six years ago. Last week we took about 40 people off the priority list and gave them houses, and in the same period received 60 further applications over the counter from people looking for homes.

All that goes to prove that there cannot be a recession in the building industry while large numbers of migrants are coming into the country. The Leader of the Opposition said that there should be an inquiry into building costs, but I think the best indication one can get in that regard is by calling tenders. When the builders have to tender one against the other and the business becomes competitive we will no doubt get better prices, but unfortunately our experience on the last two occasions was that there was not enough tendering to make them highly competitive.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Is the tendering competitive?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: It is fairly competitive.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: What does that mean?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I think that in the case of the last lot of tenders, with the price at about £2,000, there was a variation of about £200, or ten per cent., and that is not bad for these days. The Leader of the Opposition also said that the working man would never be able to pay for a home under the Workers' Homes Act, but I cannot subscribe to that view. To come within the ambit of the Act, in order to purchase a home the worker must be earning less than £920 per year and he can purchase a house on a deposit of as little as £5, and borrow up to £2,000. The cost is amortised over 40 years. The sum of £1,500 amortised over 40 years—as we are doing at present—means that the worker pays as little as 30s. to 37s. per week. It is in his own interest to do that because, if he were simply renting a dwelling, he would pay rent in perpetuity and never own a brick in the structure. I can see no reason why any worker cannot pay the rental charged under this scheme and in five or ten years own a stake in the country, and have quite a good equity in his house. If he then wishes to go to some other district he has something to sell, whereas if he had been renting a home he would have no asset at all.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—COOGEE-KWINANA RAILWAY

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 7th October.

HON. J. B. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [5.25]: I have no objection to the Bill as we have already placed on the statute book legislation ratifying an agreement

with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, one of the provisions of which was that we should provide this railway. A pretty good job has been done in avoiding any great deal of high-cost land resumption, and none of the gardening area has been interfered with to any great extent. The route surveyed for this railway seems to have gone along the coast nearly all the way. I think the Government should have decided to construct the south-of-the-river railway from Midland Junction, with a branch line running to the oil refinery at Kwinana, but for the present we will have to be satisfied with what is being done. There is no question of doing anything but honour the agreement that has been made.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—WHEAT INDUSTRY STABILISATION ACT. AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 7th October.

HON. E. NULSEN (Eyre) [5.30]: I have no objection to the Bill because I think it is fair and equitable. It takes away the burden from one section and places it upon the shoulders of everybody in the community. Previously the wheatgrowers had to stand the burden of supplying stockfeed at the very cheap rate of 10s. but now the wheatgrowers will get 16s. 1d. a bushel. The poultry, pig and dairy farmers will pay 12s. a bushel and the Commonwealth Government will subsidise that to the extent of 4s. 1d. a bushel, making a total of 16s. 1d. The subsidy will be effective on 26,000,000 bushels and that will cost the taxpayers of Australia £5,200,000.

It is only reasonable that the community should stand that burden instead of the wheatgrowers being responsible for it. Also, I think the Wheat Board, under the provisions of the Bill, will be responsible in regard to freights between the States.

The Minister for Lands: Yes, that is correct; the board pays the freight.

Hon. E. NULSEN: Previously the individual farmers were expected to pay it and that was the trouble with the Bill brought down last year. This Bill is equitable in every respect and I have much pleasure in supporting it.

MR. MAY (Collie) [5.32]: I, too, have had a look at the Bill and I think there are one or two matters that should have been included in its provisions. It is

definitely an improvement on last year's measure which was rejected by this Chamber because it contained a proposal that the farmers of this State should pay freight on stockwheat consigned to the Eastern States. That was an unfair proposal and Parliament was justified in rejecting it.

Later in the year, or early this year, it was discovered that the Wheat Board could not permit the farmers in this State to obtain any of their own wheat from the silos in order to keep their stock alive; I refer particularly to sheep. I know of many farmers who lost a considerable number of sheep because there was no provision enabling the Wheat Board to authorise the issue of a certain quantity of wheat from the silos to assist them in maintaining their flocks. Many farmers lost a percentage of their sheep and it is reasonable to assume that the non-delivery of that wheat for stockfeed will have an effect upon last year's lambs which, of course, will be this year's sheep.

Eventually the Wheat Board did overcome the position and made wheat available from the silos to the farmers in the drought-stricken areas, but a considerable amount of damage was done before that wheat could be delivered; also there was a good deal of agitation on the part of farmers before they were able to obtain a release of some of their own wheat. In addition to that drawback, wheat farmers have been more or less subsidising the pig, poultry and dairying industries because they have been forced to sell their wheat at 12s. a bushel. It is no wonder that the farmers made some endeavours to have this anomaly rectified; under the Bill they will obtain 12s. a bushel plus a Commonwealth subsidy to the extent of 4s. 1d., making a total of 16s. 1d. However, in his speech, the Minister said—

Because those in the poultry, pig and dairying industries in this State have not paid the extra 2s. per bushel, this loss has had to be averaged, and growers throughout Australia have received slightly less than 16s. 1d. per bushel for stockfeed wheat.

So it will be seen that on top of all the disadvantages suffered by the wheat and wool growers, they still suffer another imposition inasmuch as they are, to a certain extent, being made responsible for accepting the loss created by the poultry, pig and dairy farmers in their payment of 12s. a bushel.

There is another feature, too. The Minister did not say what is likely to happen in the future in regard to freight on stockfeed wheat consigned from this State to the Eastern States. There is nothing in the Bill about it, nor anything to safeguard the farmers of this State. All the Bill says is that the poultry, pig and dairy

people will pay 12s. and the Commonwealth Government will subsidise the wheat by 4s. 1d. a bushel. There is nothing in the Bill to say who will pay the freight on stockfeed wheat consigned to the Eastern States.

The Minister for Lands: The Wheat Board will pay it.

Mr. MAY: When the measure was drafted consideration should have been given to that point in an endeavour to safeguard the wheatfarmers of this State. There has been too much assumption in the past, and that is why the farmers could not get any of their own wheat to feed their starving sheep. The Minister tells us that the Wheat Board will pay this freight but the Bill does not say so. There should be some definite provision in the Bill and I hope the Minister will have something to say on that aspect when he replies to the debate. According to the measure, the Wheat Board will sell to the poultry, pig and dairying people wheat for stockfeed; there is no mention of stockfeed for sheep.

The Minister for Lands: Yes, there is.

Mr. MAY: Further down the measure states that the board may sell wheat as food for animals other than pigs, poultry or cattle.

The Minister for Lands: Yes, that is it.

Mr. MAY: At 16s. 1d. per bushel.

The Minister for Lands: Yes.

Mr. MAY: The point is that the subsidy will be paid on wheat up to 26,000,000 bushels. What I want to know is this. If the other people, apart from the pig, poultry and dairy cattle producers, are to be paid 12s. a bushel, plus the 4s. 1d. subsidy from the Commonwealth, and if the farmer takes a quantity of wheat from the silo, before the target of 26,000,000 bushels has been reached, he pays 16s. 1d. for his wheat as I understand it. However, after the 26,000,000 bushels has been reached he still has to pay 16s. 1d. a bushel. Is that the position?

The Minister for Lands: The farmer gets 16s. 1d. a bushel. In effect, he is only getting his own wheat back for which he was paid 16s. 1d. a bushel.

Mr. MAY: I am talking about the position before the 26,000,000 bushels is reached. What does he pay for his wheat then?

The Minister for Lands: The farmer has to pay 16s. 1d. a bushel.

Mr. MAY: It does not say so in the Bill.

The Minister for Lands: Yes, it does.

Mr. MAY: No, the subsidy of 4s. 1d. affects the position before the 26,000,000 bushels is reached, and therefore the farmer gets his wheat for 16s. 1d. a bushel in the same way as the poultry and pig raisers and the dairy cattle producers.

The Minister for Lands: The board will pay 16s. 1d. per bushel for the wheat and the farmer has to pay 16s. 1d. a bushel for it if he wants some of it back but, if he withdraws his wheat from the silo, he must pay 16s. 1d. a bushel.

Mr. MAY: If the poultry, pig and cattle men are going to get their wheat at the silo for 12s. a bushel and the farmer has to pay 16s. 1d. a bushel, I think the position should be rectified and the Minister should make some inquiries before the Bill is finally passed. I want to support this measure if I can, but there are one or two anomalies in it that should be corrected before the House agrees to it. One is in regard to the cost of freight to the Eastern States because the farmers' minds should be set at rest on that point, and the other is that we should know whether, the farmer has to pay 16s. 1d. a bushel for his wheat before the 26,000,000 bushels are reached as against the pig and poultry men paying 12s. a bushel. I understand that after the 26,000,000 bushels have left the bin for stockfeed everybody has to pay 16s. 1d. a bushel but, according to the Minister, the farmer pays that price for it before the 26,000,000 bushel target is reached. The Minister, therefore, should give serious consideration to those points. They constitute the only objection I have to the Bill and I ask him to make some inquiries in regard to them. We should not leave anything to assumption, but should have it definitely set out in the Bill.

HON. J. T. TONKIN (Melville) [5.45]: I thought there may have been one or two other speakers on this measure. It provides that the Wheat Board shall charge a certain figure and the Bill also makes provision for it to increase that amount by 2s. As I understand it, the position is that although the existing legislation provides that the stockfeeder can purchase wheat at 10s. a bushel, in effect he cannot do so because the board does not sell the wheat. The Wheat Pool is the agent of the board and it sells it at 10s. 2d. a bushel to anybody who buys less than 40 tons per month. I want to know what authority the Wheat Pool has, and where it came from, to be able to charge a person who buys less than 40 tons more than the person who buys in excess of that quantity, because there is nothing in the Bill referring to quantity. If the wheat is to be at so much a bushel, that is to be the price laid down, and the small man is entitled to get his wheat at that price in the same way as the man who buys it in quantities of 40 tons a month.

I assume that the pool will continue to charge that extra 2d. and it may make a concession to anybody who buys more than 40 tons a month. It seems to me that it is nobody's business to see that the legislation is carried out. I want to know on

whose authority the Wheat Pool is permitted to charge a higher price than is authorised under the legislation, and from where that authority is obtained. That is something that requires investigation, and some assurance should be given on it because the Wheat Pool now and again acts in an arbitrary manner. I have had an instance brought under my notice where it has absolutely refused to supply and steps have been taken to try to force it to do so, and some gentlemen in high places have been reluctant to take those steps.

The Premier: Does not this amendment make all this particular legislation throughout Australia identical?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It is supposed to, but in practice there is a differentiation. I am trying to point out that the practice here is that the Wheat Pool acts as the agent for the board. The board does not sell the wheat. I am informed that for any person who buys less than 40 tons a month, the existing price is 10. 2d. a bushel instead of 10s.

The Minister for Lands: Plus the 2s. it would be 12s. 2d. a bushel.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: If the existing practice is continued, it will be 12s. 2d. instead of 12s. I am asking from where the Wheat Pool believes it derives the authority to charge the extra 2d. because I am informed that that is the position. Further, although those who buy 40 tons a month are allowed to get it without having to pay the extra 2d., that concession could be withdrawn at any time if the Wheat Pool decided to do so.

The Attorney General: I take it that the practice would be uniform throughout Australia.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I do not know.

The Premier: I should think that would be the principle, would it not?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I could not think anything of the sort, because I have a letter in my satchel that shows where the Wheat Pool refused to supply a certain buyer as he was complaining about the quality of the wheat and wanted it referred to arbitration. The law provides for reference to arbitration if the quality is not satisfactory. This buyer was trying to insist on his rights, and he was told by the Wheat Pool that they would not supply him any further; they went so far as to return his cheque, and tell him to take his business elsewhere, knowing full well that he could not take it elsewhere as there was no other supplier.

The Attorney General: Did he report the matter to the Minister for Agriculture?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes, and he got no redress. He then reported the matter to me, and got his wheat without a cheque.

The Attorney General: Did he not have to pay for it?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: He did, subsequently. There is room for inquiry here to find out exactly what is happening because, if we agree to certain legislation, we want it obeyed, and it should not be left to the discretion of anybody what alteration shall be made. The farmer is entitled to the return which the Legislature desires him to have, and the consumer is entitled to get the product at the price at which Parliament intends he should get it. It is not anybody's province to depart from those provisions and impose additional costs simply for the purpose of meeting their particular ideas. I hope the Minister will make inquiry with regard to that point. There is nothing we can do about it in this legislation, but I hope he will find out what is happening, and have it corrected if it is contrary, as I am led to believe it is, to the intention of the Legislature.

MR. J. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [5.52]: This Bill is brought down to help in securing uniform legislation throughout Australia. During last session, when the agreement that was supposed to have been drawn up by the State was submitted to Parliament, it was rejected on the ground that it contained a provision that freight charges were to be borne by the farmers. By that rejection, of course, stockfeed in this State remained at 12s. a bushel. Members who represent electorates that contain large numbers of poultry farmers will no doubt be aware that the people engaged in that primary industry, will be perturbed that the price of their stockfeed, instead of being on the down grade, is to be on the increase. So there will be trouble in the poultry industry when this legislation is passed and they are aware what the position will be. There are a large number of poultry farmers in my electorate.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! There is too much noise.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: There are also many poultry farmers in the Canning and Dale electorates and, from personal contact I have had with them, I know that these poultry farmers were very incensed when they learned of the stockfeed position. I would go so far as to say that it was the poultry farmers' votes that defeated me in 1947 because the price of stockfeed had increased. I have no doubt that they will have something to say when they find that, by the passage of this Bill, the price of stockfeed will be increased.

Members who allow this legislation to pass without any comment and have poultry farmers in their electorate will have a good deal said about the matter during election time. In 1947 the question of stockfeed was considered to be very much alive. There is the suggestion that the wheatfarmer should get full value for his product, but the practice in

past years has been that stockfeed has been dependent on important industries in this State, such as the poultry and the pig industries. The poultry industry is important because it is developing and growing. While we are doing justice to the wheatgrower by the passage of this Bill, we are on the other hand doing an injustice to the primary producers I have mentioned.

MR. GRIFFITH (Canning) [5.56]: I do not know how the member for Middle Swan suggests that this problem can be overcome. He likes to throw threats across the House of what is going to happen to the member for Canning at the next election. Whatever takes place, and though he thinks it was the poultry farmers that defeated the hon. member in 1947, I am not going to make any comment about that except to say that I do not know why the poultry-farmers should vote for him anyway. But how is he going to overcome this set of circumstances? Would he agree that the primary producer is entitled to the worth of his product? The hon. member does not answer.

Mr. J. Hegney: I am not allowed to interject!

Mr. GRIFFITH: The member for Middle Swan will interject while I am speaking whenever he feels inclined, and when he thinks he can get away with something. But on this occasion he cannot, because obviously the primary producer is entitled to the worth of his product.

Mr. J. Hegney: I have said that.

Mr. GRIFFITH: What does the hon. member suggest as a solution, apart from the increase in the price of wheat to stockfeeders?

Mr. Hoar: A further subsidy.

Mr. GRIFFITH: That could be an answer, but is it to be expected that the subsidy could be raised beyond the 4s. 1d. that it is now? That, however, does not worry me so much as the provision in the Bill for the maximum consumption of 26,000,000 bushels for the purpose of stockfeed. What concerns me primarily is that this will go to all types of producers—poultry-farmers will be able to use it, pig-feeders will also be able to use it, and so will the luxury industries, like horseracing.

Mr. May: They only give it to race-horses to stop them.

Mr. GRIFFITH: I do not know about that.

Mr. Yates: Twenty-six million bushels!

Mr. GRIFFITH: Does the hon. member suggest that they first give the horses a feed of wheat and a drink of water afterwards?

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Yes, to make the wheat swell.

Mr. GRIFFITH: That is the reaction, I understand.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: They do not give wheat to racehorses, do they?

Mr. GRIFFITH: It will be the poultry-farming industry and the pig industry which are provided for in quantity under the Bill. The position will then be that the poultry-feeder and the pig-feeder will have to pay 16s. a bushel for their wheat. This is a danger and an aspect which I do not care for, and I would like the Minister to express his views on that point. I am concerned about that angle. An increase of 2s. in the price of wheat will enable the Egg Board, or the producer's representative on the Egg Board, to claim a further increase in the price of eggs. I am not satisfied with that aspect of it, and I hope the Minister will address himself to the points I have mentioned.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. L. Thorn—Toodyay—in reply) [6.0]: Replying to the member for Melville, I can inform him that I will make inquiries regarding the 2d. to which he made reference. I take it that would be the handling charge.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: No, it would not be that. The Act says the price shall be 16s. 1d. per bushel.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: That payment is to the grower as the wheat goes into the silo.

Mr. May: There is the 4s. 1d. subsidy.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, but the wheat has to be brought out again. However, I will make full inquiries regarding the matter and will endeavour to inform members of the position later on. Dealing next with the remarks of the member for Collie who said that the farmers would be buying back their wheat for their sheep at 16s. 1d. whereas the poultry, pig and other stockraisers would be paying 12s. a bushel, I put it to him that, after all, the farmer is practically buying back his own wheat for which he received 16s. 1d. per bushel.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Therefore he is getting his wheat for nothing!

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Surely the member for Collie does not expect the farmer to buy back his wheat for less than 16s. 1d. The pig and poultry men pay 12s. and get the benefit of the subsidy of 4s. 1d. With regard to freights, the Wheat Board pays those charges and sells the wheat for considerably more than 16s. 1d. per bushel. Therefore I claim that eventually the buyer pays the freight.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: What allows the wheat to be sold for more than 16s. 1d.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The grower is paid that amount.

Mr. May: The charge would be on world parity.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: To be able to pay that, there must be sales to buyers.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: But it is not authorised to sell at 16s. 1d.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: To anyone?

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Yes.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not think that is so; they could sell at that figure overseas.

Mr. May: That is the world parity price.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not think that is so. No man would pay 16s. 1d. to the grower without paying the cost of marketing and other charges.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: But no one said he would pay 16s. 1d. to the grower.

Mr. May: They do not get it.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: According to my information, the object of the Bill is to make sure that the grower receives 16s. 1d. per bushel.

Mr. May: Less handling charges.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: It would be less those charges.

Mr. May: Who gets them?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Those who handle the wheat.

Mr. May: The Wheat Board.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: There again, there must be handling charges to the board, and I say that the freight on wheat comes out of the handling charges.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I do not know where you get that from.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Bill is similar to that introduced last year and agreed to by this House. In the Bill last year the freight charges were placed on the shoulders of the producers. That clause was struck out by members in this Chamber. The present Bill is the same with the freight clause left out, so I cannot see why it should not be accepted by the House.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: I think members are anxious to vote for the second reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Then it is time I stopped!

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

House adjourned at 6.6 p.m.