Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 13th August, 1952.

CONTENTS.

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

QUESTIONS.

TRANSPORT BOARD

As to Application of Retiring Age Policy.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

Is it the intention to apply the Government's retiring age policy in the appointment of members of the Transport Board that may be made in the near future?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

The Government in general acknowledges the principle of retiring age in regard to appointments for full-time officers, but does not necessarily apply this principle to part-time members of boards. Each case is considered on its merits.

MIDLAND JUNCTION ABATTOIRS

As to Method of Slaughtering.

Mr. NEEDHAM asked the Minister representing the Minister for Agriculture:

Will he favourably consider the appointment of a panel of experts to inquire into the present system of slaughtering at the Midland Junction abattoirs with a view to the introduction of a system less brutal and revolting?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied:

This is not considered necessary. The present system of slaughtering of animals at the Midland Junction Abattoirs is constantly under review for the introduction of improved methods. New implements made available by manufacturers will be tested from time to time.

RAILWAYS.

As to Sale of Reserve, Spencer's Brook.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

Will he place upon the Table of the House all papers dealing with the sale of the railway reserve at Spencer's Brook to a local farmer?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

Yes.

TRAM AND BUS SERVICES.

As to One-Door Trolley Buses.

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

As in reply to my question of the 7th August he acknowledged that one-door trolley-buses delay loading and unloading at peak periods, will he state—

(1) Were the effects of these buses on traffic studied before the placement of the order? If so, by whom, and was the report favourable?

(2) Practical experience having proved the effect of these buses, why are a further 15 to be delivered?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

(1) Yes. By Mr. Taylor, the then General Manager, Tramways, Ferries and Electricity Supply. He reported favourably and recommended the adoption of "centre entrance" trolley-buses.

(2) Because the cost associated with redesign of bodies is not warranted. The contractor is in possession of the components of the steel framework manufactured to suit the present design.

WATER SUPPLIES.

As to Kalamunda Scheme.

Mr. OWEN asked the Minister for Water Supply:

(1) What is the reason for the continued delay in proceeding with the Kalamunda water supply scheme?

(2) Will the reduction in the loan programme of State works further hold up this work?

(3) Is it a fact that the pipes manufactured for the Mundaring Weir-Kalamunda water main were used at Kwinana?

(4) When is it anticipated that the work of laying this pipeline will commence?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Financial limitations; also the interruption to pipe manufacture for all hydaulic undertakings owing to the A.E.U. strike and the necessity to concentrate manufacture on works of a higher priority, e.g., Southern Cross-Bullfinch line.

(2) Yes.

(3) No.

(4) It appears unlikely that the work of pipe laying will commence this financial year. The present indications are that payment for the steel for the pipes will absorb virtually all funds that can be made available.

POTATO HARVESTER.

As to Commonwealth Report.

Mr. HOAR asked the Minister representing the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Has he received any report from the Commonwealth Director of Agriculture, Mr. Bullcock, regardng the experiments made recently in Victoria with the Johnson Junior (British) potato harvester?

(2) If so what is the nature of the report?

(3) What is the landed cost of this machine in Australia?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied:

(1) No.

(2) Answered by (1).

(3) Price in Britain £235. The landed cost is not available.

COAL.

As to Stockpile at Government Depots.

Mr. MAY asked the Minister representing the Minister for Mines:

What is the total tonnage of stockpile coal held at all Government depots in the metropolitan area at the present time?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING replied:

Approximately 49,000 tons.

BREAD.

(a) As to Interpretation of Price Ruling.

Mr. NEEDHAM asked the Attorney General:

(1) Has his attention been drawn to a statement by Mr. Mathea, appearing in "The West Australian" of Saturday the 9th of August, declaring the correct prices to be charged for 1 lb. and 2 lb. loaves of bread?

(2) Is he aware that housewives are being charged 6d. for each 1 lb. loaf on a daily cash sale?

(3) Will he inform the House whether the statement of Mr. Mathea, the Prices Control Commissioner, is the correct interpretation of the price to be charged on a daily cash sale for a 1 lb. loaf?

(4) If the answer to (3) is in the affirmative, will he arrange for the necessary instructions to be conveyed to the master bakers?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

(1) Yes.

(2), (3) and (4) Owing to the necessity to adjust bread prices on the finest of margins, it was found necessary to make a differential price between a single sale of 1 lb. of bread and larger quantities.

The correct interpretation of the price to be charged on a daily cash sale for a single 1 lb. loaf is 6d.; for the sale of a 2 lb. loaf the price is 11½d.; the price for two 1 lb. loaves sold at the one time is 11½d.

(b) As to supplies of Flour at Kalgoorlie.

Mr. STYANTS (without notice) asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) Is he aware that the master bakers of Kalgoorlie and Boulder are experiencing great difficulty in securing sufficient supplies of flour with which to make bread for the population of those districts and that the rate quoted by the truck owners to take flour up by road to Kalgoorlie is in the vicinity of £18 per ton?

(2) Will the Minister see that accommodation is provided on whatever trains are run to the Eastern Goldfields to ensure that the master bakers obtain sufficient flour to enable them to supply bread to the residents of the districts mentioned?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

(1) and (2) I am not personally aware of the difficulty referred to by the hon. member although the Minister for Railways may be. I can assure the hon. member that if the circumstances he has outlined are accurate, as I have no doubt they are, whatever is possible will be done to meet the situation.

UNEMPLOYMENT.

As to Dismissal of Power House Employees.

Mr. GRAHAM (without notice) asked the Minister for Works:

In view of the fact that I gave notice of a question one day last week, which appeared on the notice paper yesterday, and following which the Minister for Works had the submission of a reply deferred until tomorrow, does it not appear to be rather remarkable that a number of men can be dismissed from the East

Perth Power Station, given a fortnight's pay in lieu of notice, and yet it takes a week to ascertain the reasons why such men were dismissed under these unusual conditions?

The MINISTER replied:

I made personal inquiries about this question and I was advised that the information would be made available tomorrow, but I have no information on the notice given to the men.

OATS MARKETING BILL.

(a) As to Resumption of Debate by Minister.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN (without notice) asked the Minister for Lands:

Is it his intention to proceed with the debate on the Oats Marketing Bill?

The MINISTER replied:

No. I secured the adjournment last night so that Government business could be proceeded with. As a matter of fact, I am not in a position to commit the Government with respect to the Bill.

(b) As to Government's Opinion.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN (without notice) asked the Premier:

(1) Has the Government an opinion with regard to the Oats Marketing Bill?

(2) If so, is it his intention to give expression to that opinion?

I may say in amplification of the question that during the whole time I have been in this House, no Government has ever refrained from stating its views on any question, whether submitted by the Opposition or by a private member. As there is a very real need for an expression of the Government's opinion—if it has one—I ask if it is the Government's intention to see that a representative spokesman states what that opinion is.

The PREMIER replied:

This is a private member's Bill and there is no obligation upon the Government to give it support. Members are free to act as they like and it is quite possible that some Ministers will support the measure while others will oppose it. That being the position, I do not think that at this stage there is any need for any Government expression of opinion regarding the measure.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: In other words, the Government has no opinion on the Bill.

MARGARINE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

(a) As to Urgency of Legislation.

Mr. GRAHAM (without notice) asked the Premier:

In view of the fact that Wednesday is usually regarded as private members' day and, further, in view of the arrangement of the notice paper for today, does it indicate that the Government seeks to deny this House an opportunity to decide whether an amendment of the Margarine Act is to be regarded as an urgent matter?

The PREMIER replied:

Usually private members' day does not operate until the conclusion of the Address-in-reply debate. Furthermore, as the hon. member knows, Standing Orders have been suspended to enable certain legislation to be considered. The Government does regard the amending of the Margarine Act as a matter of importance and a Bill for that purpose will be introduced early during the session.

(b) As to Opportunity for Discussing.

Mr. GRAHAM (without notice) asked the Premier:

Is it his intention to deny me, through the two notices of motion standing in my name, an opportunity to discuss this matter.

The PREMIER replied:

I will give consideration to the matter and let the hon. member know during the evening.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motions by Mr. Kelly, leave of absence for two weeks, granted to Mr. Marshall (Murchison) on the ground of ill-health and to Mr. W. Hegney (Mt. Hawthorn), Hon. A. A. M. Coverley (Kimberley) and Mr. Rodoreda (Pilbara) on the ground of urgent public business.

BILL—OATS MARKETING.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. KELLY (Merredin - Yilgarn) [4.47]: Over the last few years we have witnessed some rather unusual introductions of Bills in this Chamber. Some Ministers have, with very scant treatment, dealt with the subject-matter of measures entrusted to their care and a certain amount of criticism has been levelled against them from time to time in that respect. In introducing the Bill last evening the member for Moore made what appeared to me to be particularly heavy going. In fact, he spent the first hour dealing mainly with insinuations, saying very little in the way of definite statements regarding the oats position, and some of the time making personal attacks.

Mr. Graham: We wanted to know about the attacks in "The West Australian" by way of protest.

Mr. KELLY: The member for Moore explained that the provisions of the Bill were almost identical with those of the

wheat legislation which has been operating for some time. In actual fact, the premises upon which those two measures were based are entirely different. The world demand for oats, for instance, is negligible compared with that respecting wheat. From the oats point of view the utility range is appreciably restricted compared with that of wheat. The main appeal of oats at present and over a number of years past—I admit that the position is somewhat altered these days—has been in respect of grazing. In latter years that grain had come to be regarded as a source of ready income for many farmers.

It has been said that oats represent an insurance against difficult times. Some districts have experienced trying periods because of the scarcity of rain. In fact, I think we have been in shorter supply in this State from a feed point of view than for many years. So oats came into their own this year to a very much greater extent than in seasons when natural feed has been more plentiful. They have come to be regarded as a handy standby in cases of emergency and have played a very important part in many districts that have reverted largley to grazing. The production of oats has increased materially in the last few seasons. There are several reasons for this. World demand and world parity have both led to a considerable rise. There has been a far greater demand for Australian oats oversea. Consequently oats have been sown to a far greater extent by farmers.

The pooling of oats has several advantages but it must be on a voluntary basis for those advantages to be maintained. It is the farmer's prerogative to have a free choice in the disposal of his produce, including oats. Many growers prefer to handle their own oats because it enables them to speculate. I suppose it can be reasonably claimed that nine out of ten people are keen on a little gamble, and farmers are no exception. They are quite happy in the majority of instances to speculate, particularly where surplus oats are concerned, and in many cases with regard to their entire oat crop. Again, many farmers prefer to dispose of their oats for ready cash as against pooling them in return for an advance payment and subsequent payments at intermittent periods, sometimes spread over a considerable length of time.

In the past two or three years farmers have preferred speculation irrespective of whether or not they were in a position to get as much from merchants as from a pool. We have often heard of the changing value of the pound over the past few years, and I can appreciate any farmer's desiring 4s. or 5s. a bushel for his oats at present in preference to having to wait a long time for a higher price, only to find that when he gets it the intrinsic value of the money has depreciated. When it is paid in small moieties, as it frequently is, the advantages are practically negligible. Many farmers have taken advantage of the fact that ready money was available to them from the sale of oats in a number of ways, including handling by metropolitan merchants.

The member for Moore is not quite right when he claims that the oat trade has been entirely dominated by the merchants. There are many other avenues of sale open to the farmer, and he has accepted many of them, which have been far removed from the system of handling through merchants. It has been an incentive to him that he has been able to dispose of his oats when and where he pleased.

Over the years the demand for oats has been limited and the price has not been all that was to be desired. On many occasions oats have been practically valueless, but I can remember that at the same time, though wheat was being handled under pool conditions, its value was also very low. I do not think we can commend a pool for the handling of oats on the assumption that the price would be ever so much better, because we have known wheat to be frequently very low in price.

Because of the very restricted possibilities in the disposal of wheat under pool conditions, I have no doubt that sowings of oats have materially increased; and, because of restrictive legislation governing wheat, the disposal of oats has been more effective. I think it can easily be claimed that the real attraction of oats lies in the freedom of disposal. Undoubtedly, in past years, merchants have provided what might be termed an easy way of sale or disposal of oats.

If we could make a fair analysis, with all contingencies thrown in—it would be most difficult to do so, of course—I think we would be able quite easily to say that in most years the farmer had received prices for oats sold through merchants comparable with those obtained by sale through many other channels.

There is always a certain handling risk. It is not a matter of just storing oats and forgetting them. There are all sorts of difficulties making it risky to keep oats for any long period. During the time when oats were not quite so much in demand, merchants had to run the risk and had to dispose, by the best means available to them, of any oats that might have been carried over. During the years I have in mind, when oats were not as popular as they are today, there was a very limited export demand and these facts have undoubtedly had a great bearing on the quantity of oats planted until a few years ago.

I do not suggest that the merchants have not received fair treatment, because I know they have. Whether they have become fabulously rich I do not know, nor do I think any member of this Chamber knows, unless he is connected with a company handling oats. Therefore, any assertion that the men who have provided the only outlet for the oats produced by the farmers over the years have become grossly enriched is, I think, ridiculous. I am not for one moment putting forward a case for the merchants, because they do not concern me except as an outlet for the oats grown in the past by the farmers I represent, but I think that method of disposal has proved satisfactory to the majority of the farmers concerned.

For a long time, the merchants were the only link between oat producers in this State and the export market, and it can be claimed that they pioneered the Singapore trade that has become of considerable value to the State. In the past, these merchants have proved themselves to be an excellent medium. I desire to see the farmers of my district, or any other area of the State, get as high returns as possible for their products, and I believe that had we been contented with a voluntary pool, with the farmer pleasing himself in regard to disposal through the merchants, we would have achieved a desirable end in the interests of the majority of the farmers of the State.

On the figures given to me, the 1950-51 season appears to have been prolific in the production of oats, and may almost have been a peak year. There may have been more oats produced last year, but I am speaking of the period when the merchants and the pool were in the field together. I am informed that during the 1950-51 season—I have reason to believe the figures are correct—the merchants handled roughly 25,000 tons of oats, of which they exported 17,000 tons, home consumption and milling purposes accounting for the other 8,000 tons. During that same period, I understand the pool handled roughly 11,000 tons of oats. In that case, the farmers had both methods of disposal available to them, and were apparently quite happy to dispose of a considerable portion of their oats for ready money rather than pool them and wait long periods for final settlement.

Of course, the position changed materially, and it is at this point that I believe the urge for pooling and the trumped-up reason why a compulsory pool should be agreed to first appeared. The seeds of that were first sown about the middle of 1951 when bags became very scarce. That was at the tail-end of the 1950-51 handling season. The demand was far greater than the supply, and so we reached a point where many farmers were concerned as to the method of disposal. Not only were new bags in short supply, but secondhand bags were almost unprocurable. It was at that stage that the farmers were giving thought to the question of some alternative. C.B.H., as it is known, had its mind to business and, with its vast resources, was in a position to supply the farmers with the reason why that organisation could handle the oats successfully on a bulk basis.

In these circumstances, it is easy to understand why some farrmers were ready to grasp at the suggestion. I say this because I wish to show that there was a turning point in the farmers' preference for the handling of oats in the bag as against the pooling of oats. I will not deny that C.B.H. did an excellent job in handling oats in the voluntary pool, and I think the organisation must be commended for the excellent manner in which it carried through the season's operations. There were some shortcomings, but they were not very important, seeing that C.B.H. did such an excellent job at short notice.

By the time the handling of the 1951-52 crop was reached, most farmers had become partly pool-minded. Apart from the quanity of the oats that passed through the pool in that period, there was a tremendous potential of bagged oats, and we find that the channels that had previously handled bagged oats are continuing to deal with large quantities. The farmers must be satisfied with the treatment they are receiving and with the alternatives available to them. I think those methods of disposal have provided both an incentive and an alternative.

In view of the fact that the status quo has apparently proved satisfactory to the majority of the farmers, I think this measure to force compulsion on them is diametrically opposed to their wishes. It is an unnecessary measure. Market competition between merchants—such as exists in this State—is a healthy sign for the farmer. He is not being exploited by groups of men who have their heads together to decide what price should be paid per bushel for oats week by week. Rather, he has had the advantage of competitive disposal.

Mr. Graham: The member for Moore wants to create a monopoly.

Mr. KELLY: I have thought along those lines myself. After experiencing the conditions of trade that have existed in the past, farmers will not succumb easily to regimentation such as is suggested in this measure, nor will they be happy to submit to compulsion. The farmers, together with many members on the other side of the House, objected to nationalisation when it was attempted a little while ago, and surely this measure reeks with nationalisation for the farmer. The farmer values his freedom far too much to fall for any such approach, or to believe the views put forward by C.B.H. or those who are going around the country endeavour-

ing to win support for a measure of this kind. I know that some farmers have sold their oats for low prices. Occasionally they have brought oats to the city and, though a week earlier the price was reasonable, have had to sell them to the merchants for a figure that was not satisfactory. That happened on odd occasions only because of oversea conditions, the stocks on hand, or some other reason.

After this long period of reasonable conditions and freedom of enterprise in the sale of oats, we find that a monopoly has now reared its ugly head, and it is an ugly head when one considers the Bill, clause by clause. I am surprised that the member for Moore should bring down a measure of this nature, because he understands the ramifications of C.B.H. and the wheat position in general. C.B.H. issued a proposterous ultimatum to the farmers of the State. It was a question of "the lot or else!" I have frequently heard of sections of the industrial movement being accused of adopting those tactics, and yet that is exactly what C.B.H. did in putting its proposition to the farmers in the words contained in the letters written to members, and in the motions passed by the C.B.H. trustees and those in control.

Is it any wonder that this announcement from C.B.H.—this bolt from the blue—produced hostile Press comment, and that, when the clauses of the Bill were understood and the threatened legislation took shape, there was revolt in many parts of the country by the people concerned—the growers? They are the men who should have been consulted in the first place as to their desires in this regard. The fact that the member for Moore went to Ballidu or somewhere else and got the opinions of a few people, and then came here and said he had the support of the people in the country does not make his claim less ridiculous or fantastic.

Mr. Grayden: It is just as fantastic as the Bill.

Mr. KELLY: I think it is. All this Press comment has been fully warranted. There are two sides to the question, and there are some farmers who know the value of pooling, who have been members of C.B.H. for a period of years and have probably had satisfactory dealings with that organisation. They know the ramifications of the company and are quite happy about it, but many of them are not oatgrowers. They are purely wheat men, but in past years a great number of oatgrowers have crept into the picture. Many of these men have had their wheat crops handled successfully by C.B.H. and are prepared to let the organisation handle their oats under the same conditions. So we were getting to the point where all sorts of assurances were forthcoming from one side and these people were stating that the Oats Marketing Bill was something that the Government should have sponsored, should have taken up with open arms and should have thrust upon all farmers whether they wanted it or not.

We have the other section, and a considerable one. too, I can advise the hon. member, which does not want the Bill under any circumstances. I do not confine my activities to my own electorate. I visit many parts of the State and I have been in those districts where the hon. member says he has full support, or at least 98 per cent. of it. I assure him that the percentage of people who do not want the legislation is very much more than 2 per cent. If one asks these people for a free and open expression of opinion, unbiassed and unsolicited, one gets the true position and this applies in the majority of our districts. Compulsory pooling, without a referendum, is undemocratic and we could not, under any circumstances, entertain a suggestion of that type no matter in what form or disguise it was brought to this Chamber. It cannot be regarded in any other manner than a monoply.

Mr. Nalder: How would you suggest obtaining a roll of growers?

Mr. KELLY: To use the words of the member for Moore, I will tell the hon. member later. The hon. member said that on five occasions last night and failed to answer any of the questions. A monopoly, from a pool point of view, would be most dangerous. It could be far more dangerous than appears. It could force oatgrowing to become uneconomic because, to use the words of the hon. member himself, oatgrowing has been attractive in certain circumstances. The circumstances he enumerated were not to his credit. However, I will deal with that question later in my speech.

If we are going to make oatgrowing unattractive we will be getting back to the position we were in a few years ago when there was little use or reason for growing them, unless they were to be used as fodder, for grazing purposes, or sometimes as a soil conditioner. It is only in later years that we find oatgrowing has become more popular, mainly because the price has become attractive to many farmers. With legislation of this type we could quite easily force the farmers to reduce the sowing of oats and consequently we would get back to the position where nobody cared very much about growing them.

The hon. member stated that he had been farming for 40 years and during that time he had not "given two hoots" about growing oats even though they were easier to produce. Conditions have not altered but world parity has and that is creating the different ideas about oatgrowing. The member for Moore claims that 60 per cent. of our grower organisations support this legislation. I do

not agree with that because, judging from the consensus of opinion among oatgrowers in the parts of the State I have visited, most growers are against compulsory pooling and these people would prefer to have a referendum on the subject.

Let us assume that the hon. member's figure of 60 per cent. is correct, although I do not agree with him. At this stage I wish to discriminate between growers and grower organisations. I know a number of farmers' organisations where the membership is 80 or 90 and the average attendance at a meeting is approximately a dozen. So to say that 60 per cent. of our farmer organisations are in support of the proposal does not mean very much because it does not necessarily mean that a majority of our farmers support the proposal. Over a period of years, because of world conditions, attendances at farmers' meetings have been considerably reduced. However, let us suppose that 60 per cent. of the grower organisations are in favour of this legislation. Why do they support it and what reasons can be advanced for their support? I say that there are four or five reasons. Threats have been hurled at the farmers over the last five or six months and they have been told what will happen to their oats if they do not agree to this legislation. There has been considerable exaggeration as to possible future conditions if oats are not pooled. Coercion has been used in a number of instances. In fact, I understand that the telegram forwarded to many farmer organisations was full of coercion and threats and many of the points in it were not very creditable.

Because of all this fear propaganda a most dismal picture has been placed before the farmers, and they have reached the stage where they are afraid that if they do not compulsorily pool their oats there is no other alternative. Again, the "or else" position crept into the early remarks in connection with the possibility of establishing a compulsory pool. Ultimatums were issued but there is no need for me to enumerate them. Members who are interested in this question must have sensed, or read, the ultimatum that was contained in those early remarks. Finally, there was the alleged impracticability of taking a referendum. I challenge the sincerity of the member for Moore in that particular instance. I do not challenge his sincerity as a man but the sincerity of the remarks he has made on a number of occasions—that the taking of a referendum was impracticable.

Mr. Ackland: Will you tell me of a practical method of obtaining a roll?

Mr. KELLY: Yes, again in my own time. C.B.H., with the means at its disposal, could have taken a referendum of growers. The organisation has a most up-to-date and comprehensive register of wheatgrowers and a referendum could have been conducted. Every wheatgrower would have been in a position to notify C.B.H. of his willingness or otherwise to accept a plan such as this. It was necessary to ask only three questions and I list them as follows—

(1) Were you an oat producer in the season 1951-51?

(2) Do you intend to grow oats in the season 1952-53?

(3) Are you in favour of a compulsory oat pool.

There was no need to ask farmers what happened in years gone by and the final question could have been simply asked and simply answered; that is all that C.B.H. need have done about the matter. The organisation has a complete register and could have obtained a consensus of opinion. If that had been done, members of this House would have been quite happy to accept the result and consequently these nefarious statements and suppositions would not have been advanced.

Mr. Ackland: What about the oatgrower who has never delivered wheat to the organisation, and is not likely to do so? There are many hundreds of them.

Mr. KELLY: All that is necessary is to ask them "Were you a grower last year? Are you a grower this year? Are you in favour of a compulsory oat pool?"

Mr. Ackland: But they are not on the roll. They do not submit their wheat to the organisation.

Mr. KELLY: The growers would let the organisation know as quickly as possible, especially if it affected them financially. The hon. member mentioned the figure of £1,000,000, and that in itself would have been sufficient for the growers who are not on the books of C.B.H. They would have made themselves known, and very quickly, too. There is no doubt in my mind that if there had been a desire to conduct a referendum it would have been held. Such a method would have been entirely satisfactory to the majority of the farmers in the State and they would have been quite happy to have abided by the decision of the majority. Members, too, would not have been faced with this type of legislation because the farmers would not say that they wanted a pool if they did not want it. If a ballot had been conducted on the same sound lines as we on this side of the House are accustomed to expect, we would have been quite happy to accept the result because it would have expressed the desires and requirements of the farmers.

Mr. Nalder: You would still be speaking against it.

Mr. KELLY: No. I would not, because I will sum up my remarks at the end of my speech, especially my feelings on the question of pools. During the course of his introductory remarks the member for

Moore, in reply to a question asked by the member for Collie, said that he did not think that increased oat sowings would have any effect on production. I disagree with the hon. member, because I know of numerous instances where the quantity of wheat sown has been considerably decreased while oat production in those areas has increased. This has been expedient, particularly in the lighter rainfall areas where grazing forms an important part of farming. Apart from the 400 to 500 acres of wheat those farmers have gradually increased their oat sowings.

I will illustrate a hypothetical case. Farmers, six or seven years ago, would sow 400 or 500 acres of wheat but they are now sowing about 300 acres of wheat and 400 to 500 acres of oats. The hon. member says that that position is not likely to occur but I would like to remind him that it is already doing so, and it could materially affect the wheat situation and ultimately the food position of this State. This is the point I want the hon. member to take particular notice of, because I think he made a very unfair comment; a comment that was unjustified and which should never have been made in this House.

The member for Moore said or contended that many farmers have expressed their opposition to the pool because they have been able to evade taxation. That is an indictment of the farmers of this State; it is a mean betrayal of many decent farmers and of many decent people throughout our country districts. I am surprised that a farmer should make a statement that would cast a slur on so many of the people he represents, and with whom we are very pleased to associate.

The member for Katanning wanted to know whether I would not have spoken in a similar manner if it had been the matter of a pool introduced on a compulsory basis. I make no secret of the fact that I am quite happy about and in favour of voluntary pools. I think it is the right of producers to determine whether they shall have compulsory or voluntary pools. The disposal of their products is their business entirely; why should we in this Chamber endeavour to take from them that right? I also imagine that whatever the farmer decides would be acceptable to this House.

I have told the House of the views I hold and of the objections I have to much of this Bill. I have expressed in no uncertain terms what my intention is in connection with it. My stand is one of objection to it from beginning to end. I do not think it would be possible even to consider this Bill in the Committee stage, because I am quite certain that after this Chamber has dealt with it in Committee it would have little more than the Title left. Accordingly it would be a waste of time to go on with it when far more pressing legislation can be brought down in the time we would occupy discussing amendments which would not and should not pass this Chamber. We would be quite justified, after members have expressed their opinions, in defeating the Bill on its second reading.

As I mentioned a moment ago I have endeavoured up till now to give the position as I see it. I would crave the attention of the House for a few moments whilst I enumerate other reasons why I feel this Bill should be shot out of the House. I have a complete memorandum of a zone council meeting held in Merredin on the 1st March, this year. A number of important resolutions were carried at this meeting and I now refer to one concerning compulsory pools. It is as follows:—

> That this meeting is in favour of an oat pool, but not in favour of a compulsory pool without a ballot of growers.

That resolution was carried unanimously. At that meeting the zone council had delegates from Baandee, Doodlakine, Hines Hill, Kellerberrin, Yorkrakine, Kodj Kodjin, Noongaar-Bodallin, Belka, Korbel, Moorine Rock, and Nungarin. Some of these are centres and branches contained in the electorate of the member for Avon.

The Minister for Lands: You mean Mt. Marshall.

Mr. KELLY: That is so. There were 11 branches of the Farmers' Union represented at this meeting to which I refer. That was in March. I was not quite happy to rely entirely on an expression of opinion given so far back, so I had a further look and found that on the 24th July of this year the zone council was again in conference and that on this occasion the following resolution was passed:—

> That this zone re-affirms its policy on a compulsory oat pool as per motion from the last zone meeting which reads:—
>
> > That this meeting is in favour of an oat pool but not in favour of a compulsory pool without a ballot of growers.

That was carried unanimously. Some of the Farmers' Union represented at that zone council are within the Merredin-Yilgarn electorate. There are others who did not put in an appearance but are still within that territory and I propose to read resolutions in connection with this rather vexed question. The Farmers' Union of W.A. Inc., Nukarni-Nokaning Branch, reported as follows:—

> Our branch discussed this matter two months ago and finally carried a motion opposing the formation of a compulsory oat pool; that must stand as the opinion of our branch.

I have a letter from the Merredin Farmers' Union Branch as follows:—

> Members of this branch are unanimously opposed to the proposed compulsory oats pool. We consider that before any compulsory pool is formed, a ballot should be taken of growers concerned. We are of the opinion that a voluntary pool could adequately cope with the position.

I am not reading the letters in their entirety because there are other matters discussed in them which are not relevant to this Bill. The following is part of a letter written on the 9th July from the Farmers' Union of W.A. Burracoppin-Walgoolin Branch:—

> In reply to your letter of the 9th June, 1952, I wish to advise that the above branch is definitely opposed to a compulsory oats pool and strongly favours a free pool.

The Korbel Branch of the Farmers' Union had this to say on the Oats Pool in a letter dated the 16th July—

> Also members expressed themselves as being in favour of an oats pool but not necessarily a compulsory oats pool.

On the 7th July the Belka Branch of the Farmers' Union advised me that the opinions regarding the oats pool were varied but that, rather than miss out on the bulkhandling of oats for this season, they favoured a compulsory pool for one or two years. So it will be seen they are very restricted in the time. Finally in a letter dated the 4th August from the same branch, namely the Belka, this opinion was expressed. It is possible that the member for Roe had been busy around there—

> That oats in bags be exempted from inclusion in the legislation for the compulsory oats pool.

In other words this particular branch of the Farmers' Union is prepared to agree, if there is no other means of getting a pool, to having a compulsory pool. But they desire, however, to maintain the right to prevent bags from being included in the compulsory oats pool. It is perfectly obvious that the 11 branches of the zone council, plus a number of other individual branches, have recorded their disfavour of this legislation which the member for Moore has seen fit to introduce. It must be apparent to every member in this Chamber that farmers generally are not in accord with the provisions of this Bill, nor of a compulsory oats pool.

Mr. Hoar: How many farmers would be represented?

Mr. KELLY: I would not have the slightest idea. Some of these branches have considerable membership; some are quite small. The smallest would probably have a membership of 35 or 40.

Mr. Nalder: Would there be many oat-growers?

Mr. KELLY: The same percentage as in the district that represents 60 per cent. which the member for Moore says supports this type of legislation. I have not a great deal more to say. If Co-operative Bulk Handling is not in a position to handle bulk oats on a voluntary basis, how does it propose to handle the entire oat crop on a compulsory basis? Surely the circumstances are equal. Why is it that when a voluntary pool is mooted, they will not touch the farmers' oats with a 40ft. pole, but immediately they are to be given the monopoly of the entire oat crop they find themselves in a position to handle it? That savours of a big stick and it is something that I am not prepared to bow to at this stage or any other. If facilities for transport and shipping are not available in the event of a voluntary pool, by what strange magic can we make those facilities available for a compulsory pool? During the last few months when there has been the possibility of the introduction of a voluntary pool we have had veiled threats of the big stick being waved in an endeavour to bring out a fear complex among farmers so that they will think only of a compulsory pool.

I think a disservice is being done to the nation when an endeavour is made to force down the throats of people a fear complex. Nor does it end with this Bill. We find it in both Commonwealth and State politics and I think anybody who would bring about a situation such as would be created if this Bill became law, would be doing a decided disservice.

Mr. Nalder: All exaggeration!

Mr. KELLY: The hon. member knows that I do not exaggerate. I am certain that if he speaks on this matter he will advocate a voluntary pool rather than a compulsory one.

Mr. Hoar: A voluntary pool has never proved successful in the past.

Mr. KELLY: Although it was never given time fully to establish itself, this voluntary pool ran to the entire satisfaction of farmers who took advantage of it. This legislation is not the immediate answer to the oat position in the State. The position against which we are arguing could be resolved by virtue of a referendum and a general concensus of opinion of all the farmers; the people who are mostly concerned.

If the bulk of the farmers were satisfied that Co-op. Bulk Handling were the people who should take it over, there would be nothing further to be said, provided that all the other interests in the State are catered for, and that a farmer is permitted to retain sufficient oats on his farm to safeguard against the possibility of a bad season and to barter with his neighbour if he so desires. Under those conditions I should say that such legislation would be

warranted but, until the growers ask us to pass a measure of this sort, we shall not be justified in depriving them of the freedom they now enjoy.

MR. MANN (Avon Valley) [5.46]: I listened last night with great interest to the speech of the member for Moore in moving the second reading of the Bill. I think members will agree that the mover scarcely touched on the Bill, but that the whole basis of his advocacy was the economy that would be effected. One would imagine that the hon. member had been sent into the world as a benefactor to guide the destinies of mankind, who should be thankful for his existence to help the economy of Australia. He should be standing at the right hand of Sir Arthur Fadden; that is his place, not here.

My chief reason for rising to speak is that the member for Moore is endeavouring to force the farmers of this State to accept a compulsory scheme which they do not desire. The suggestion that the feeling of the farmers should be ascertained by means of referendum has been brushed aside as being impossible. This legislation has been mooted for quite a long time and Co-operative Bulk Handling or the member for Moore could easily have arranged for a referendum of grain growers, as the member for Merredin-Yilgarn suggested. But no, he has not done that.

The Farmers' Union, of which I am a member, is playing a remarkable role in this State. As an organisation, it is supposed to watch the interests of the farmers. Last year the farmers' paper subscribed to the action in connection with wool in an endeavour to force the woolgrowers under control. A referendum of the growers definitely fixed that. What I wish to emphasise is that the member for Moore was opposed to compulsion for the control of wool, but, on this occasion, he is adopting a very different attitude. Whatever the hon. member may have been in days gone by, he is not the same now.

Mr. May: He is no more.

Mr. MANN: Anyhow, he opposed the control of wool, and now he brings down legislation of this sort for the compulsory control of the marketing of oats. What is the motive behind this Bill?

Mr. Nalder: To give service to the oatgrowers of Western Australia.

Mr. MANN: It will give no service at all. What it will do will be to reduce the production of oats in this State. As soon as farmers realise that the oat crop is to be controlled, they will reduce their sowings to provide no more than is necessary to meet their own bare necessities. Control is fatal to production; what the farmers ask for is freedom. If there is any section of the community that has a distrust of control, it is the primary producers. Hence the whole contention that the farmers can be helped by control is pure balderdash. As a farmer and a grower of oats, I am satisfied that if the Bill is passed the result will be as I have stated.

The member for Moore said he was speaking as a practical farmer of 44 years experience, but I would remind him that because a man sells a bag of oats off his property there is not necessarily anything screwy about him. Wheat is a commodity that the farmer sells at once; oats is a commodity that he holds on his farm and may sell at any time. Many farmers are endeavouring to build up their soil by planting oats instead of wheat. Perhaps it would be better to have no export of oats in order to build up the fertility of the land. As I view the Bill, Bulk Handling is behind it. Of the men who control Bulk Handling one is on the high seas, one in Melbourne, one in the sanatorium, and the other in Perth. I consider that it is time we had a Royal Commission to investigate the whole show.

Mr. Needham: You mean all bulkhandling?

Mr. MANN: Yes. One attempt has been made by Bulk Handling to control the marketing of oats. Over the years merchants have been forced into buying oats in bags. Bulk Handling handed over its fittings for trucks to the Railway Department and since then merchants have been able to compete. The member for Moore is one of the directors of Bulk Handling Ltd. and his idea is to prevent that competition.

The handling of wheat in bulk has been cheap, but I point out that the oat crop comes in before the wheat crop. Therefore, as soon as the wheat began to arrive at the sidings it would be given priority over oats. Should the season be a bountiful one thousands of bags of oats would be left on the farms because C.B.H. would be unable to handle the quantity.

This Bill would deprive the farmers of their freedom. I have heard the member for Moore talk about communism and of there existing communism among school teachers. Yet by his very action in introducing a Bill of this nature, he would deprive farmers of their freedom. The hon. member entertains the most remarkable ideas. He wants to control everything. In reply to his statements that the farmers approve of the scheme, let me read a telegram I have received from Beverley under today's date. It reads—

> Rooke (Secretary, Wheat Section of the Farmers' Union) addressed a meeting of 20 at Beverley last night. One spoke in favour of oat pool; remainder against. All insist must have ballot before pool established. Please advise Premier.

I am satisfied that the farmers are opposed to anything in the nature of control in this direction. If a pool is desired, let it be a voluntary one so that it will be open to farmers to join or not as they please. The Avon Valley is a large wheat, barley and oat producing area, and only one farmer wants this control.

There is a man in this community who is highly respected—so highly respected that the Government thought fit to recommend him for an O.B.E. in recognition of his long service in the cause of agriculture. I was distressed last night to hear the member for Moore state that one who had been prominent in his letters to the Press on the oat marketing controversy was a man whose name stank in the nostrils of the wheatgrowers. That man is W. G. Burges, and anybody who under the privilege of Parliament maligns such a man in that way could be guilty of nothing more contemptible or despicable. One might disagree with another's views, but is not justified in stigmatising him in that way.

Mr. Graham: The member for Moore will probably apologise.

Mr. MANN: The member for Moore is a pettifogging political humbug for he has taken advantage of Mr. Burges, who has perfect right to express his opinion.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think it is non-Parliamentary to apply the term "humbug" to an hon. member.

Mr. Ackland: I am not objecting. All of this is going clean over my head.

Mr. MANN: There has been some discussion as to whether the Government approves of this Bill and I think we are entitled to know. I take exception to the statement by the member for Moore that some farmers had been trying to evade taxation by selling oats. That statement is not true.

Mr. Graham: The member for Moore accuses everybody that disagrees with him.

Mr. MANN: The Taxation Department is quite capable of looking after its own affairs without requiring the assistance of the member for Moore. The hon. member's statement amounted to a reflection on the Taxation Department, which should demand an apology from him. I have had communications from other farmers whose desire is that this Bill should be defeated. The Government certainly went a long way to meet the member for Moore by suspending the Standing Orders to permit him to introduce the Bill at this stage. By so doing the Government has created a precedent. It might have been better had the Premier adopted the attitude of saying, "We are not prepared to accept this and, if the member for Moore is not satisfied, he had better resign and get out."

The Premier: The member for Moore did not make any threat like that.

Mr. MANN: Probably he did. I know the hon. member.

Mr. Ackland: Thank you, Mr. Premier. I am glad someone said that.

Mr. MANN: I hope the Bill is defeated on the second reading because it is of no use to anyone. We should oppose the measure here to stop the introduction of frivolous legislation of this nature. I hope that every member of the House will take the view that the matter concerns the farmer and no-one else. It does not even concern the Country and Democratic League because many of its members are not farmers. It concerns those of us who are the growers of grain, either oats, wheat or barley. I trust the Bill will be defeated on the second reading.

MR. BRADY (Guildford-Midland) [8.2]: I have had an opportunity to hear the member for Moore, and also to read an extensive case against the Bill prepared by, I take it, representatives of the Chamber of Commerce who have gone to a lot of trouble. After considering the Bill from all angles, I feel that it is introduced in the interests, firstly, of the State and, secondly, of the farmers. What surprises me is how members like the member for Avon can get up and say the farmers should not be forced into a compulsory pool, and so on, but should have the right to please themselves, but when it comes to framing an arbitration Bill and including an interpretation of "strike" which will keep the trade unions in subjection, they will vote for it quick and lively.

The only farmers who are against the measure are the St. George's Terrace farmers—the parasites who have lived on the farmers for years and who want to live on them for a few years more. What the country wants is production. Let the people who are sitting on cushioned seats by radiators, enjoying morning tea, and those in clubs with their whiskies, and the ones at the golf clubs, get out and do a little producing.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. BRADY: They might then have something to think about in regard to what the worker does. They get their money too easily. I am surprised at the member for Avon being taken in by these people. I was in the wheat game for ten years. I managed a flour mill for a short period, and I have some idea of what goes on in the handling of cereals. During the days prior to the depression there were at least a dozen firms who had their representatives running around the country buying and selling wheat. They had to pay for the running of their cars as well as for their office staffs and offices.

Who paid for all these things? The farmers—just as they are paying for the buying and selling of oats. When profits are made they do not go to the farmers, but to the people who are farming in St. George's Terrace—the banks, commercial firms and very often Eastern States and oversea investors. They are the people who get the rake-off, and who do not want the Bill to pass. They are the ones who are going among the members of the Liberal Party, and others on the Government side, saying, "You must get rid of the Bill." They do not want it because they have, for many years, had a harvest assuring them of a livelihood, and they want it to continue. If one agency handled the whole of the oats in the State it would reduce the costs to a minimum. That point should be the first which should appeal to the farmer rather than there being 20 or 30 agents running around to handle the commodity. These agents are in a position, in my opinion, to rig the market against the farmers, just as many firms are rigging things against the farmers and the community generally.

I do not say that all the farmers practise malpractices in connection with taxation, but some do. I have seen taxation officers going into various firms to examine the books because they have been suspicious of what the farmers were doing. They have gone to banks to see what moneys have gone through farmers' accounts, and so on. We should take that temptation away from the farmers. But the majority are not like that. Most are decent people who will pay the taxes they have to meet, just the same as there are decent merchants and workers. But a percentage in all sections of the community try to avoid their responsibilities, and there will be some of those among the people growing oats.

Another aspect which appeals to me is that if one pool is handling oats it will be able to do a maximum amount of research in the interests of the farmers; and to make maximum experiments in handling the product; and do the most in arranging freights oversea. Instead of half a dozen merchants negotiating with half a dozen shipping companies for freights, one agency will do the lot. As a result costs must come down; and this will apply even to the man using ordinary oatmeal porridge, because the price of oatmeal to the consumer will come down.

We are going to face a period in Australia when we will look for ways of economising. Things are not going to be as easy as they have been in the last five or six years. So this Government and its supporters should be looking for avenues through which they can effect economies and reduce costs. They should be doing that, not only in connection with the oat pool, but other things as well. I hope the member for Moore will introduce other Bills that will cut out these parasites who are erecting huge buildings in the city of Perth when they should be producing in the rural areas.

I feel that the Bill contains one or two weaknesses because I think the member for Moore has always been biassed in favour of the farmers. He would do better to look at the whole picture as it affects the consumers. I advise him to amend the Bill so that a representative of the consumers could be appointed to the board he proposes, because I think that even the board could gain something by hearing the consumers' point of view. This representative might be able to point out to the board where its handling of oats is wrong; where it is encouraging the wrong grade; and where the right chemicals or super are not being used on the land where the oats are produced.

The farmers might be classed in the same category as a mother who gives her child a dose of castor oil. The child does not want the castor oil, but the mother knows it will do him good. I say to the member for Avon that this measure will do the farmers good in the Avon electorate. They do not like it, but this is the oil they want—this compulsory pool.

The Minister for Lands: That is the Mussolini cure.

Mr. Lawrence: You know all about him, by your arbitration Bill.

The Minister for Lands: Yes, I was over there.

Mr. BRADY: The private buyers can now get the oats and after paying the average price they can pick out a particular class and sell them as seed oats, and so get a premium which is not passed on to the farmer. If the pool is established, the farmer will be given the full advantage of the proceeds from the oats sold.

Hon. E. Nulsen: Why cannot a voluntary pool be established?

Mr. BRADY: Because a voluntary pool does not give the people controlling the pool the opportunity to gauge what they have to handle. They might set out to deal with 300,000 tons of oats and find they have only 50,000 tons. With a compulsory pool they will know just what will be coming forward, and will make their arrangements accordingly. The economies in that respect will be immense. For a year or two, at least, the pool should be encouraged by all parties in the House. I am all for bringing about the establishment of the pool to reduce the costs to farmers. The pool will function, as I said before, firstly, in the interests of the State as a whole and secondly in the interests of the man producing the cereal. I hope the second reading will be carried, and the Bill ultimately become an Act.

MR. NALDER (Katanning) [6.12]: I support the Bill, and it is my intention to give the House some reasons why it should be passed in the interests of the oat-grower. A lot has been said, but not necessarily regarding the measure, by those who are opposing it. They have not given reasons why it should be thrown out, but have been attacking each other. I want to say why I feel the Bill should be passed. Let us take, for argument's sake, a farmer who has been delivering oats to a siding and who has had to rely on bags for the delivery of the oats. He has first of all to find the bags, then to sew them, then to cart them and finally to have them stacked.

Mr. Yates: What is the cost of bags?

Mr. NALDER: It is not quite as high as it was a few months ago. Last year it was at the highest peak in the history of the State.

Mr. Ackland: Bags were 72s. last year and are 49s. today.

Mr. NALDER: That is the price of new bags.

Mr. Ackland: No, I am talking of second-hand bags.

Mr. NALDER: New bags were 79s. a few months ago, but the price is considerably less now. But that is not the whole factor. The point is the convenience in the handling of bulk oats. We do not have to worry about sewing the bags, because they are just lifted on the truck, taken to the bin where they are emptied and then carted back to the paddock where the harvesting operations are continued in the same way as they are with wheat. The farmers in Western Australia, in the past few years, experienced the convenience of handling wheat in bulk, and in the last 12 months many of them have experienced the advantage of handling oats in bulk.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. NALDER: Before the tea suspension I was commencing to emphasise the advantages obtained from the bulkhandling of grain. One has to be in the industry to realise the advantages that can be obtained from this modern method. Over the years I can recall how long it took to prepare one's harvest for marketing; the trouble of getting the bags ready by ramming them, sewing them and generally preparing them for cartage to the siding. The bags that were used by growers on their farms for the storage of grain were subject to the ravages of rats and mice, which breed prolifically under such conditions. During a trip I recently had in the Eastern States, I noticed when passing through South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales, that farmers were still disposing of their grain in bags, and one had only to look out of the train to observe the waste that was being caused by that obsolete method of handling.

Because of the many advantages that can be derived from bulkhandling, numerous farmers throughout the State are building bins to store the grain for those periods of the year when they require it for seed or for feed. Several speakers opposing the measure have submitted arguments that do not exist. They have referred to monopolies and compulsion, but this is a generous offer by a firm that has pioneered bulkhandling in Western Australia. The company makes an offer to give the scheme a trial for a short period. It says, "Give it a trial for, say, twelve months so that we can compile a register of growers, and then we will refer the matter back to you." That is a generous offer to handle oats in bulk for a short trial period. When such period has elapsed, they will say to the growers, "Are you in favour of oats being marketed in bulk, or do you still favour the bag system?" If the House throws out the Bill, it will deprive oatgrowers of an opportunity to have their grain handled by a modern and up-to-date method.

Mr. Cornell: Do not you think it is like a shotgun marriage?

Mr. NALDER: The Farmers' Union is behind this move, and rightly so, because it speaks as one voice for all the farmers in Western Australia.

Mr. May: All of them?

Mr. NALDER: We think they are in the majority and it is those who do not belong to the Farmers' Union that are trying to defeat the scheme. They are doing their best to divide the Farmers' Union, to have its members at sixes and sevens and keep them arguing the point over something or other. They are not anxious to see the farmers organised, but want them disorganised. Proof of that is shown in the article published in "The West Australian" of the 20th May, 1952, where it was reported that the Chamber of Commerce objected to the scheme. What right has that organisation to oppose it? It has not the farmers' interests at heart.

I am inclined to agree with the member for Guildford-Midland when he stated that all they are interested in is the rake-off that they may get themselves. In reply to the member for Merredin-Yilgarn, I point out that nine out of 10 district councils of the Farmers' Union in Western Australia have voted in favour of the Bill, and 68 per cent. of the branches are also in favour of it. Four branches out of 20 who were opposed to it have since reversed their decision.

Mr. Kelly: Was not that done under duress?

Mr. Hearman: Were those branches consulted?

Mr. NALDER: Many branches were consulted, but they took that decision without being asked. The Bill makes no

restrictions as to the handling of seed oats. If a farmer has seed oats for sale and another farmer in some other portion of the State wishes to purchase them, he is at liberty to make his own arrangements about price and delivery. Another provison sets out that where a farmer in one district requires feed oats, he can make his own arrangements as to their purchase so that he may have sufficient on his property to tide him over until the following year for stock requirements.

Mr. May: He has to get the approval of the board, though.

Mr. NALDER: I hope the House will pass the second reading of the Bill. I feel sure that the hon. member who has introduced it will give consideration to the exclusion of bagged oats. I am certain that, if the Bill enters the Committee stage, we shall be able to put it into shape and overcome some of the objections members have raised. I urge the House to allow farmers to enjoy the opportunity of having this scheme tried. We have the matter in the palms of our hands here tonight. I hope the Bill will not be rejected, and that in the Committee stage it will be amended so that it will be acceptable to all members.

HON. E. NULSEN (Eyre) [7.40]: Much ground has already been traversed and I do not intend to reiterate many of the statements made by members. I listened attentively to the member for Moore when he introduced the Bill, but since reading it I do not like it one scrap. It seems to me that it was instigated by Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd., and perpetrated by the member for Moore. As far as I am concerned and the party with which I am associated, we are in favour of co-operative societies and bulkhandling, but only on certain conditions. Firstly, we want to know whether the majority of farmers are in favour of the bulkhandling of oats. A referendum has not been taken, and consequently we are rather confused after listening to the member for Merredin-Yilgarn and others, including the member for Avon, who have already spoken.

We should be sure of our ground before we assent to something that will not suit the majority of farmers. The minority, too, should be given consideration. There are a number of farmers that resent compulsion. I am one of them because I consider we have too much compulsion and too many boards. We say that we send our men oversea to fight for freedom and liberty and we are told that this is something that farmers want, but we will find as time goes on that a terrific monopoly will be created and, instead of farmer control, it will become a control of farmers. The Bill aims at absolute control of growers. If members will look at pages 10 and 11 under the heading "Marketing of Oats," it will be seen that it says—

> The Board may by public notice fix a day (in this section called the appointed day) on and after which every grower shall comply with the requirements of this Act as to the sale and delivery of oats.
>
> On or after the appointed day a grower shall not sell or deliver oats to any person other than the Board and except with the approval of the Board a person other than the Board shall not purchase or take delivery of oats from a grower.

That means that if I wanted to give my mother a bag of oats the provisions of this Bill would not allow me to do so. It provides for no elasticity except with the approval of the board. That becomes very autocratic. It reminds me of the system that exists in Russia. The people there have no say in the marketing of their produce.

Mr. Guthrie: That applies to wheat.

Hon. E. NULSEN: Yes, but oats and wheat are not comparable.

The Minister for Education: Both are autocratic, according to you, because they are similar.

Hon. E. NULSEN: That is so, to a great extent. But the decision regarding wheat was approved by a majority of farmers whereas no referendum has been conducted in connection with oats.

Mr. Ackland: We have made provision in the Bill for the holding of a referendum. It is there now.

Hon. E. NULSEN: No, I do not think it is.

Mr. Ackland: It is the same.

Hon. E. NULSEN: Wheat has been of great economic value to the State. It must be borne in mind that oats are used mostly for fodder purposes; but if the Bill is passed, farmers will have to keep back a large quantity of their crop as a safeguard against drought. If they do so, they will not be able to dispose of it to anyone else and they will have missed the opportunity to dispose of it to the pool.

Mr. Ackland: They could dispose of it, and that applies for the whole 12 months.

Hon. E. NULSEN: The Bill does not say that.

Mr. Ackland: It does.

Hon. E. NULSEN: I do not see any reason why a pool should not be successful on a voluntary basis. Under the Bill, however, the farmers want to create a monopoly and force all growers of oats to sell their crop to the pool and to no one else. It must be remembered that we have breakfast foods, such as oatmeal. An expert purchases the best oats he can procure but, if the Bill is agreed to, he will have to be content with average quality oats.

Mr. Ackland: Read the Bill! You will see that is provided for.

Hon. E. NULSEN: What is suggested could not possibly be carried out with regard to breakfast foods. We do not know until about July whether the season will be good or bad. By that time the pool will have been closed and should a farmer have any surplus he will not be able to dispose of the oats. I believe farmers are becoming robots and they will soon be working automatically in accordance with the dictates of the legislation we are asked to pass. I do not want any doubt to arise as to my attitude to co-operative organisations. I know the advantage of co-operative societies and am in favour of them. However, I do not believe in the creation of a huge monopoly. If we adopt that course we will have trouble. There will be no elasticity or resiliency such as is necessary in the interests of the economy of the State.

I have been told that there is no compulsory handling of oats in the Eastern States. If the growers there cannot compete with Western Australians, why do we want to legislate for the bulk handling of oats? It seems to me that it will be of great advantage to Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd., which will be in a position to dictate to the farmers as to what they shall do with their oats.

Mr. Ackland: Read the measure and you will see that the board has to do a service for which it is paid.

Hon. E. NULSEN: But that is the board.

Mr. Ackland: And the members of the board are elected by the vote of the growers.

Hon. E. NULSEN: It does not matter whether it is done by growers or someone else. Such boards become autocratic and will look after their own interests to the disadvantage of everyone else.

Mr. Ackland: The members have to go up for election every two years.

Hon. E. NULSEN: I claim there is no need for the legislation. I have given a great deal of consideration to the Bill and I regard it as unnecessary. It is not a good Bill by any means, for it is too restrictive. The present system of disposal serves the interests of the whole of the people, including those who wish to use their oats other than by exporting it oversea. Are the farmers of this State afraid of competition?

Mr. Graham: They want it, but the member for Moore desires to stop them from having it.

Hon. E. NULSEN: It certainly appears that some of the farmers are afraid of competition. They should have a voluntary pool and they are certainly not compelled to sell their oats to the merchants. If they could get a better deal by putting their oats through the pool, why should they not do so? If they get a better deal from the merchants, why not allow them to deal with their oats in that way? It should not be made one-sided. If legislation were introduced for the nationalisation of banking so that the State could take control, would the member for Moore support it? That would be one-sided legislation, but so is the Bill under discussion. We remember the uproar whenever there has been any reference to the nationalisation of banking, although that step would only be comparative.

In my opinion, we should allow matters to stand as they are for the time being. During the past two years the handling of oats has been carried out successfully, but the board has found that merchant competition has stolen a lot of the oats that should have been put through the voluntary pool. Had the Bill been passed in earlier years that grain would have gone through the pool. However, not all the farmers are in favour of the proposed legislation and I do not think that even the majority of them favour it. It is true that some councils of the Farmers' Union have supported it but, though the members of those bodies may have been favourably inclined, it does not say that a majority of the individual farmers they represent are in favour of the Bill. Should a referendum be taken and the result indicate that the majority of farmers desire bulkhandling, I would support the Bill.

Mr. Nalder: There is provision for that in the Bill.

Hon. E. NULSEN: But why was the referendum not taken first and legislation introduced subsequently? There is no excuse for introducing the legislation first before a referendum has been held.

Mr. Ackland: It is the board you have to deal with.

Hon. E. NULSEN: But Bulk Handling Ltd. is the board.

Mr. Ackland: It is not.

Hon. E. NULSEN: It is, more or less, because it controls the bulkhandling of grain. I have in my possession a copy of a letter signed by W. G. Burges, who, I believe, is a very honourable man. I met him some years ago. His letter reads:—

> The reply (on July 31) of Mr. H. E. Braine, general manager of Co-op. Bulk Handling Ltd. is quite unconvincing in that he advances no reason why a voluntary pool cannot be operated in the coming season just as it has been in the past two seasons.
>
> More and more growers are telling me that they are opposed to a compulsory pool. They are unwilling to have their freedom regarding the disposal of their oats taken from them and some are asking whether C. B. H. passed their resolution in favour of a compulsory pool before or after the Farmers' Union conference in February.

Mr. Burges is a man of integrity who is held in very high regard throughout the State. In his letter he merely expresses the sentiments of the farmers with whom he has come in contact, and certainly he must know the farmers and their views better than I do. There is proof in the letter that for two years the farmers have carried on quite satisfactorily. I do not know why it is, but it seems to me that outside competition has been very great and more than 50 per cent. of the business has gone to the merchants as against Bulk Handling Ltd. The farmers are men of commonsense and they would act in their own interests. I do not oppose the Bill merely on trivial grounds. In a recent issue of "The Sunday Times," the following article appeared:—

> Oats Bill might be Knocked Out.
>
> There is no certainty about the Oats Bill going through. Labour is peeved because while a suspension of Standing Orders was granted to enable Mr. Ackland's Bill to be speeded up, Mr. Graham's move for a similar suspension for his Margarine Bill was knocked back.
>
> And Mr. Ackland was one of those who voted against him.
>
> This could mean that the bulk of Labour might vote with the Liberals against the C.D.L.s and knock out the Bill.

Mr. Graham: Hear, hear!

Hon. E. NULSEN: Even Mr. Braine would not support any action like that suggested in the newspaper article! We are not so trivially minded as that. Merely because of some small argument we would not vote against a measure if it were important in the interests of farmers.

Mr. Ackland: And you are proving that "The Sunday Times" is wrong?

Hon. E. NULSEN: I oppose the Bill on its merits and not for any other consideration. I am sure that also applies to the member for East Perth. I hope the House will not agree to a measure that will deprive us of our freedom and liberty of action but will give the oatgrowers an opportunity to market their oats in the manner they deem advisable. We must foster the co-operative movement because the co-operative societies have done a wonderful job.

MR. MAY (Collie) [7.59]: In the few remarks I am about to make on the Bill I intend to divorce myself from any letters or comments I have seen in the Press or propaganda sent to me either for or against the Bill. On the other hand, I cannot divorce my remarks from those of the member for Moore directly concerning the Bill, because he did not make any. Most of his speech centred around the wheat position and the reasons for the curtailment of areas sown to wheat. He gave various reasons for the reduction in wheat areas but, in my opinion, he did not state all of them.

I know there are farmers in the Western Australian Parliament, not necessarily in this Chamber, who have bitterly resented the taxation tactics of the Commonwealth Government towards farmers, particularly in regard to wheatgrowing. I believe the taxation measures of the Federal Treasurer have had much to do with the reduction of wheat acreages in this State. When the taxation measures of the Federal Treasurer are such that they cause farmers to go to the bank for accommodation in order to pay their taxation, there is something radically wrong with the system.

One farmer told me that last season he had 800 acres of wheat which were to average 24 bushels to the acre, and he was dead scared to take off the crop because he did not know what would happen to him in regard to taxation. As a matter of fact, he did not take it off. He let the sheep in on it. That is one of the reasons for the reduction of acreage in this State. One can go to any part of the wheatgrowing areas and the farmers will say the same thing. It does not matter so far as the smaller farmers are concerned, but the taxation proposals of the Federal Treasurer seriously affected those over the £7,000 mark.

According to the member for Moore, this Bill will lead to a greater production of oats and to a greater production of wheat. I cannot make that add up. I believe that areas that are not under cultivation at present and are suitable for oatgrowing should be used for that purpose. But the world is far too short of wheat for us to reduce the production of wheat for the sake of growing oats. Wheat is a far more suitable food than oats will ever be, though there may be some Scotsmen who will not agree with that. It is a fact, however, that wheat is the most suitable food in the world. I believe that growers who have been accustomed to harvesting wheat should continue to do so in the interests of the State and of the world in general. This is a wheatgrowing State, but if we have any areas not sown to wheat that are suitable for oatgrowing, that is where oats should be planted.

I am not opposed to this Bill for many of the reasons that have been given during the debate. My opposition is due to the fact that the growers as a whole have not been consulted, and I could never bring myself to impose compulsion on any section of the community which had not had the right to say whether they wanted such a system or not. I have no grievance at all against Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd., which, so far as wheat is concerned has done a wonderful job. But

I believe there are two factions at work in this State, one striving for a compulsory pool for oats and the other fighting against it, and those working for the compulsory pool have, in my opinion, decided to make the member for Moore the guinea pig in connection with this Bill.

The Bill makes provision for a referendum to be taken amongst farmers in 12 months' time in regard to this question. Why should we have to wait for 12 months for a referendum? Why could it not have been taken before the introduction of this Bill? I know that in all probabilty the member for Moore will say it is difficult to take a referendum of the growers, but it would be no more difficult to do so at present than to do so in 12 months' time. So I consider the Bill has been ill-timed, inasmuch as steps were not taken to obtain the opinion of the farmers as to whether they wanted this compulsory pool or not. That is the reason for my opposition. If the farmers in general agreed that they wanted a compulsory pool, C.B.H. could quite easily cope with it.

That brings me to the point that if oats are compulsorily pooled there will be only one quality. But I believe that for production purposes various qualities of this cereal are required. For instance, I understand that, for the production of oatmeal, best quality oats are needed. If we put all the oats into a pool, as is done with wheat, there will be only one quality and that would be useless to some consumers.

Mr. Ackland: Read Clause 29.

Mr. MAY: I do not know whether I have a note on Clause 29, but I would not be allowed to read the clause on the second reading. Another matter I want to mention is that when introducing the Bill the member for Moore spoke of one man putting thousands of bushels of wheat into the pool and taking out more than double the quantity. There is something wrong with an organisation that allows that to be done.

Mr. Ackland: No; it is Federal legislation.

Mr. MAY: Four weeks ago I endeavoured to get 100 bushels of my own wheat out of the pool in order to save my starving sheep and I was told I could not get it. I was informed at the Wheat Board office that if I were a pig-raiser or if I were keeping a few fowls I could get it. I said, "You mean that I cannot get 100 bushels of my own wheat for my starving sheep?," and I was told "No."

Mr. Ackland: But you got it.

Mr. MAY: Do not be in such a hurry; I am telling my own story. I set the wheels in motion; and with the help of various bodies, and the member for Moore, I eventually obtained authority for the release of that wheat. But it was released only after the damage was done. I lost my sheep. So far as I am concerned, that sort of thing is not going to happen with regard to oats. It is most ridiculous to find that one can get wheat from the pool to feed fowls and pigs but that when it comes to starving sheep affected by the dry year, one cannot get it.

The board would not think of releasing it. Mr. Fethers it was who said, "No, you just cannot get it." Eventually I did, but not until my sheep had died from starvation. That is not going to happen in connection with any oat pool and, so far as I am concerned, in connection with any wheat pool in the future. I am referring only to my own case, but there were hundreds in the same boat. I could have got five tons of oats from North Fremantle, but I could not get it transported to Morawa.

Mr. Nalder: In future you would keep enough back from your own harvest, would you not?

Mr. MAY: I grow sufficient to keep my sheep if there is likely to be a dry summer, particularly before they start to lamb. Unfortunately, we were unable to get shearers last season; and when we did, we should have been stripping our oats, but we lost the lot. Consequently, on account of the dry latter end of the summer, I was without any feed for the sheep and a representative of the Wheat Board told me I could not get any wheat out of the pool, though it belonged to me. So far as I am concerned it will not happen again.

Contained in the Bill is a provision that pooled oats can be sold to any person provided the owner of the oats receives the permission of the board. At present we do not know what is to be the composition of the board. We do not know who will be appointed, and I am not prepared to take the risk of members of such a board doing the same to me as members of the Wheat Board did. That is the reason for my opposition to that portion of the Bill.

I notice also that there is provision for a roll to be compiled of oatgrowers in this State so that a referendum can be taken in 12 months' time to decide whether the pool shall continue or not. I have already said I am at a loss to understand why that roll could not have been compiled and that referendum taken before the hon. member introduced his Bill. I feel that if that had been done there would have been greater support for the measure. I am not going to put my head into a noose without knowing what is going to happen in regard to this pool, without knowing what men are going to be in charge and the conditions under which it will operate.

I think the hon. member should have safeguarded his Bill by tying up all those points before bringing the measure to this House. With Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. I have no quarrel. That company has done an excellent job and I guarantee that the wheat from this State could never have been handled as it has been without the service of that organisation. One other provision to which I object very strongly is that which provides that the police can go to a person's farm and his buildings and make a complete search to ascertain whether he is withholding any quantity of oats from the pool.

Mr. Ackland: You know that is not a fact. What it says is that that shall be done when it is feared that there has been some sharp practice by somebody purchasing oats.

Mr. MAY: It does not say anything about sharp practices. It simply provides that the police, or any agent nominated by the board, have power to enter upon anybody's property and make a search. If one's neighbour saw policemen going on to one's property, he would not know whether they were going to search for oats. Such neighbour might misconstrue the reason for the appearance of the police and attribute it to something else. So far as I am concerned, neither the police nor anybody else are going to be given the right to go on to my property through the provisions of this Bill.

Mr. Ackland: They would not; you are a grower of oats.

Mr. MAY: The hon. member is a bit late with his assertion. The Bill distinctly says the police or any other agent authorised by the board would have the right to enter on a property for the purpose of making investigations.

Mr. Ackland: You have passed that provision twice in this House in connection with wheat.

Mr. MAY: Then I should not have done so and I will not make the mistake a third time. I am not opposed to the member for Moore in this matter, but I do oppose the Bill in view of what has already happened to me and many other farmers in the State and I will do whatever I can to prevent those things happening again. If the majority of our farmers say they want a compulsory pool they can have it, but the Bill will require radical alteration before receiving my support. I am sorry the measure has been brought before us in its present form and without the authority of all the oatgrowers in the State. After a referendum is taken of the growers the member for Moore may be able to bring before us a Bill that has the approval of all the oatgrowers.

Mr. Nalder: There are many growers who have never sold oats.

Mr. MAY: I am one of them.

Mr. Nalder: You must differentiate between those who sell oats and those who do not.

Mr. MAY: I think it would have been possible to hold a referendum of the farmers in regard to this measure and I am sorry the member for Moore did not follow that course before introducing the Bill. I oppose the second reading.

MR. HEARMAN (Blackwood) [8.17]: During the debate a good deal has been said that perhaps was somewhat away from the Bill, but I hope to keep closely to its provisions. One argument advanced in support of the introduction of the measure was that the majority of the branches of the Farmers' Union have voted in favour of it. I do not wish to detract from the difficulties of conducting a poll of oatgrowers and perhaps the Farmers' Union, in conducting what was virtually a Gallup poll, was acting in good faith and making the best of a bad job. But I do not think that because the organisation took that step this House should necessarily be influenced unduly by the figures produced.

I do not think the wish to have this legislation introduced was a spontaneous reaction on the part of the farmers. It has been indicated that there has been inspired opposition to the move and I suggest there has also been inspired support for it because the Farmers' Union, in deciding to circularise its branches asking for their support—I do not infer that that was wrong—indicated that it was making an effort among those branches to gain support for the Bill. It has been stated that 68 per cent. of the branches circularised —I would like to point out that by no means all branches were circularised, but only those in areas expected to produce oats for sale—a little better than two out of three voted in favour of it and approximately one-third against it.

It must be borne in mind also that the Farmers' Union does not necessarily represent all the farmers in the State. In some areas of my electorate I doubt if more than 40 per cent. of the farmers belong to the organisation and so in the absence of any proof to the contrary, I think the House is entitled to assume that 25 per cent. of the farmers are not members and were given no opportunity to indicate their views in the poll conducted by the union. Although it is said that 68 per cent. voted in favour of the Bill it is possible that that would represent little if any more than half of the farmers in favour of it, even if all of them had been given the opportunity to express their views.

A further point is that there is no indication that only oatgrowers voted in the poll, so I do not think the House should be over-influenced by the figures produced. It should regard them in the

light of the circumstances under which they were obtained. A couple of years ago the Farmers' Union endeavoured to absorb the Potato Growers' Association and, after a certain amount of propaganda and a number of meetings, a poll was conducted. I think the Farmers' Union was certain that the potatogrowers would vote to join it, but they rejected the proposal by over two to one. That indicates the Farmers' Union is not always completely reliable in its assessment of the opinion of farmers.

The basis on which the Farmers' Union conducted the poll was not that of the Bill. It asked that the Government should be requested to bring down a measure to create a compulsory oat pool, but the Government has not agreed to that, with the result that a private member has had to introduce the legislation the terms of which are, of necessity, different from what would have been the terms of a Bill brought down by the Government. One substantial difference is the composition of the proposed board. When the Government refused to bring in this legislation approaches were made to the trustees of the Wheat Pool to see if they would finance an oat pool and they agreed, but naturally made certain provisos to the effect that if they were to provide the finance they would require a fair degree of control over the pool.

Consequently, we have the proposal that the chairman of the board should be a nominee of the trustees of the wheat pool, the other four members eventually to be elected by the growers. That is reasonable from the point of view of the trustees of the Wheat Pool, but is different from what one would have expected to find in legislation brought down by the Government. The chairman of the board is given the power of veto over other members on all matters pertaining to finance, so I think this measure would make the oatgrowers' interests completely subservient to those of the wheatgrowers. Co-operative Bulk Handling has stated that it will not receive oats when handling the wheat harvest, and the people who would be controlling the oat pool would, I believe, be greatly influenced by the requirements of the wheat pool. In practice I think that under this Bill the oatgrower would play second fiddle to the wheatgrower.

Mr. Ackland: That is one reason why the referendum could not have been held.

Mr. HEARMAN: I do not think the hon. member is following my remarks. I said that under the Bill the interests of the oatgrower would be subservient to those of the wheatgrower. On matters affecting finance the chairman of the board will have over-riding powers, and so no matter how many oatgrowers are on the board their efforts will in some direction be restricted. I wonder whether if the oatgrowers knew how the board was to be constituted they would have agreed to the introduction of this Bill to the extent that they apparently did. I realise that the member for Moore had to get the money from other than Government sources, and naturally when one is under an obligation to somebody else in regard to finance that person always exercises some control over one.

Hon. E. Nulsen: There is no consumer on the board.

Mr. HEARMAN: No. The oatgrowers' interests will not be as fully protected under the Bill as was envisaged when the proposition was originally put to them.

Mr. McCulloch: You do not agree to the chairman having veto powers as regards finance?

Mr. HEARMAN: I did not say I do not agree with it. I am endeavouring to show what will happen under the legislation in its present form. There may be dozens of other ways in which the board could be constituted, but if the trustees of the Wheat Pool stipulate that if they are to make money available they must appoint the chairman and give him this power of veto, I suggest the oatgrower is being tied closely to the trustees of the Wheat Pool. If the member for Moore desires to contest that he will doubtless have opportunity to do so.

There is no direction in the Bill to the board in regard to its responsibilities and actions other than to sell the oats in the pool to the best possible advantage to the grower. That is understandable in a Bill sponsored by the growers, but it makes no provision to give any protection to other members of the community—farmers or otherwise—who may be consumers of oats, but not growers. That is an extreme power to give the board. It could well receive oats in the early part of the season before the wheat came in and could ship them, leaving practically none available in the pool. When anyone wanted oats for feed purposes it might be extremely difficult to get them as there would be none available in the pool, and these people would not be prepared to handle oats until the wheat harvest had been dealt with.

Another point is that a grower who wanted to dispose of his oats during that period would find great difficulty in doing so, because he could dispose of them only through the board and the board would not be prepared to receive them at that stage. As far as I can see, there is no obligation on the board to receive them but doubtless the board may be able to make some arrangements to tide over a man who happened to be in dire financial straits; of course that would be subject to the approval of the chairman.

I think one must be parochial to some extent in connection with any legislation. It seems to me that there is no obligation

on the part of the board to make any provision for seed oats. As members are aware, I represent a South-West electorate where considerable quantities of oats are used for seed purposes. No oats are harvested as grain but they are used for green feed for stock and, in many instances, the oats are allowed to mature and may be baled or chaffed The normal practice has been for farmers to buy their seed oats from produce merchants. In passing I point out that the average area sown by any one farmer in those districts would be only about 10 or 20 acres and the farmer concerned might want only half a dozen or a dozen bags of seed oats.

Mr. Ackland: What about the amendment on yesterday's notice paper?

Mr. HEARMAN: I read yesterday's notice paper but the member for Moore is getting a little ahead of himself. His proposition will enable farmers to buy seed oats direct from other farmers; but does he realise that a number of small farmers in the South-West, if that proposition is introduced, will have to find some farmer in the oatgrowing areas who is prepared to sell only half-a-dozen or a dozen bags of oats of the variety and standard required? Then the farmer who grows the oats will have to rail the half-dozen or dozen bags to the siding concerned. Under that setup farmers will have to pay more for their seed oats and, in addition, they will not be able to see the oats they intend to buy; in other words, they will be buying them on the blind and there will be no redress. I do not know how the board will determine the price to be paid by one farmer to another and on some occasions farmers combine and get a truck-load of oats between them. Freight charges will be considerable and that must have a bearing on the cost.

There is another aspect, too. This Bill will be all right for those who arrange to plant oats early in the season. But oats are planted in the South-West any time from about February through to August, and while it is possible to arrange truck lots early in the season, it is not so easy later on. Frequently farmers do not decide to grow any oats at all until after their farms have been burnt out by a bushfire, and that may be as late as April.

Under this Bill it will be difficult for farmers in the South-West—especially those who want a relatively small quantity for seed purposes—to obtain oats of the variety they require. They may be satisfied with what they receive but usually farmers like to know the quality of the seed oats they are buying. If they can see the oats beforehand, they can tell whether there are any noxious weeds in the seed and under the existing system, where merchants buy in truck lots from farmers and sell the oats in the South-West, farmers can see what they are buying. That, from the South-West viewpoint, is much more satisfactory. I have not been able to get the detailed figures of the amount of seed oats coming into the South-West each year, but I would say that it would be in the vicinity of 1,500 tons last year.

If there is to be any substantial increase in the output of our dairy farms, there will have to be an increase in the area of feed oats sown. Consequently I do not want to see any legislation introduced which will place any additional obstacles in the path of the dairy farmers who wish to make an endeavour to increase their output. While the amendment on the notice paper might be satisfactory for the oatgrowing areas, it will not be satisfactory to farmers in the South-West. Under this legislation it will be an offence for a farmer to dispose of oats other than through the board. But with this amendment a farmer who sells oats to another for seed purposes is exempt from that provision. How is a farmer who is producing oats to know that he is selling seed oats to another farmer if he only receives a letter requesting a certain quantity of seed oats?

A merchant might ring up a grower and, after claiming to be a farmer, request the delivery of a quantity of seed oats. This will put the onus on the grower to determine whether the man to whom he is selling is a farmer or not. There are search provisions in this Bill that will enable the board to check up on growers to see if they have committed offences. That would tend to place a further obstacle in the path of small growers in the South-West, particularly those who might want only a small quantity of seed oats.

Farmers frequently buy a truck-load and use part of it for seed purposes and the rest for feed. But under this Bill they will have to buy their seed separately and purchase their feed in bulk from the pool. That would not suit all feeders because many of them prefer to buy oats in bags. I do not think that those who have supported the Bill have demonstrated clearly that it is necessary. They have shown that Co-operative Bulk Handling would like the Bill but they have not shown that it is essential.

Mr. Nalder: If you had grown oats for sale you would not say that.

Mr. HEARMAN: The position is that the farmers have not shown any spontaneous desire for this legislation. They have been circularised and asked what they think of it. But it is well known that Co-operative Bulk Handling is very anxious to have this legislation introduced Members of the organisation have said that if the Bill is not introduced they will not handle oats in bulk.

The Minister for Education: "Cannot" I think is the word, and the legal aspects have to be considered.

Mr. HEARMAN: I understand that "will not" were the words used.

The Minister for Educaton: "Cannot" is the word.

Mr. HEARMAN: There is no knowing in what form the Bill might be passed and when it might be passed. The Bill might become law in November and then Co-operative Bulk Handling would be obliged to handle oats in bulk. Obviously to do that they must make arrangements to handle them now and, if they do it now, why is this legislation necessary? I suggest that the legislation is not necessary because there has been a voluntary pool in existence and that appears to have worked satisfactorily. I do not know that there have been any objections to this voluntary pool and it seems to me that little extra oats will be handled if this legislation is passed. Also, I fail to see why a grower of oats should not be permitted to grow seed oats and dispose of them as such to anybody who is prepared to pay the price he asks.

One of the objections to pooling—and this was clearly demonstrated in the days of the Apple and Pear Board, when there was a compulsory acquisition of the crop —is the decline in the standard of the product. Under a pooling system there appears to be little incentive to growers to produce good samples. I know that there is a provision in the Bill whereby millers may be able to get a premium line if necessary, and that is most desirable. But by and large there is very little incentive for growers to produce their best lines and there is a distinct hardship inflicted on farmers in the South-West who wish to grow oats for other than seed purposes. For that reason I oppose the Bill.

On motion by Hon. J. T. Tonkin, debate adjourned.

BILL—INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous day. Mr. Perkins in the Chair; the Attorney General in charge of the Bill.

Clause 4——Section 9 amended:

Mr. GRAHAM: I move an amendment—

> That after the word "Court" in line 5 of proposed new Subsection (4f) the words "by unanimous vote" be added.

It will be seen that the proviso extends power to the Arbitration Court to permit it to disallow any rules of an industrial union. Rules of industrial organisations are already subject to the scrutiny of the court or one of its servants, in the presence of the Registrar, who is aware of the pattern this should follow and of the requirements of the law. Because the Government has insisted on giving the court such tremendous powers, it is possible that it will tend to become vindictive, though I should not say it would, and apply pressure on a union. There is no possibility of rules contrary to the spirit of arbitration being inserted in the constitution of industrial unions. These rules must be approved by a majority of members present at a meeting called for the purpose. From Section 9 of the Industrial Arbitration Act it will be seen that there are many provisions which it is incumbent on industrial organisations to incorporate in their rules. Without picking any one in particular, I would like to read several of them out. Subsection (3) sets out—

> The rules shall specify the purposes for which the society is formed, and shall provide for—
>
> (a) The appointment and removal and powers and duties of a committee of management, a chairman, secretary, and any other necessary officers, and, if thought fit, of a trustee or trustees.

So, unless the above provisions are satisfied, the Registrar of the Court would not agree. Paragraph (b) runs on as follows:—

> The manner of calling the general or special meetings, the powers thereof, and the quorum and manner or voting thereat.

Paragraph (c) reads—

> The mode in which industrial agreements and all deeds and instruments shall be made and executed . . .

Paragraph (e) is as follows:—

> The control of the property and investment of the funds of the society and an annual or other shorter periodical audit of the accounts.

There are other provisions along those lines. Subsection (4) states that "Such rules shall expressly provide" a certain number of other conditions. So there is sufficient safeguard. If the court is to take the extreme step of overriding the constitution of an industrial union, it should be the unanimous decision of the court. We do not want any excess indulged in and I move as stated.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not understand why this has been raised. It would create an unusual precedent because the court always acts as a court, and we are endeavouring to provide that three of its members have to be unanimous in their decision. That would be a curious position.

Mr. Lawrence: The Bill itself is a precedent.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: This provision has been in the Federal Arbitration Act, from where it was taken, since 1928. It was commented on in 1947 and 1948 by Dr. Evatt and, if there was any objection, surely a man of such eminence would have struck it out.

Mr. Graham: You are a very recent worshipper of Dr. Evatt.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not like some of his politics, but I admired him as a distinguished High Court judge.

Mr. Lawrence: Fraternal love!

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The hon. member might say professional admiration, and I would agree. This would create a position that could not be tolerated. The matter does not involve a major decision and, in all the circumstances, I cannot agree to the amendment.

Mr. LAWRENCE: The provision states that the court may, upon its own motion or upon application made under this section, disallow any rule of an industrial union which, in the opinion of the court, etc. I take it that "court" implies the three members constituting the court. For the protection of the union, surely the decision should be unanimous! The Attorney General said that this was a minor matter.

The Attorney General: Compared with other provisions of the Bill!

Mr. LAWRENCE: Minor compared with the definition of "strike" for example. The dictionary meaning of "opinion" is "guided by reason." We may assume that the three members of the court are reasonable men and the chances are they would be unanimous in their decision. Therefore the words should be inserted. Further, there is no appeal against the decision of the court so that the opinion of the President, supported by the employers' representative, would permit of the rules being disallowed.

Even a murderer has the right of appeal against the unanimous decision of the jury that convicted him. If the Attorney General will not approve of the court's decision being unanimous, how can he fairly claim it to be right that a person convicted of a major crime against society must have been found guilty by the unanimous decision of a jury? That is a right conferred by British justice and similar justice should be meted out to the workers. The measure will place wider power in the hands of the court. It should be observed that the rules of the union would have previously been examined by the Industrial Registrar and accepted by him.

The Attorney General: There is an appeal to the court against the registration of the union.

Mr. LAWRENCE: Yes, but I can point out a provision where there is no appeal against the decision of the Registrar. I do not know whether the Attorney General has examined his own Bill too well. I appeal to the Government to be fair in these matters. We are not asking for the deletion of the clause, but that it be qualified so that reasonable justice will be given to members of trade unions or persons who may come within the ambit of this measure.

Mr. GRAHAM: I agree with the Attorney General that where an industrial matter has to be resolved the decision of the Court should be by a majority of its members. But there are certain requirements that every union must fulfil before it can be registered. There are certain matters that must be provided for in its rules. The rules are expressly to provide that all industrial disputes in which an industrial union or any of its members may be concerned shall, unless settled by mutual consent, be referred for settlement pursuant to the Act. There must be a rule to that effect in the constitution of the industrial union, and unless it is there the Registrar will not accept the application. Then the Act provides that the rules or any amendment thereof may contain such other provisions as are not inconsistent with the Act or otherwise contrary to the law.

That is the charter of the Registrar of the Court. Accordingly, in all good faith, the industrial union fulfils the requirements of the Act and forwards a perfectly valid constitution for consideration. The Registrar, on going through it carefully, is satisfied that it conforms to all the requirements of the law. Yet we are suggesting that a majority vote of the court shall have the right to override any of those rules; in other words, override the law. It cannot be for any other purpose, because the rules are not in conflict with the Arbitration Act or any other statute.

The Attorney General: They would be if they were tyrannical.

Mr. GRAHAM: I have already explained that the rules must conform to certain requirements and must be accepted by the Registrar; therefore there would be nothing unbecoming about the rules because they would have been officially accepted by him.

The Attorney General: But there is always an appeal from the Registrar and in this case an appeal to the court.

Mr. GRAHAM: If the Attorney General had followed me he would know that in effect it is an appeal against the law of the land.

The Attorney General: No, it is not.

Mr. GRAHAM: Because certain things must be expressly placed in the rules of the union under this very Act. Yet the employers' representative and the President of the court, by a majority decision, can strike out any of the rules which in

their opinion should not be there, notwithstanding the provisions of this legislation or any other. Surely such a decision should be unanimous!

Mr. BRADY: The Attorney General seems to feel that a majority on the bench would not agree with the decision of, say, the President; but almost weekly the whole three members of the bench agree on a matter which may be pro. or con. the employers or the employees. No employees' representative on the court worthy of his salt would agree to a rule being carried on which in his opinion was oppressive. On the other hand, he might agree that a rule was essential. There are such a multiplicity of activities in unions, and it is often necessary to have a rule applying in some union that would not apply in others. The Attorney General probably realises that the Act provides that in addition to the specific matters laid down in it which must be provided in the rules, a union has the right to include other rules not laid down but which may be for the benefit of members. It seems to me extraordinary to reserve the right to the court to remove by a majority decision a rule that has been put into a constitution after having been scrutinised by the Registrar prior to the registration of the union.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not think members quite appreciate the position. I made this provision more advantageous than the existing provision, because under the Act it is the President who decides most of the issues and he alone. First, the Registrar examines the rules and decides whether the union shall be registered or not. Then in Section 22 of the Act it is provided that—

> Any society, trade union, or company which thinks itself aggrieved by any decision of the registrar in refusing to register it as an industrial union, or in registering any other industrial union, may within three months from the date of the decision appeal against the decision to the president.

In this instance I have provided that where the rules are concerned it will not be a matter for the decision of the President alone. I have given the industrial representative an opportunity to consider the matter. Apart from the rules, the President alone decides. The industrial representative on the court has no say.

Mr. STYANTS: I think the Minister is the one who does not understand the implications of the clause when he quotes Section 22 of the Act. Clause 4 (f) of the Bill deals with the registration of a rule of the union.

The Attorney General: That is so.

Mr. STYANTS: Section 22 of the Act deals with the right of the registrar to refuse to register the union.

The Attorney General: That is so.

Mr. STYANTS: I submit that is quite a different matter.

The Attorney General: Not at all, because unless the rules are in order he cannot register the union.

Mr. STYANTS: The Minister would have us believe that under this subclause, or some other provision, a union can appeal against a decision to refuse to register a particular rule.

The Attorney General: I did not say that at all.

Mr. STYANTS: It was quite clear to me that the Minister did say it. Would the Minister tell us where any appeal is provided for in the clause?

The Attorney General: I did not say there was an appeal.

Mr. STYANTS: I understood the Minister to say there was, and I think other members did, too.

Mr. GRAHAM: I do not object to the Attorney General refusing to accept an amendment if he has any reason for doing so, but, when he makes irrelevant comments, we become a little upset. He quoted Section 22 of the Act and said he was doing something generous by extending a privilege so that the court, instead of the President, could deal with the matter. But the amendment has nothing to do with Section 22. The Minister does not intend to amend that section. He is still going to leave with the President the full power and authority which is there. An organisation which applies for registration, and has the application refused by the Registrar, and then appeals to the President, is in a different position to an organisation that has been registered, and the rules of which have been accepted by the court, because this will allow an embittered employers' representative, together with the President, to override any rule in the constitution of the industrial organisation.

There is no limitation because the court can form its opinion on any basis whatsoever. Even if the rules of a union are drafted in accordance with the requirements of the Act, two members of the court have the right to override the legislation. If the Attorney General thinks I have based my argument on false premises, he can point out to me where I am wrong. I am suggesting there should be a unanimous decision because we are allowing the court to override the court.

The Attorney General: To override the Registrar.

Mr. GRAHAM: He is an officer of the court and subject to the court.

The Attorney General: Can the President override the Registrar in connection with the registration of a union?

Mr. GRAHAM: Yes.

The Attorney General: If the President can override the registration, why should not the court override the acceptance of a rule?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Attorney General had better speak later.

Mr. GRAHAM: I ask the Minister for Education whether he can clear up the point I am making, that under this provision a majority of the court can override the rules of a union, notwithstanding that those rules conform with all the requirements in the Act. If I am satisfied on that point, some substance of my opposition disappears, but I think it is fantastic as it is now.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: A union is formed and adopts its rules, after which it applies to the court for registration. The Registrar peruses the rules and considers other matters, and, if he thinks fit, registers the union. Under the present law within a period of three months any other union can object to the registration and the decision of the Registrar can be overruled.

Mr. Graham: And that will still obtain notwithstanding this Bill?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes, and it can be overruled by the President if he thinks the rules do not comply with the Act or that the Registrar has made a mistake. I have provided that the court can do it only on the grounds stated here.

Mr. Styants: But there are other things—

The ATTORNEY GENERRAL: Yes, I am coming to them. At present the President alone can query the rules of a union.

Mr. Lawrence: Who could query them under the Bill?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The Court.

Mr. Lawrence: How many members of the court?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Three.

Mr. Lawrence: And how many must agree?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The majority—two.

Mr. Lawrence: They could be the representative of the Employers' Federation and the President?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes, or the Employers' Federation representative and the union representative; any two members of the court.

Mr. Lawrence: So if the representative of the Employers' Federation wanted to be mean about it, the question would devolve on the President to decide.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes, and if the union representative decided to be mean the same would apply. Questions of the greatest importance are decided by a majority decision in the High Court.

Hon. E. Nulsen: And in the Privy Council.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: That is not a court.

The Minister for Education: It acts as one.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Both the High Court of England and our own High Court are governed by majority decisions.

Mr. McCULLOCH: In the session before last we dealt with a Bill relating to citizenship right for natives, under which a magistrate and chairman or member of a road board were to decide who should receive those rights. There were only two members of that board and their decision had to be unanimous. In this case, with three members, the Attorney General says it would be wrong to provide that the decision must be unanimous. Under the present Act the greatest difficulty a union has is obtaining any amendment of its rules. The provision in the Bill is tyrannical and if agreed to will mean that the only member of the court who knows anything about union affairs will be overruled.

The Attorney General: Do you agree that before an award is made there should be a unanimous decision of the court?

Mr. McCULLOCH: The person who controls the Arbitration Court is the President. In the history of our Aribitration Court the representative of the Employers' Federation and the representative of the workers have never agreed to out-vote the President. From personal experience I know how extremely difficult it is for a union to secure any amendment of its rules. I do not think the member for East Perth is asking for too much in the amendment he has moved.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I was hoping that the Attorney General would accept this reasonable amendment. I listened to his objections, and all he did was to quote the practice already in existence in the High Court, the Supreme Court, and so on. I presume the Attorney General referred to those matters because of his legal training, but when dealing with the question of arbitration we should get away from the legal atmosphere, and the Arbitration Court should be a court of equity. Right from the early days it has been the practice in the Arbitration Court to keep legal representatives out of it. After all, we are not here to be slaves to precedent; we are here to establish precedents.

The Attorney General: Are you prepared to provide that the court should be unanimous on every decision?

Mr. NEEDHAM: I am prepared to accept the amendment, and I think the Attorney General would be wise to do the same.

Mr. MOIR: I support the amendment. When it is a question of altering the existing rules of the union, the court should be unanimous in its decisions.

The Attorney General: Should it be unanimous on all decisions?

Mr. MOIR: I am discussing the question of rules.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Attorney General should reply after the hon. member sits down.

Mr. MOIR: All union rules have to be approved by the Registrar of the court. Consequently they must be just and lawful. Over the years, various unions in this State have amalgamated; the A.W.U. is an example. The workers in the goldmining industry had a union of their own, known as the mining branch of the Australian Workers' Union. That body had a separate registration in the court, but some years ago, as a result of an alteration in the rules of the W.A. branch of the A.W.U., the mining branch was prepared to relinquish its registration and become part of the W.A. branch of the A.W.U. They did this because there was an agreement on certain rules, including one which stated that members of the union engaged in the mining industry would control their own affairs in relation to approaches to the court.

If this Bill were passed, it would permit the President of the court, with the agreement of one other, to alter the whole setup if he so desired. That is not a fair proposition, and I cannot see why the Attorney General objects to the amendment. I have listened to the Attorney General and can only come to the conclusion that he knows very little about this subject. It is most important to unionists in this State, and apparently it is the intention of the Attorney General to have all the existing union rules thrown into the melting pot so that somebody entirely unconnected with unions can draw up a fresh set of rules for them. Union members should be able to decide on their own rules, especially when these rules have stood the test of time. I cannot see the necessity for this provision, because the Bill stipulates that certain things must be done by the unions within three months to bring them into line with these amendments. If they do not, the Registrar may proceed to alter the rules himself. It then goes on to say that the court may have the power to alter any existing rule of the union. That power should only be granted to the court following a unanimous decision by its members.

Mr. LAWRENCE: On five occasions the Attorney General has hurled a question across the Chamber asking if we would accept, in all cases, the unanimous decision of the court. By doing so he merely attempts to cloud the issue because he knows full well that in the annals of the State Arbitration Court the employers' representative and the employees' representative have never been known to unite or agree to override the opinion of the presiding judge. Therefore in a case where the union advocate is asking for, say, an extra margin of 1s. per hour, naturally the employers' advocate will oppose that and by no stretch of the imagination could I foresee a position whereby agreement could be reached between those two representatives. That, therefore, answers the question posed by the Attorney General.

Where there is no monetary gain under consideration it, may, however, be possible for a unanimous decision to be reached between the employers' representative, the employees' representative and the judge himself. The Attorney General's question, nevertheless, raises an interesting point because under the existing Act there is no doubt that the President has all the say. In fact, I cannot understand why there is a representative for each side on the bench because they do not possess any arbitrary powers whatsoever. The Attorney General may try to disprove it if he can, but I maintain that the provision in the Bill still leaves the President of the court as the sole arbitrator on any question because if the employees' representative said, "I do not agree to this" and the employers' representative opposed him their votes would become null and void and the President of the court would then give his decision. Therefore, the amendment as it reads, is of no value.

We must consider that after the word "court" in line 5 all these other clauses follow and we must have some regard for them. Another point that is distinctly unfair is that where a question is left to the discretion of the court the decision rests purely on the opinion of the presiding judge. There is no appeal against that decision even though the union rules have been examined by the people who drew them up, namely, the members of the trades union concerned, and also by the firm of lawyers retained by the union. They are then submitted to the Registrar and he closely examines them as an expert and as a responsible officer of the court. He may decide that they are well within the terms of the award insofar as they do not conflict. So they are registered, sent back to the union and it administers its business under those rules. Under the provisions of the Bill because of the opinion of a single judge, who has never been a member of a trades union, the rules can be declared null and void. I cannot see any objection to the inclusion of these words and I hope the Attorney General and the members of the Government will agree to them.

Mr. GRAHAM: Can the Attorney General give us one case where a rule has been incorrectly inserted in the con-

stitution of an industrial organisation; where an industrial registrar has not done his job?

The Attorney General: I heard your amendment two minutes ago.

Mr. GRAHAM: The Attorney General has misunderstood me. I am seeking the reason for his amendment. Unless there is evidence to the contrary, we can take it that every industrial organisation has fulfilled the requirements of the Act and has made provision for all those things; that none of the provisions are contrary to the law of the land in respect of the other matters mentioned in the rules of the organisation. Has any fault been found with the scrutiny of the Registrar?

The Attorney General: I have known a union to make the entrance fee so high that it was impossible for a working man to afford it.

Mr. GRAHAM: To which union does the Attorney General refer?

The Attorney General: The carpenters' union.

Mr. GRAHAM: And what was the attitude of the Registrar to that?

The Attorney General: I do not know.

Mr. GRAHAM: The Attorney General agreed that the Registrar is sufficiently vigilant and conscious of his duties, and that he would take the appropriate steps if there was anything that did not conform with the Act.

The Attorney General: I think the amendment is necessary and that is why it is in the Bill.

Mr. GRAHAM: Apparently there has been no necessity for this power all the time we have had the Industrial Arbitration Act. Assuming there is the necessity for it, we then come to the crux of the amendment, namely, the type of authority that should determine the issue. It is a unit of the court that has made a decision; then by a simple majority the court is to over-ride that decision.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the member for East Perth has been over this ground a couple of times before.

Mr. GRAHAM: It is obvious that my remarks have not penetrated the Attorney General.

The CHAIRMAN: Whether or not they have penetrated, the hon. member cannot go over that again and again.

Mr. GRAHAM: If the Attorney General would compromise I would, under protest, agree that a majority decision shall prevail in respect of powers mentioned in paragraphs (a) and (c) which are matters of law. But the provision contained in paragraphs (b) and (c) is purely a matter of opinion which could be given by anybody. Will the Attorney General accept that? I distinctly heard a rattle so he must have shaken his head, indicating the negative. I have done everything to indicate the farcical nature of the provision before us.

Mr. Lawrence: And to see justice done.

Mr. GRAHAM: Exactly. My amendment is quite reasonable in view of the extraordinary powers being granted.

Mr. Lawrence: Not in the opinion of the Attorney General.

Mr. GRAHAM: That is the whole point. It is a question of opinion, not of law or hard fact.

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

Ayes	19
Noes	20
Majority against	1

Ayes.

Mr. Brady	Mr. Moir
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Needham
Mr. Graham	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Read
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Styants
Mr. Lawrence	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. May	Mr. Kelly
Mr. McCulloch	*(Teller.)*

Noes.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. Mann
Mr. Ackland	Mr. Manning
Mr Brand	Mr. McLarty
Dame F. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Doney	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Watts
Mr. Griffith	Mr. Wild
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Yates
Mr. Hill	Mr. Bovell
	(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Hutchinson
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Rodoreda	Mr. Owen
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Totterdell
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. North

Amendment thus negatived.

Mr. BRADY: I move an amendment—

> That after the word "Court" in line 5 of the proposed new Subsection (4f) the following words be inserted:—"after hearing an official of the union."

A statement was made by the Attorney General that some of the unions fix their admission fees too high. If there is any union doing the right thing by its members and the public, it is the carpenters' union, which was mentioned by the Minister. Perhaps its reason for fixing a high figure was to prevent the breaking down of its standards.

The Attorney General: I did not say that that was the fee now. I said that that amount was charged at one time.

Mr. BRADY: Under my amendment, an official of the union would have a right to be heard, and possibly he could make out a good case for charging such a high fee.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: A similar provision has been in the Federal Act since 1928.

Mr. Lawrence: That has nothing to do with the question.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: In the Federal sphere, it has worked well and has had the full approval of Labour Governments for many years. To tinker with this part of the proposed new subsection would be unwise. If we inserted the words here, they would have to be included in many other places, and I do not know what the court would think they meant.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I move an amendment—

That paragraph (d) of the proposed new Subsection (4f) be struck out.

This paragraph provides that the court may disallow any rule if it imposes unreasonable conditions upon the membership of a member or upon an applicant for membership. We have already stipulated that the court may disallow any rule that is contrary to law or to an award, etc. or if a rule is tyrannical or oppressive or hinders members from observing the law or the provisions of an award, etc. Those provisions are wide enough without having this additional drag-net. If the conditions referred to in paragraph (d) were so unreasonable, the court could act under paragraph (b) on the ground that they were tyrannical or oppressive. Under paragraph (d) anything could be stigmatised as unreasonable, and it would be possible to play ducks and drakes with a union and place it in a difficult if not an impossible position. The amendment of the member for Guildford-Midland might well have been accepted.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: This provision has been under the scrutiny of courts and unions since 1928 and I have been unable to find any occasion when any objection has been raised to it. Paragraph (b) could be construed as being oppressive on members of the union, but paragraph (d) deals specifically with persons seeking to join a union. The whole point is to make it clear that the rules must not be unreasonable in so far as they relate to people joining the union. What is the objection of the Leader of the Opposition to the contention that the rules shall be reasonable and that people shall have a reasonable opportunity of joining a union?

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: None at all.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: That is all this says.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: No, it is not.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes, it is. What is the objection?

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: I will tell the Attorney General once more in a moment.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I cannot see that there can be any objection if a rule is unreasonable so far as it relates to a member of a union or to a man who wishes to join a union. The Act has been considered time and again by Labour Governments and this provision has never been cut out. Why change it? It has been found suitable and convenient.

Mr. Lawrence: It has never been in the State Act.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No, but it has been in the Federal Act.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Why blindly follow Canberra?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am not doing so. This has been confirmed time and again by Labour Governments.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The Attorney General tried to overcome the point I made about paragraph (b) being applicable by suggesting that that paragraph would apply only to persons already members of the union.

The Attorney General: I said it might.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: And that it could not be applied to persons applying to become members. A union must have in its rules conditions which are to apply to an applicant for membership and consequently rules covering applications for membership will be covered by paragraph (b).

The Attorney General: They might.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I say they would. There is no differentiation at all about the kind of rules. The preamble to these paragraphs is all-inclusive, covering every rule of any particular union and every one of the rules is subject to disallowance by the court if, in its opinion, those rules are of a kind set out in the paragraph.

The Attorney General: Are oppressive! Why do you object to an unreasonable rule being deleted?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I am not objecting to an unreasonable rule being deleted. I am objecting to the unlimited nature of the word "unreasonable." I am saying that neither the Attorney General nor I nor anyone else can place any limitation upon the court's interpretation of what would come under the word "unreasonable." The employer's representative and the President together could hold to be unreasonable all kinds of rules that the average person would regard as being quite reasonable and necessary for the proper management and existence of an industrial union. I do not think we should give the court unlimited discretion of that kind. Let us give the court power to disallow union rules on a clear-cut basis.

The use of the word "oppressive" in paragraph (b) would meet any situation that the Attorney General could conjure up as being an unreasonable condition of membership or an unreasonable rule touching upon any application by a person for membership in a union, and the Attorney General should be thoroughly satisfied with the use of the word "oppressive" in a prior paragraph. In addition, the Attorney General should be very satisfied with the attitude of members on this side to the provision as a whole. I should think he would be pleasantly surprised up to date at our attitude in that connection. We are approving the provision in principle. All we content ourselves with doing is to ask him to be reasonable, if I might use that word, about the powers which are to be given to the court as a basis for the disallowance of union rules. I challenge the Attorney General to indicate a situation which could arise in regard to the imposition of unreasonable conditions upon a member of a union or upon an applicant for membership which could not be dealt with under paragraph (b).

The Attorney General: What is the objection to it?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The objection is that the use of the word "oppressive" imposes upon the court or a majority of the court an obligation to satisfy themselves that the rule under consideration is indeed oppressive and not merely unreasonable, and a rule might be held to be unreasonable where it could not be held to be oppressive.

The Attorney General: I agree.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Then why have this drag-net paragraph (d)? Why give the court absolutely unlimited discretion to destroy the rules of a union?

The Attorney General: This does not do that. Surely you do not want an unreasonable rule registered!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: If the Attorney General could tell me what an unreasonable rule is I might agree, but he cannot do it.

The Attorney General: You asked me to be reasonable just now. You must have known what you were talking about.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I did, but I had no hope of my appeal being accepted or acted upon by the Attorney General, because he has not the slightest conception of how to be reasonable in regard to this Bill. The Opposition has met him with regard to the principle in the clause and has asked for some comparatively minor amendments, but the Attorney General, following some pre-determined attitude or policy of himself and the Government towards the Bill, says "No, no, no, no." That is all he can say. The Attorney General's attitude is only making it more necessary for members of the Opposition to fight all the more strenuously to obtain what after all are very small concessions particularly in connection with this clause. I think the Attorney General's attitude is bordering on the childish. It is certainly most obstructive to winning any substantial degree of progress in connection with the course of this Bill through the Committee stage. If the Attorney General is digging his toes in and saying the Government will not agree to any amendment from the Opposition, no matter how mild—

The Attorney General: I am not saying that.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: —then he is looking for bother, and will have no justification for complaint if it comes along. The deletion of this paragraph will not deprive the court of any legitimate power it should have, but it will take out of the Bill a provision which would give to the majority of the court unlimited discretion to disallow any rule. This is a harsh proposition to include in an Act of Parliament in this State. The only justification the Attorney General can give for its inclusion is that it has been in the Federal Act for years.

Does he want to establish in Western Australia the same relationships between unions and the court as exist in the Federal sphere? I hope not. Therefore, his attempt to argue that the paragraph has merit because it has been in the Federal Act for years has not much point. I would like the Minister to display some measure of co-operation with the Opposition on the Bill. Neither he nor the court loses anything if the paragraph goes out because paragraph (b) will still remain and it is unlimited, but it does place an obligation on the court to make sure that a rule is so unreasonable, if I may use the term, that it ought in the interests of all concerned to be disallowed.

Mr. MOIR: I would like to ask the Attorney General whether he holds the belief that the various registrars of the State Arbitration Court, both past and present, have registered unreasonable rules. He evidently does not know. The principal Act provides, by Section 9, how rules shall be registered. I challenge the Attorney General to tell me one unreasonable rule that has been registered under the Act. What is reasonable or unreasonable is purely a matter of opinion. There may be people sitting on the court who might say that the membership fee of a union was unreasonable so that it would be possible for the court to cripple a union in regard to the way in which it could carry out its functions. There is no appeal. There is no need to have a clause like this in the Bill. Sufficient protection exists in the Act to ensure that no unreasonable rules are registered. If the Attorney General says there is necessity for this provision, he is saying that the registrars of the court in the past have

allowed unreasonable rules to be registered. I ask him to agree to the deletion of this paragraph.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I ask the Attorney General to be "dinkum" about this and tell us just what is behind it. It appears to be designed specifically to tackle the unions that demand a certain standing from those who make application to be members, as regards their past industrial careers. I refer to the unions with closed books, that one cannot simply join on paying the necessary fee. This provision is another attempt by the Attorney General and his fellow Ministers to interfere with the administrative side of the trade unions. The Attorney General says this provision has been contained in the Federal legislation since 1928, but that on referring to his text books he can find no case dealing with this question before the courts in Western Australia. Why then should he introduce this provision now? He is again wrong when he says he can find no reference to any prosecution laid against trade unions on the application of certain people.

Two men, Slade and Hawkins, proceeded against the Fremantle branch of the Waterside Workers' Federation because they had been dismissed from the union and had their registration cancelled. The Supreme Court awarded them each £1,000 damages against the union. It must be apparent, therefore, that there is no need for the inclusion of this provision in the Bill. The Attorney General should have made sure of his facts so that he could give the Committee the correct legal interpretation of the various clauses of the measure whereas, in fact, he has on a number of occasions been proved to be wrong.

A union is formed only to protect the interests of its members, so surely the Attorney General realises that the administrative constitution of a union must be all it should be. What would be the attitude of the Liberal Party if the Leader of the Opposition applied for membership?

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: They would grab him.

Mr. LAWRENCE: He could not believe in their platform.

The Attorney General: We would have him because we think he would be pretty good.

Mr. LAWRENCE: If he applied and could not agree on some minor point of the constitution of that party and was refused membership would he not have the same right under the Bill, as has any person who tries to join the Waterside Workers' Union, to go to the court and demand admission to the party? If this provision is agreed to the unions will object strongly and no court in the country is going to tell us whom we are to admit to membership. I do not believe the court wants that power. Is it thought we should admit to membership a past president of the Employers' Federation?

The Minister for Lands: Why not, if he were out of work?

Mr. LAWRENCE: I am surprised that a Minister who claims that he worked on the Fremantle waterfront and knows all about it has the temerity to suggest such a thing. Before I sit down I want to know to what this question of "unreasonable conditions upon the membership of a union" refers.

The Minister for Education: If you sat down perhaps somebody could tell you, but not otherwise.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The Attorney General has not told us.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I do not know what the Minister for Education means.

The Minister for Education: I think the Attorney General would be entirely disorderly if he rose at the same time as you were speaking. You said that you would not sit down until you knew.

Mr. LAWRENCE: That is the first time, since the Bill was introduced, that any member of the Government has offered to get up and explain it. The Attorney General has refused time and again and he just sits there like a mute and says nothing. The Minister for Education will have ample time to explain this after I sit down. Government members sitting in the back benches have not been present in the Chamber while the Bill has been discussed; yet they are prepared to come in and vote on questions when they know nothing about them. If that is not unreasonable I do not know what is.

The Bill states that it is at the discretion of the President of the court to say whether something is reasonable or not. I now want to refer to the Waterside Workers' Federation which is one of the unions at which this measure is aimed. The Waterside Workers' Federation is registered with the State Arbitration Court and the organisation is what is known as a closed union; we have certain administrative clauses in our rules quite different from those of other organisations. A person can join the Shop Assistant's Union by paying £1 a year and that person is covered by the union. In the Waterside Workers' Federation one pays £13 or £14 union dues in the first year. Would the Attorney General say that that was oppressive or unreasonable? He will not answer that question. We also demand that our members pay 3d. in the £ on their earnings and I do not know of any other organisation that demands such payments. So under this legislation the court could say, upon the application of a disgruntled person who could not obtain membership, that that was unreasonable.

If a member misconducts himself or breaks a union rule we can cancel his registration—that is, we can deny him the right to work in any port in Australia. During my term as an executive officer of the union it was my sad duty on several occasions to fine men up to £50. Perhaps if those men went to the court, the court would say it was unreasonable, oppressive or tyrannical. Whoever thought of putting the word "tyrannical" into an Arbitration Act? On many occasions our members have been fined varying amounts for what might appear to be frivolous offences, but they are not frivolous so far as the union is concerned. If one of those persons applied to the court, or the court heard of it and on its own motion inquired into the matter, it could be said that was unreasonable.

The Minister for Works: I think they would be right, too.

Mr. LAWRENCE: That is what I wanted the Minister to say because the court, if it said the rule was unreasonable, would declare it void. If that were done we would not have the power to fine or suspend our members and in those circumstances how could we maintain discipline and control over our waterside workers? The Australian Stevedoring Industry Board has handed over to us the right to discipline our own members. Therefore nobody could say that it was unreasonable because it is in the interests of industry and of decent members of the trade union. If Government members say that the fine is unreasonable, what about some of the penalties in the Bill? A man can be fined £100 and £10 for every day the offence continues. We ought to be able to apply to the court to have the legislation declared unreasonable, oppressive and tyrannical, and thus have it cancelled.

I remind the Minister for Works that the Registrar has already passed these rules but under this Bill the President, of his own motion, could say, "Well, they are unreasonable," simply because somebody has lost his membership or been fined £10 by the union.

The Minister for Works: The President would not say it without some good reason.

Mr. LAWRENCE: During my term of office members have been expelled and some of them would be only too glad to be able to apply to the court. If the court decided that they should go back and work with some of the men down there, they would refuse to do so because it would be purely an administrative matter. There is no need for the court to interfere in such affairs. There is another angle to this. If, say, a union supports a member of the A.L.P. at a forthcoming election and wishes to make a levy of a shilling on each member in order to build up a pool of money to help fight the election, would the court say that such action was unreasonable, tyrannical or oppressive? Of course it would! It would say that it was unreasonable to place a political levy on the members. It would certainly be unreasonable if one of the wharfies, who had been levied to vote for the Labour candidate, voted for the Liberal candidate, but if the members as a whole were prepared to pay the levy, why should the court be given power to meddle in the union's own private affairs?

Such a provision does not apply to any other person or organisation except the trade unions. With no appeal against a decision such as this, a fine old situation will be created. That is why we should insert certain words after the word "Court" in line 5 of proposed new Subsection (4f). The words "tyrannical or oppressive" in paragraph (b) of this proposed new subsection could be said to be unreasonable by anybody, including either the court or the person making the application. The meaning of "oppressive" is quite clear in the dictionary, so why put this additional clause into the legislation? If the reason given by the Attorney General is the true one, there is no need for this amendment.

The amendment also imposes unreasonable conditions upon an applicant for membership. Surely any organisation, whether it be a tennis club, football club, the Labour Party, the Liberal Party, the Catholic church, the Protestant church or a trade union has the undeniable right to accept or reject members. That perogative is recognised in all walks of life. Yet here the Attorney General desires that the court shall have the right to say who shall be admitted to membership. What is to stop the Employers' Federation putting a stooge into a trade union to white-ant it? That practice has been followed on many occasions in the Eastern States where the Act, which the Attorney General has lauded, is in operation. It is particularly prevalent in Victoria and advantage has been taken of it by men such as John Wren.

I am sorry that these things are not known to the members of the Government. They have not studied the history of unionism. They have not been members of a trade union and do not know how they operate. I am sure the Attorney General does not know; otherwise he would not interfere in these things. At this stage I will read to the Committee extracts from the constitution and rules of the Waterside Workers' Federation of Australia relating to admission to membership. They are as follows:—

> (a) Any male who intends to follow the occupation of waterside worker who is of respectable character and of the age of at least twenty years and not exceeding 45 years and who is reasonably competent to perform the duties of a waterside worker and

who agrees that whilst a member he will follow the above occupation may become a member and be enrolled as such in any branch of the Organisation throughout the Commonwealth, subject to the following provisions:—

(i) Any eligible person being a candidate for membership of the Federation shall make written application to the Secretary of the Branch in which he wishes to be enrolled. He shall then sign an agreement on the prescribed form, binding himself that if and when accepted to membership he will, unless excused by the Branch Committee of Management, do all classes of waterfront work offered to him and he shall pay the sum of three pounds (£3) initiation fee. Such application for membership shall then be considered by the Branch Committee of Management which body will then make a recommendation to the members of the Branch for acceptance or otherwise of the application. The applicant shall be notified by the Branch Secretary to attend a subsequent meeting of the Branch, at a place of which he shall be informed, and the majority of financial members assembled at such meeting shall decide the question of his admission or otherwise. If the applicant is not admitted the initiation fee paid by him will be returned forthwith.

(ii) If the decision of the members is in favour of the applicant being admitted he shall then pay to the Branch Secretary the sum of two pounds (£2) with current levies or such other annual contributions as may have been fixed pursuant to the rules of the Organisation.

(iii) The Branch Secretary shall then transmit the applicant's name, together with a duplicate of the prescribed form which he signed on making application for membership, together with a registration fee of twenty shillings (20s.) to the General Secretary of the Organisation giving the date of the applicant's admission and thereupon such person shall be a member of the Organisation and of the Branch in which he is enrolled.

(b) Employers of labour shall not be eligible for membership.

(c) The prescribed form referred to in subclause (a) (i) hereof (and valid only when issued by a Branch Secretary of the Organisation) shall be as follows:—

Then follows the form which the applicant must fill in, which reads——

Waterside Workers' Federation of Australia.

Port of.....

I..... of .....
do hereby make application for admission to membership of the Waterside Workers' Federation of Australia, and to be enrolled as a member of the..... Branch.
My age is..... years.
I am a fit and proper person to be admitted in accordance with the provisions of the rules of the said Federation, a copy of which I have read. I declare that I am competent to perform the duties of Waterside Worker and I do hereby agree if and when admitted to membership that I am capable of doing any class of waterside work with the exception of..... and that I will accept and carry out any class of work to which I am ordered except that previously referred to herein or unless excused in accordance with the rule of the federation by the Branch Executive. I also undertake that I will faithfully observe and otherwise assist to carry out the rules of the Waterside Workers' Federation of Australia and of its branches.

Then he must sign this. Would the Minister consider this unreasonable? When a person wishes to become a member he must be nominated and seconded by two financial members of that branch; they must sign his nomination paper. His papers are then placed before the committee and he fronts the general management committee. He has to produce his birth certificate and his Army, Navy or Air Force discharge, if any. He may be asked any question by any member of the management committee which they may think relevant. The first question is as to his age; he has to produce a birth certificate and state what age he was when he left school.

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

Mr. LAWRENCE: I bring these points forward because, as pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition and myself, the words "tyrannical or oppressive" in paragraph (b) definitely cover the word "unreasonable" in paragraph (d). The Attorney General does not agree and I must bring evidence to show how the word "unreasonable" can be misconstrued. As I said before, the union to which I referred is a closed union, and the second part of the clause is definitely designed to have some control over that union.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot allow the hon. member to quote the rules of every union that operates in Australia under this amendment.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I have quoted the rules of only one union and am giving the Attorney General a concrete example of a union that this amendment will cover.

The Attorney General: It covers your union because you are a Federal union.

Mr. LAWRENCE: We are registered with the State Arbitration Court.

The Attorney General: You are also registered as a Federal union.

Mr. LAWRENCE: What difference does it make? We are registered with the State Arbitration Court whose rules have been accepted by the Registrar. My proposition is therefore a fair one. Will you permit me to continue, Mr. Chairman?

The CHAIRMAN: I will rule the hon. member out of order if he is out of order; that is a better way to it.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I have not been ruled out of order?

The CHAIRMAN: Not if the member speaks to the particular clause, as to why paragraph (d) should be struck out from the Bill.

Mr. LAWRENCE: I am trying to show that this case has reference to a union which can be affected by paragraph (d). It is unreasonable.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must limit his remarks to that particular clause.

Mr. LAWRENCE: It is rather a long story and I cannot get to the point immediately. When questioning an applicant for membership, if we feel that he is not taking advantage of being in a trade union where this was possible, we refuse to accept him as a member. That is the reason why the Waterside Workers' Federation has grown into a very strong union. That is how I want to link this up. If that went to the court the court would declare it unreasonable. It is not unreasonable and we demand the right to select our own members. If there is an applicant for membership and we find that he was a tradesman, even though he was not earning as much as a wharfie, and we refused to have him, and thus limited his earning from £14 as a waterfront worker to only £13, that would be unreasonable because we would be limiting his income. It does not allow a man any advancement. The court can say, "You shall take this man." That would be most undesirable for any union. The court should not be empowered to interfere with the internal affairs of a union, as would be possible under this paragraph.

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

Ayes	20
Noes	21
Majority against	1

Ayes.

Mr. Brady	Mr. McCulloch
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Moir
Mr. Graham	Mr. Needham
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Read
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Styants
Mr. Lawrence	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. May	Mr. Kelly

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Ackland	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Brand	Mr. Nimmo
Dame F. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. North
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Doney	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Watts
Mr. Griffith	Mr. Wild
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Yates
Mr. Hill	Mr. Bovell
Mr. Manning	

(Teller.)

Pair.

Ayes.	Noes
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Hutchinson
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Mann
Mr. Rodoreda	Mr. Owen
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Totterdell

Amendment thus negatived.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I move an amendment—

> That in the last line of the clause the word "Fifty" be struck out and the word "Twenty-five" inserted in lieu.

I desire to reduce the penalty by 50 per cent., which is a sufficiently high maximum for any offence that might be committed under this clause.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The penalty of £50 is not unreasonable. It relates to serious matters, and a similar penalty has been provided in other Acts. However, I do not wish members to think that I am not amenable to some co-operation—I always am, wherever possible. I shall be stretching my conscience, but, under the persuasive influence of the Leader of the Opposition, I accept the amendment.

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

Clause 5—Section 12 amended:

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: In Section 16 of the Act, the term "trade union" is used and, for drafting purposes, it is necessary to insert those words in this clause. I move an amendment—

> That after the word "union" in line 6 of the proposed new Subsection (3) the words "or a trade union" be inserted.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. BRADY: I move an amendment—

> That in line 8 of the proposed new Subsection (3) the word "President's" be struck out and the word "Court's" inserted in lieu.

Under the Bill, the appeal would be from Caesar to Caesar, because a union that had been deregistered could not be re-

registered without the consent of the President. The President might have been upset by the advocate for the union and should not alone have the right to determine whether a union should be re-registered. It should be a matter for the court. On one occasion, the President of the court reproved a union secretary for having made certain statements. Unfortunately I had the temerity to question the soundness of the President's statements, and because of that I was subsequently arraigned before him and severely chastised. If I had been before the court next day the President would have deregistered my union for contempt of court. The appeal should not be from Caesar to Caesar but some independent body, such as the court, should make a determination.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The whole conception of the measure in this connection is based on the President's having discretion as to whether a union shall be registered or not. Section 22 gives the final decision to the President, and we cannot have a reference to the President in the one place and to the court in another. The Act was brought in by a Labour Minister and he gave the jurisdiction to the President.

Mr. BRADY: To view this in its right perspective we must have regard to how the court and the President are appointed. The President is not appointed by the unions or employers, but by the Government, and the Government could be a party to a dispute in which the union was deregistered. Subsequently the union applies for registration and the President is to be given the right to say whether it should be deregistered or not. In such case the President is not in an independent position, but is more or less prejudiced. The whole thing is loaded against the workers right through. Imagine the metal trades unions going back to the President who deregistered them and asking for re-registration!

The whole court should be given authority to decide such a matter, because the President would still be prejudiced. Some people who are put in these positions often get very high-brow ideas of their standing and what they are allowed to do, and I do not think any union should be prejudiced in this way. The metal trades unions are suffering in this dispute because Mr. Justice Jackson had them deregistered, a colossal error. The first big mistake was made by the President because he was prejudiced and acted very quickly when he should have tried to reason the matter out. If it had been Mr. President Dwyer or Mr. President Dunphy, neither would have run into this business.

Mr. MOIR: Clause 5 of this Bill and Section 22 of the Act have no relation to each other. The two are entirely different, and the Attorney General's remarks are completely misleading to those who do not know the circumstances and have not the Act before them. As a member of this Committee, I object to that sort of thing. The Attorney General should make himself acquainted with his Bill and also the principal Act before he gets up to tell members of this Chamber things like that. Our objection to this provision is that one person does a certain thing and there is no appeal to anybody except that person. Many of our laws provide for appeals, and I can see no objection to this being agreed to.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.31 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 14th August, 1952.

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