

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 18th November, 1925.

Question: Mining, Coolgardie, Royal Commission, recommendations	1962
Bills: Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Act Amendment, 2a.	1962
Day Baking, 2a.	1966
Primary Products Marketing, 2a.	1966
Bush Fires Act Amendment, 1R.	1966

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

QUESTION—MINING, COOLGARDIE.

Royal Commission's Recommendation.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN asked the Chief Secretary: Has any action been taken, or is any contemplated, with regard to the suggestion contained in the following paragraph, concerning Coolgardie, from the report of the Royal Commission on Mining:—"Provision was made at the State Battery at Coolgardie for a flotation unit, to conform with the rest of the plant and deal with, say, 25 tons of ore per day. I would suggest that this proposal be carried out, and further, that diamond bores be put down at likely places to prove the more prominent gold occurrences at depth?"

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: Since the report of the Royal Commissioner was made, a pilot plant on the Oroya Links Mine was loaned to the Department for further experimental flotation work, in addition to that carried out in the laboratory at the School of Mines. The trials are still incomplete, but have given very promising results. Until they have been carried further, it would be premature to put up another treatment plant at Coolgardie State Battery. Full consideration will be given to doing so after completion of the Oroya Links tests. The Minister stated, when introducing the Mines Estimates, his intention to carry out boring on the Goldfields, the sites to be decided after consultation with the professional officers of the Department.

BILL—METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY, SEWERAGE, AND DRAINAGE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [4.37]:

I had hoped to hear from metropolitan members something regarding the measure because it proposes to inflict further charges upon the community here. I feel that in offering some few remarks on this subject I may have to again voice opinions I have held for many years past. We are asked to authorise the Government to increase their charges upon the residents of the metropolitan area because of the great expenditure being incurred in providing new water supplies at the Canning, Wongong, and Churchman's Brook areas, and probably at other centres as well. It takes me back to a period many years ago when, in this House, we earnestly appealed to the Government of the day to cancel a contract that had been let for putting down a 10-inch main from Mundaring to Midland Junction, it being the then intention to carry the pipe line on to Maylands. Although the ink was not yet dry on the contract at the time, we asked for the cancellation in order that the Government might put in a 30-inch main to supply the city with water. We held that there were ample supplies at Mundaring, and although the city required water, there was an enormous body of water impounded in the reservoir at Mundaring that was not being made use of. At the same time the State was losing something like £80,000 a year in interest upon the expenditure involved in that scheme, which was not covered by the sale of water that was being supplied to the goldfields. During the intervening 20 years there has been a direct loss on the Mundaring scheme which, I suppose, has by now run into considerably over £1,000,000. All that loss could have been converted into cash because the water, instead of being allowed to remain stagnant in the reservoir, could have been supplied to the city, which would then have had a better and purer water supply than has been made available during that period. To-day we are again facing the same subject—a better water supply for the city and for the metropolitan area generally. Mr. Lovekin has given us particulars of the enormous sum being spent at Churchman's Brook in connection with

the Canning scheme. It is appalling to think that the Government are going on in that direction when there is still ample water at Mundaring from which a quicker and better supply could be obtained, a supply sufficient to meet the requirements of the metropolitan area for many years to come. It will be of advantage if I go into some of the figures to indicate what is available at Mundaring. The reservoir originally cost something in the vicinity of £240,000. The average overflow for the past 20 years has been about 10,678,000,000 gallons, the average daily overflow during that period having been about 29,000,000 gallons. The suggestion has been made by a good number of people that another weir should have been thrown across the same valley, and while I agree with that contention, I do not think it would have been wise to construct that additional weir below the Mundaring dam, but rather should it be constructed higher up. The storage in the Mundaring Weir is carried back for about seven miles. There are very good sites at the head of that seven miles run of water, and weirs could have been thrown across several valleys that lend themselves to a scheme of that description. If that had been done, it would have put us in the position of having, should anything go wrong with the present reservoir or should it be desired to clean it out at any time, adequate reserves of water higher up. At all times, even should a drought cause the depletion of the supplies in the main reservoir, we would have been in the position of being able to replenish the supplies from the quantities of water held higher up. By that means we could have impounded a great volume of water which is now represented in the overflow. The greatest quantity in any one year that has been pumped from the Mundaring reservoir was 1,478,000,000 gallons, or an average daily draw of 4,000,000 gallons. The greatest drop in the water level from the crest of Mundaring Weir was reported in 1914, and it then went down only 13ft. 3in. That was the drought year and practically the only drought we have known. The average drop has been 6ft. 6in. The known loss from evaporation is about 1,000 million gallons, which also is equivalent to a fall of 6ft. 6in. on the weir head. Over a 20-year period the water pumped plus the water drawn has been about equal to the known loss by evaporation. Therefore, during the whole period as much water has run into the

dam as has been drawn out of it; otherwise there would have been a greater drop than the average of 6ft. 6in. Allowing for this, there would be left 3,650 million gallons available for consumption in the metropolitan area. Dealing with the worst period in the history of the undertaking, we find that from October, 1913, when the overflow for that year ceased, to the 1st May, 1915, a period of 18 months including two summers, the inflow was 997 million gallons. If we allow for the evaporation during 1913-14, 907 million gallons, plus the 1,433 million gallons drawn, we have a total of 2,340 million gallons. Adding to that the evaporation in 1914-15 of 1,000 million gallons and the draw of 1,478 million gallons, we get a total of 4,818 million gallons. As the first 6ft. from the crest of the weir is equal to 1,000 million gallons, there should have been a drop of 30ft. The fact that there was not such a drop shows that there has been a large and constant inflow of water that the engineers apparently did not allow for when the scheme was considered. The drop in 1914 was only 13ft. 3in., whereas, judging by the quantities drawn and evaporated, the dam should have been empty. On the 1st May, 1915, however, there was still 86ft. 9in. of water in the dam. The Hills Water Supply Commission of 1907, who considered the statistics in the first year of construction—1902—evidently did not measure the quantities correctly. Paragraph 14 of the report states that if the dam had been built in 1900 and 5½ million gallons daily had been drawn off, the dam would have been empty by the summer of 1902-3. The intake, however, was not reckoned. The rainfall in 1900 was 33.34, in 1901 24.46, and in 1902, 19.26. The intake for 1901 was 1,391 million gallons and for 1902 it was 1,323 million gallons. With all that water flowing into the dam, even during the worst seasons, if the overflow could have been stored, the catchment would have given a water level of greater height which it was claimed was necessary in order to supply Perth from Mundaring. It has been said that, if the water were brought from Mundaring, it would not gravitate into the Mt. Eliza reservoir. Weirs, however, could have been constructed at the head of the seven-mile reach and thus the greater height necessary to get the flow to the Mt. Eliza reservoir would have been obtained. Though it was said that the water could not be gravitated to Mt. Eliza because of the levels, in

1914 a 6in. main was run from the Mundaring catchment to the Victoria reservoir. I have been informed that this main has been supplying the Victoria reservoir for some years, and I presume it is doing so to-day.

Hon. J. E. Dodd: Are you sure of that?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I have been assured that that is correct. If it is so, it shows that the height of the weir is sufficient to throw the water into the reservoir at Mt. Eliza. As the water level, even during the year of greatest drought, has not fallen below 13ft. from the crest, there is a sufficient head of water to supply the Mt. Eliza reservoir if the pipe line were brought direct from Mundaring.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What is the total head at Mundaring?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: A hundred feet. Some years ago when the cancellation of the contract for the 10in. main from Mundaring to Midland Junction was desired, the reason given to me for not bringing the water to Perth was that it was known that the Coolgardie scheme would be a failure, and it was not desired that the burden of the failure should be cast upon the citizens of Perth. Still, the people of the metropolitan area together with the rest of community have to bear their share of any loss, and it seemed to me that that was an unfortunate attitude to adopt. It would have been wise at the time to put in a 30in. main from Mundaring to Perth. Considering the head of water and the levels, I have always felt convinced that the water could be delivered from Mundaring into the Mt. Eliza reservoir. Even were it not so, if we can pump water to Kalgoorlie, surely we can pump it into the Mt. Eliza reservoir. However, we have had all these millions of gallons of water running to waste and many more millions of gallons stored up and stagnant in the catchment during the last 20 years, when the people of Perth would have been only too glad to purchase it. That water could have been turned into cash, the State would have saved money and the people of the metropolitan area would have had a good water supply. The same argument holds good at the present time. Several weirs could have been thrown across the rivers feeding the Mundaring catchment at an expenditure of probably £500,000, which would have been an infinitely cheaper proposition than the new hills schemes, which apparently are not proving too successful. Those sources can be tapped in years to

come, but I understand that it will be a infinitely more expensive proposition than to tap Mundaring. The select committee recommended that the pipes should not be laid from Churchman's Brook and a suggestion was advanced that the pipes should be diverted to Mundaring. I am surprised that the people of Perth have not been more keenly anxious to get water from Mundaring.

Hon. E. H. Gray: You cannot go against the advice of engineers.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: It is not too late even now to connect the city with Mundaring. We realise that the supply to the metropolis is likely to get from Churchman's Brook will not to any considerable extent augment that which is being delivered to the people to-day. Moreover, as we are experiencing a somewhat dry season, I doubt whether Perth will be able to draw any great quantity of water from Churchman's Brook in the coming summer, because I understand that the pipes have been laid to pick up the summer flow in the brooks. The chances are that that flow will cease altogether.

Hon. T. Moore: Did that brook cease to run in 1914?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I do not know but I do know that a good many of those brooks, in the days when I was familiar with them, very frequently ceased to flow in the summer months.

Hon. T. Moore: You are wrong.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I fear Perth has a very poor chance of getting much water from that source. I notice also that it is proposed to increase taxation in respect of sewerage. I regret that in years gone by it was deemed advisable to construct the tanks on the site chosen. The late Mr. Wright, a well known engineer, when a member of the House, strenuously opposed the construction of the tanks where we now find them, and what he then said would take place has been borne out. His claim was that there would be great difficulty in getting those tanks to function properly. The foundations, he said, were not likely to be satisfactory, and he argued that when the pipes were laid across the river from the mainland to the tanks, the engineers would lose sight of them, and they would not be subject to inspection. He added that the pipes were bound to sink into the bed of the river and that due allowance could not be made for bursting, and that if they did burst the sewage matter would

empty itself into the river and cause a great deal of pollution.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Have those predictions been borne out?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I cannot say altogether.

Hon. E. H. Gray: No, they have not.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: The late Mr. Wright's original fears have not been very wide of the mark, because we know that the river is not as clean as it was before the tanks were constructed. There is evidence, too, that the water has been polluted. I used to enjoy a swim in the river, but I take very good care never to go into it now. There were many banks that were beautifully white. Those banks are now covered with a black scum. I am told that if you go boating and drop your anchor for a day or so, when you pull it up the anchor rope is foul with a sediment and slime which you get all over your hands.

Hon. H. Stewart: And bubbles and gas.

Hon. J. Duffield: And beautiful cobblers.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: The aroma from the river is enough to drive anyone away from it. Now we are asked to pay additional taxation on land and property to enable the Government to continue a system that has been so unsatisfactory. I have always hoped that the Government would see their way to establish a sewage farm where it would be possible to turn to profitable account all the sewage that passed into it. That would have prevented the destruction of one of our greatest beauty spots, the Swan River. We are asked to pay additional taxation without there being any suggestion of an improvement being effected in either water supply or sewerage. The people are about to be rated to a greater extent without getting anything in the shape of a return commensurate with the expenditure to which they will be put. As the debate proceeds, I trust we shall be given a definite promise that will lead us to hope that better results will accrue in the future. Now that the new Engineer-in-Chief is with us I trust, also, that the Government will ask him to look seriously into the questions of water supply and sewerage. Enormous sums of money have been spent, and there has been great waste. The work that has been done has not been in the best interests of the State.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [5.12]: For a number of years there has been an agitation, not without cause, for an increased water supply for the metropolitan area. The Government are now engaged in supplying that need. Whether it will prove a success or not remains to be seen. According to some hon. members, especially Mr. Lovekin, the position looks very black. A great deal of money has already been spent, and we are told that in the coming summer we shall have only a small increase in our supply. I can hardly believe that. Further than that, when members urge that the Government, having expended over £100,000, should drop the scheme and tap the Mundaring supply in opposition to all the expert advice that has been given in the past, it appears very strange to me. The Government of the day and their predecessors have given every consideration to the question of increasing the water supply. The National Government, of which I was a member, devoted considerable time and expenditure in the direction of making inquiries to supplement the city supply. From what I know of the position I do not consider that the Canning scheme is going to be as hopeless as we have been told it will be. The object of the Bill is really to increase the rate, and I take it that the increase was to a large extent agreed upon by those who are urging the provision of an increased water supply of water, because it was well known that existing supplies could not be augmented without the expenditure of large sums of money. Therefore the suggested increase in the rate seems to be quite all right, except that I cannot understand why there should be an increase in regard to storm waters because, in the parent Act, sewerage and storm water are under the one rating, namely 1s. 6d. in the pound. That figure is allowed to stand, and the storm water rate is to be 5d. in the pound. I do not know why there should be an increase in storm water rating, for I cannot see that the provision made for storm water is going to impose any additional expenditure on the Government. Surely the increased rating in respect of the water supply would be sufficient! Very little money has been expended in providing for storm water. Even to-day in many parts of the metropolitan area there is no storm water drainage. I urge those representing the city community, for whom the water supply is being provided, to give serious consideration to the position, instead of embarrassing the

Government by talking about tapping Mundaring—

Hon. J. Duffell: If you had read the report of the select committee you would hold very different views.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I have read it. Not one expert has made a straight out recommendation that Mundaring be tapped for the city supply. When Mr. Ritchie visited the State it was thought that he would make such a recommendation, but he did not do so. He recommended the present scheme.

Hon. J. Duffell: He did not recommend the present scheme.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: He recommended the Canning scheme. He did not make a straight out recommendation to tap Mundaring for the city supply. We hear talk of what would happen if we had a drought. We never have had a drought in this State. The 1914 season was a dry one, but was not a drought. When this talk of drought appears in the Press and in "Hansard" it is noised abroad, to the prejudice of the State. It is time enough to cry drought when we have one. But suppose we were to get another dry season like that of 1914, and perhaps two in succession; if we were drawing on Mundaring for the city supply it would mean in such a season the depletion of the supply both for the goldfields and for the agricultural areas along the pipe line. I hope nothing drastic will come out of this opposition to the Government's expenditure, for I do not see how the Government can now throw aside that scheme.

Hon. V. Hamersley: They could hold it up quite easily.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: What is the use of holding it up? They have gone so far on expert advice, and I say let them expend the rest of the money and provide the water.

On motion by Hon. H. Seddon, debate adjourned.

BILL—DAY BAKING.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. H. A. STEPHENSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.20]: Before the Bill reached the House I thought it was going to be a very easy matter to decide upon. I was advised that both the master bakers and the employees had agreed on the condition laid

down in the Bill. However, since then I have been informed that not the whole of the master bakers agreed to the conditions, for the simple reason they were never consulted, that some of them knew nothing of the meeting until they saw a report of it in the newspaper. In addition to that, there are in the metropolitan area some 23 bakers who do not employ labour. They are totally opposed to being brought within the scope of the Bill. We should protect those men. Why should we endeavour to crush a man who is trying to build up a business connection for himself? What would have happened to most of us here, business men, if 20 or 30 years ago, when we were small men, we had been caught in a trap such as this? We would not have been classed to day as amongst the bigger men. The small man of to-day who has sufficient initiative to endeavour to build up a business for himself and get out of the rut ought to be encouraged in every way. Again, I regard these small men as a buffer between the Master Bakers' Association and the Bakers' Union, and I hold that we should do what we can to enable that buffer to continue, if only in the interests of the public, who should also be considered. I will vote for the second reading, but when in Committee I will assist in getting amendments in favour of those to whom I have alluded.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—PRIMARY PRODUCTS MARKETING BILL.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. J. E. DODD (South) [5.25]: In ordinary circumstances I should have been content to leave the discussion of the Bill to those concerned in the growing and marketing of fruit. However, when I examine the Bill I find that practically all primary producers are affected by it. In the province I represent there is quite a large number of primary producers. Further than that, there are in the Bill principles of supreme importance to all in the community, not merely those interested in the fruit marketing industry. Under the terms of the Bill a majority of producers in any one line

may ask for a board to organise and control the marketing of that line. When that is done and the board appointed, all growers of that particular product are compelled to come under the operations of the board in respect of the selling of the product and the organising of markets. Then the Bill places an embargo on any grower who is not content to let the board handle his produce. Such a grower will not be allowed to use the railways for the carriage of his product. The questions I ask myself are: whether the proposal is reasonable and just, and whether compulsory organisation is needed. I believe organisation is needed very badly in the fruit industry, but to my mind no good can accrue by using such coercive measures as are proposed in the Bill. The Scaddan Government resumed a large area of land at West Perth for the purpose of establishing markets. That was done before the war, and the coming of the war capsized everything. Still, it is significant that since that time nothing whatever has been done for the organising of markets in the city, save in respect of the kerbstone markets which, I understand, are doing very useful work. I believe in the organising of the fruit industry, but it ought to be voluntary, not compulsory. During the winter months I had the privilege of indulging in many conversations with a representative of the Queensland orchardists. I heard from him a great deal in relation to the operations of the Queensland measure. He knew that Act from A to Z and was thoroughly familiar with the whole business. He was a member of the League of Freedom, which was formed to break down the Act. He was an orchardist pure and simple. We know what happened in Queensland, where the League of Freedom was responsible for the taking of a case to the Full Court. The court ruled that the operation of some parts of the Act constituted a restraint of trade. The Bill before us is going to set up a Soviet similar to some of those operating elsewhere, and to set up an industry dictatorship. I would refer to what has been done by means of voluntary organisation. Trade unionism, for instance, has been built up by voluntary organisations, and this has meant a great deal to members of unions and it will no doubt continue to mean a great deal to them. It has certainly led to considerable improvement in the condition of the workers of to-day. The Westralian Farmers have

also done wonderfully in the way of voluntary co-operation. In South Africa a great deal has been done through voluntary organisation and co-operation. Before the war I read a book dealing with the work of Sir Horace Plunkett, now Lord Plunkett. This, too, showed the extraordinary results that have been achieved by voluntary organisations. Had it not been for the war Ireland would have been one of the most prosperous parts of the Empire. This was largely due to the work of Lord Plunkett himself. I know of no other part of the world except Queensland, where an attempt has been made to coerce the minority as has been done there. Compulsion is necessary in many directions, and in some cases we could not go on without it, but there is a line over which we cannot pass. It seems to me that this Bill is taking us over that line. The individual in some respects is above the law. None of us recognises the right of any law to interfere with religion or to invade the home, for the home is a man's own castle. We should not recognise the right of anyone to interfere in politics although I fear that that is being overstepped. The individual has rights with which no one should attempt to interfere. We have inherent rights that are above all laws. I have often used a quotation from an American poet, "That before men made us citizens, Nature made us men." This means that before we had our citizen laws we had our natural laws. This Bill intrudes upon what may be called the natural laws and intrudes upon our rights. It lays down that all producers, good, bad and indifferent, ought to pool their products, and accept what a board appointed by a two-third majority may dictate. There may be many who will get more money and do better if they market their own produce than if they place it in the hands of the board. I have had letters from friends who are engaged in the fruit industry, and who are only small growers. Some of them live in the hills, where the people are said to be favourable to the Bill, but these men are opposed to it, and have asked me to do all I can to prevent it from becoming law. Are our experts in any industry, who have gained their positions by study and energy, to be brought to a dead level by the Bill? Mr. Willmott asks if the lawyers would agree to pool their fees. I suppose there are many lawyers in Perth who are not earning as much money as the

average good tradesman earns. Would the more highly paid lawyers agree to pool their fees in order to bring up the small men to their own positions? The same remark applies to medical men. The other day applications were invited for a medical man at the Leonora Hospital. I think there were 56 applications from doctors for this position. Is it to be supposed that all the doctors would pool their fees in order to help those who are on the bottom rung of the ladder? Before the war there were hundreds of doctors looking for positions outback. If the pooling of the returns of all the producers could be justified, as proposed in this Bill, we should be equally justified in applying the principle to the medical fraternity. I recall the magnificent speech delivered by Mr. Moore on group settlement on the subject of individualism, the rights of the individual group settler, and the recommendations of the Royal Commission. When I think of that speech I wonder that such a Bill as this could have been brought down. Mr. Moore spoke of how the group settlers were pooling their earnings.

Hon. T. Moore: Pooling their energies.

Hon. J. E. DODD: And that because of the principle operating there the settlers had no particular interest in their work. Let me instance contract work in mines. If the system of pooling the earnings of mine contractors were adopted, a lot of trouble would be created. Suppose we said that these contractors were to pool their earnings; they would at once reject the proposal. In times of war, pestilence or famine we might be justified in bringing down legislation of this kind, but in ordinary times like the present there is no justification for allowing a two-thirds majority in any industry to dominate the remainder. The remedy is to provide more marketing facilities for our producers, and more cool storage accommodation. There is also the other supreme remedy, with which we cannot deal, namely, the removal of the restrictions that are killing the primary industries of Australia. Let me instance the sugar industry, tin plate, solder, etc., which are intimately connected with the jam-making industry. There are also restrictions of the tariff concerning everything used by the fruitgrowers. If these restrictions could be removed it would be better for the fruitgrower and the community at large. I am sorry to have to vote against the Bill, for I think it has been brought forward with the intention of helping the fruitgrowing industry. I could not,

however, reconcile my conscience to vote for a Bill which is an invasion of man's natural rights. I know of one man at Karragullen, who is an expert apple grower and who has worked up a good connection. Is he to throw all his knowledge into the melting pot, and accept what the committee of direction or the board may offer him? It is unthinkable that he should do so. I intend to oppose the Bill.

HON. J. M. MACFARLANE (Metropolitan) [5.40]: I have no doubt the Bill has been introduced to improve the position of the primary producers by giving them some control over their marketing conditions through a board. I am prepared to acknowledge that the Minister has safeguarded the position of the department, and has been very generous over the conditions imposed upon the primary producers in the matter of marketing. I ask myself whether compulsory marketing would be an improvement over present day conditions, and whether it would lead to greater values being obtained for the produce. My experience of many years entitles me to give my impressions as to how far the present position would be improved in directions with which I am fairly familiar. I question the wisdom of breaking down present conditions. They have been built up as a result of long years of experience. They have produced men who are experts in marketing and in finding fresh markets, and these men are working on the basis of 5 and 7½ per cent. commission and sometimes lower than that.

Hon. H. Stewart: There are very few who are working on a lower commission than that.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: That represents the cost to the producer to-day.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: The wheat brokers charge only 1 per cent.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: During the war it was found necessary to coerce the growers for the benefit of the nation. That was all right in the circumstances, and it produced inflated prices that were highly remunerative to the producer. It created the idea of establishing compulsory pools, on the assumption that they would give results similar to those achieved during the war. The conditions since the war have improved in all directions. Further markets have been sought out which have proved profitable. The apple-growers, by co-operative action, have found a good market in London, as a

result of paying careful attention to packing, selection and general marketing arrangements. They are strongly opposed to any legislation that will interfere with their organisation. I was in Queensland a few weeks ago, and I found no attempt being made by the committee of direction to pool soft fruits. They consider it is beyond them. They have confined themselves to the fruits which can be handled without great risk of failure. Present-day conditions of marketing have to be borne in mind. Those conditions have been created by experts who have devoted a lifetime of study to finding markets for produce. Under the Bill the producer is to pass that business over to a body of unskilled men, inexperienced in finding markets or marketing. The intention is to obtain full control of the commodity, and the Bill provides that the election and maintenance of the boards, and the employment of graders of produce, shall be at the expense of the producers. These charges, in addition to the other charges which I have mentioned, would total much more than the cost under existing conditions.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: How could soft fruits be pooled?

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: I contend that soft fruits cannot be pooled. Queensland tried it for two years, and saw the un wisdom of it, and thereafter left soft fruits severely alone. The complaints arise at a time of the year when the market is over-supplied. The supply is seasonal, and no board of control could overcome that condition. A change could be effected only by the establishment of secondary industries such as jam-making. The public mind has become more normal since the war, and conditions are now more favourable towards voluntary effort. Great improvements in export trade have been effected with assistance from the Federal Government during the last year or two. I may refer particularly to the export of dairy products. The Federal Government have granted financial assistance for the purpose of watching conditions in London. Two gentlemen have been sent there to act on behalf of the producers and try to improve the marketing position. The result has been to improve matters as regards butter to such an extent that Western Australia, with its £500,000 a year of imports, in view of Federal legislation controlling export, does not need local control. As regards dried fruits, there is an export board, and the State can export their sur-

plus with financial assistance from the Federal Government. Therefore, neither of these industries requires a board or an Act to regulate it.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: But as regards fruit the Eastern States are not going to stand the present position, which is intolerable to them, of our growers getting the cream of the market.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: The only group of people known to me—a group with whom I have very much sympathy—who consider that they have anything to gain from the Bill, are the poultry-keepers. I am fairly familiar with the handling of eggs, and have gone into the matter closely. I see nothing in the Bill that would give the poultry-keeper any advantage that he could not gain on a voluntary basis. Poultry-keepers urge a compulsory pool because they want to market their own produce and want to be placed in a position to compete with the Eastern States. Especially they want to control country supplies in order that the price may be stabilised. Knowing the position as I do, I regard the idea as absurd. The suburban supplier within a radius of, say, 20 miles of the General Post Office, wants to control supplies from the farmer, and says that anybody owning 100 fowls or more should be compelled to come into the pool. The farmer's eggs, however, are usually a side line for the farmer's wife and daughter, who obtain pocket money in that way. The farmer's egg is not a breakfast or household egg. It is distinctly a line which comes into competition with Adelaide eggs.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Farmers' eggs are useful at public meetings!

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: Farmers' eggs have not the same value by 1d. or 2d. as suburban eggs. At the same time, they would affect a compulsory pool, and would cause disturbance rather than peace in the industry. It has to be borne in mind, too, that Adelaide is not very far away from Perth, and that South Australia is a large producer of eggs at a cost much lower than that obtaining in Western Australia. The South Australian producer of eggs looks upon this State as a good customer, not for breakfast eggs, but eggs for pastrycooks and cake-makers, people who have to buy large supplies so that they may go on manufacturing when eggs are scarce. When eggs become so cheap that the supply is a menace to the grower, the position is similar to that which arises in connection with soft fruits

—the market is over-supplied for the time being. The large pastrycooks did not attempt to buy here formerly; they made their contracts for eggs in bulk in the Eastern States. There would be perhaps 40 dozen frozen eggs in a kerosene tin, and eight or nine eggs, cracked and shelled, would make a pound, and which basis these eggs are sold. Eggs in bulk are held in cold storage and are obtained by the purchaser as required, each shipment being drawn against. So the purchaser has not to find any money while the eggs are in cold storage. Another method of holding eggs for the scarce period of the year is to keep them in shell in cold storage. Egg-producers here say they find that eggs in shell in cold storage interfere with their business, and that eggs in bulk are bought in Adelaide whereas they should be bought here. They contend that if they had control of the matter, they would so stabilise the price as to place themselves in a much better position. However, everything that is done by the South Australian egg-producers can be done by our producers voluntarily. Our growers complain that the banks will not make them advances on their eggs, but I think that is wrong. I was speaking to my banker on the subject to-day, and he said that he would make advances on eggs stored for a period. Whether the matter would be satisfactory or not must depend upon the circumstances of each year. Our egg-producers can make contracts with the cake and pastry people in exactly the same way as such contracts are made by the South Australian growers. There is no need whatever for compulsion.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Is the South Australian organisation voluntary?

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: Yes. It is being said that a compulsory pool is to be introduced in South Australia, but I do not think there is much chance of it. If our growers had a compulsory pool, they could not influence the Adelaide position. If they tried to raise the price to a figure benefiting them, they would defeat their own end, because our cake and pastry people, who are in competition with Eastern makers, would be forced to go elsewhere to buy their eggs at the same value as those Eastern competitors. It is a well-known fact that our cakemakers have to meet competition from cakemakers in the East. I do not blame our cakemakers for going to Adelaide to buy eggs if they find the market here against them. Compulsion could only do our poul-

try-keepers financial harm eventually. Queensland tried an egg pool, operated it for a time, and then under the Act had to take a referendum as to whether the pool should continue. The necessary 75 per cent. majority could not be obtained, and therefore the Queensland pool is now in suspension. The Queensland Government have been asked to reduce the majority to 66 per cent., it being claimed that the adverse result was due to the indifference of growers. That, however, is a very poor argument. If the growers, as the result of two years' experience of the egg pool, were so indifferent as not to come forward and vote up to the percentage required, the pool cannot have been a great success. Had the financial results been satisfactory, there would have been no difficulty in getting 75 per cent., or even 100 per cent. If the necessary majority were reduced to 66 per cent., and if that figure were not attained, no doubt Parliament would be requested to reduce it to 51 per cent. I agree with Mr. Dodd that in such circumstances the majority should not rule a minority of even 25 or 20 per cent. My experience in the egg business leads me to believe that the 20 per cent. who stand out are the best growers and the best packers, the men who attend to their business thoroughly and devote all their time to the work, who are careful in the selection of their breeds, and in the packing of the eggs, and who oversight the way in which the eggs are sold. It is the opponents of the compulsory pool whose eggs bring 1d. or 2d. a dozen more than the eggs of the people who want the compulsory pool. I do not deny that there are some good growers who ask for the pool, but I contend that the better-class growers will, as the result of the compulsory pool, be brought down to the level of some of the less experienced and less qualified men, with the result that the better-class growers will lose their initiative and their ambition to be among the first lot. I am stressing the position regarding the egg pool, because we have been told that while the Minister has been urged to give relief in this respect, Parliament has discussed the Bill from the point of view of the fruitgrower only. It is because I believe there is some truth in that contention that I am dealing with the egg position. I have analysed the matter thoroughly, and I have arrived at the conclusion that the conditions are such that all that is necessary can be done as the result of voluntary efforts, with-

out the necessity for compulsion. If an attempt were made to compulsorily control the egg market, particularly the country supplies which, during the spring time, represent a fair quantity, it would be found to be a difficult and costly proposition to police. That would be the position, irrespective of the competition from Adelaide, which would be beyond the scope of the Bill. Adelaide could easily upset all calculations. The big cake bakers buy large quantities of egg for storing against the time when eggs become very expensive. The glut takes place in August and September, during which months the prices are the lowest during the year. That is when the cake bakers operate in the egg market. The prices for that period until March are fairly right. They become firm about October and November at about 1s. 2d. to 1s. 6d. per dozen. In March, however, they are about 2s. a dozen, but during April, May, June and July the prices rise to between 2s. 6d. and 3s. 6d. per dozen. Thus it will be seen that a dozen eggs during that period represent the equivalent in price of three dozen of eggs purchased during the spring time.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Do not the cake bakers pickle their own eggs?

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: No. The people in Adelaide are prepared to finance them as well, apart from supplying eggs. The same thing could be done here with the assistance from the banks or under the provisions of the Commonwealth Bank (Rural Credits) Bill to which Mr. Stephenson referred last night. However, I feel that the pooling idea has outlived the demand. The public mind has become more normal and people have settled down to business in a proper competitive way, as it should be, with individuality imparted into transactions. With improved marketing conditions, the demand for a pool has died down. Skill has been brought to bear and wider and profitable markets have been found. I am satisfied that the export of eggs will be a big factor in connection with poultry farming in this State. The last two or three years have proved that. Mr. Tom Walsh was responsible for the failure this season, not the marketing conditions here or in England. One ugly feature in connection with the proposal to establish boards is that producers will not be free. The growers will be fettered to the boards, and will have no control over their own products. I would not appreciate that sort of thing in my own business, and I do

not think the great bulk of the growers would appreciate it either. I admit that present conditions can be improved, and they will be improved as time goes on, but at present the grower is free and untrammelled. To my mind it is essentially best that the producer in any particular industry should be free and untrammelled. I cannot support a Bill that would trammel the primary producers. In the circumstances I feel I must oppose the second reading of the Bill.

HON. H. STEWART (South-East) [6.6]: A little while ago Mr. Kitson interjected that there would be no board under the provisions of the Bill if the growers did not want one. I will not say that that is the strongest argument in favour of the Bill, or for agreeing to the second reading of the measure. It is true that there will be no board if the growers do not desire one, because two-thirds of the growers can petition for the appointment of a board.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: In number?

Hon. H. STEWART: Yes, I will deal with that phase later. However, one-quarter of the growers, by means of a counter petition, can prevent the issuing of the Order-in-Council constituting the board. When we consider the provisions of the Bill, however, it must be admitted that the provisions relating to the appointment of a board are very unsatisfactory, particularly when once the board comes into operation. To consider the provisions regarding boards from the initial stage, we must recognise that it will not be possible for one board to deal with all primary products, nor is that intended. Even after the Bill was first introduced in the Assembly, it was found necessary in that House to amend it by providing a definition of a fresh fruitgrower. No such provision was in the Bill when it was introduced first. The definition reads as follows:—

“Fresh fruitgrower” means a person by whom fresh fruit is grown or produced for market from an area of not less than two acres.

One has only to read that definition to realise the significance that lies behind it and, in fact, behind the Bill itself. It means that a man whose economic value in the community, from the standpoint of the Bill, is almost negligible, would, because of his two acres under fruit, have a say as to

how the fruit of the State should be marketed. If Mr. Burvill, who is an authority on potatoes, were asked if a man having two acres under potatoes should be allowed to say how he and others were to market their products, what would he say? How many acres of wheat should a man have before he should have a say regarding the marketing of his product?

Hon. J. Nicholson: Two acres, of course.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: But wheat is not fresh fruit.

Hon. H. STEWART: Not from the point of view of Mr. Kitson, or of the Bill. The amendment I referred to was the only amendment allowed in the lower House and represents probably the only instance in which a "t" was crossed. In view of the definition inserted regarding a fresh fruit grower, if we carry out the position to a logical conclusion, we must also insert a definition to make clear what will constitute a potato grower, a vegetable grower, a wheat grower, a wool grower, or a dried fruits grower. Mr. Macfarlane has already correctly stated that the Bill does not apply to fruit only, and the position regarding other products has not been stressed. I fully realise the comprehensive scope of the Bill in that it may apply, not only to the agricultural produce, but to timber as well. It is even questionable whether the Bill cannot be made to apply to minerals and metalliferous products. While I say it could be applied to the timber industry, in one sense, we would require another definition.

Hon. E. H. Gray: They have a good ring now.

Hon. H. STEWART: Seeing that the hon. member has referred to what he regards as the timber ring, I would draw attention to the fact that State trading, as it applies to the timber industry, has not reduced the price of fruit cases, but has doubled it.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Nor have the State Sawmills done so.

Hon. H. STEWART: It was the establishment of the State Sawmills that created that position. Before the war we could import fruit cases made of suitable wood, of a type enabling our growers to place their fruit in open competition in the markets of the world, at a cost of 7d.

Hon. J. Duffell: And the best of wood was used, too.

Hon. H. STEWART: Then a start was made with indigenous timber, and we were able to get the cases at about 6½d. To-day the price has increased to 8½d., but within recent years we had to pay 10½d.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I am told that you can buy jarrah cheaper in Adelaide than in Perth.

Hon. H. STEWART: I am not surprised to hear that. It is significant to recall the prices of fruit cases when we find legislative efforts being made to benefit the producers in the marketing of their products. The present Government are keeping quiet regarding State trading at present, but the former Labour Government, who introduced the principle, were the means of increasing the cost to the producer of marketing his goods.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: But they are working fewer hours now, 44 as against 48 or so.

Hon. H. STEWART: Yes, and if the unholy alliance which has been proposed in some instances, such as day baking, is to be established, under which the industrialists and the big men will be able to squeeze out the little men, thus helping to get rid of competition, the spot mills throughout the forests will be wiped out, although those mills are providing the growers with fruit cases more cheaply than the combine.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. H. STEWART: After reading through the Bill several weeks ago, I came to the conclusion that it represented a very good attempt to provide a piece of general legislation to deal with the great variety of agricultural products, but in that attempt at an almost impossible task, some things had crept in that made the measure absolutely impossible of acceptance by the people whom it was designed to benefit. One provision alone would make it unacceptable to the producers of this or any other democratic State—the provision relating to the board. Every thing is to be left to regulation. It is provided that the board can make so much of a product as shall be necessary available for consumption or use within the State. If that power were left to the board, it could be justified, but there is a proviso that the Minister may stop or prohibit any action or proposed action on the part of the board which he considers is or would be detrimental to the public interests, and may revoke any

such order, and may at any time nominate not more than three persons to advise him as to whether in any particular case it is expedient to make or not to make such an order, or to continue or revoke an order already made. That would give to the Minister a power that I do not think this Chamber would ever grant.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: What is wrong with it?

Hon. H. STEWART: Five-sixths of the members know what is wrong with it, and that is quite sufficient to prevent its being agreed to. Amongst some Parliamentarians and a section of fruitgrowers last year there was a very persistent cry for help in the marketing of their products, and it is only fair to recognise the attempt made by the Government to meet that demand for legislation. That demand for legislation was made for one product only, fruit. The potato growers of the South-West had already organised and protected themselves, and I have been advised by them that they are satisfied with what they have been able to do in the way of voluntary organisation. This applies to the potato growers in the Bunbury and Albany districts. The fruit-growers were the people who raised the cry for legislation. Some people were advising them to request legislation similar to that of Queensland and were pressing the Government to introduce such a measure. A good deal of difficulty has arisen, because of the attempt to provide in one Bill for what is almost impossible. Reading through the Bill one does not realise all the difficulties that are likely to occur. It was found necessary to have a definition of a fresh-fruit grower, and a corollary to that would be a definition of every other kind of producer to regulate those who are to have a vote to bring about the decision. There we see the beginning of the difficulties caused through trying to frame a comprehensive measure for such widely diverse products. Only a man of great ability could bring forward a measure that would cover such a variety of products and result in organisation to control the marketing of millions of pounds worth of produce, some of which like wheat is on a national scale, and other like vegetables for domestic requirements on a relatively petty scale. The Bill has really been introduced to meet the outcry for a measure to assist the marketing of fruit, and therefore no one can be surprised if harsh things are said about it. I, with my short experience of leg-

islation, fully realise that measures of this description are not necessarily the product of the Government or of a Minister, but are really an attempt on the part of expert officers and the draftsman to follow certain lines. Generally, it is accepted that the Minister follows the advice of his expert officers. An amendment moved to the original Bill providing for a definition of fresh-fruit grower shows that if the Bill is to be passed, definitions of growers of other products are equally necessary. Failing that, the matter would have to be left to regulation when the growers of such other products desired to come under the measure. I wish to deal with the fruit marketing position. I do not intend to refer to the Queensland Fruit Marketing Act. I read all that was written by "Scrutator" in the "West Australian" and by Mr. McGregor, and I read of the High Court case which showed that the action of the Queensland committee of direction was held to be in restraint of trade. What applies to Queensland does not apply here. Products that Queensland growers can successfully market are not the products that we have to deal with, and the ones with which they experience difficulty are the ones that give rise to difficulty in marketing here. When the agitation occurred last year I corresponded with New South Wales, New Zealand, Victoria, and Queensland asking for any legislation dealing with the marketing of primary products. The questions of which I have given notice to-day are based on what I have gleaned from that legislation, and if similar measures are adopted here, we might to some extent ameliorate the position as between the grower, the agent and the consumer. I have already pointed out that the Bill would make it possible to include the timber industry, if desired, timber being a product of the soil. It is a moot point whether it could not be made to apply also to metals. It is abundantly clear that a mixed farmer might be registered with wheat growers, meat growers, wool growers and fat stock growers. This might easily apply to many people farming in the Great Southern areas, and it illustrates how comprehensive a Bill must be to cover all. It is certainly a tribute to the draftsman, but I stress the difficulty of making one Bill apply to so many products. In other States this has not been attempted, unless it be in Queensland. Even if the Bill were put into operation for one product such as fruit, there would be difficulties. Subclause 3 of

Clause 4 provides that notice of the receipt of a petition shall be advertised in the prescribed manner, and any such Order-in-Council may be limited to the district or districts in which it is to have effect, may be rescinded by any subsequent Order-in-Council, and shall whilst in force have the same effect as if it were enacted in this measure, and shall be judicially noticed. If any attempt were made to apply the measure to districts, it would lead to an untenable and impossible position. The power to rescind, put where it is without any restriction, seems to me to weaken the position. It indicates a possible lack of assurance and a continuity of policy, both of which are absolutely essential. If you are going to build up markets you must have continuity of quality and continuity of supplies as well as continuity of policy. You must organise in such a way that you will have that continuity, and if you leave a loophole through which the whole thing may go by the board, you will be treading on dangerous ground. I might make reference to the wheat pool. I consulted the wheat pool authorities knowing full well the considered opinion of the wheatgrowers as to what their views were on markets. The wheatgrowers have organised themselves in such a way by voluntary co-operation that they can handle at least three-fourths of the harvest of this State more efficiently and cheaply than it was ever possible to do before. They want no Government interference or Government financial backing; their position now is such that they do not need any assistance or protection. They are satisfied with the voluntary pool. Whether it was Federal or State that sought to have anything to do with the wheat or wool in this State, neither could then be handled without a paltry advance being offered. No such demand has ever been made by the Wholesale Co-operative Society of Great Britain, which last year placed a million sterling at the disposal of our co-operative wheat pool. The financial arrangements were so satisfactory last year that they have been repeated this year. A feature of the Bill is contained in Clause 5, which deals with marketing boards. There we see that forthwith or contemporaneously with the making of an order under Section 4, the Governor shall by regulation prescribe—

(a) The number of persons of which the board shall be composed, and what persons shall be capable of being elected; (b) The

method by which such persons shall be elected, the method of voting, of ascertaining the result of the elections, and of the appointment of a returning and other officers, and any other matters incidental to the election of such members which it may be necessary to prescribe; (c) The tenure of office of members of the board; (d) The method of filling vacancies caused by effluxion of time; (e) The method of appointment of a chairman of the board.

All these things should not be carried out by regulation; they should be put into black and white in the Bill. It would be better to have legislation to deal with one type of product, and then it would be possible to fix all details such as how the board should be constituted and that kind of thing. I have already referred to Clause 6, and it has been fully covered by the remarks of Mr. Dodd. The proviso to the clause giving the Minister almost complete power of veto, and to appoint three people to advise him on any question, I am perfectly certain the Chamber will not endorse. As a matter of fact that is the weakest clause in the Bill as well as the most objectionable. The next clause has also been dealt with by Mr. Dodd, who pointed out that the railways are common carriers, and therefore should not be instructed by the board to refuse to carry certain products. When this was done under the wheat pool, that pool was then being financed by the Government, and the Government had representatives on the board who insisted on its being done. Under the voluntary wheat pool there is no compulsion on people breaking existing contracts.

Hon. T. Moore: You backed up the Government when they did it.

Hon. H. STEWART: It was, at that time, an emergency war measure.

Hon. T. Moore: It was not; it was after the war.

Hon. H. STEWART: We realise that what was done at that time was the outcome of chaos, but as we have progressed we have learnt. I would like to inform Mr. Moore that the wheatgrowers were then to a large extent in the hands of the Government of the day. In those times it took the Government of the day, because of the war conditions, several years to clean up one pool. The Government were not able to dispose of what was stored. Even after the war when they had only one year's produce to deal with it took them 18 months to clean it up. Under the voluntary pool, in the light of experience gained, and because they are

not hampered by Government restrictions it is possible to clean up now by September of each year. But I have digressed somewhat because of the hon. member's interjection. The growers at Mount Barker had a very rough spin, like all the fruitgrowers in the State, during the period of the war. It was impossible to shift the fruit, and only a small proportion of it could be stored. The growers in the Great Southern districts, almost without exception, are against the Bill, because to them it is unnecessary. They have all got together, and by means of organisation established cool stores. They are in the position of being able to insist that the great bulk of the fruit shall be exported, but they retain within their cool stores a certain proportion. Anyone to-day, provided he is willing to pay for it, can obtain first-class fruit out of those stores.

Hon. E. H. Gray: What is the position of the consumer?

Hon. H. STEWART: I do not gather what is meant by the interjection. If the hon. member will explain I will try to answer him, but I have no doubt he will interject again. During the season, fruit can be bought by anyone that wants it, and it can be bought cheaply. There are occasional seasons when there is a shortage, and then because people have to meet their export commitments there may be a shortage in the local market. Both Bridgetown and Mount Barker are opposed to the Bill, and also the small districts where the growers have been organising or have established their markets. More can be done by getting together and carrying on organisation work than by trying to dispose of fruit through a compulsory pool. If a pool were formed and those people had reserved for them the metropolitan market, they would be able to supply it for a short period, and at a price that would be fixed not altogether in the interests of the consumer. But I do not think those people wanting the Bill would be able to supply the local market for the whole of the 12 months; they have not the quantity of prime fruit to carry over the period of shortage. The Mt. Barker and Bridgetown producers have their own cold stores where they can store for the rest of the State. It would not be satisfactory to keep those producers out of the metropolitan market until those who want the Bill had exhausted their supplies.

During the past twelve years, I have been keeping apples in cold store up here in Perth rather than sell them during the glut period. There are the Government cold stores and Bantock's, while the Westralian Meat Exports Co. have in recent years provided accommodation for tens of thousands of cases of apples. If only the banks would advance, or the growers could stand out of their money until the glut of pears and apples was over, they could put their fruit into cold store in March, pay 1½d. per case per week, and then be able to dispose of the fruit and pay the storage on it, and still have a better return than they could have got during the glut season. I know what I am talking about, for as a small grower I have had experience since 1911, in exporting and selling locally. And what could be done with firm fruits, to a certain extent, could be done with soft fruits. Plums are sent Home from South Africa, and are bringing satisfactory prices. Although we have not so complete an Agricultural Department as we hope to have some day, yet as one who, since coming to the State in 1909, has utilised the department, I will say that if all the people who had gone on the land had consulted the department, they would have saved themselves many losses. In a number of instances orchards, vineyards, and orangeries have been set up in localities that the officers of the Agricultural Department declared were not suited to the trees planted. In consequence the orchards have been neglected, the trees eventually pulled out and the land put to some other use. It is necessary to direct attention to Clause 22, which provides for the protection of the Crown and its officers and the proposed board against action. In my view it is unjustifiable to grant that protection to a corporate body such as the board will be. To do so would be to suggest putting a premium on the board for not handling their business efficiently on behalf of the growers. In New Zealand there is a Dairy Produce Export Control Act, which was brought into operation in 1923. That Act provides for a corporate body consisting of two persons chosen by the Governor in Council on the recommendation of the Minister for Agriculture, nine persons elected by the producers, and one manufacturers' or sellers' representative. The personnel of that board rejoices my heart, for there the producers

have representation elected by themselves. That is very different from what the wheat growers unsuccessfully fought for during the war and post-war years. In any scheme for the control of wool or livestock in Australia the broker or agent seems to be regarded as a much more important person than the grower. Why he should have equal representation on all boards of control, passes my comprehension. In New Zealand there is a Meat Export Control Act. Under that the board is a corporate body composed of two persons nominated by the Governor in Council on the advice of the Minister for Agriculture, five representatives elected by the producers of meat for export, and one representative of the stock and station agents.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: They have the same in South Australia.

Hon. H. STEWART: Probably they took it from New Zealand. In dealing with a Bill like this, not only do I voice my objections to certain provisions, but also I endeavour to offer some constructive criticism. In 1917 I suggested a way of raising a large amount of revenue without imposing a burden on production, one that at the same time would bring idle lands into operation, instead of doing what was done last session in respect of the Taxation Assessment Bill against the wishes of the Legislative Council, and, I regret to say, with the consent of the managers of this House. If they had increased the land tax by four times and given the man utilising his land a rebate of 75 per cent., and provided that the tax on the man not improving his land should be 4d. instead of 2d., and imposed on the man using his land only a half-penny, it would have been sounder statesmanship than was represented in the decision arrived at by our managers last session.

Hon. A. Lovekin: There would have been no revenue; all land would have been improved up to the required standard.

Hon. T. Moore: What has this to do with the Bill?

Hon. H. STEWART: I think I have fully connected up my remarks with the Bill. In Victoria they have made attempts at voluntary pools but have sought to protect the consumer by the Stock Foods Act, which deals with the sale of chaff, bran, hay, pollard, and other stock foods. That Act makes provision against adulterations

and with regard to agents for the proper conduct of the business of produce merchants. They also have the Farm Produce Agents' Act, passed in 1920. That embraces cereals, fruit, vegetables, grain and other things. Section 10 is a restriction on the agent purchasing consignments without declaring his position. If we had legislation along those lines, it would be helpful. There is another section in the Act which I think would help to improve the position, particularly of the fruitgrower so far as marketing is concerned. I had evidence put before me recently dealing with the marketing of apples this year and the marketing of apples last year at this time of year. Apples were sent away last year at this time of year to two markets and went through the same cool store and through the same old-established firm, and realised almost the top price on the market. I saw the quality of the apples. In another instance apples were put through other agents who realised 50 per cent. below the prices obtained last year. There is no remedy for this position. The producers may send in tomatoes or fruit and know that the quality is prime but if the return is small there is no protection for them. The account sales do not prove anything. Under the Farm Produce Act of 1915 there is a schedule. According to this the following information has to be supplied—the name of the purchaser, the address of the purchaser, the nature of the produce sold, the quantity sold, the sale price, the total price paid, and the commission charged. In this State what we have is everything except the name of the purchaser and his address. It would probably help to safeguard the position of the grower if he received the name of the purchaser, for he might like to ask him what he thought of his particular produce. This might lead to mutual satisfaction as between grower and consumer, and to the producer getting a higher price than he now receives.

Hon. J. Duffell: That would not do any harm.

Hon. H. STEWART: I should like to see it brought about. We provide by law for estate agents, but they do not need legislating for nearly as much as the man who puts produce on the market.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: The agent would supply the information voluntarily if you asked him.

Hon. H. STEWART: Section 10 of the Farm Produce Agents' Act says—

At the expiration of three months after the commencement of this Act it shall not be lawful for any farm produce agent, whether directly or indirectly or by himself or any partner or sub-agent, to purchase or be in any way concerned or interested in the purchase of any farm produce consigned or delivered to him for sale by any principal without disclosing to such principal the fact that he has purchased such produce.

There is also a provision covering employees of a farm produce agent in the same way. The penalty in each case is not to exceed £50. Section 11 says—

A farm produce agent shall, within 10 days from the date of a sale and delivery, supply to every vendor or principal for whom he has disposed of goods an account sales note in the form of the schedule to this Act.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: They would all be in gaol here if they did not render account sales and send a cheque on the following day.

Hon. H. STEWART: There is no objection to an efficient produce merchant or business man returning account sales within ten hours. I have here the regulations framed under the Fruit Act of 1917, which is slightly amending the Fruit Act of 1915, both of Victoria. There is a list of the fruit that has been declared fruit for the purposes of the Act. It contains pineapples, passion fruit, bananas, etc. Vegetables also come under this, including anything between asparagus and turnips, and cucumbers and potatoes.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: How do they classify tomatoes?

Hon. H. STEWART: As a vegetable. Under the Fruit Act of 1915 the Government help by making provision for advances to companies for the purpose of erecting cool stores, sheds for storing and packing, and for pulping, canning and drying, provided proper security is afforded and a mortgage over the property is given. All these things may be provided for fruit and vegetables, and those things that are defined as fruit products. Part II. of the Act deals only with packing, inspection and the sale of fruit and vegetables. We already have State and Federal legislation governing packing, the size of fruit cases, etc. The Government could assist by taking these things into consideration. The Victorian Act might well afford some useful information for them on the question of publicity, assistance to producers, storage, packing,

pulping, drying and certain safeguards with regard to farm produce agents. I do not think the Bill before us will go through. I understand it is required only by the currant and raisin people. It would be better to bring in a small Bill dealing with them only and later on bring in another to safeguard the producer who is dealing with agents, and who should provide certain information according to schedule, as is done with regard to house agents. The funds that are received by produce agents should also be paid into a trust account. Cases have occurred in which a producer has lost his money through no fault of his own.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: And include a uniform contract.

Hon. H. STEWART: If such a measure came forward I have no doubt Mr. Stephenson would be able to afford valuable information on that subject. I have fully considered the whole position and as to how it affects the people I am associated with in the marketing of products. The Bill has many good points, but there are two or three serious blots upon it. Seeing that it deals with perishable products, the better thing would be to reject it on the second reading.

HON. T. MOORE (Central) [8.25]: When the Bill was introduced in another place I thought it was introduced at the desire of fruitgrowers. I understood that during the last two or three years they had been clamouring for something to be done for them. No one has given the Government any credit for their honest attempt to do something for them. Mr. Stewart began by saying there was something that was good about the Bill, but he also said there were tremendous blots upon it. He forgot to say that until the end.

Hon. H. Stewart: I did say there was some good in it.

Hon. T. MOORE: It has met with a hostile reception both from members representing city interests and the middleman, and those representing country districts and the interests of the country. I am surprised that those members should be so closely allied in their hostility. To me it is an unholy alliance, and not good for those who produce things. It would appear that Mr. Dodd twitted me for being illogical if I supported this Bill, by saying that I had spoken freely on a former occasion and advocated that the individuality of the settler should not be lost sight of. One would infer that

in this case everyone who voted for the Bill would vote that the individuality of the fruitgrower should be lost. That is not so. It would also appear from inferences to be drawn from the remarks of other members that in this case fruit will be pooled in the same way as wheat, and that all will get the same price. That is not the idea of pooling fruit on a scientific basis.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: The Bill says so.

Hon. T. MOORE: It says nothing of the kind.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: The fruit will be graded.

Hon. T. MOORE: Let me show what has been done in a small way in this State. The Geraldton tomato growers pool their tomatoes in order to place them on the Melbourne market. Each case is marked with the grower's mark, and the whole shipment is sent away. The individuality of the grower is never lost, for he receives the return for the tomatoes he packs. Mr. Dodd, therefore, is himself illogical.

Hon. J. Nicholson: That position would not arise under this Bill. Look at Clause 10.

Hon. T. MOORE: The grower has the right to do things in his own way. The control will be that of the growers.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The individual loses his identity and his fruit.

Hon. T. MOORE: Boiled down, the control will be in the hands of the growers, who will in effect be the board. The pool will not be controlled by the State. The Minister will have the power of veto, but it is likely that any Minister would exercise his veto to the detriment of the fruitgrowers engaged in the conduct of their own business? What happened here in connection with the agents who have been lauded so highly? There was a glut of tomatoes in the local market because, owing to a strike, tomatoes could not be sent from here to Melbourne.

Hon. J. Duffell: When was that?

Hon. T. MOORE: A few weeks ago. In the hands of Perth agents, the tomatoes realised a peculiarly small return per case.

Hon. J. Duffell: They realised 8d. a lb.

Hon. T. MOORE: The growers got a wonderfully small return.

Hon. J. Duffell: Those tomatoes were marked up in the shop windows here in Perth.

The PRESIDENT: Let the hon. member speak.

Hon. T. MOORE: The growers of those tomatoes got only a few shillings per case, but the consumers did not get the tomatoes at a few shillings per case.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: If the tomatoes were intended for the Melbourne market, their condition would not be suitable for this market.

Hon. T. MOORE: If any statement I make is wrong, the hon. member interjecting, if he has not yet spoken, can get up later and correct me. To get the Melbourne market, tomatoes are picked a week ahead. The instance I have quoted shows how remote growers fare at the hands of agents who are supposed to do everything for them. The Bill is brought forward to provide against gluts, and I am surprised at the hostility shown towards the measure. In arguing that the Bill should be rejected, Mr. Stewart dragged in the State Sawmills, fruit cases, land tax, and other utterly extraneous matters. The principle of the Bill is good. The aim of the measure is to do something for people who have been clamouring for help. In the Upper Swan district particularly many returned soldiers have built up excellent little orchards, but unless something is done for them, I do not know how they will get on.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Those men want a measure like this. Their produce is not so perishable.

Hon. T. MOORE: Something must be done or those people will have to go off their holdings. I believe the necessary organisation to be possible under the Bill.

HON. W. H. KITSON (West) [8.26]: I support the second reading, and desire to emphasise Mr. Moore's point that the Bill has been brought forward at the express request of various sections of growers throughout the State, and not only growers of fruit, but growers of other products as well. From remarks made here, one would imagine that the measure will make it compulsory on growers to accept a pool or some other marketing scheme. If members will only read the measure carefully, they will not entertain that idea for one moment. If a section of growers desire to take advantage of the measure, it will be possible for them to do so. If they do not desire to take advantage of it, then there is no necessity for them to do so. There will be no compulsion except

at the desire of the growers themselves. Therefore, it is clear that the Government, in introducing the Bill, have done their best for Western Australian producers. They say to the producers, "We think it is possible by organisation to improve your position as regards marketing, and we will provide the necessary machinery for you. We will not insist on Government control, but will let you have absolute control yourselves. The method we lay down in the Bill is that you shall elect a board of growers to control your own particular product, and that the board shall have the absolute right to determine the method to be adopted for the disposal of your product." I do not think any proposal could be fairer. The measure requires a two-thirds majority of the growers of a product in order that advantage may be taken of its provisions; otherwise the measure will not come into effect. Again, if a quarter of the growers of a product object to coming under the measure, the Minister is to veto whatever may have been decided previously. That arrangement seems to me most equitable. If some members think 66 per cent. is not a large enough majority, the percentage can be made higher. Let us make sure that the growers really do desire to come under the measure.

Hon. J. Duffell: Have any proportion of growers asked for the Bill?

Hon. W. H. KITSON: Certainly. Over a fairly long period representations have been made that a measure of this kind should be enacted. The Bill represents the Government's interpretation of the proposals which have been put forward from time to time. Of course I cannot speak for the Government, but I think they are merely trying to provide means for the growers to obtain better returns for their products. It cannot be denied that at present numerous growers are not making even a living wage. Many of those within a reasonable distance of the metropolitan area are having a particularly hard struggle to make ends meet; and, as Mr. Moore has said, unless something definite is done for them in the near future, disaster will be staring those people in the face. If members consider that because one section of the producers do not desire to take advantage of the Bill no other section of producers shall have the benefit of it, I cannot agree with them. The Bill is not to become operative unless the growers themselves desire it, and we should endeavour to meet the wishes of those growers who do

want the Bill. As regards the powers of the board, Mr. Stewart and other members have pointed out that it would not be fair to submerge in the pool a grower who has spent a lifetime in the industry and, thanks to his initiative and skill, has built up a reputation that enables him to get a very high price as compared with the average price of the product. Under the Bill, however, it is possible for the board to exempt any grower they think fit. A clause expressly provides for that. The powers of the board, which is to be elected by the growers themselves, are such that if the growers are not satisfied with the conduct of their affairs, any alteration desired by them can be brought about. That is a further reason why we should pass the second reading of the Bill. Some capital was made out of the fact that it would be possible for the board to declare void certain contracts. According to my reading, the only contracts which could be affected in that way would be contracts entered into after the appointment of the board.

Hon. H. Stewart: You are wrong; the Bill does not say that.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: I think I am right.

Hon. J. Nicholson: You are right.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: It is absolutely necessary that the board should have some such control, as otherwise individual growers would be found claiming that they had contracted to sell their product, and that therefore the board had no right to deal with it.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: A man would be liable to a fine of £500 if he bought after the formation of the board.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Mr. Kitson is quite right.

Hon. H. Stewart: Clause 14 speaks of "every contract made inside or outside Western Australia, whether before or after the passing of this Act."

Hon. W. H. KITSON: That refers to inter-State trade, with which we cannot interfere. If the great majority of growers agree to come within the scope of the measure, the provision is necessary for the safeguarding of their interests. Mr. Stewart referred to the Minister's powers under the Bill. The Minister will have the right to veto any action which may be taken by the board if he considers such action detrimental to the interests of the State as a whole. In my opinion that is a wise provision. We would not expect any Minister to take action of

that kind without just cause. Seeing that provision is made for his being advised by three persons possessing knowledge of the product being dealt with, I do not regard the power as in any way dangerous. I consider that it would work to the advantage of all concerned. Whenever a monopoly is given to any particular section, there may on occasion be something done that is all right in the interests of the section, but extremely detrimental to some other section. In that event I think it is only right that the Minister in charge should have the right of veto as provided in the Bill. Mr. Willmott, when speaking some time ago, made various statements regarding the attitude of growers in different parts of the State. He painted a very doleful picture and told us that throughout the State he had not been able to find a friend or supporter of the Bill. He went further than that and claimed that the Spearwood growers, who had had a visit from the Minister in charge of the Bill who had explained the clauses to them, had not given a decision at the time but had subsequently come to the conclusion that the measure was of no use to them. Mr. Willmott also said that 99 per cent. of them were opposed to the Bill. I know those growers and have had the pleasure of meeting their committee on several occasions. At the time I was convinced that there was some mistake, that Mr. Willmott had either been misinformed or had misunderstood the position. Mr. Willmott was invited to attend a meeting of the Spearwood growers. At that meeting the matter was discussed.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: How many growers were there?

Hon. W. H. KITSON: It was a representative meeting.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: I was informed that there were 20 there out of about 100.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: I will not quote figures, but will content myself with saying that it was a thoroughly representative meeting. I am sorry that Mr. Willmott is not present, because I believe he intends to make a statement regarding the matter. Since that meeting I have received the following letter from Mr. George Aberle, the secretary of the Spearwood District Fruitgrowers' and Market Gardeners' Association:—

I have been directed by the members of the above association to inform you that they are

in favour of the Marketing Bill, and we appeal to you to do all in your power to help make this Bill become law. Our position is entirely different from the Hon. Mr. Willmott's, whose company we had the pleasure of at our last meeting. After hearing his side and he ours, he has promised to tell the House our opinions regarding the Bill, and further, that his statement regarding 99 per cent. of the growers of this district being against the Bill is not true.

The Spearwood growers have been organised for several years. They have what might be called a voluntary organisation that has proved successful in several directions. Unfortunately, while the great majority of them have been quite content to carry out arrangements agreed upon, on occasions it has been found that an individual grower has been prepared to take advantage of the organisation just so long as it suited him and then, for some reason or other, to refuse to take any responsibility in connection with it. Occasionally individual growers have even endeavoured to undermine the efforts of the organisation by underselling and in various other ways have done things that were considered detrimental to the growers of the district as a whole. Under the provisions of the Bill, they claim it will be possible for them to so organise the business that it will be impossible for an individual grower, for some personal gain, to undermine the growers' organisation in the future. The Spearwood growers have proved that they are capable of handling their own business. They claim that the Bill will give them the power that they have not actually had in the past. It will enable them to see that each grower will fall into line with the great majority. It will be admitted that the Spearwood district can hold its own with any other district, and if the experience of the Spearwood growers can be taken as a guide, we should have no fear in agreeing to the Bill. What the Spearwood growers have proved to be possible to a limited extent without the measure, should furnish proof of what will be possible to a greater extent with the advantage of the powers conferred by the Bill. There is absolutely no compulsion about the matter unless the growers themselves desire it. It will be possible for growers in a given district to deal with their own products. It will be possible for the growers to include the whole area or only a portion. They can limit its applica-

tion to one class of primary produce or to all classes, but only if the growers so desire. I cannot see any logical reason why we should not agree to the Bill in order to give the power to the primary producers that they desire. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [8.53]: The object of the measure is to assist the producers. I am at all times ready to support anything of that nature if it can be shown that what is desired can be attained. Unfortunately I cannot see anything in the Bill that will be of value to the producers, apart from those interested in dried fruits. The Bill is based upon the Queensland Act, but when the measure was introduced in Queensland there was far greater demand for it on the part of the producers than exists in Western Australia to-day. Here a small section of the growers only are in favour of the Bill. In Queensland probably more than two-thirds of the producers were favourable to the introduction of the measure, but to-day, having had experience of the Act, they will tell you that they are far from satisfied. They are openly opposed to it. The only success achieved in Queensland, that I have heard of, relates to pineapples and bananas. In every other direction the operations of the Bill have resulted in failure. The experience regarding tomatoes could not have been worse, and so it must be with all products of a highly perishable nature. References have been made to the wheat pool. Because of the success achieved in that direction, it is suggested that the same result will follow the handling of other primary produce under the provisions of the Bill. The commodities, however, are entirely different. Those that will come under the scope of the Bill will be of a highly perishable nature. Of course, wheat will deteriorate, but not to the extent of the primary produce covered by the Bill. The most successful results in connection with the wheat pool were achieved during the war period. On top of that, however, there is the fact that wheat finds so ready a market. Where shall we find a market for a lot of our perishable produce?

Hon. T. Moore: I saw grapes in shop windows in London marked at 7s. 6d. a pound.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Quite so, but does the hon. member understand that there are only two varieties of grapes that will carry to London? What about the rest of the grapes produced?

Hon. T. Moore: Let us grow those two varieties.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: They are not grown to any extent to-day. Many varieties of grapes will not carry any distance at all.

Hon. T. Moore: Of course I did not buy any of those grapes in London.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Potatoes have been mentioned in the course of the debate. Some of our growers are so well advanced with their potato production, that they can get their produce on the markets before the crops in the Eastern States are ready. Thus they get the advantage of the early prices. Victoria and Tasmania combined control the potato market of Australia. It would be all right if we could get some provision under which the whole of the States would work together, but Tasmania and Victoria would never agree to such a proposition.

Hon. T. Moore: Wait till the group settlements get going!

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: If we could sell the whole of our produce within the State, it would be all right, but that is not possible. Will it be contended that because our potato growers are able to get their potatoes on the market early and secure that advantage, they must not do so but must accept pool prices? That is what the Bill means. It gets back to the old position, that no matter what interest or skill may be displayed by an individual he must be content with the rates payable to the individual who lacks skill and takes no interest in his work. The position is far from satisfactory to-day regarding grading, packing, and other matters. Although work in that direction can be done more cheaply by the growers themselves, I recognise that the position is far from satisfactory to-day, but it can be dealt with without the necessity for the Bill. We can have better grading and packing than is apparent to-day because there is not sufficient supervision. If we are to establish, under the provisions of the Bill, various depots for packing and grading, it will all increase the cost of administration. While it may be attempted in one year, I am satisfied there will be a revolution in the succeeding year. What would be more valuable to the Western

Australian producers would be the establishment of central markets.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: Hear, hear!

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I do not know how long that reform will be delayed. If we had central markets the growers would be brought into touch with the producers, but that reform is delayed year after year. No step has yet been taken in that direction and nothing is done to overcome many of the difficulties that could be wiped aside by the establishment of a central market. It would not cost much. All that is required is a skeleton shed, such as we have for the open markets. It does not matter whether railway communication is available or not. If it were available, it would suit only a few agents. Central markets would relieve the present position and save the high rates of commission. On some produce sent to South Australia some time ago, the rates of commission amounted to 28 per cent., the major portion of which could be obviated by the provision of central markets. If the local governing bodies even were to establish central markets, the position would be satisfactory.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: The local governing body could act as the landlord.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Yes, and stalls in the markets could be leased as is done in Adelaide. Some people there have had leases extending over 50 years. The rent is only a small amount weekly, but it is highly profitable for the body controlling the markets.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: The Railway Department are doing a little to assist in the distribution of fruit in the country.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: That is so.

Hon. T. Moore: The trouble is that people cannot afford to buy a case lot.

The PRESIDENT: The question is the Primary Products Marketing Bill and not markets.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: That is the point I am dealing with. I wish to show that there is a better way of marketing the fruit than under a measure of this description. The work of the Railway Department in attaching a couple of fruit vans to country trains has been satisfactory, but it has not been extended far enough. Vegetables should also be included, and the vans should not be restricted to the wheat areas but should be hauled to all parts of the State. The department should haul the trucks at

a specially cheap rate right through to Cue and Meekatharra, Menzies, Leonora and Laverton. People in those parts are almost perishing for fruit and vegetables, and the running of fruit trucks would create a market and supply a demand. There is no question that measures are necessary to deal with the dried fruit section. A few years ago the dried fruit industry was very profitable to growers. But the markets have gone against them and the industry is in a very parlous condition. At present there is in force a Commonwealth Act, and to work in with it Victoria and South Australia have passed similar measures. The Western Australian Dried Fruits Association have a representative on the board, but there is no control over our growers. While the legislation has been working well in the Eastern States, the Western Australian growers have not been tied and have been able, if they so desired, to take advantage of the markets in the Eastern States without joining in the movement. Our growers should be put in the same position as are those in Victoria and South Australia. There should be an Act to control dried fruits and bring about uniformity. It has been said that the repatriation of soldiers and their engaging in the dried fruit industry has resulted in swamping the local market. That is not so. The trouble is that the prices of dried fruits have come right back. When the soldiers entered the industry, dried fruits were realising more than twice as much as they are bringing to-day. It is the overseas market that is the trouble. When our dried fruits have to compete with those from Mediterranean countries, growers are up against a difficult proposition. We cannot afford to stand aloof from the Eastern States, and it is necessary that we should have an Act on the same lines as those passed by Victoria and South Australia.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Those are voluntary pools.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: No.

[The Deputy President took the Chair.]

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: There is the export control board in dried fruit and there is also the State Advisory Board.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: But we have not an Act to control our growers. We already have a representative on the board, but it is quite open to our growers to send their fruit

to the Eastern States and take advantage of the market created there by the Act and the board referred to. That is why it is necessary for us to have legislation to control our growers. Outside of that I cannot support the Bill. I trust that the outcome of the discussion will be the framing of a Bill to control the dried fruit section.

HON. E. ROSE (South-West) [9.5]: This Bill will have very far-reaching effects and, judging by the letters and telegrams I have received from various parts of my province, the growers of fruit, potatoes, and other lines are opposed to it. They have asked me to oppose the Bill right through. I have yet to learn that a majority of the producers have requested the introduction of such a measure. The growers not only of fruit but of potatoes object to being controlled by any board in Perth. They would rather have their own organisations, as they have had in the past.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: This Bill would enable them to have their own organisations.

HON. E. ROSE: To-day growers are exporting potatoes to the Eastern States. They do not wish to be controlled by any outside board under a Minister. They do not want to have the business taken out of their hands. They have their own organisation, directed by men who have been in the business for years and who know it from A to Z. They want to know why, at this period, they should be prevented from selling their produce as they think best.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: This Bill will not have that effect.

HON. E. ROSE: It will. It will be impossible for them to sell potatoes except through the board under a penalty of £500.

Hon. J. Duffell: The board might control butter as well.

HON. E. ROSE: Yes; if I wanted to sell a few pounds of butter and did not deal through the board, the same penalty would apply. When travelling through Queensland a few months ago, I inquired why fruit was so dear in the districts where it was produced, and I was informed the reason was that it had to be bought through the board. The producers could not sell their fruit direct to the vendors on the railway stations; they had to sell it through the board and consequently the consumer had to pay big prices for it. I found that the Queensland Act was not giving the satisfaction that has been credited to it here.

Our growers of fruit, and especially of soft fruit, would rather have assistance in the form of a dehydrator in Perth, where soft fruits could be dried, or factories where the fruit could be preserved and made into jam, so that in the glut season it could be utilised to advantage. The same thing applies to vegetables. When there was a glut, they could be dried or preserved and sent to the goldfields, where they would command a ready sale. Instead of the Government going to the expense of a board, as is proposed in this Bill, and taking so much from the producer and giving him little or no benefit in return, it would be better to assist them in the way I have indicated. In England there is a very fine market at Covent Garden where sales are held daily of different kinds of fruit. If we had markets in Perth under the control of the municipal authorities they would be better for the producers than the proposals contained in this Bill. Mr. Moore stated that there was an unholy alliance between metropolitan and country members. I say there is no alliance whatsoever between members. We are simply giving our views and the views of the people we represent. Where an unholy alliance comes in, I fail to understand.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I certainly know of none.

HON. E. ROSE: The statement should never have been made.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: Is it the same sort of alliance as that between the master bakers and the operatives?

HON. E. ROSE: The country members are here to express the views of their constituents. If, because we oppose a Bill, we are to be accused of entering into an unholy alliance, it is time members were called to order and made to withdraw such statements. Mr. Willmott dealt fully with the Bill, and I agree with much of what he said. In travelling about we find that similar legislation is not in force in other parts, and that ordinary markets are found to be quite sufficient to deal with the products. The soft fruits section should have some legislation to assist them, but I fail to see how such a far-reaching Bill as this can be of any benefit. In fact, it must operate against the interests of the State. Why the Government should have copied the Queensland Act I have yet to learn. Queensland has nothing in common with Western Australia, because that State produces pineapples, bananas, and other fruits. It does not produce apples

and pears such as we grow here. Mr. Willmott pointed out how much more Western Australian growers produced than do growers in Queensland. Why should we copy that State? During my travels abroad I made inquiries as to the condition in which our fruit arrived, and in nearly every instance I ascertained that the packing and grading of our fruit was good, and so was the fruit. Western Australia is in the happy position of sending to England the finest apples exported by any of the Australian States. We are also in a position to export our grapes to better advantage than the Eastern States, and therefore I do not see that it is necessary to have a Bill like this. Look at the powers it is proposed to give to the members of the board. Those powers will prove a disadvantage to the growers. Clause 5 provides that the board shall be a body corporate with perpetual succession and a common seal. The members of the board are also to be paid out of the funds of the board and the remuneration is to be fixed by the Minister. All this money must come out of the profits derived from the sale of fruit. Further on the clause also provides that forthwith after or contemporaneously with the making of an order under Section 4, the Governor shall by regulations prescribe a number of things. Why by regulations? We have had experience of regulations. The clause provides that by regulations there may be appointed the persons of which the board shall be composed, the method by which they shall be elected, the tenure of office, the appointment of a chairman, etc. Why should not all these things be stated definitely in the Bill? Why leave it all to regulations? We know from experience that regulations made in the past have worked disadvantageously to those concerned. Further on Clause 7 provides that no person shall sell or deliver any of the products to or buy any commodity from any person other than the board, and the penalty for a breach of this clause is £500. Therefore if I buy or sell fruit without buying or selling through the board, I render myself liable to that penalty.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Even if you make me a present of a case of fruit you will be liable.

Hon. E. ROSE: If the second reading of the Bill is carried it will be necessary to amend it in many directions. It would be better to introduce a small Bill to assist the dried fruitgrowers and the soft fruit-

growers rather than have a comprehensive Bill such as this. Growers generally are opposed to the Bill. The opposition comes not only from the South-West, but I have a letter from the Metropolitan Dairymen's Industrial Union of Employers. Other letters I have are from the Bridgetown Fruitgrowers' Association, and from Boyanup, as well as other places, all protesting against the Bill and asking me to vote against the second reading.

Hon. H. Stewart: Are there any returned soldiers at Boyanup who want it?

Hon. E. ROSE: Boyanup, Donnybrook, Manjimup, and other places are opposed to the Bill. I intend to do my utmost to defeat the second reading, because I cannot imagine that a Bill such as this can be of any benefit to the producers in the South-West, or in fact any part of Western Australia. The Bill is too far-reaching and I shall vote against the second reading.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [9.21]: Like other speakers, I have had a great many requests to vote against the second reading of the Bill. I have also had requests to vote in favour of it. I do not wish that there shall be any misunderstanding in regard to my attitude. I have listened with interest to the speeches that have been made and I desire to applaud the Government for having brought down a Bill that in my opinion is so fair, because there has been eliminated to a great extent the power of the Minister by providing for the appointment of a board to be chosen by those interested in the industry. That is as fair as we could have it. In discussing the matter with prominent fruitgrowers in my province, I found that some of those who have organised their businesses and are working on sound lines and have been successful, claim they will have one vote as against a number on the part of small fruitgrowers. They say that no matter what we do with the measure, we cannot improve the position of those who have built up a good business and who have for a number of years mastered the intricacies of the trade, but that it will directly interfere with them. The claim of those men is that so many growers who are interested in the measure and who are urging that the Bill should be passed have gone into the industry without any knowledge of it, that they have gone into it, not as a means of livelihood, but as a sideline. Those people, it is contended not knowing sufficient about it, chose ground

that was not suitable and perhaps also chose trees that were not suitable for the ground they had, and because they were not making a success of their orchards they were blaming everything, and were in hopes of something coming along to help them out of their difficulty. Those are the people who are eager for organised control, expecting in that way to realise a better price for the fruit they want to put on the market. The Bill is too far-reaching. There is nothing to prevent others organising, as suggested by Mr. Dodd. Organisations can get together and make their arrangements, and where they have pooled together they can make a success of their business. There are many instances where they have failed to create the organisation they desired, and I think the dried fruits are suffering under that problem to-day. It may be that something can be done for the dried fruit section, something that will help out a lot of the small growers. Dried fruits are in a category totally different from that of soft fruits. Dried fruits can be sold at any time and there is no expense associated with keeping them. If the Minister could give an assurance that the measure would be mainly directed to dried fruits, I would be prepared to support the second reading. In the absence of such an assurance it would be better to drop the measure. Otherwise I shall support those speakers who have declared that the time is not ripe for the introduction of such a Bill. It has not worked successfully in Queensland, and we cannot expect it to be successful here.

HON. J. J. HOLMES (North) [9.28] Unlike many of the previous speakers I have not had any requests from my constituents as to the manner in which I should vote in regard to the Bill. As a matter of fact, the far northern part of the State rarely gets to hear of legislation of this nature, until it has slipped through and become an Act of Parliament. What has been puzzling me is how we can derive all these benefits in the South from a Bill which does not provide for a compulsory pool. If there is no compulsion, I fail to see how all the benefits that have been referred to can result. Fruitgrowers will be in the same position as they are in now. To-day, if they agree to co-operate, they can accomplish without any board or Government interference what the Bill sets out to do for them. I will say there is an earnest desire on the part of the

Minister for Agriculture to help those people, but I think he has been led away by political clamour. In this country those who make the most noise get the most done for them. The people I represent ask for nothing but facilities for getting their products to market. Beyond that, they want no Government interference. But what is the position in respect to the marketing of cattle? Until last year the two State ships lifted Wyndham cattle during the cattle season and landed them into this market. But the Government, controlling the only two ships visiting Wyndham, and controlling at the same time the Wyndham meat works, said last year, "We will close this port against cattle shipments and force our Crown tenants producing cattle to put their cattle into the Wyndham meat works at our prices." There we have political interference.

THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I must ask the hon. member to connect his remarks with the Bill.

HON. J. J. HOLMES: The Bill is a marketing Bill. The cattle are produced in this country and have to be marketed. Under the Bill, almost anything can be done in respect of marketing. Surely, then, I am entitled to refer to the marketing of cattle! In our generation we were led to believe that God helped those who helped themselves. We are now reaching the stage where the Government will have to help those who will not help themselves. The whole tendency of legislation such as this is to kill individuality. The people in the industry want the Government to provide means by which certain results can be accomplished, notwithstanding that the matter is entirely in their own hands if they choose to co-operate among themselves. Reference has been made to Geraldton tomatoes and Spearwood onions. The whole thing is a question of supply and demand. If the supply be limited, the price goes up; if the supply be unlimited, the price goes down. All this desire to assist the grower to get a better price can react in only one way in relation to the consumers: if we are going to do something to boost up the prices to the producer, the consumer will have to pay higher prices. The reference to the Geraldton tomatoes is easily explained. We are producing down here sufficient tomatoes for the metropolitan area. A thousand cases or so from Gerald-

ton were held up owing to the strike at Fremantle. How can a little city like Perth, with plenty of locally grown tomatoes, meet a contingency such as that? Nothing could save those Geraldton tomatoes from being sacrificed. I hope that those responsible, those who hold stop-work meetings, will consider the effect of their action on the producers. The people of Spearwood have had a happy and prosperous time. Mr. Gray, who was a member of the Peel Estate Royal Commission, can tell the House that that Commission knew that the development of the Peel Estate would practically wipe out Spearwood. Throughout the South-West we are producing goods fit only for local consumption. What the Commission tried to stress was the necessity for producing for export. It is of no use putting an extra thousand cabbages on this market in any one day, for to do so would be to knock the bottom out of the market. We have in this State only 360,000 people. They are spread over one-third of the territory of the Commonwealth, and the great bulk of them are producing all they want for themselves. Compare that with Sydney, where there is a consuming population of a million people within 10 miles of the post office. Producers there can grow for local consumption. Here, however, we must grow for export. In the South-West, where we have really good land, we ought to be producing butter, cheese, bacon and other dairy produce for the world's market, instead of growing white onions that will not keep, and putting them on the overstocked local market. Something has been said about the agents. An agent, unless he can command the best price for an article, has to go out of business. The higher the price, the more commission the agent gets. So it is bordering on absurdity to say that the agent wants to knock down the price. His only hope is to boost the price, for that will bring him more trade and increased commission. Mr. Kitson told us all about contracts, but he said nothing about the Commissioner for Railways, a common carrier, being ordered by the Bill not to touch any products of the country unless they are consigned to the pool. We have had a little experience of that in the closing of one of our own ports, and the refusal of the State Steamship Service to lift cattle, just in order that the cattle

might be forced into the hands of the monopoly held by the Government. Under Clause 5 the Government will appoint boards as they think fit. But under Clause 22 the Government absolve themselves and their officers and the boards from all liability incurred in the execution or supposed execution of the Act. It does annoy me to think that efforts should be made to help people of the South who will not help themselves, while so little is done for the North, where people are anxious to help themselves. However, I will say that, apart from the State monopoly at Wyndham, this Government have made distinct efforts to help the North, and that we have seen results of those efforts already. In a little over a year the Government have finalised many matters affecting the North, matters that had been hung up for years. We have been accustomed to see so little done for the North that the smallest assistance is keenly appreciated. I would be failing in my duty if I did not once more thank the Government for their efforts to solve some of the problems of the North. My only wish is that we had enough people up there to make a noise, in order that we might reach the stage that has not been reached in the South, where the Government have started out to help those who will not help themselves. All we want up there is to be given facilities to get our products on the market. We will do the rest, and the less interference we have the better. Viewing the Bill as I do, there is only one course for me to adopt, and that is to vote against the second reading.

On motion by Hon. H. J. Yelland, debate adjourned.

BILL—BUSH FIRES ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

House adjourned at 9.17 p.m.
