

Legislative Assembly.*Tuesday, 19th September, 1939.*

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

ELECTORAL—SWEARING-IN OF MEMBER.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received the return of a writ for the vacancy in the Irwin-Moore electorate caused by the resignation of Mr. C. O. Barker. It shows that Horace Thurston Berry has been duly elected. I am prepared to swear in the hon. member.

Mr. Berry took and subscribed the oath and signed the roll.

QUESTION—WOOLPACKS AND CORNSACKS.

Mr. SEWARD asked the Premier: In view of the reported likelihood of there being a shortage of woolpacks and cornsacks during the next four months, will he investigate the matter, and, if necessary, take immediate steps to secure ample supplies for this State?

The PREMIER replied: This matter has been investigated. It is anticipated that 6,000 bales of cornsacks will be required, 3,500 of which have been bought. The Commonwealth Government has not ordered cornsacks, and has advised us that shipping space is available, and it wants the trade to order as usual. In the opinion of the trade, there are sufficient woollacks available in the State.

BILLS (6)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Land Act Amendment.
- 2, Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act Continuance.

- 3, Financial Emergency Act Amendment.
- 4, Industries Assistance Act Continuance.
- 5, Toodyay Cemeteries.
Introduced by the Minister for Lands.
- 6, Dairy Industry Act Amendment.
Introduced by the Minister for Agriculture.

BILL—RESERVES (No. 1).

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILLS (2)—REPORTS.

- 1, Rights in Water and Irrigation Act Amendment.
 - 2, Inspection of Machinery Act Amendment.
- Adopted.

BILL—METROPOLITAN MILK ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 14th September.

MR. McLARTY (Murray-Wellington) [4.41]: Producers are pleased that the existence of this Act is to be continued. Unquestionably there would be chaos in the whole industry if the Milk Board went out of existence. This would mean a speedy reversion to the chaotic conditions which existed before the board was created, and producers would again be exploited. I must express disappointment that there is no proposal to make the Act a permanent statute. Though fully aware that the Minister is facing unsettled conditions, I still feel that he should agree to make the measure permanent. It was stated on previous occasions that this legislation is experimental; but the Act has been in existence long enough to be well past the experimental stage. Apart from that aspect, we have in London, Sydney, Melbourne, New Zealand and various European capitals examples of permanent Acts governing milk supplies. If a permanent measure failed to function here as the Government wished, it could be repealed. There are substantial reasons why the Act should be made permanent. A long-range policy is essential if the board is to function as it should. Permanency

gives security to those engaged in the industry, and prevents certain people from threatening milk producers and undermining the board's work. Every member agrees as to the need for the board, and the Minister acknowledges that chaotic conditions throughout the industry would ensue if it went out of existence.

The Minister told us of the good work accomplished by the board; the consumer is receiving a better commodity, the producer a better price, and the retailer knows where he stands, and, further, consumption of milk has increased. My feeling is that better and more satisfactory work will be done by the board if it has permanency of life. Moreover, it is reasonable to anticipate that better work will be done in view of the board's past experience. Knowing the members of the board, I feel certain they desire to do justice to every section of the community. I would remind the House that the present Leader of the Federal Opposition, Mr. Curtin, was one of the first members of the Milk Board, and helped to shape its policy. Again, all sections of the community are represented on the board. I understand that in the Committee stage the Leader of the Opposition intends to move that the statute be made permanent, and I hope the Minister will agree to that course. Certainly three years are much too short a term to give the board the opportunity it should have to formulate a long-range policy. The Minister has also told us that the Act gives the board wide powers. I should like to see some of those powers exercised. It is necessary that a central depot or central depots should be established. This would not mean confiscation of established businesses, which is the last thing I desire. In my opinion, it would not be necessary at all. Under present conditions it is not possible to police the supply of milk which comes into the metropolitan area. The Act gives power to centralise, and in my opinion that course should be adopted. Should the result be to put some people out of business, a fund exists for their compensation. The Act empowers a magistrate to decide what amount of compensation should be awarded. In any case, I feel certain that the board would do justice to any person who had to go out of the industry.

Further, the board should have control over all milk coming into the metropolitan area or passing through it. At present large

quantities are being bought on the goldfields. This milk is commonly called "Kalgoorlie milk." I am not sure that all the "Kalgoorlie milk" gets to the goldfields, and that much of it is not bought here at a cheaper price than that fixed by the board for metropolitan buyers. In order that the board may function successfully, it must have control of all milk coming into the metropolitan area, whether consumed here or not. At one time the producer was exploited by being paid less than the price fixed by the board when milk was supplied to ships in the Fremantle harbour. Quite a large quantity of cheap milk was bought as ship milk. However, the Act was amended in order to bring ships within its purview and to make ships pay the same price as paid by residents of the metropolitan area.

The Minister further expressed a hope that zoning would be established in the not distant future. I share in that hope. I am convinced that much money can be saved in regard to distribution costs. The Minister quoted figures as to the overlapping of milk carts in streets. It is staggering to learn how much overlapping exists in respect of distribution.

I should like some information from the hon. gentleman regarding the producers' compensation fund. The last balance sheet, presented 12 months ago, showed the fund as amounting to £5,073. Naturally the total has increased since then. Up to date no payments have been made out of the fund. I should like to know whether the Minister anticipates that payments will be made from it in future. The producer contributes one-twentieth of a penny to the fund. Again, the milk vendors' fund amounted to approximately £7,000, according to the last balance sheet. If zoning comes into operation, as it probably will, this money will of course be needed to compensate those who go out of the industry. As regards the producers' fund, on the other hand, I do not see any need for any of them to go out. I know that these funds are trust funds, and that they cannot be touched except for the purposes specified in the Act. Still I should like some information as to the producers' fund.

The board has been attacked—unjustifiably, in my opinion—as to its cost of administration; but the Minister is right in saying that the board is to be credited with

having placed the industry on a much more satisfactory basis than previously. There is no question about it, the producer, the consumer and the retailer are on the whole better off as the result of the establishment of the board. The latest balance sheet of the board which was laid on the Table showed that there was a sum of £3,888 in the Administration Fund. All the expenses of the board must be paid out of this fund, that is, salaries, rents, publicity, legal costs and other expenses. The legal costs have been rather high, and are not likely to be as high in the future. To this fund the producer pays two-thirds of a penny for each 5s. and the vendor one-third of a penny for each 5s. I am sure that if the Act were made permanent, expenses could be reduced. I feel that we have passed the experimental stage, and therefore I hope the Minister will agree to make the Act permanent. This is the third occasion on which the Act is to be continued for a period of three years. I fail to see why each term should be fixed for three years. It is agreed that there is necessity for the board, so why limit its life? I ask the Minister whether, on this occasion, provision is to be made for the election of a producers' representative to the board. A number of producers have asked me to obtain this information.

We have had much discussion on the subject of milk in this Chamber during the past few weeks, and so I do not feel there is need for me to speak at great length on the question of milk supply to the city and other towns. The matter is a most important one. I have two reports from the Ministry of Agriculture in England relating to milk supply. They are most informative, and I shall be pleased to hand them to the Minister for his perusal, if he so desires, although I know his time at present is fully occupied. In conclusion, I once again appeal to the Minister to adopt the suggestion that will be put to him by the Leader of the Opposition and make the Act permanent.

MR. NEEDHAM (Perth) [4.53]: I support the second reading of the Bill. I am glad to know the measure is to be continued. The only fault I have to find with the Act is that a certain section of the people engaged in the industry has not had representation on the board. The Act was passed in 1932, so that it has been in operation for approximately seven years.

The milk board constituted under it has also been operating for that period. During six of those years I have had the honour to be a member of this Parliament, and in that period I have frequently complained about the fact that the retailer—the man who has to earn his livelihood in the industry—has not been represented on the board. I was hoping that the Minister, when he brought down this continuance measure, would have given that phase some consideration. The only regret I have in supporting the second reading is that provision is not being made to give the retailer representation on the board. I have contended on several occasions, and I do so again this afternoon, that the composition of the board is not equitable.

Mr. Doney: I do not think you should deal with the composition of the board under this Bill.

Mr. Cross: Why?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. NEEDHAM: I have yet to learn that I am not in order. If I were not, I would soon be put right by you, Mr. Speaker. If we cannot voice our opinions, then we are in a sense—if I might use the term—gagged. This is not a measure that we can discuss in Committee; there is not much to discuss. The Bill before us has for its purpose the continuance of the present board for a period of three years. Surely I am right in referring to the composition of the board.

Mr. Cross: Most certainly you are.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. NEEDHAM: The statement has been made many times in this Chamber and in other assemblies that taxation without representation is not equitable; and the man vitally concerned in this industry—the retailer—is certainly paying his share of taxation under the provisions of the principal Act. I said a moment ago that the composition of the board was not equitable. I repeat that statement. The producer and the consumer are represented.

Member: What about the producer-retailer?

Mr. NEEDHAM: I have heard of him before. I was just wondering where that man finds himself, where his interest as a producer ends, and his interest as a retailer begins. The composition of the board would be improved either by taking

off one of the producers and putting in a retailer, or by adding a retailer. The answer of the present Minister and of other Ministers when this matter has been brought to their notice has been that such a board would be unwieldy, but they adduced no convincing argument in support. I hope that before long the retailers will be represented on the board. A considerable amount of dissatisfaction has been expressed by the retailers themselves, through their organisation, with the working of the board. I have never attacked the board itself, but I have introduced deputations to the Minister for Agriculture from the Retailers' Association, who have voiced the grievances under which they consider the retailers are labouring as the result of the operations of the board. Most of these grievances I believe are genuine, and none, I think, so far has been really answered by the Minister. I hoped that when the Minister made his second reading speech he would refer to the last deputation which he received from the Retailers' Association and which I introduced to him about a year ago. The exact date was the 5th September, 1938, so that actually it was a little over 12 months ago. The Minister listened sympathetically to the complaints of the deputation, which amongst other things, dealt with the overhead costs to which the industry was subjected. The Minister promised to go into the matter, have a report prepared and eventually to let the deputation know, through myself, the result of the inquiry. So far no reply has been received, although 12 months have elapsed. I am aware that during that time the Minister has been a busy man. He has travelled frequently to the Eastern States on ministerial business and on occasions his health has not been of the best. However, I hope that when he is replying to the second reading debate he will give the House information as to the nature of the report he said he would have prepared.

Mention has been made of the zoning system, which I would welcome. To see two or three dozen carts delivering milk every morning in one street is farcical and to inaugurate a proper zoning system would be a step in the right direction. If such a system is introduced, however, we shall have to be careful not to go from one extreme to the other, for there is a danger of our

creating a monopoly. I presume the Minister will give that phase of the zoning system very careful attention. Then again a zoning system should be the means of reducing overhead costs to the men who distribute the milk and thus the consumers should benefit. If the system is put into operation I look forward to a reduction in the price of milk. I do not want a system to be introduced that will operate to the benefit only of the retailer or the producer; I want to see a system operating for the benefit of the consumers. I daresay that is what the Minister has in mind. If the board can introduce a scheme that will result in a reduction of overhead costs to the retailers, with the natural corollary of a reduction of charge to the consumer, the move will be wise and profitable. The board has done excellent work. Of course to please everybody and so administer the Act that satisfaction was felt by every interest concerned, would be difficult; in fact, it would be an impossibility. But looking at the matter by and large I venture to say that the board has performed excellent service. As a result of its work we have to-day what is undoubtedly the finest quality milk in any part of Australia. Good though the work of the board has been, however, I suggest that it could do even better work if one of its number was a representative of the retail dairymen. My colleagues on this side of the House suggested to me that in advocating the inclusion of a retailers' representative on the board I am not adhering to the policy of my colleagues and myself. They declare that I am asking for representation of the middleman on the board. My reply is that there are very few boards dealing with a commodity such as milk, which has to be brought from the producer to the consumer, and in the absence of a socialised system of milk delivery there must be a middleman. In view of the fact that the retailers or distributors are paying a large amount of money in comparison with what the producers are paying towards the cost of the board, the retailers should be represented, and such representation would not be a breach of any Labour principle.

Concerning the duration of the Act, I do not believe in piecemeal legislation. If a measure has been tested and proved to be beneficial to the community we should adopt some other means of prolonging it, rather

than occasionally passing a Bill to continue the life of the parent Act. The time has arrived when we should give consideration to the continuity of this particular piece of legislation. The Minister voiced encomiums concerning the members of the board and their work. I agree with him, but if the board has performed such excellent service why not place the measure permanently on the statute-book? Perhaps the time is not opportune, but I sincerely hope that it will not be much longer before the Minister will introduce a Bill along those lines. No one who has studied the condition of the industry seven years ago and compared the situation then with that prevailing to-day can fail to admit that splendid work has been done by the board. Perhaps the members of the board have made mistakes; they would not be human if they had not, but taken all round their work has been excellent. I support the second reading of the Bill and again express my regret that provision has not been made for the representation of retailers on the board.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands) [5.10]: The Bill purports to amend only one section of the principal Act for the purpose of continuing in existence the board created by the Act. Your predecessor in office, Mr. Speaker, held that on a Bill of this description it was competent to move an amendment to alter the character and composition of the board. That matter was discussed in this House in a former session of Parliament and went to a division on exactly the same point that is now being debated, namely that the representation on the board is not satisfactory and should be altered. By a very large majority the House agreed that no alteration could be made. Only eight members supported the move for an alteration, of whom the member for Perth (Mr. Needham) was one, and the member for Canning (Mr. Cross) another. I think there was another member on the Government side who supported the move; the remaining supporters coming from this side of the House. To me it seems extraordinary that such an important member of the industry as the retailer should be represented only in a pseudo manner by some person who is a producer, but who happens to be to some extent also, a retailer. That, however, can scarcely be said to be equitable representation; there would certainly at the most be a very divided opinion.

I share the view that the retailers should be allowed direct representation. I do not entertain the smallest hope that the House will agree to give effect to that view. After having refreshed my memory by reading "Hansard" I realise that to persuade the House to do so is a hopeless task. Nevertheless, though the task is hopeless, the claim that the retailers who are concerned in the distribution of milk should have some voice, however little, in the government of the industry, remains a very just claim. To-day the retailers have no voice. Another point to which I wish to refer is the zoning system. Undoubtedly there is a great waste of effort in the distribution of milk, but to find any equitable scheme to overcome this difficulty is a delicate matter. It is delicate to suggest that certain distributors should be given the sole right to deliver milk in certain localities.

The Minister for Agriculture: Not the sole right.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The Minister is correct; not the sole right, but the right with some others—a limited number—to distribute milk in certain localities.

The Premier: They do that with beer, do they not?

Hon. N. KEENAN: It is done with a great many commodities. The system prevails with regard to the distribution of newspapers, but it is done not by force of statutory enactments, or by a board created under a statute, but by means of a trade arrangement. Bakers observe a similar method, but also by agreement. If a man wishes to secure more customers in a certain locality he exchanges some of his customers in another district with another baker who is delivering in the locality in which he desires to increase his trade.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I do not think that is correct.

Hon. N. KEENAN: That may not be correct, but it is better than a system of compulsory zoning, because the customer is not bound to accept any tradesman. He need not deal from a particular baker, but can procure his bread from some other person if he chooses. All the same I recognise the fact that there is a tremendous waste of energy under the present system of distribution and that some attempt must be made to stop that waste of energy which, of course, represents cost. The mere fact that so much energy is wasted may be of importance or not, but what is absolutely without

question important is that the cost to the consumer is increased by that waste of energy. For that reason I should be very pleased if some equitable scheme could be devised for the elimination of that waste. The suggestion has been made that this Bill should be made permanent instead of being a measure that would require to be re-enacted every three years. I am not in favour of this legislation being made permanent. I have no doubt that, beside representation on the board, zoning, and so forth, many other questions of importance will arise in connection with the industry. Because a Bill must be brought down every third year to enable the Act to remain on the statute book, we get an opportunity to discuss this important question; otherwise we would have none. That is an opportunity I am not prepared to sacrifice. Even if the Minister looks kindly on the suggestion that this measure should be made a permanent Act, I hope the House will not agree to it.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [5.16]: I support the second reading, although on different occasions I have attempted to secure the representation of retailers on the Board, and still believe there is room for such representation. That phase of the situation need not be stressed this afternoon, for I wish to deal with other aspects of the duties of the board, namely, increase consumption and better distribution. The member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. McLarty) told us that this was experimental legislation. The whole of our economic system is experimental, and the experiments have not been very successful. As has been said over and over again, by the highest in the land as well as by the lowest, the failure of our economic system is the failure of distribution and consumption. Boards are appointed with a life of two or three years, and the producers are perfectly satisfied. They have their prices assured and they can go on merrily enjoying their standard of living. The question of the failure of distribution and consumption remains still to be dealt with. Anyone who takes an unbiassed view of the whole situation must see the increasing failure of distribution and consumption. That is shown in every direction. Parliament would be failing in its duty if this question were not again raised. The Minister is already aware of it, though I would not expect him to provide a solution of the problem to-morrow. In Committee

power may be given to the board to organise consumption, or organise for increased consumption and better distribution.

Mr. Fox: What is required is better wages.

Mr. NORTH: Under the stress of war something has happened in the Federal Parliament that perhaps points to action that can be taken in this direction when the strain is sufficiently serious. I was astounded to read in the Press last Saturday a statement by the Assistant Treasurer, Mr. Spender. He said he would not hesitate, and neither would the Federal Government hesitate, if necessary, to use the national credit of Australia, but without inflation. We also had the immediate action of the Prime Minister, supported by the Premier of this State, when from the first day of hostilities they agreed to the appointment of a profiteering controller in general, and profiteering controllers in particular.

Mr. SPEAKER: I hope the hon. member will connect his remarks with the question before the Chair.

Mr. NORTH: Under stress emergency action has been taken in two directions that vitally affect us. On the one hand it means an increase in many supplies, and on the other immediate control in the case of every industry, so that prices cannot rise though the purchasing power is provided. That particular thesis has been fought for many years by certain sections of reformers the world over. They wanted to improve the distribution and consumption of the essentials of life by increasing the finance without increasing the price. The action of the present Government and the promise of the Assistant Under Treasurer are providing the two means that will enable this board, if given the requisite power, to bring about an increased consumption of milk. In a practical House like this, it would not perhaps be desirable that I should take up too much time on this question. If one had a very important thesis to get off one's chest, it might be put in the form of a brochure that could be distributed and used for any purpose members thought fit. Some of them might decide to read it. I am afraid I have been somewhat sketchy in my remarks so far, but I do not intend to labour the question. If this and other boards were given power to increase consumption, I feel sure that at the end of the year, when their statements were presented to the House, it would be demonstrated that this board had

been able to achieve something in the direction of increasing the consumption of milk, of arranging for its better distribution, and for an improvement in the quality, and most of all that the consumption had increased by 30 per cent. To-day people may advertise "Drink More Milk." That is merely an effort to attract a little more purchasing power from the consumption of other commodities that are in competition with milk. It appears that this House is prepared to build up a number of boards and give them complete control over certain industries, almost like the old guild system. We should at all events know that the primary policy of these boards is to increase the consumption of the commodities entrusted to their care. What would that mean in practice? I think more dairies would come into existence, more gallons of milk would come into Perth, and the consumption would increase. At present the consumption is equal to half a pint per day per individual. In London the consumption was the same. Last week the announcement was made, as a jeer at the Germans, that the consumption of milk in London was to be one pint per head. In effect, this meant immediately doubling the consumption. Probably one pint a day is about the requisite consumption of milk for every individual, and most people, with the possible exception of Dr. Caporn, agree with that view. We know that the dairymen would be only too ready to increase their supplies, but so far that has not happened. My dairyman has told me on several occasions that many households in Cottesloe and Claremont do not take any milk. There must be a good reason for that. Possibly the people concerned do not like milk, or economic conditions may prevent them from buying it. I would go so far as to say that at this stage of our economic history the time is not far distant when we must organise all the essentials of life, more on a socialistic basis than we are doing to-day. All enterprises can be divided between essentials and superfluities. Certain essentials to-day, such as roads, are controlled by State management. Our thoroughfares are for all to use. We do not tell the bakers they must walk on rough gravel, while other people must walk on good roads. We all have the use of water, public parks, and many other amenities. I believe the time is coming when, as a community, challenged

as we are by totalitarian States, we shall not permit the present system to obtain in respect of essentials such as milk, and allow a few people to make a good living by means of a semi-distribution in a limited fashion over part of the economic area. If we are going to fight other nations we must use their methods and maintain our strength. Everyone knows that for a decade we have been falling off in physique, that our standard is declining. In the old days, before machines, when work was the order of the day for all to maintain the needs of the community, people were able out of their wages to obtain the essentials of life. I admit that half of us may be diseased and still be living. I would rather see people living only to the age of 60 but fit, than see people living to the age of 80 and doddering. It is possible for people to be in attendance at hospitals and to live on for years, but that is not a desirable thing. On this question of essential commodities, such as milk, bread, meat, fruit and vegetables, leaving aside the superfluities, we must take a stronger line. We must ensure that every unit in this sparsely populated country shall function as well as our motor cars are expected to function. Fancy if, in the supply of petrol and oil, it were possible to sell a certain low-standard of fuel for use in some cars and the higher grade for use in others!

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the hon. member is getting away from the question of milk.

Mr. NORTH: What is good in the instance I have mentioned is good also in the case of milk. Milk should be put into every house and there should be sufficient for all. It is not enough to see a few advertisements in the Press urging people to drink more milk. What effect would such advertisements have on the man who preferred beer or whisky? Milk should be free for all such as are our roads and public parks, though I do not mean free economically. There is nothing new in the suggestion that these things should be done by some sort of subsidy paid by boards. Our means are at present taken from us in the form of taxation, direct and indirect. No one knows what is happening to the money, except members of this Chamber through the Budget statements

supplied to them. What happens to the money is not known to the average person.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member should keep to the motion before the Chair.

MR. NORTH: We cannot get away from the troubles behind these problems. Members are elected to this Chamber every three years. We put this and that Bill through and carry on our economic system as before. If we multiply this problem and the problems of similar industries by the methods employed to carry them on we see why we are facing a world crisis. In Committee I hope it will be possible to amend the Bill to provide that consumption shall be the be-all and end-all of the milk board.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [5.30]: The reception accorded the Bill must be gratifying not only to the Minister in charge of the measure but to all concerned, particularly those who are in the slightest degree interested in orderly marketing.

The Premier: I thought the Minister was getting the cane about the Bill.

MR. SAMPSON: Not at all. The passage of the Bill will be a matter for thankfulness and gratitude, and that has been indicated by various speakers. Certainly, side-issues have been discussed to some extent, but the Bill has been acknowledged to be a beneficent measure, and there is certainly no question about its passage. As a result of this legislation, great changes have been effected in the interests of dairymen. Prior to its enactment, milk producers were cruelly exploited. No definite price was fixed for their commodity. In fact, the price that dairymen received was amazingly low. To say that the dairymen did not receive sufficient to cover the cost of fodder for their cattle is no exaggeration. To-day the position is improved, but we must not forget, in accepting that statement, that the whole story is one of orderly marketing. The public are not required to pay more than previously. The gap between the amount received by the producer and that paid by the consumer has lessened, and certainly the consumer is not required to pay more. Unquestionably the consumer has received a much better quality milk, and that point will appeal to the member for Subiaco (Mrs. Cardell-Oliver), the member for Claremont (Mr.

North), and many others. I do not know that I need say more. I claim, and no one has disputed the fact, that the Metropolitan Milk Act has justified its passage. Everyone concerned is better off because of its existence. I am quite sure the Bill will receive the approval of the House, and I hope that it will find a place on the statute-book for many years to come. Not only does my wish apply to the Milk Act but to every other measure that conforms to the principle underlying the measure. The more consideration we give to the man on the land, the greater will be the general prosperity of both the country and the city.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [5.35]: In supporting the second reading of the Bill, I wish to discuss one or two phases relating to legislation of this type, which give rise to vested interests. In point of fact, all such legislation does tend in that direction. The Minister will probably agree with me that one objective should be to reduce those vested interests as much as possible. Producers are receiving such a return by way of a fixed price as a result of the enactment of this legislation that the value of their franchise, or their license, is now considerable. The tendency is to create a monopoly of the franchise thus provided by the State. If that be so, the inference is that the price fixed is payable. Naturally we all desire that the price fixed shall be such as to secure to the producer an adequate return. As I understand the position, the original price to the producers was fixed at 1s. 1d. per gallon. The price to the consumer was also fixed, and the margin between the consumers' price and that payable to the producer was to cover all charges and profits of the intermediate people who were responsible for storing and cooling the milk, as well as distributing it to the retailers. Sometimes those people fulfilled one or both of those intermediate functions. The price was originally determined at 1s. 1d. per gallon; subsequently it was fixed at 1s. 2d. and later at 1s. 3d. a gallon. The effect was that while the producer's return was increased, the margin to the intermediate people who stored, cooled and distributed the milk was correspondingly reduced.

Hon. C. G. Latham: When the price was fixed at 1s. 3d. a gallon?

Mr. McDONALD: Yes. Although the price to the producer was increased to that amount, the cost to the consumer remained the same. Thus every increase to the producer meant a reduction in the return to the intermediate people who stored, cooled and distributed the milk. I do not quarrel with the increase granted to the producers, for naturally we desire them to receive as much as possible. Nevertheless, in view of the increase, it must follow that either the intermediate people were receiving too much when the price was 1s. 1d. per gallon or, as the range of the margin has been reduced by 2d., they are receiving too little now. That is the alternative involved in the increase of 2d. in the price to the producer, while the consumer's price remained stationary. I have been informed by distributors of milk that increased costs have been experienced. For instance, there was an increase in the basic wage, which, together with other costs, made it difficult for distributors to carry on. That is one aspect of the existing legislation that calls for attention. In addition, there is a question that I shall raise for the Minister's consideration affecting the sale of milk in shops. I realise that the problem is difficult. Under existing conditions, a man is granted a license to sell milk in a shop situated in a certain area. Probably there is no other shop with a milk license within a quarter, a half, or even a mile. Therefore the exclusive right granted to one shop to sell milk in that area constitutes a valuable franchise, much more than would appear at first sight. The tendency is that if a man has the franchise to sell milk and is the only one so licensed in a particular area, people who go to the shop to purchase milk are likely to buy other goods.

Mr. Raphael: The members of the Milk Board are hard and will not move on that point. They are worse than Mussolini.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. McDONALD: I find myself in some agreement with the member for Victoria Park (Mr. Raphael). If a person goes to a shop to buy milk, he may ask for confectionery. Thus the shopkeeper may find it profitable to sell confectionery. Then again, he may be asked for groceries, and so it becomes profitable for him to deal in groceries. The result is that trade tends to be diverted to the shop that has the exclusive right to sell milk. It is not merely a question of the

license giving the shopkeeper the privilege to sell milk but the consequent tendency to increase the general trade of the shopkeeper at the expense of other traders in the vicinity. Not only is that of benefit to the man who occupies the shop but it is a very valuable advantage to the landlord. The license attaches to the shop, and the landlord, by virtue of the added value accorded his premises, has an incentive to increase the rent. When the Minister or the Milk Board considers the matter of zoning—the Minister indicated that that would be done in the future—and so regulates the distribution of milk in various parts of the metropolitan area, I trust he will give the House an assurance that the whole structure of the Act will be reviewed. I know he appreciates that it may be necessary to provide a special license, franchise or monopoly to milk producers and so on, but I suggest it would be well if that franchise, especially in the case of shops, were acquired at a price. As the franchise has a real value, just as in the case of hotels, the Minister might consider requiring a price to be paid for the license and thus secure to the general public the consequent advantage.

The Minister for Agriculture: Certainly it is advisable to have some control.

Mr. McDONALD: That is a point upon which I concur with the Minister. There may be too many shops selling milk, and I agree as to the necessity to assure that such premises are kept in a proper hygienic condition.

Mr. Raphael: Some of the dagoes who hold milk licenses, sleep on their premises. That is deplorable.

Mr. McDONALD: That is a matter of administration.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The member for Victoria Park is a member of a health authority.

Mr. Raphael: And you do not do much to help.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. McDONALD: Storekeepers in the vicinity seeing one of their number in possession of a valuable license to sell milk and so enjoying a definite advantage in respect of general trading conditions, would justly feel aggrieved at not being able to secure similar licenses. In these circumstances, either all shopkeepers should be able to obtain licenses to sell milk, provided their premises conformed to requirements

or the granting of a license in a particular area should be made conditional upon the payment of a price representing the value of the franchise. Perhaps the license could be submitted to auction or tenders could be called for its acquisition. I do not care which course is adopted, but decidedly the present system of licensing merits review both in regard to its operation and its fairness to the commercial community. I support the Bill in the hope that the Minister, when considering the zoning question, will regard the Act, as it should be and, in fact, has been by Parliament since its inception, as largely experimental, and that in the light of experience during the years it has been in operation, he will ask the board, and will do so himself, to approach the whole subject with an open mind and with the object of proposing such amendments to the legislation as may be regarded necessary to make it more effective and equitable in its application to all sections concerned.

Mr. Raphael: Do not you think three years is too long? The board has too much say now.

Mr. McDONALD: I have no quarrel with the three-year period proposed in the Bill. No one can do much unless he can look forward to some period during which plans may be matured.

Mr. Raphael: An extension for 12 months is sufficient.

Mr. McDONALD: While I do not quarrel with the three-year period, I trust the Minister, when he replies to the debate, will give the House and the public an assurance—this is a matter of general interest to a large number of people—that the Bill will be reconsidered in the light of its operation and application to the whole milk trade.

MR. CROSS (Cunning) [5.44]: In common with some other members who have spoken, I would not be inclined at present to support a Bill to make the Act permanent. In my opinion, some alterations are called for, because I think most members will agree that one important section concerned in the milk industry is being dealt with harshly. That section has no voice. The member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) indicated to some extent that increased difficulties have been imposed upon the men I have in mind, when he pointed out that the producers had been granted an increase

in price from 1s. 1d. a gallon to 1s. 4d.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The member for West Perth said the increase was to 1s. 3d. per gallon.

Mr. CROSS: Well, 1s. 3d. a gallon, but the point is that the increase has been borne by the retailer. The consumer has had no benefit. Incidentally, that is not the only increase the retailer has had to suffer in the last 20 years. Twenty years ago a milk-carter received 7s. a day and he worked eight hours a day and seven days a week. To-day under an Arbitration Court award the carter receives 16s. a day and he works 6½ hours a day, and 42 hours a week. The price of milk to the retailer is just the same as it was 20 years ago. Some of the vendors, we know, are on the verge of insolvency. Only yesterday a vendor from North Perth interviewed me in the absence of the member for North Perth (Mr. Abbott). I took up the matter on behalf of that hon. member. The vendor told me that in order to carry on he was obliged recently to borrow £30, and now he found himself in difficulties over that loan, and in danger of losing his home. The information that he gave me with regard to costs proved definitely that he is working for 5s. or 6s. a day. He told me quite a lot more too.

Mr. Thorn: And you swallowed the lot.

Mr. CROSS: I discussed with him his costs and charges.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Would that man sell 100 gallons a day?

Mr. CROSS: No. He told me the figures, but I have forgotten them. I think, though, that the quantity he sells is between 70 and 80 gallons daily. The man is a well-known member of the community, and he is known also to half the members of this Chamber. He does not stand alone in the position in which he finds himself. There are other retailers as badly off although perhaps not altogether in a precarious position. Definitely they are in an invidious position because they have to stand the whole of the cost of the industry, bad debts included. Incidentally, it can be mentioned that bad debts play a very prominent part in a dairyman's business. I believe that much of the difficulty in which the person who interviewed me finds himself is due to the fact that he has been somewhat easy in respect of credit given

to his customers. Members must be aware of the difficulties experienced by milk vendors in this respect. Frequently when vendors call on their customers for the collection of the weekly account, they find that the lady of the house is out. We know too that there are unscrupulous people who move their place of residence fairly frequently and purposely forget to acquaint the milk vendor that it is their intention to do so. With regard to the board, I consider it is distinctly unfair that so important a section of the industry should be refused direct representation. The Minister has told us that there is a producer-retailer on the board.

The Minister for Works: And he is one of your electors.

Mr. CROSS: If the retailers had representation on the board some of their grievances would receive attention. As a result of the regulations that have been framed an improvement will follow and the vendors will be saved considerable expense by having to deliver milk only once daily.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in discussing the regulations. The House has already decided that question.

Mr. CROSS: I may be permitted to say that the decision of the House is approved by everyone outside. In common fairness the Minister should amend the Bill to permit the retailers to have at least one representative on the board. The retailer has no opportunity at the present time to improve his position; he is not able to place his grievances before the board. For instance, if he had representation on the board he could suggest improvements by way of zoning. A zoning system should be introduced by the board, and it could be carried out successfully. I do not mean that the board should declare a large number of small districts. The board could subdivide the greater metropolitan area into, say, a dozen districts. I do not say it should not give one zone to one retailer. I should declare about a dozen zones and apportion them in accordance with the quotas of milk supplied. The areas should be allotted in close proximity to the distributors' premises. Under the present system a man possessing a license for the distribution of milk in the city is able to sell milk anywhere from Victoria Park and Carlisle to West Perth, West

Leederville and Mt. Hawthorn, as well as anywhere in the city itself. The same distributor, however, could not cross from Victoria Park to South Perth. We generally find that quite a number of people move from Victoria Park to South Perth, but the milk vendor who served them in Victoria Park is not permitted to follow his customers to their new place of residence. At the same time he can travel as far as West Leederville and the other suburbs that I named. If zoning were fixed, one area could well be Victoria Park. Belmont and South Perth, and for the City of Perth, one for Subiaco and Nedlands, one for Claremont and Cottesloe, and so on. The vendor who called on me yesterday stated he had a license for Perth and Subiaco, and he was pleased that the single delivery regulation had been introduced. It affected him to the extent that to carry out an afternoon delivery for one or two people he would have to send his delivery cart from Angove street to Subiaco, and perhaps to deliver a pint and a half of milk. I suggest that the Minister should review the position, and if possible introduce zoning by means of regulations. At the present time there are vendors on the south side of the river who would be prepared to give up their deliveries on the other side of the river if they were permitted to supply the whole of the area on the south side. This would make their rounds more compact. If zoning is introduced, I shall oppose it if the areas allotted are very small.

The Minister for Agriculture: That would not be zoning.

Mr. CROSS: I repeat that I regret the Minister has not seen fit to give the retailers representation on the board. I do not know whether I would be in order in bringing down a private Bill to provide for this.

Mr. Thorn: Not this session.

Mr. CROSS: I do not want the hon. member's advice. If I were in order I would be prepared to introduce such a Bill, because it would be fair to all concerned. Retailers are entitled to a say in an industry in which they give useful service. I shall support the second reading of the Bill.

MRS. CARDELL-OLIVER (Subiaco) [5.58]: Although I do not believe in boards, I shall support the Bill if the period of the continued appointment is for not longer

than three years. Boards, in my opinion, tend towards socialisation.

Mr. Raphael: Are you not a socialist yourself?

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: Boards tend towards or are the product of socialisation. In capitalist countries boards tend towards monopolies, and, monopolies by their weight break; then socialisation is the only solution. The representation on the Milk Board is not fair; there should be a woman representative on it. With one or two reservations it is my intention to support the second reading of the Bill. I do not know whether I would be order in referring to the regulations.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member would not be in order in discussing the regulations that have already been agreed to by the House.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: We have been told that the milk that is being distributed at the present time is in a better condition than the milk sold before the board was appointed. I do not know what the conditions were like before because I was not in this State, but I do emphatically claim that the milk we get to-day is, in many instances, not fresh. Much of the bottled milk that is sold is in a very bad condition. A friend of mine found 3s. 9d. in her bottle the other day, and I know of instances of bottled milk containing flies. In one bottle there was a needle, and in another bottle a drawing pin was found. I just mention these points to illustrate that bottled milk is not always everything it is supposed to be. I have visited the various establishments where milk is bottled, and my opinion is that the bottling plants are perfect. They are kept very clean and the bottles are well sterilised. This being so, something must happen after the milk leaves the establishment. Therefore I say that the condition of milk as delivered is not all that it should be, and that the board should take steps to ensure that the milk is delivered to consumers in a fresh and clean condition. Let me point out also that sometimes the refrigerators in milk shops are not kept in the clean condition that we have a right to expect. When one enters a shop and asks for milk the refrigerator, on being opened, often gives forth an odour that is most unpleasant. I expect somebody to retort that that is the fault of the shopkeeper. I cannot say, but these things are happening, and

the Minister should see that the board makes an inspection of such shops to ensure that consumers, when buying milk, get fresh milk, and that it is made impossible to refill a used bottle and fix another cap to it. Evidently something of this kind must have happened to account for the presence of foreign bodies in the milk.

There is something very wrong with the milk supply, particularly with the milk delivery in Perth. It is not as fresh as it should be. I have received many complaints from sisters in charge of the clinics about the quality of the milk, but have not been able to do anything. I feel sure that many doctors will eventually order powdered milk instead of fresh milk for children. Regarding the representation on the board, as the producers are represented and it is contended that the retailers are represented, though I do not think they are, the wholesalers should be entitled to representation.

Mr. J. Hegney: And also workers?

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: Yes.

Hon. C. G. Latham: They are represented.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: And the personnel of the board should include a medical man and a woman.

Mr. McLarty: Of how many should the board consist?

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: The present board consists of five members, but the Melbourne board has only three members. The Melbourne representation is preferable, because it consists of three independent men.

The Minister for Agriculture: Would you support a board of three with no sectional interests at all?

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: Yes. The members of the Melbourne board have no personal interest in the industry and the people there are satisfied with the board. Perhaps a board constituted on similar lines would give greater satisfaction here. If we start giving sectional representation, we must be fair and allow every section to be represented. To permit only some sections to be represented would be unfair. With these few suggestions, I support the Bill, because I fear that conditions might become chaotic if the board ceased to exist, especially after it has been operating for some years.

MR. RAPHAEL (Victoria Park) [6.4]: The proposal to continue the board for three years does not appeal to me. The practice of renewing the term year by year should be continued in order that the contentious questions associated with the milk supply might be discussed each session.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Would you apply that to all boards?

Mr. RAPHAEL: I would consider each board on its merits and, at the same time, would review the actions of each board. When the Leader of the National Party was speaking, I interjected that the actions and attitude of this board had not always been right and just. We have virtually given the powers of a monopoly to the board, and the board has not extended to distributors the consideration that might reasonably have been expected. In Victoria Park I have received numerous complaints from shopkeepers to the effect that much of their trade had been lost because the board refused them licenses to supply milk to their customers and at the same time granted the right to competitors. On occasion people of Australian and British birth have been refused milk licenses while foreigners have secured them.

Hon. C. G. Latham: In the same locality?

Mr. RAPHAEL: Yes, in Victoria Park. I shall not encroach on the Canning district, and then perhaps the member for Canning will not encroach on mine.

Mr. Cross interjected.

Mr. RAPHAEL: That would be borne out by the unemployed.

Mr. SPEAKER: We are not discussing the unemployed.

Mr. RAPHAEL: The question has been raised whether consumers are supplied with milk of satisfactory quality. I have watched the delivery of milk to shops, especially after milk had been sold by those shops in a condition that made it practically unfit for human consumption. When a new supply of milk was being delivered, no effort was made by some of the shopkeepers to cleanse the fridaire or even to see that the container in the fridaire had first been emptied and cleansed. Nor was any step taken by the board to ensure that the new supply was stored in clean receptacles. Some storekeepers were satisfied to mix the new supply with the milk remaining in the container, which was

quite sufficient to account for the bad quality. Some of the milk had probably been in the refrigerator for two or three weeks. If three or four pints remained, another half gallon or more would be tipped in, and so it continued from day to day.

Mr. Fox: How long has that continued?

Mr. RAPHAEL: For four years.

Mr. Cross: The board does make inspections.

Mr. RAPHAEL: Then the board has not made efficient inspections. Probably it has done that part of its work as the member for Canning would do it if he were an inspector. I am definitely opposed to amending the Act to provide for compulsory zoning. No vote of mine will ever help to introduce the zoning system into the milk industry.

Mr. Sampson: But that would lead to a reduction in the price of milk.

Mr. RAPHAEL: If the zoning system came into force, probably the Milk Board would adopt the attitude it has taken in the matter of issuing shop licenses and would create a greater monopoly than has already been built up. One shopkeeper who has been in business for years realised that his customers were being compelled to patronise another shop when they required half a pint of milk, and numerous instances have been cited to me indicating that the shopkeeper selling a half pint of milk has asked, "Where do you buy your groceries, vegetables and tobacco?" Such a question amounts to a veiled threat, and the people, in order to get milk, have had to take their trade from a shop where they have done their business for years to another shop to which the board had granted a milk monopoly. Yet, when representations have been made to the board to get the injustice removed, the reply has been that there were sufficient licenses in the district and that additional licenses could not be granted. From the board's action in that direction, we can visualise what would happen if the board controlled the delivery of milk under a system of zoning. The board would probably allot five or six streets in Victoria Park or South Perth to two milk vendors. I claim that my wife or any other housewife has the right to choose the tradesmen with whom she will deal. We are reaching a pretty pass if a board may dictate to people as to whom they shall deal with.

Mr. Thorn: We are always being dictated to.

Mr. RAPHAEL: And probably we shall have to submit to additional dictation later on.

The Minister for Mines: Do you choose the agent who delivers your copy of the "West Australian"?

Mr. RAPHAEL: No, I do not. That is another instance of a monopolistic firm—the West Australian Newspapers—dictating as to the man who shall deliver my morning paper.

Mr. Hughes: How many pages does the paper contain?

Mr. RAPHAEL: The size of the paper has been reduced, and I understand that the staff has been reduced by about 30.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You have the same dictation from your trade unions.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. RAPHAEL: I am sure the Speaker will not allow me to discuss trade union dictation under this Bill. An onion board has recently been constituted, and I am wondering whether it is on account of that legislation that we have been obliged to import onions from Egypt.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member may not discuss onions now.

Mr. RAPHAEL: But we have imported onions from Egypt, and a warship had to escort the Italian vessel that conveyed them here. Owing to the dictatorial powers that have been vested in boards, the liberty of the people has been curtailed.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. RAPHAEL: My objection to the board being allowed a three-year lease of life, when it has already been in operation for several years, may not receive consideration at the hands of the Minister. Members have argued that the board should have a certain length of life in which to create the necessary organisation for the work that lies ahead, and they have suggested that a tenure of office lasting only 12 months would be insufficient to enable it adequately to discharge its duties. In this instance the board has already been in operation for some time, and the spade work has all been done. We are, therefore, in a position to raise any objection we like to the actual principle. When the board was first created I had no objection to its

being appointed for three or five years, as I realised it would require some time in which to exercise proper control over the industry. After that, however, the whole subject could well come up for review at intervals of 12 months. I agree with the member for Subiaco (Mrs. Cardell-Oliver) that men drink very little milk, and that women are the principal consumers of that commodity, for which reason they should have some representation on the tribunal in question. Possibly the wife of some consumer or producer, or the representative of some women's organisation that was interested in milk supplies, could be appointed to the board. I know the Minister is kindly disposed towards the fair sex, and he might give consideration to this matter. He might be prepared, now that the board has been functioning for some years, to increase its personnel by adding one woman to the number of appointees. The board has done a great deal to improve the condition of the milk industry generally. Prior to its establishment chaotic conditions prevailed. Members opposite have referred to the working classes going on strike to gain their objective. They will recall that milk producers found it necessary to take direct action by smashing up the trucks the owners of which were, in their opinion, scabbing on the industry and selling milk at a cheaper rate than others were doing. Not only, therefore, do members of the working classes sometimes resort to direct action, if they think that is the right remedy to apply to their troubles, but we find that producers have done the same thing. I am not opposed to the second reading of the Bill, but hope the Minister will give consideration to the points I have raised.

MR. HOLMAN (Forrest) [7.35]: The Minister is to be congratulated on bringing down this Bill. The Act itself has proved a great boon to the milk producers in my electorate, and they desire to see it remain permanently on the statute-book. Although no serious objection has been raised to the measure before us, many side issues have been brought forward with the object of clouding the real objective. Discussing the zoning system one member used a ridiculous argument as to the effect it would have upon licensed milk shops.

The result of zoning would be to reduce the cost of retailing milk. The hon. member suggested that a monopoly might be created for the shops concerned, and possibly develop a trade at those shops in commodities other than milk. Possibly more establishments could be given licenses provided the premises were equipped with the necessary refrigeration, and the nature of the business warrant the introduction of such plant. In any event the arguments used by the hon. member were ridiculous. A consumer is always in a position to go to one of these shops, whereas if he wanted his milk delivered he would have to rely upon the milkman visiting his premises. No hardship should be occasioned to a person who had to walk a hundred yards or so for an extra supply of milk, whereas, if ordinary deliveries had to be relied upon, taking into account all the vehicles and employees, to say nothing of duplication of and uneconomic services, a great deal would have to be added to the cost of conducting the industry. The member for Victoria Park (Mr. Raphael) wanted to know how many men would be displaced by the zoning system. He would not be opposed to such a system if he realised what it meant to the workers. There should be no need for a man to rush around in the middle of the night in all kinds of weather, going from one street to another delivering small quantities of milk. The object of everyone interested in industrial matters is not only to ensure work but also better conditions for those concerned. If the old system of mining, say, had been adhered to, probably more men would be engaged in it, but industry and workers would be harmed by the chaotic nature of former conditions. It is similar conditions we want to change in the milk industry. That an organisation of workers should have better conditions is far preferable to the providing of two or three additional jobs. The zoning system in the milk industry will probably not employ so many men, but will afford workers in the industry a better chance of improving their conditions; and that is worth while. After all said and done, progress cannot be halted, even though there may be complaints on the ground that the introduction of machinery reduces the number of jobs. In a sense, the zoning system represents machinery, inasmuch as it will

increase the efficiency of the industry. I hold that the system would benefit not only the consumer but also the retailer and the producer, provided that when the zoning system is carried into effect a watch is kept on it. Certainly the tendency should then be to cheapen the cost of milk. I have no doubt that many members believe, with me, that if the cost of milk can be reduced, its consumption will be increased; and that would in some measure be in accordance with the views of the member for Claremont (Mr. North). Increased consumption would benefit the producer by enabling him to enlarge his herd and improve its quality.

Probably all members are not in agreement with the present composition of the board. It now includes a producer-retailer. I do not know why the producer-retailer was appointed to the board. His appointment was not due to opinions held by this party, but to the fact that at the time it was made there were many producer-retailers.

The Minister for Agriculture: The producer-retailer representative was elected to the board.

Mr. HOLMAN: Yes, but he must be a producer-retailer. The idea at the back of my mind is that the appointment of a producer-retailer may operate against the interests of the Brunswick and Harvey districts in my electorate, where there are not the producer-retailers there are in the metropolitan area. One method of overcoming the difficulty would be to reduce the quota of metropolitan producers and give additional quotas to the South-West. My electorate is extending its dairying areas, and giving a steady supply of milk all the year round. If the South-West's quotas of supplies were increased, a regular delivery of milk of consistent quality throughout the year could be obtained. When the metropolitan producer is behind in his quantity, the flag is held out to the South-West for the deficiency. By reducing the milk production in the metropolitan area, we would be assisting the board in combating the pirating that assuredly goes on at present. The south-western producer has not the same chance of pirating as the metropolitan producer has; not that I consider anyone should be given the opportunity to pirate.

Mr. Raphael: The pirating is mostly done in the Canning district.

Mr. HOLMAN: I should say the producer-retailer at this end would have a better chance of exploiting a policy of milk piracy than the south-western producer. The pirating is detrimental to the board and the industry.

Mr. Cross: What about the wages aspect?

Mr. HOLMAN: The member for Canning persists in interjecting. It is a pity he does not interject loudly enough to let us hear what he says about increasing wages. However, such an argument might be used against us later in the Industrial Arbitration Court. One of our objects is to increase benefits not only to the producer, the retailer and the consumer, but also to the worker in the industry. All associated with the industry will agree that every man employed in it should receive his fair due. And that is exactly how the board has endeavoured to function, so far as I have been able to ascertain in my district. The existence of the board has been a boon to the milk producers in my electorate, and they believe that its existence should continue.

The member for Victoria Park (Mr. Raphael) has expressed the view that the Act should be extended for 12 months only. I fail to see why that should be so. No serious objection is raised either to the board or to the Act after their operation for three terms of three years each. That fact cancels the hon. member's contribution to this debate. Had there been any serious objection to either the Act or the board, I might perhaps have agreed with him, because then I might have wanted to say something on the subject in 12 months' time. However, I consider that the hon. member's contentions on this occasion should be discarded.

Mr. Raphael: You are only talking moonshine.

Mr. HOLMAN: Not so, for in the dairying industry the only sunshine is the South-West. We do produce milk.

Mr. Raphael: But you are not allowed to sell it.

Mr. HOLMAN: That does not bear upon the question of this Bill. Thus the contribution of the member for Victoria Park to the discussion is less valuable than at first I thought it was. The board as now constituted can allot to the South-West a larger quota if it is necessary and is desired.

Mr. Thorn: He does not understand the position.

Mr. HOLMAN: No. The member for Claremont (Mr. North) referred to organised consumption and I agree with his remarks. I go further and believe in the socialisation of industry. I am proud to belong to a party that endorses that principle. We believe in organised consumption which, we have been told, amounts to the socialisation of industry and production. In fact, we believe in the socialisation of industry, distribution and exchange. We desire the introduction of the zoning system so that there shall be more equitable distribution. The member for Claremont also referred to the possibilities of increased money distribution during the war period, but that phase will not enter extensively into the problem because the employers are not affording the workers an opportunity to make it effective. That arises from the fact that so many men are being dismissed, which means that those having that experience will be denied the opportunity to secure their quota of the milk available for consumption. His suggestion amounted merely to half measures. In my view, he is looking to the time when we shall be able to socialise every form of industry, distribution and money power. When that objective is attained, we shall be able to provide every person with that which he needs. We shall be able to give him work and the right to buy food and the right to eat it. Men cannot do that now because they cannot afford to buy what they require. In this instance, of course, it is not a matter of eating, but of drinking. Another point I desire to mention is that some factories are evading the provisions of the Act. I referred to that matter when speaking on the Address-in-reply debate. Those adopting that attitude are extracting more from the consumers than was intended when the Act was passed. I hope the board will take some cognisance of my remarks and go into that phase more fully. In two contiguous districts, the prices obtaining are different which means that the producers in one district suffer a disability because of the unfair incidence of the charges. With other members I trust the House will not take into consideration the side-issues that have been introduced into the discussion, but will bear in mind the benefits the Act has conferred upon those engaged in the in-

dustry. Those benefits represent the original objective and I hope those considerations will be kept in view when the Bill goes to a vote.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [7.53]: The Act has been on the Statute-book for seven years and so may be regarded as having passed the experimental stage. That in itself would constitute justification for making the Act permanent. I regret that the Bill, as introduced by the Minister, cannot be altered to give it permanency; a completely new measure would be necessary. I would prefer greater permanency than is indicated in the proposed extension for three years. Whether we control industries by boards or any other means, I claim that plans must be laid down for future development. Too much of our legislation is restricted, so to speak, to a period of from day to day. Under such enactments neither farmers nor distributors can plan ahead because it becomes too costly. Naturally the consumer does not know where he stands. I was anxious to secure a measure that would be more permanent.

The Premier: We can apply that principle to the Lotteries Control Act.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I thought that suggestion might have some influence on the Government, which brings forward Bills to make permanent measures that suit it, whereas those that are displeasing are made temporary.

The Premier: That is not so. If the Government does not want a measure, it will not be introduced.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Premier may find it easy to persuade himself, but he cannot convince me on the point.

Mr. Marshall: There is nothing to prevent you from testing the feeling of the House on that score.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I might find difficulty in that respect as I have in relation to the Bill. The member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) may know better how to achieve my end than I do. I have done my best to overcome the difficulty that I foresee without introducing a new Bill that you, Mr. Speaker, would probably rule out of order. After going into the matter, I find I can do nothing. I have listened attentively to the debate, and I agree with

the member for Forrest (Mr. Holman) that much extraneous matter has been introduced. The legislation was originally introduced in an honest endeavour to afford the producers engaged in the industry a fairer deal. Certainly the Act has been of considerable help to them. I wish we could introduce a measure that would provide still further relief to the primary producers, but that is not within our power unless we can hit upon some means, other than those we have at present, of financing the scheme. The Metropolitan Milk Act and the Dairy Products Marketing Act have been of assistance to the dairying industry. At the same time, some members may think that under the former legislation the producers received 1s. 3d. a gallon. I wish to correct that impression. Unless the man happened to be a producer-retailer, he did not receive anything like that price. Producer-retailers actually received a return of considerably more than 1s. 3d. per gallon. The member for Forrest will agree with me that the producer in the country has been in receipt of not more than from 10½d. to 1s. per gallon.

Mr. Holman: Yes, about 10½d. a gallon.

Mr. Hughes: After deducting transport charges.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That is so. Those engaged in the dairying industry are in a position totally different from that of any other section of workers. Dairying is the only industry in which the producers have to work seven days a week in all kinds of weather.

Mr. Marshall: Perpetual motion.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes, they are in perpetual employment. They have to accept all the seasonal risks and climatic disadvantages or advantages, whichever they may prove to be.

Mr. Holman: And stock diseases too.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes, frequently they find their dairy herds suffering from various types of diseases.

Mr. Raphael: Dr. Caporn says the whole lot have tuberculosis.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Some people talk without any knowledge at all. I have no patience with that type of individual. The woman referred to is doing a very great injury to our people. The dairymen have to contend with the disabilities to which I have alluded. When members discuss

this legislation they should appreciate the fact that by no stretch of imagination can those engaged in the dairying industry be regarded as making fortunes. They have to work longer hours than people engaged in any other form of industry, and probably at the end of the year secure a much lower return. That consideration should be borne in mind when the Bill goes to the vote. The introduction of the zoning system has been mentioned as one method by which the retailer may receive a slightly greater return than he enjoys to-day. If the figures that have been placed before the members are correct, the retailer has undoubtedly not received a fair spin. I have not been able to verify those figures, but I have received information to the effect that the board has asked retailers to assist in order to ascertain what their costs are, but has been unable to secure that help. It is useless for retailers to ask members of Parliament to extend assistance to them if they are not prepared to work in co-operation with the board, which I believe has administered the Act in a very fair manner. Apart from a few disgruntled individuals, I have not heard any complaint against the board. I believe the present board is doing its work as well as any other personnel could do it. A zoning system cannot be worked effectively unless depots where milk can be treated are established, thus ensuring delivery of milk of a standard quality. I know very well that the milk supplied to certain places—probably including Parliament House—is of a higher standard than that delivered to other places of which I have knowledge. I would not compel people by legislation to accept inferior milk if they can get milk of a better quality at the same price. It would be necessary to standardise milk as regards butter fats and solids, so that a zoning system would be fair. There are difficulties in the way of introducing a zoning system, and on this aspect I am prepared to accept—on this special occasion—the statement of the member for Canning (Mr. Cross) that some consumers travel away from their places of abode at night and do not return.

Mr. Cross: I did not say that.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The hon. member did.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The hon. member also said that one of his friends earned only

about £14 a month in the retail business, and that that friend had to go to him for assistance because his customers failed to pay their bills. The metropolitan area, under a zoning system, would probably be divided into zones where people paid and zones where they did not pay; and the vendor who happened to have a quota in the city where the people paid would be very much better off than the vendor with a quota such as the hon. member mentioned. I do not know what part of the metropolitan area it was; possibly it was South Perth or its environs.

Mr. Cross: North Perth.

Mr. Holman: Such a customer could not run away to another retailer if he had not paid his bill.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Very well. Frequently such customers change their names.

Mr. Patrick: They change their abodes rather frequently.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: There is that difficulty. Large cities, such as London and Melbourne, distribute their milk supply on a much more economical basis than that of this State. It seems to me a waste of manpower to have four or five carts delivering milk to adjoining houses. There is only one way to overcome that difficulty, and that is, as I have said, to standardise the milk at depots. I do not think we have quite reached that stage, but we may reach it. I give the Bill my blessing, because my desire is to see that some fair standard of living is assured for the people engaged in the industry. I have a clear recollection of what took place between the years 1930 and 1932. It was in 1932 that this legislation was enacted. The price fell as low as about 5d. a gallon; but people were unable to pay, and retailers, honest enough and desiring to pay their way, were unable to make any profit. Parliament was therefore compelled to introduce this legislation. I have listened to complaints by members who said they dislike this form of control. After all, the Arbitration Court is a similar form of control. Yet no one finds fault with that court. Industrial arbitration is the accepted policy of Australia; and I agree with it, too. I hope we shall resort to it in every instance of industrial trouble, instead of using other weapons, which often cause workers to lose large amounts of wages. The principle is the same in both cases. On the Arbitration

Court bench we have a representative of the employer, and a representative of the workers, with an independent chairman. In the case of the Milk Board, there are two representatives of consumers and two representatives of producers, with an independent chairman. If it is right and proper to have a tribunal for fixing wages and salaries, then it must be right to give the producer an opportunity to have a fair and reasonable wage fixed for him. That is all this board does. It tries to hold the scales equally between producer, retailer and consumer. If members do not like this class of legislation, let Parliament repeal it, and then we can start over again. Only recently, when we found our primary industries were up against it, we realised that there was justification for legislatively ensuring to the man working on a farm a reasonable standard of living. To-day, very few men working on farms get that.

The Premier: Are you talking about the farmers, or the men who work for them?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Both. They cannot be separated, because if the employer is getting starvation wages—and he must have help—he cannot pay his worker the standard rate known as the basic wage. It is impossible. We must never lose sight of that fact. I know the farmers are anxious to pay fair wages, as are other employers, because a better class of worker can be had if sufficient wage is paid. On that account I regret the Minister cannot see his way to make the measure permanent. One other point I desire to mention is that although the Bill proposes to continue the Act for three years, it does not propose to continue the present board, so I presume the Minister contemplates an election for representatives of the producers and the consumers. The representatives of the consumers are generally appointed by the Trades Hall.

The Minister for Agriculture: No.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I understand the Trades Hall was approached at one time.

The Minister for Agriculture: You might have done so.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Anyhow, it does not matter. I dare say at the Trades Hall they probably know as much about the industry as do other people, if not more, although not as much as does the Minister. However, I have no objection to such a course being followed, provided the people

have the necessary knowledge. If so, I would be prepared to accept any advice they might tender. The representatives of the producers were elected; I know a ballot was taken. Whatever the outcome of the elections may be, I sincerely hope the new board will discharge its duties in the same efficient manner as the present board has done. My one regret is that we have not been able to reduce the waste which has occurred since the Act has been in force. In time we may be able to stop that waste. I hope the Bill will pass. As I have said, I regret the extension is for three years only.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE

(Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne—in reply) [8.9]: During the past week so much has been heard on the subject of milk, that there is very little to reply to now. Many aspects of the milk industry and matters connected with it have been mentioned, but only two points arise from this debate calling for comment and reply. The first is the suggestion that a permanent board should be appointed: the second is a recommendation for further representation by some other body. Regarding permanent life for the Act, I agree entirely with the sentiment expressed by the member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan), that it is necessary for this Act to have a prescribed life. Even at this stage, in spite of its having been in operation since 1932, much of the measure is still in an experimental stage, and there will be need for further alterations and further review of this legislation. I can visualise the time when the producer or retailer or the metropolitan dairyman will not find much place in the scheme of things representing milk production in this State. That is, in fact, obvious; it will be part of the evolution of the city, and of the requirements of the industry.

The representation of retailers has been thrashed out repeatedly in this House, and no one putting up a plea on their behalf has so far been able to demonstrate that they have been disadvantaged by the board's operations. On the other hand, that the retailers have derived material advantage from the board's activities can clearly be shown. There is evidence that the interests of that section of the industry have been protected equally with those of any other section. The member for Subiaco (Mrs.

Cardell-Oliver) submitted that we should have not only a woman on the board, but a doctor and a representative of the wholesalers. If such representation were granted, then we should also have representatives of depot keepers, of shop keepers, and of the transport workers who constitute an important factor in the handling of milk, as well as a representative of the men who deliver it. No case has been made out for representation of retailers on the board. No instance has been given of retailers being disadvantaged in any way by the board's activities. I would ask—and very pertinently—whether it is not true that the retailer-producer representative on the board is not in a very good position to assess the value of both producing and retailing activities. Since one of those representatives on the board is elected from the inner zone operated and controlled by the milk board, there is no doubt that that representation will continue. It has not been indicated in whose interests, other than those of the retailer, a direct retailer representative would act. We cannot say that he would act in the interests of either producer or consumer. Those who are giving serious consideration to the benefits obtainable under this legislation should consider first the interests of those two sections particularly. With regard to pasteurisation of milk and the haphazard manner in which milk has been bottled in some instances, I can assure the member for Subiaco that I am with her in endeavouring to ensure that both pasteurisation and bottling shall reach higher standards than now prevail. The matter is one to which the board is giving attention.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Marshall in the Chair: the Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 48:

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The clause reads:

Section 48 of the principal Act is amended by striking out the words "thirty-nine" in line 3 of the section, and substituting the words "forty-two."

I ask your ruling, Mr. Chairman, whether I can move an amendment, that all the words after "thirty-nine" be struck out?

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think I can accept that amendment, because it would leave the clause in such a state as to make the parent Act practically inoperative.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Of course I propose to add other words.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not know what they are.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I will tell you; perhaps that will help. The Act provides that the measure shall continue in force until the 31st day of December, 1939. The Bill provides that for 1939 shall be substituted 1942. The amendment I propose is that all the words after "thirty-nine" in the clause be struck out with a view to inserting "until repealed by Parliament."

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee can neither extend the time nor increase the amount. That is set down in the Standing Orders. Either can be reduced, but not extended or increased.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I shall have to disagree with your ruling, Mr. Chairman, if you insist that we cannot extend the time. I know, of course, that we cannot increase amounts.

The CHAIRMAN: The rule which applies in such a case is this; I quote from "May"—

It is not within the scope of a Committee on an expiring laws continuance Bill to amend the provisions of the Acts proposed to be continued or to abridge the duration of such provisions; or to make the Acts permanent.

Consequently the amendment would be distinctly out of order.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I agree that a proposal to make the Act permanent would be out of order. I move an amendment—

That in line three the words "forty-two" be struck out with a view to inserting "fifty-two."

The Premier: You are a bit modest, aren't you?

The CHAIRMAN: I can accept that amendment.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: To extend the operations of this Act for 13 years would be very unwise. If we intend to continue it for that length of time, it should be made permanent. The Government has given a good deal of consideration to the matter, and deems it inadvisable to make the Act permanent. Many changes are likely to occur in the

handling and distribution of this commodity, necessitating entire reconstruction of the board as at present constituted. If that happened, many features would have to be reviewed and the whole Act would have to be put in the melting pot. When moving the second reading of the Bill, I pointed out that this was not our measure, that we were simply continuing legislation introduced by Opposition members when in office. A complete review would be beneficial, not only in implementing the Act but also in aiding the operations of the board.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Then it should be brought down straight away.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: People would probably have a better appreciation of the Act if it lapsed for a year. We might then get down to a better understanding of representation, permanency, and other matters of which appreciation is lacking.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: One gets a little tired of the lack of attention by Parliament to matters of this kind. When the Act was introduced, a limited period was specified in order to test its operation and to determine what was required to ensure effective distribution and purification of the milk supply. The Act has been in operation for six or seven years, and surely we can now reach some degree of permanency. How can the board be expected to function efficiently when its period is so limited? It cannot tackle alterations or reforms because, if a change is made in the existing organisation and anything goes wrong, there is no time to create something else. Consequently we might as well continue the Act from year to year, since the board will be able to get as good results in one year as in three years. The Government should get down to a proposal of permanency and give us an organisation we can be proud of, instead of tinkering with the Act. I do not mind a little tinkering when a reform is first instituted and I believe in moving cautiously for a start, but surely after seven years we should have a knowledge of what is required to give the people satisfactory service. The Minister admits that improvements can be made. Why not make them? Why put them off time after time? If the Minister cannot accept the amendment, he might convey to those interested in reform that he will consider introducing a permanent organisation. There has been

no inducement for the board to do its work efficiently, and that is what brings Parliament into contempt. People are getting tired of this inactivity, and are beginning to believe that the Labour Party cannot mould reforms of this kind. This particular reform directly affects the people, and they are justified in looking to Parliament for protection. I support the amendment as an indication that I do not consider anything effective can be accomplished in three years. I do not believe in an extension of 13 years; but the Government should give an indication that if the three-years period is adopted, a comprehensive measure will be introduced to give the measure of control essential to protect the health of the people.

Mr. McLARTY: I support the amendment, and agree with the member for Guildford-Midland that we have long passed the experimental stage. The board has been in operation for seven years, and now an extension of three years is proposed, making 10 years in all. That should indicate Parliament's recognition of the need for the board. Boards with permanent tenure are established in Melbourne, Sydney, London, New Zealand and in some European cities. I do not know why the Minister objects to granting the board permanency. In order that the board may formulate a satisfactory policy, a term longer than three years should be granted. I suggest that the Minister, if he will not accept the amendment, agree to a period of five years.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Make it six years.

Mr. McLARTY: Well, five or six years. Such a request is only reasonable.

Mr. HUGHES: I oppose the amendment. I shall not cast my vote for a measure to perpetuate the control of a commodity by a board. This is the worst form of control. It is neither capitalism nor socialism, but is a setting-up of privileges for groups. If we give boards power to do this sort of thing, the community will be divided into two sections, those sheltered and those not sheltered, and the unsheltered will have to regain their freedom by force. If we are going to deal with this problem, let us nationalise the industry.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is getting slightly away from the amendment.

Mr. HUGHES: To talk of making the Act permanent is ridiculous, because Parliament can repeal or amend it. Why not

extend the period till 1992? If the board has a policy to put into operation, there is power under the regulations to do it.

Mr. Doney: This Act can be made permanent as readily as can any other.

Mr. HUGHES: I should like boards to be abolished, so that all who sell these commodities may be on the same footing. If this board cannot formulate a policy in three years, it may not be able to do so in a longer period.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am surprised at the remarks of the member for East Perth, who has always supported anything in the way of tribunals to fix wages.

Hon. P. Collier: They are not fixed for 13 years, but come up for review at any time.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Minister would have us believe that this is a law of the Medes and the Persians, and therefore unalterable. Every law can be altered, and that can be done during any session of Parliament. I do not agree with the Minister that the reason why this measure should not be made permanent is that later on the necessity may arise for altering it. It should be made a satisfactory piece of legislation now.

Mr. CROSS: Some members have expressed peculiar ideas about this amendment.

Mr. Thorn: And we are now going to get a few more.

Mr. CROSS: When the board was first appointed, the industry was in a chaotic condition. Since then it has made remarkable progress, and people who were hostile to this legislation now realise the benefits they derive from it.

Mr. Hughes: They now possess valuable monopolies.

Mr. CROSS: Of course they do. Perhaps the board will think it necessary to introduce the zone system, which may or may not prove a success. Should we not be satisfied with it, we can say so when the time comes. Three years should be sufficient time for the board to make the necessary experiments. I oppose the amendment.

Mr. HOLMAN: There is a good deal in what the member for East Perth has said. If we pass this amendment we may find ourselves in a ridiculous position, because the new Parliament may upset our decision. In giving the board a further life of three years, we still retain control of it. We ourselves are only here for a term of three

years at a time. Two members of the Arbitration Court have to come up for re-appointment by the employers and employees, respectively, every 12 months. In three years we shall know more about the activities of the Milk Board, and shall be able to judge of the effects of its administration. Should it not come up to expectations, the opportunity will exist to say what ought to be done. More efficient means should be used to reduce the price of milk. One means is the zoning system. I do not consider members of the board infallible any more than members of Parliament are infallible. The board should be permanent, but subject to a tight rein.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I never wish to be dogmatic. This question has had the fullest consideration, and I am unable to agree to what the Leader of the Opposition proposes should be done after "42" has been struck out. I would consider a proposal to substitute "44" for "42".

Hon. C. G. Latham: I would agree to that.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Deputations have suggested to me that the board's term should be five or seven years.

Mr. HUGHES: In reply to the Leader of the Opposition, no analogy exists between this board and the Arbitration Court. The court lays down conditions under which anyone can carry on a business, but the board does not allow anyone to carry on the business of selling milk under certain conditions. The board gives the privilege of selling milk to certain persons only.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I understood that not the scope of the measure but the striking-out of "42" was under discussion. I am glad the Minister agrees to allow the board a five-years term. Within that period the board should be functioning in such a manner as to be able to tackle certain problems. The board must take into consideration the fact that its life and its authority are limited. Within three years the board is required to take into view a certain activity, but a board limited to three years is not justified in counting upon a longer term. The responsibility for the limited term rests upon Parliament and not upon the board.

Hon. P. Collier: I thought you always favoured Parliamentary control as against control by boards.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Certainly. The responsibility is that of Parliament. The Minister can either speed up or slacken the board's activities. The Dried Fruits Board, for instance, has not a long enough term to reconstitute its organisation. From this Milk Board we could expect more in five years than in three. I do not know whether the Act gives authority for zoning and other matters discussed in connection with the amendment. The board could make a better job of general reforms in five years than in the shorter term.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am prepared to accept the Minister's suggestion in order to make progress with the consideration of the Bill.

Amendment (to strike out words) put and a division called for.

The Minister for Mines: Mr. Chairman, did you give your decision on the amendment?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, I gave it in favour of the "Ayes."

Division resulted as follows:—

Ayes	..	..	..	..	34
Noes	..	..	..	..	13
					—
Majority for	..	..	..	..	21
					—

AYES.

Mr. Berry	Mr. Pantou
Mr. Boyle	Mr. Patrick
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Doney	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Fox	Mr. Seward
Mr. Hawke	Mr. F. C. L. Smith
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Hill	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Holman	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Latham	Mr. Triat
Mr. Leahy	Mr. Warner
Mr. Mann	Mr. Watts
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Millington	Mr. Wise
Mr. Needham	Mr. Withers
Mr. Nulsen	Mr. Wilson

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. North
Mr. Collier	Mr. Raphael
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Shearn
Mr. Hughes	Mr. Styan
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Cross
Mr. McDonald	

(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed.

Hon C. G. LATHAM. I move an amendment—

That the word "forty-four" be inserted in lieu of the word struck out.

Mr. HUGHES: I wish to move that the amendment be amended by inserting the word "forty" in lieu of "forty-four."

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot accept the amendment on the amendment. The hon member may endeavour to defeat the amendment and then he can move his further amendment.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	36
Noes	..	..	..	..	11
					—
Majority for	..	..	..	..	25
					—

AYES.

Mr. Berry	Mr. Pantou
Mr. Boyle	Mr. Patrick
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Doney	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Fox	Mr. Seward
Mr. Hawke	Mr. F. C. L. Smith
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Hill	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Holman	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Triat
Mr. Latham	Mr. Warner
Mr. Leahy	Mr. Watts
Mr. Mann	Mr. Willcock
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Millington	Mr. Wise
Mr. Needham	Mr. Withers
Mr. Nulsen	Mr. Wilson

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. North
Mr. Collier	Mr. Raphael
Mr. Hughes	Mr. Shearn
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Styan
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Cross
Mr. McDonald	

(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 3, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

BILL—RAILWAY LEVEL CROSSINGS

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 12th September

MR. STUBBS (Wagin) [9.0]: With a few exceptions this Bill is designed on lines similar to the Bill that was considered by the House last session. The Bill proposes to empower the Commissioner of Railways when he deems it necessary, to close any railway crossing in the State, and to appoint a board to deal with the matter. The reason for the defeat of the prior Bill was I think, the composition of the board proposed by that measure. If my memory serves me correctly, no provision was made for representatives of local governing bodies to sit on the board; and, as I have said, that in my judgment was the reason why the Bill was defeated. My electorate is a large one; between 250 and 300 miles of railway

traverse it north and south and east and west. Probably greater lengths of railway run through the electorates of other members. In my electorate, most of the railway crossings are at right angles, and properly so. There are some, however, that have a bend resembling a hairpin. I regret that the title of the Bill confines the measure to the closing of railway crossings. I would not therefore be permitted to move an amendment in Committee to give power to a board to alter or remove a crossing that might be dangerous to the public, and not be at right angles, as all crossings should be. I ask the Minister for Railways whether the title of the Bill cannot be amended to give effect to this suggestion. In my electorate there are nine road boards, all of which have been written to in regard to this matter. I have received replies from eight of the boards—one has not replied—intimating that the Bill meets with their approval. The member for Pingelly (Mr. Seward) has given notice of an amendment which I think will be acceptable to the Minister and to the House. I hope it will be. His amendment is to the effect that the board should be composed of a nominee of the Commissioner of Railways, a member of the local governing body in whose district the crossing is situated, and an independent chairman appointed by the two members, the chairman not to be a Government officer. I think the suggestion is an excellent one. Police magistrates in the country, I am positive, are fitted and willing to act as chairmen. I am sure members would not question the fitness of a police magistrate to perform that duty.

My main reason for speaking on the second reading is to point out that a board might be appointed of members who would know nothing about local conditions. I admit that traffic at the time our railways were constructed could not compare with present-day traffic. In the Great Southern district the railway line divides many towns into two parts. People have invested capital in property on both sides of the railway; and if a crossing were closed at the will of men who did not understand local conditions, great injustice might be done. The Railway Department should, in the interests of public safety, have power to close a crossing; but the Bill should provide that if a crossing is closed at a certain point, the Commissioner of Railways should be em-

powered, if necessary, to purchase land to construct another crossing some distance away. That power should also be given to a board to be appointed under the measure, if it becomes law. The Bill does not empower a board to remove a crossing from one spot to another. It would be well for the Minister to agree to the insertion of such a provision in the Bill. One of the road boards in my electorate—a board that controls a considerable area—has requested me to place before the House the suggestion that the Bill should contain a provision empowering the board to direct the construction of a new crossing, if the Commissioner so desires. That suggestion also might receive the attention of the Minister. I am afraid that any board appointed under the measure would not have such power under the title of the present Bill. I have pleasure in supporting the Bill, and hope the amendment on the Notice Paper to which I have referred will receive favourable consideration.

On motion by Mr. Wilson, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.9 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 20th September, 1939.

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

QUESTION—LICENSING COURT.

Hotels on Class "A" Reserves.

Hon. H. SEDDON asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Which portion of Part III. of the Land Act, 1933, or the Parks and Reserves