

# Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 19th August, 1952.

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

## QUESTIONS.

### HOUSING.

(a) *As to Austrian Pre-fab Homes, Willagee Park.*

Hon. J. T. TONKIN asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) What was the name of the firm which supplied the Austrian pre-fab houses which have been erected at Willagee Park?

(2) Was the purchase arranged by direct negotiation with the firm, or through agents?

(3) What are the names of any agents concerned in the deal?

(4) Upon what basis was the firm of Sandwell and Wood given the contract for the erection of the Austrian pre-fabricated houses at Willagee Park?

(5) Of the estimated cost of erecting these houses of £2,593 each, what is the estimated cost of each of the following items:—

- (a) Tiles.
- (b) Plasterboard.
- (c) Electric wiring, etc.
- (d) Painting?

(6) What was the average length of time required for the erection of each of the 49 houses which were completed and occupied up to the 5th August?

(7) What was the longest period of time taken for the erection of any house?

(8) What was the shortest period of time taken for the erection of any house?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Thermo-Insulated Units Ltd., of London.

(2) By direct negotiation with the firm following receipt of tenders.

(3) A. E. Turner & John Coates Ltd., of London, inspecting agents for the State Housing Commission.

(4) The basis of the contract with Sandwell and Wood is to take delivery of and store imported materials. To supply other materials from local sources and to erect completely on site.

(5) The costs estimated by the contractor for these items are not available to the Commission. The price submitted was an overall figure.

(6) 5.2 months.

(7) 6½ months.

(8) 3½ months.

In regard to the answers to (6), (7) and (8), these times are no guide to the rates of erection of these 49 houses, since preparatory work on a large scale, such as erection of chimneys and foundations, has been completed and is proceeding in advance of the other construction work.

(b) *As to Evictions and Accommodation for Two-Unit Families.*

Hon. J. T. TONKIN asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) How many two-unit families have been evicted following Court orders since July, 1951?

(2) How many of such two-unit families have been provided with accommodation by the State Housing Commission since July, 1951?

(3) How many two-unit families who have been evicted were provided with accommodation by the State Housing Commission during each month of this year?

(4) How many families against whom warrants for ejection have been executed since July, 1951, have not been provided with accommodation by the State Housing Commission?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Information not available to State Housing Commission.

(2) Statistics showing the size of families provided with accommodation were not kept prior to 1/7/52.

(3) Statistics were not kept prior to 1/7/52 relating to size of families. Information could only be obtained by perusal of individual files of all evictees.

(4) Forty-seven families have not been provided with accommodation by the State Housing Commission. This figure includes 15 who declined to accept the accommodation offered by the State Housing Commission and 20 who did not apply for accommodation.

*(c) As to Funds for Building in Country Areas.*

Mr. HOAR asked the Minister for Housing:

Referring to the erection of purchase homes in country districts by the State Housing Commission—

- (1) What is the origin of the money used by the Commission for the erection of these houses?
- (2) What interest does the Commission pay for the use of this money?
- (3) What interest does the Commission charge the home owner in respect of this money?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Commonwealth Government Loan Funds made available through State Treasury.

(2) Prior to the 25th July, 1952—3½ per cent. Since that date—4 per cent.

(3) Prior to the 25th July, 1952—4½ per cent. Since that date—5 per cent.

**UNEMPLOYMENT.**

*(a) As to Government Employees Dismissed and Under Notice.*

Mr. LAWRENCE asked the Premier:

(1) How many employees of the Government have been sacked or given notice of dismissal in the past four weeks?

(2) Will he tell us the figures of Government employees sacked or under notice by each Government Department?

(3) Does the Government propose to sack any more of its employees; if so, what is the complete estimate of the proposed sackings?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) and (2) Retrenchments from the 1st July to date are as follows:—

Metropolitan Water Supply	....	32
Public Works Department	....	308
State Electricity Commission	....	117
Electricity and Gas	....	6
Forests	....	36
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No further men are under notice of dismissal.

(3) Until the Government knows the extent to which it is possible to defer contracts and also the exact amount of loan money available from all sources, including the possible State Electricity Commission Loan, it is not possible to answer this question. Every effort will be made to keep retrenchments to an absolute minimum. Special representations have been made to the Commonwealth Government to assist with finance for work associated with food production.

*(b) As to Government Retrenchments.*

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Premier:

(1) How many men were retrenched from Government employment during the month of July?

(2) How many men have been retrenched by the Government this month up to Saturday last?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) One hundred and thirty-seven.

(2) Two hundred and ninety-four.

**BUNBURY HARBOUR.**

*As to Closing of Leschenault Estuary and Silting.*

Mr. GUTHRIE asked the Minister for Works:

Will he inform the House—

(1) What degree of infection with the dreaded *Bacillus Coli* has been reached in the Leschenault estuary following the closing of the outlet to the harbour?

(2) What steps are being taken to remedy this threat to public health caused by the stagnant water?

(3) Is it true that very considerable siltage is taking place at the new cut at Turkey Point?

(4) If so, what effect will both of these results have on the development of Bunbury harbour, particularly as work is ceasing at the moment?

The PREMIER (for The Minister for Works) replied:

(1) No tests of the Leschenault Estuary have yet been taken. Arrangements are in hand for tests to be taken, commencing this month, at approximately monthly intervals.

(2) Until the results of testing are to hand indicating the degree of pollution, no remedial action is being taken.

(3) As was expected, considerable changes have taken place in the shape of the ocean cut at Turkey Point since first opened. A bar has formed at the sea entrance and physical changes are being observed. It is considered that a static condition has not yet been reached.

(4) It is considered that the ocean cut will have no detrimental effect on work which has been performed to date as part of port development.

Slowing down of activities by virtue of loan cuts does not affect the position.

**PRICE CONTROL.**

*As to Potatoes and Handling Costs.*

Mr. BRADY asked the Attorney General:

(1) Is it a fact that the Prices Commissioner has allowed an increase in the price of potatoes to cover extra cost involved in road transport charges?

(2) If the answer is in the affirmative, will he say whether savings in handling costs to and from railways have been offset against road transport costs?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes. The increase granted of 15s. per ton did not cover any costs other than the net increase incurred by the use of road transport in lieu of rail transport from grower's siding to market.

#### PRINCESS MARGARET CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL.

##### *As to Doctor's Trip Abroad and Resignation.*

Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Health:

(1) Is it a fact that a doctor on the staff of the Children's Hospital recently paid a visit to England for further studies at the State's expense, and, since returning, has resigned to take up a position out of Australia?

(2) If the answer is in the affirmative, will she take steps to see that there is no repetition of such practices?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Such an arrangement was made by the Board of Management of the Princess Margaret Hospital.

(2) I am not clear what the hon. member means by "such practices." The doctor in question returned to the hospital for seven months and made an extensive report to the board on what he observed on his travels. The amount advanced by the Hospital for expenses was £376 10s.

#### ELECTRIC PETROL BOWSERS.

##### *As to Installation.*

Mr. STYANTS asked the Minister for Police:

(1) Is he aware that a large number of electrically operated petrol bowsers are in this State, and that his department has prevented their installation?

(2) Is it correct that these bowsers conform to the specifications of electrically-operated petrol bowsers, which are used in hundreds throughout Eastern Australia?

(3) What are the reasons prompting his department in prohibiting their installation in this State?

(4) Have complaints been received from motorists in Eastern Australia regarding any malpractices that it is alleged can be indulged in with these machines?

(5) As this question has been under his notice for about six months, has he decided what final action is to be taken in the matter?

The MINISTER replied:

(1), (2), (3), (4) and (5) I am aware that there is a large number of new electrically-operated bowsers in this State,

which were brought here for the purpose of installation. I understand that these bowsers conformed to specifications of electrically-operated bowsers used in the Eastern States. This type of bower was investigated by the Weights and Measures Branch and some defects in the efficiency of the bowsers were discovered, inasmuch as it was possible, by manipulation, that the bower might not show the correct amount of petrol supplied to a customer. Further investigations conducted by the Weights and Measures Branch with a view to overcoming the faults disclosed were successful, so that minor modifications will give increased efficiency. This matter is now being taken up with the owners of the pumps with a view to a satisfactory arrangement being come to for their use.

#### MINING.

##### *As to Efficacy of Aluminium Therapy Treatment.*

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

(1) Has any investigation been carried out to ascertain the effect of "aluminium therapy" treatment on goldminers in this State?

(2) Has he seen the report from the Third International Conference of Experts on Pneumoconiosis, held from the 28th February to the 10th March, 1950, in Sydney, and published in the "Medical Journal of Australia," Volume 1 of 1950, which seriously doubts the beneficial effect of this treatment, and that in some instances, "aluminium therapy" treatment might have harmful effects on human beings?

(3) Has he seen an article entitled "Effects of Aluminium Dust on the Animal Organism" in the "British Journal of Industrial Medicine" dated the 8th November, No. 2, April, 1951, in which similar doubts and fears are expressed?

(4) In view of these and other similar expert opinions, will he have an investigation commenced at an early date to ascertain whether the treatment is proving beneficial and protective to those men working in the goldmining industry, particularly those who had not already contracted silicosis when this treatment was commenced in the goldmines of Western Australia?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING replied:

(1) All miners receiving aluminium treatment are examined every year by the medical officer at the Kalgoorlie Health Laboratory. A special note is placed on the card of each miner who is receiving treatment. The development of silicosis to the stage where it can be detected takes several years. No conclusion regarding the value of the treatment in assisting silicosis among our miners can yet be formed. A separate set of records to show the progress of silicosis in those receiving

treatment has been arranged. No case of sickness or ill-health resulting from the inhalation of aluminium powder is known to our medical officers.

(2) The report has been seen. The Mines Department had two observers in Dr. Outhred and Mr. Brisbane at the Conference. Dr. Outhred subsequently advised that, "The position is still open as regards the prophylactic use of aluminium dust in men, there being no conclusive reports available yet that this preventive treatment has been effective in reducing the incidence of silicosis and no reports that it has been found ineffective or harmful in men. Nevertheless there is evidence in discussions at the Conference and in overseas journals I have since received, that the experiments in the prophylactic use of aluminium are being carried out in the United Kingdom, as well as in Canada and America, and as the animal experiments have repeatedly been convincing, I can see no reason why the Western Australian Government should not proceed with its plans for introducing this treatment in the manner recommended by Dr. George." He further advised that the reference in the report to the inhalation of aluminium in industrial processes being occasionally harmful has to do with processes of manufacture of aluminium powder for use in paints and so on, where the aluminium is coated with stearin, is in the form of flakes and retains its metallic colour. In other words, he said, it is an entirely different substance to that used for aluminium prophylaxis.

Mr. Brisbane concurred with Dr. Outhred and also stated that there was no member of the conference who was prepared to say that the use of aluminium would not arrest the onset of silicosis.

(3) Yes. The article refers to harmful effects produced in animals by aluminium dust but the conditions of the experiments were very different from treatment as administered to miners.

Aluminium therapy under the McIntyre process has been in operation in Canada for many years and no case of sickness or ill-health has been discovered except in rare instances where some other condition may render a person sensitive to aluminium dust. The annual report of the McIntyre Research Foundation, which shows the widespread use of the process in Canada, America and Mexico, is attached.

(4) Answered by (1) above.

## RENTS AND TENANCIES EMERGENCY PROVISIONS ACT.

### *As to Continuance.*

Mr. GRAHAM (without notice) asked the Chief Secretary:

In view of the apprehension on the part of tenants of both dwelling-houses and business premises, will he indicate

whether it is the intention of the Government to introduce a measure this session for the continuance of the rents and tenancies legislation?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:  
Yes.

## BILL—OATS MARKETING.

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 13th August.

HON. J. T. TONKIN (Melville) [4.421: The purpose of this Bill is to establish a compulsory pool for the marketing of oats. The subject is of wide interest in this State. For some months past considerable discussion and disputation have taken place in various parts of the State as to whether this compulsory oat pool should be established or not, and quite a number of letters have been written to the newspapers on the subject, some in favour of its establishment and some opposed to it. The sponsor of the Bill, as is well known, is the member for Moore. There is nobody who would doubt his obvious sincerity in this matter, for if ever a man could be said to be obsessed with an idea, the hon. member is obsessed with this one because he believes and conscientiously believes, that it is the only thing possible in the interests of the grower.

The hon. member is to be complimented on his assiduity and zeal in the cause. If he sees it in the wrong light, as I believe he does, that is not his fault. I admire his earnestness and the way he persisted in his endeavour to bring the proposed legislation before this House. But what of the Government, Mr. Speaker? Surely there is a responsibility upon the Government of a State to give an indication as to what it feels about legislation, which can have a serious effect one way or another upon a part of the economic life of the State. Has the Government any opinion on this question, as a Government?

Mr. Graham: It has two opinions; that is the trouble.

HON. J. T. TONKIN: Surely it ought to have an opinion about a matter of this importance and magnitude. Has it any ideas at all on the subject? In a question such as this the House could be assisted to arrive at the right decision if it were made aware of any ideas or views held by the Government. It is a most remarkable state of affairs when a proposal like this is before Parliament, and the Government, as a Government, remains dumb concerning it. The other evening we did believe, for a short time, that the Government, as a Government, was going to have something to say because the Minister for Lands, as was to be expected, secured the adjournment of the debate. But it was not to be. The Minister balked at it when it came to the time for him to proceed and he

handed on his right to somebody else. So far he has remained silent; so has every other Minister. I consider that to be not only not right, but an indefensible attitude for the Government to adopt.

Even if there is no unanimity in the Cabinet, there must be a majority opinion. We have had other questions and other matters upon which there was no unanimity in the Cabinet, but decisions were made. We understand there was no unanimity in the Cabinet on the question of the hanging of Tapci, but Tapci was hanged, because the Government made a decision even though we were led to believe, it was not a unanimous one. In most subjects a majority opinion in Cabinet is taken; one does not always get 100 per cent. support for a proposed line of action. The majority principle rules and a majority of Cabinet decides the policy to be adopted, and so it must always be.

Was there no majority opinion in the Government on this subject, or has it no ideas on the subject at all? This is not some trifling matter which is brought forward at the whim of a private member only to be allowed to expend itself against the walls of the Chamber, and then to disappear as something in the forgotten. This is a matter of vital importance to many interests one way and another. Yet so far we have had no lead at all from the Government of the State; no suggestion that it has any intention of entering the debate. The proposal in the Bill could have a very considerable effect on a portion of the State's economy. Who is responsible to see that an adequate quantity of oats remains in the State if this legislation becomes law?

Mr. Perkins: A prudent man would buy what he considered necessary.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Suppose circumstances changed; suppose the prudent man bought what he considered necessary, and the season turned out to be particularly bad and he found that he had only half enough, although he had bought a substantial quantity, how would he get on then?

Mr. Perkins: What happens with all the other commodities?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: How would he get on if, meanwhile, all the available oats had been shipped oversea. Whose responsibility is it to ensure that the State's requirements are adequately safeguarded? We have had this trouble before with other commodities. It is somebody's responsibility to give attention to the matter. For example, we look to the Potato Marketing Board to provide the potatoes required by the people, the Dairy Products Marketing Board to provide the butter required by the people and so on, but, under this Bill, whose responsibility is it to ensure that the requirements of the consumers in this State will be safeguarded?

The Government could not care less. There is nothing in the Bill to make it the responsibility of any Minister, board or person, and yet we have not a word from the Government as to whether the legislation is considered to be good or bad, not a suggestion of any intention of doing anything to safeguard the position. In my view the Government's attitude to this question is inexcusable. We have had an indication from the Minister for Lands as to what he thought a few months ago. What we do not know is whether he has changed his mind in the interim.

However, circumstances arose a few months ago that caused the Minister for Lands to commit himself to a degree, perhaps unwittingly, but nevertheless he did so. He ought to tell the House whether he holds the same opinion as he did in March last or whether he has changed it. If there is no chance of getting a concerted opinion in the Cabinet, the Premier ought to indicate what his section of the Cabinet thinks and the Deputy Premier ought to indicate what his followers think. We are entitled, on a matter of such importance, to have a lead from the Government.

The Premier: This is a private member's Bill.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Premier cannot get out of it that way.

The Premier: We shall see.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: When Labour was in office, the present Senator Seward, who was then a private member in this House, introduced a Bill for the marketing of hay. We did not treat it as a private member's Bill or refuse to give an indication of what the Government thought of it. On behalf of the Government, I opposed that Bill and attacked it, and that was the end of it. I mention this to contrast the conduct of the previous Government, which had a mind and an opinion of its own and was not afraid to express it, with the attitude of the present Government which, so far as we know, has no ideas or opinions on the subject. Alternatively, if it has any ideas or opinions, it has not the backbone to express them. It must be one thing or the other. To try to hide behind the statement that it is a private member's Bill and therefore the Government need not give a lead is too childish.

Mr. Totterdell: Why abuse the Government?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Does not the hon. member think the Government deserves it?

Mr. Totterdell: No.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Well, I do. All we have to go on so far is what the Minister for Lands thought in March last. I can only deal with the opinions that have been expressed. On the 13th March, the member for Maylands asked a series of questions, which will be found in "Hansard" Volume No. 3, at page 1973. I do not propose to read all the questions and answers—members may do that for themselves—but

I intend to read those that emphasise the point with which I have been dealing. The first question was—

- (1) Is he aware of a move to form a compulsory pool for the handling of oats?

The Minister for Lands replied, "Yes." Thus the Minister was aware of this move in March. Question No. 3 was as follows:—

Is he further aware that a few dirty samples could ruin the entire crop of any certain district by being stored in the local bulk bin with sound quality grains?

The Minister replied—

An Act would prevent such practices far better than at present.

There is a suggestion that the Minister favoured legislation. Instead of agreeing with the point of view expressed by the member for Maylands in his question, the Minister made reference to an Act, for a compulsory pool, of course, and said that it "would prevent such practices far better than at present." If that is true, it is a good argument in favour of the Bill. Question No. 4 read—

Is he aware that such a pool would be contrary to the best interests of the oat-milling industry, be detrimental to the export of rolled oats and would further have an adverse effect on the export of milling oats?

The Minister replied—

It could and would effectively cater for all sections of the trade.

So there again the Minister for Lands indicated that he was in favour of a Bill for a compulsory pool, because he believed that such a compulsory pool would effectively cater for all sections of the trade. Now I pass to question No. 6—

Would not such a pool accentuate the present acute shortage of seed oats?

The Minister replied—

No, would tend to prevent it.

Thus again he showed himself in favour of such a pool. In the Minister's opinion, legislation for a compulsory pool for the marketing of oats would tend to prevent the occurrence of an acute shortage of seed oats. Question No. 7 read—

Is he aware that Mr. Braine, the prime mover for a compulsory pool, was well to the forefront in the movement which defeated the Government's Wheat Stabilisation Bill last year?

The Minister replied—

No. Any move for such legislation must come from the growers to the Minister.

The Minister indicated that he favoured such a proposition. But he also said that any move for it should come from the

growers to the Minister. Did it come? Of course it did, as he invited it. What did he do? Handed it over to a private member. Why should the move come from the growers to the Minister if the Minister has no intention of doing anything about it? What happened after March? Was it a case of the ideas of March having come? Was the pressure from some section too great for the Minister; or has he lost all his ideas in the meantime? Are we to have a word on the Bill from the Minister for Lands, who believes that the move ought to come from the growers to the Minister? Why? Is it to waste the growers' time or the Minister's time; or both? Of course the move should have come from the growers to the Minister and the Minister should have done something about it. We know from a number of unimpeachable sources that the proposition went to Cabinet.

The Premier: You know it?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I read it. I am sorry I have not the report the Premier had in his hand last night. He could read it there. Did it not go before the Government?

The Premier: Go on.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Did it?

The Premier: I will be speaking directly.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Ah, we have got somewhere! The Premier will be speaking directly; and so he should. He is a little bit late, that is all that is wrong. He is leading from behind.

The Minister for Education: What is your hurry?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Leaders usually lead from in front, not behind.

The Minister for Lands: You often have to get behind to push them along.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: There is no need to get behind to push anyone along on this subject. The Minister needs pushing along.

The Minister for Lands: You know the recitation on the Battle of Waterloo.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: We have made some progress. We have an assurance from the Premier that he intends to speak. I would like to get one from the Deputy Premier that he does too, because the Premier can give only half the story, and we want the other half so that we can make up our minds about it. Having achieved something, I propose to get straight on to the Bill and I will be directed in my criticism of it by a wise recommendation from the member for Moore, himself. This is a quotation from his speech—

All I ask of members is that they should judge the measure entirely on its merits and not be influenced by the controversy that has extended over a considerable period.

I assure the hon. member that, no matter what the Premier or Deputy Premier does, or those members of the Government who will not deal with it at all, I shall discuss the Bill entirely on its merits as I see them—and its demerits. Has the Bill any merits? Where should we go for the answer to that question? I would say to the member for Moore himself, because if anyone ought to know the merits of a measure it should be the sponsor of the measure. We can be quite certain that the member for Moore would not miss out any merits. He would put them all in if he wanted to make a good case for his Bill. Let us see what he regards as merits! He gives us what he calls five merits. Unfortunately I have had to reduce them to two. One he states twice, and he cannot get away with that.

This reminds me of the man playing crib who said that ten and five were fifteen, and the same five and ten were fifteen, scoring four points in all. It just does not work. So, one of his five reasons he sets out a second time in a different way, but as it is really the same reason it reduces the number to four. Of the others, to my way of thinking, two cannot be proved as being merits because I do not think the Bill provides for them. They would be merits if they were in the Bill, but I do not think they are. So his merits are reduced to two. Let us see what the five merits are that he claims, and whether I am fair in reducing them to two. The hon. member said—

This is purely a self-help measure which, as I say, contains provision to ensure that no-one shall be exploited. Its main provisions will—

(1) enable the growers' surplus oats to be marketed in the ordinary manner.

Quite true. Now I shall take No. 5, which is—

Give an incentive to farmers to increase their production of oats by (a) the prevention of exploitation by marketing regulations, and (b) making provision that oatgrowers shall have the same bulk handling facilities as those already enjoyed by the wheat-growers, with a consequent reduction of cost in handling and marketing oats.

I say that covers No. 1 which is to enable growers' surplus oats to be marketed in the ordinary manner. If it is to enable the surplus to be marketed in accordance with the Bill, it will be contained in the No. 5 reason. His No. 2 reason—and I do not concede this one—is—

It will prevent, irrespective of the quantity of oats placed on the market, gluts or shortages with consequent depressed or inflated prices.

I say the Bill does not do that because it does not provide for the situation envisaged by another member, who interjected when I was speaking earlier that the consumer would have to make his own provision by buying what he wanted. If the consumer has to make his own provision, the Bill does not do it. There is no safeguard in the Bill as the member for Moore claims.

Mr. Perkins: The Bill does not stop him doing it.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: How can the Bill provide there will be no shortages of oats? It could have the opposite effect. The overseas price could be so good at a certain stage that the pool could be encouraged to ship the whole of the oats, because under the Bill there is a responsibility on the board to get as much return for the growers as possible. That is the board's primary concern—not to feed the multitude, but to sell the oats to the best advantage of the grower. If it does that it will not be worried about shortages in this State. So I say the Bill does not guarantee anything in that regard. It will not prevent shortages, and so I wipe that out as a merit of the Bill. If it did, it would be a merit but it does not.

His No. 3 reason, he said, is that it makes provision that adequate supplies shall be available at a reasonable price to the feeders of oats. It does not do that at all. I ask any hon. member, including the member for Moore himself, to indicate to me where the Bill provides that adequate supplies shall be available at a reasonable price to the feeders of oats. It does not do anything with regard to supplies, and it does not do anything with regard to a reasonable price. The Bill contains nothing which would stop the pool from charging above world parity, if it wanted to, yet the member for Moore claims, as one of the merits of the measure, that it provides that adequate supplies shall be available at a reasonable price to the feeders of oats. I will go so far as to say that, if the Bill did make that provision, it should be claimed as a merit, but as it does not it is rather tall to claim it. So I think I am perfectly fair in my summing up by saying that the five merits the Bill is supposed to possess, can be reduced to two. Here is the second one which I will concede—

It will ensure that the growers receive the full overseas value for any exportable surplus.

It will indeed, because the pool having a monopoly can hold the oats until it is ready to sell them, and then sell them for the overseas price; and it can refuse to sell them at less than the overseas price. So we can agree with the member for Moore that that provision is in the Bill. Whether it is a merit or not depends on the point

of view. It is certainly a merit from the grower's angle—and I do not blame the hon. member for looking at this matter from that angle. But I have to look at it from all angles—the consumer's as well as the grower's. So must the Government look at it from all angles—make no mistake about that.

When members get into the Government they do not govern for a section, although sections would like them to do so, and ask for it. But no Government worth its salt legislates or governs for a section. While I will forgive the member for Moore for looking at this question purely from the growers' angle, I will not forgive the Government if it does the same. Nor could I forgive myself if, in my desire to assist one member or another, I were to be so recreant to my trust as to disregard the interests of the general community. All sections of our economy have to be considered in this question. So I say that at the most all the merits the hon. member can claim from his point of view are two, which number I will concede him but, if we look at one "merit" from the consumers' point of view, it is not a merit at all.

The member for Moore spoke about a lot of matters that he thought were in the Bill, but they are just not there. Possibly he wanted them to be put in the measure, and they might have been in accordance with his desires, but he did not see to it that they got into the Bill, and they are missing. If members read his speech carefully, they will find that that is so. For example, he said that the Bill contained safeguards against anybody being exploited, but it does not, and that is the trouble. The hon. member should not claim for his Bill things that it will not do. He should have studied it more carefully. I do not accuse him of having deliberately misled this House, but he did mislead members—unconsciously, it is true—because his Bill does not do what he thinks it does.

The Premier: Have you read the addendum to today's notice paper?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: No, I have not had a chance to do so.

The Premier: It contains many amendments to the measure.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The hon. member said of the measure, "It contains provisions to ensure that no-one shall be exploited," but I tell him that his Bill does nothing of the kind. On the contrary, there is plenty of scope in the measure for a number of people to be exploited and no safeguard against that at all. I propose to read portions of the measure and endeavour to show their effect. One of the provisions states—

For the purposes of this Act and subject to the provisions of Section 20, Subsection (5) of this Act, the

board's decision as to the quality or standard of the oats, the method of determining the dockages or deductions, the cost of freight and other charges and all expenses incurred in or about the marketing of oats and the administration of this Act shall be final.

So the people who are to make the decisions about this question—decisions that can be arbitrary—are in the very strong position that their decisions cannot be upset. How can the hon. member claim that nobody can be exploited when the measure contains a proposition such as that? It is no use saying that he took it from the wheat legislation, because he did not. That Act contains provision for an appeal from the decision of the board or pool to the Department of Agriculture, which can adjudicate on the matter of quality, and so on, but there is no appeal provided in this regard under the Bill. The board's decision is to be final. Do not let us forget that if this pool is set up it will decide what dockages are to be imposed and we will have a case of "take it or leave it". Is the grower protected there? Suppose a grower submits a sample of oats that he regards as an f.a.q. sample; he is then told that it is not up to standard and must be docked. What can he do about it under the Bill? He can do nothing, because the decision is final. I will not support a proposition such as that.

The advantages of the bulkhandling of oats are undeniable. In view of the shortage of sacks, and the fact that bulkhandling is more economical, we must admit that it has advantages over handling in the bag at the present time, but that is not to say that I am in favour of a compulsory pool so that we may handle oats in bulk. The member for Katanning, when dealing with this question, said that the criterion in this Bill—those are not his words, but this is what he meant to convey—was whether we were in favour of the bulkhandling of oats as against handling in bags. That is the way in which he summed it up. We were asked to vote on this measure and define our attitude after considering the question of whether we were in favour of handling oats in bags or in bulk.

We were asked, if we were in favour of the handling of oats in bulk, to vote for the Bill. The hon. member might get some members in by that means, but not me. The Bill does not mean that at all. It is not a question of whether one is in favour of bagging or bulkhandling of oats. It has been claimed that, unless there can be a compulsory pool, there will be no pool at all, and that therefore oats will have to be handled in bags. That is what we have been told, and it may be true, but I cannot be forced into voting for a measure I do not like simply because somebody on the other side of the House says, "If you



do not accept this Bill, we will not handle oats in bulk". That is straining allegiance much too far—to try to put it over in that way.

It is a "stand-and-deliver" attitude. We are told, "Take whatever Bill we like to give you, because we will not handle your oats in bulk if you do not". It is not a question of whether one favours bagging or bulkhandling of oats. I favour bulkhandling, but I cannot vote for this Bill because it has not the merits it is supposed to have, and it is full of demerits—almost as full of them as a colander is full of holes. I followed very carefully the remarks of the member for Roe on this question.

Mr. Perkins: I have not yet spoken to the debate.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The hon. member has not spoken yet to this debate, but I refer to his remarks on the question of the marketing of barley legislation, which was similar to this. I have refreshed my memory by reading what he did say and, to refresh his memory, I will read to the House what he said. In the marketing of a commodity such as a cereal, the member for Roe believes there is necessity for co-operation, and I agree. I regard the next statement he made as of the greatest importance, because he said there was need for a satisfactory board. The board provided for in the present Bill might be satisfactory to a handful of people, but it could not be very satisfactory to the majority of members of this House, and so I do not think it could be satisfactory to the member for Roe. I will now read what he said when he dealt with the proposed legislation for the establishment of a board to control the marketing of barley. At page 577 of vol. 1 of "Hansard" for 1946, the hon. member said—

Therefore, although we have not had a board responsible for the marketing of barley over the years, there has been something approaching what the Minister is aiming at by way of co-operation by the maltsters and the brewers with the primary producers.

I point out that when that board was being constituted by the previous Government, the idea of the Government was that if a board was to be set up to market a commodity, one should have represented on it all the interests concerned. In the case of the marketing of barley, there were the interest of the producer, the interest of the malster and the interest of the brewer. Before the Labour Government agreed to introduce a Bill for the continuance of the control over the marketing of barley, it sought the views of all the interests concerned and, having done that, it framed its Bill and made provision for representation of the growers on the board. It gave them the majority of the representation but provided for representation of the maltsters and of the brewers. As against

that, the board to be set up under this Bill—I am not dealing with the proposed amendments—is representative of two interests only; the trustees of the Wheat Pool, who are to provide the money, and the growers. The consumers are not to be represented at all. They are to have no say in the price or the keeping of adequate quantities, or anything else. Further on the member for Roe said—

It is fairly obvious that if a suitable board is constituted, there will be very little trouble from either the producers or consumers of barley in regard to the marketing of the product.

With which I agree. So long as one can have all the interests represented on the controlling authority, one at least goes some way towards removing a lot of the troubles and difficulties that are bound to arise in the absence of that provision. The ex-member for West Perth, who is not now in the House—

The Premier: The ex-member?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes, Sir Ross McDonald. He also expressed his point of view on the marketing of barley legislation. He thought that the board should be thoroughly representative of all the interests involved. One can see from the view of the member for Roe and that of Sir Ross McDonald from the Liberal Party angle—by adding those two views together—that the weight of opinion of members who are now on the Government side of the House, but who were on that occasion on this side of the House, was that the board had to be fully representative of all the interests concerned. The Bill does not provide for that. That is another demerit. I direct members' attention to this provision—

Subject to this Act—

but not subject to the Minister or the Government—

—the board may to the best advantage of growers having regard to all relevant circumstances, sell or arrange for the sale of all oats of which it becomes the owner, to such persons and at such prices and on such terms as it deems proper and by way of insuring the best advantage to growers, having regard to the possible future decline in prices for oats, may enter into present contracts for the purchase or sale of oats to be delivered at a definite future date:

All in the interests of growers, solely in the interests of growers, and nobody else! This board, with monopolistic powers, is, to the best advantage of growers, to sell or arrange for the sale of all oats of which it becomes the owner to such persons and at such prices and on such terms as it deems proper—under the control of nobody. Is that a merit? It might be, if one were considering it purely from the grower's angle. Can the Government consider that is a merit in this Bill or can we?

Can anybody, who believes that he represents faithfully and truly the interests of his electorate, support a proposition such as that which absolutely leaves the consumers at the complete mercy of the board which will fix its own prices, arrange its own terms and sell to the best advantage? How on earth can the member for Moore claim that there are adequate safeguards in this Bill against exploitation? There are no safeguards at all.

I now desire to direct attention to another weakness in the Bill. This can, however, be remedied if an amendment is carried in Committee, but I am now dealing with the Bill. In it there is a provision which says—

This Act shall not apply to—Oats which the Board refuse to accept on the grounds of inferior quality.

I want members fully to appreciate the effect of that. In other words, if a grower brings some oats to the board and it refuses to accept them they are not covered by the conditions.

Mr. Ackland: Will you not read that in conjunction with Clause 20, Subclause (5)?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Of course I will; I intend to. That only shows it up. The Bill further provides, as the member for Moore has directed me—

In the event of the board refusing to accept oats on the ground of inferior quality, the grower may request an officer of the Department of Agriculture who shall be nominated by the Minister to determine whether the oats shall be accepted or rejected by the board and the board shall act in accordance with the determination.

Unfortunately that is of no benefit to the grower because it cannot apply. The first part of the Bill that I read takes it out, namely—

This Act shall not apply to—Oats which the Board refuse to accept on the grounds of inferior quality.

So as soon as the board refuses to accept oats on the ground of inferior quality the Bill does not apply. How, then, can the grower expect to accept the fact that the Bill gives him the protection that it is supposed to give? It is intended that the Bill shall not apply to those oats if the board refuses to accept delivery and the grower shall then appeal to the Department of Agriculture. Something has to be done to take that provision out of the Bill, because it definitely says that this Act shall not apply to oats which the board refuses to accept on the ground of inferior quality. Somebody has slipped badly there. I can see what the intention is, but it just will not work in the way the provision is worded.

Another feature of the Bill that I do not like is that there is provision for the board to appoint the corporation as its agent and to delegate its powers to the

corporation. In turn, the corporation can delegate its powers to somebody else. The powers of the trustees of the Wheat Pool are definite in their own Act, as well they should be, because they have the same responsibility. We should not add anything that will permit, by a roundabout method, the trustees to exercise powers and to pass on authority to exercise powers to others which they never possessed in the first instance. My main objection to the Bill is that it seeks to amend the Wheat Pool Act by means of other legislation. Time and again I have explained my opposition to that procedure in this House; where fresh legislation is introduced, the parent Act is disregarded and additional powers are conferred outside of those vested by the original Act. It is bad legislation and is a course that should be adopted only as a very last resort.

This Bill would considerably extend the powers of the trustees. When it was sought to permit the trustees to carry on a voluntary oat pool, we did not introduce a Bill of this sort to give them the requisite power. We amended their own Act by inserting a provision for power to conduct a voluntary pool subject to the Minister. Now, however, it is proposed to give them powers to conduct a compulsory pool subject to nobody but themselves. I cannot agree to that.

Mr. Ackland: There is no suggestion of using trust funds.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It is of no use dealing with suggestions. Courts are not interested in the suggestions of members of Parliament.

Mr. Ackland: Well, no provision is made to use trust funds.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It matters not what ideas or motives we may have; they count for nothing in the courts. The courts deal with the law, and what we intend shall be the position must be in the law and not in the minds of members or in the archives of some institution. What is desired is just not in this Bill. If it is intended that, because the trustees are going to find the money, they shall be permitted to exercise a veto, the fact should be stated in the Bill, but unless we look for the loophole we cannot find in the Bill any provision whereby that may be done.

When the member for Blackwood was speaking, he stated that, as the trustees of the pool were going to provide the money, they would have the power of veto. I read the Bill and could not find that.

Mr. Ackland: No power of veto?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: No. I listened carefully to the member for Blackwood, who was quite earnest in his remarks. After he had finished his speech, I asked him to point out the provision in the Bill and, of course, he could not find it. Then he started to wonder where he had

gathered that idea and discovered that he had got it from a publication, in which the full story was told as to what was proposed with regard to the finance. I could not blame the member for Blackwood if he gained the impression that, because the trustees were going to find the money, they would control the board. There is not the slightest doubt that that is the intention.

If we look at the "Farmers' Weekly" of Thursday, the 26th June, it will be found there, "Agreement on Oat Marketing Scheme." The agreement was, that, in consideration of the trustees being permitted to have the chairmanship of the board, the money would be forthcoming to finance the operations of the board; but there is nothing in the Bill about that arrangement unless we look very deeply for it. There is a provision that, when the board of five is set up, it may appoint an executive committee, and it has been ruled that an executive committee may consist of one person.

Mr. Needham: It would be unanimous, anyhow.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Consequently, if the board of five had the power to set up an executive committee and decided to appoint the chairman as that committee, the farmer members of the board could go about their business and the chairman of the board would virtually control the operations. That is where the possibility of the power of veto comes in because the chairman of the board would be the nominee of the trustees. What would be easier than to have an understanding, as there already is, that the farmer members of the board would support a proposal that the chairman should be the executive committee?

As the Farmers' Union has already agreed to the proposition and as it would nominate the farmer members of this temporary board, they would be aware of the understanding and when they took their seats on the board, nothing would be easier than for them—busy men as they are, anxious to get about their occupations—to appoint the chairman, the nominee of the corporation, to be the executive committee, and then he would be in complete control and would be able to exercise the veto. An attractive proposition for a person who represented the consumers, I don't think!

If we were in office, we would not agree to the Wheat Pool Act being amended to permit of one man doing as he liked with the funds of the pool—the trust funds of the growers. Are we going to agree to it because this Bill is brought in and purports to amend the Wheat Pool Act? Apart altogether from the undesirability of amending a law in that way, I say we should not be prepared to grant these powers.

In my opinion this is a very bad Bill. Nobody could be a stronger supporter of bulkhandling than I am. I consider it to be a good, economical method of handling grain and, in this State, it has achieved outstanding results in the interests of the growers, but I cannot agree to the proposals in the Bill, presented as they are, however much I favour bulk handling of oats. I share the view of Mr. Russell, and I am astonished that the member for Moore did not pay more attention to it. Mr. Russell said that, after all the trouble that had been occasioned by trying to deal with the voluntary pool, he had concluded that it was not desirable to carry out the same idea again; he felt that it would be better if there were no pool at all until the State was ready to deal with the position. I think that is pretty sound advice. This is what he had to say. He had received a letter from a certain gentleman, and it was couched in very moderate and fair terms, and Mr. Russell replied to it in very moderate and fair terms, too. He said—

I have received your letter of 17th inst., about the very vexed question of the bulk handling of oats and quite freely concede your right to criticise.

Then he goes on to deal with certain aspects of the matter. Perhaps I should read the whole of this letter because he emphasises the difficulty Co-operative Bulk Handling experienced in endeavouring to handle all the oats which came forward. This is how the letter proceeds—

Under pressure from farmers, C.B.H. commenced handling oats in bulk last year, intending at first that this should be in the nature of a trial. However, when it became known that only a few sidings were to receive oats, there was a greater clamour for much more widespread receipts. The company, under this pressure, ended up by taking in four cargoes.

To receive and handle this quantity without a separate bin, and having at the same time to deal with old season's wheat, barley and new season's wheat, placed an almost intolerable burden on our staff.

In my view we should never have gone beyond the trial stage and it may be better in the end if bulk handling of oats is discontinued until we are in a position to receive it into a separate storage.

So Mr. Russell is not sure that the proposition of the member for Moore is a wise one.

Mr. Ackland: You left out a very important part—the "unless".

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: There is no "unless" here.

Mr. Ackland: There was in my speech.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I am quoting from the hon. member's speech and I see no "unless" here. Lest I do the hon. member an injustice, I will read down to the end. The letter continues—

Men like Walsh, Shanahan, Fitzpatrick and Crosse who had most of the direct responsibility, however good they may be, must have a breaking point, and we were asking more than a fair thing from them.

I am convinced that chaos will result, if, during those few weeks when the bulk oats must come in, other buyers are in the field competing for trucks and truck fittings.

There is no "unless" there. The statement of Mr. Russell's opinion was not contingent upon anything else at all. He was in some doubt as to whether or not it was wise to proceed until we were in a position to receive the oats into separate storage bins. I think members may be inclined to agree with Mr. Russell that we might be trying to force on to the growers and the consumers something for which the State is not quite ready, apart altogether from the general weaknesses in the way this structure is to be set up.

That is what I do not like about it. When we established the compulsory pooling of wheat and we set up trustees and gave them certain powers, we said, "Yes, but subject to the Minister," so that the Government could have some control; and so it should. The barley Act contained the provision, "Subject to the Minister." The marketing of barley was to be in accordance with the framework of the Act, but subject to the Minister. But the marketing of oats is to be subject to the corporation. I just will not have a bar of it. To give monopolistic powers which could be used, and I have no doubt would be used at times, against certain consumers, is a wrong thing to do within the framework of this Bill.

I have had complaints from time to time from millers with regard to wheat. They have not been satisfied with the quality of the wheat sent to them, quite often, and they have had very little redress about it, too. But there are powers in the wheat Act which could be utilised by the consumers to obtain redress. No such powers, however, exist in this Bill. This is what the position would be. Suppose this oats pool were set up and the pool sent along to me, as a consumer, a quantity of oats which I felt were well below standard, and I said so and asked for better oats. What redress would I have?

I could be told by the board to take the oats and pay the top price or go without. I ask the member for Moore: What could I do about it? These adequate safeguards against exploitation that are there! Just what could I do about a situation like that? Are we to accept that proposition? We might if our interests were all one way and we were concerned from only one angle

But we have to be concerned from all angles. And mark this: Not only must we be concerned with the big consumers who buy the oats in the first instance, but we have also to be concerned with the general public, who are the secondary consumers and who consume the finished product.

It took some time for local millers to establish themselves in this market with their breakfast foods, in competition with stuff from the Eastern States. The millers had to select the oats they were going to process, and build up the quality of their products to suit the requirements of the local market in competition with stuff from elsewhere. Our local millers could be put completely out of business by this Bill. Firstly they could be charged a price which would not permit them to compete when they tried to sell the finished product in competition with the article from another State where oats would be bought more cheaply.

Secondly, the quality of the oats sent for milling might be so poor as to ruin their product. And what redress would they have under this Bill? So if we consider the point of view of the local consumer—the working man, who wants his porridge in the morning and wants it at a reasonable price, and also wants to consume Western Australian products if he can—we cannot vote for this Bill the way it is, because there are no safeguards in it against a control of price or for the control of quality. So not only are we to be concerned with the interests of the millers, but we are also to be concerned with the interests of the general public, who are the consumers.

I honestly tried to find merits in this Bill, because I admired the way the member for Moore stuck to his guns in the face of opposition and said he would forgo his trip, if necessary, in order to put the Bill through, because the Government would do nothing about it, although the growers were advised to go to the Minister. If members on the other side will talk to members of my party, they will find that I had been saying for weeks that I was in support of a proposal to establish a pool for oats. But when I searched the Bill and found what the proposition was, and could not find these merits in it, I could not support it. If an attempt is made to amend the wheat Act to permit the trustees to go in for the bulkhandling of oats as well as wheat, and it is done in the proper way, with adequate safeguards and subject to the Government's control, it will have my support. The truth is that this is not a subject which can properly be dealt with by a private member, because he is too circumscribed. He cannot provide the funds unless he resorts to some such method as is envisaged by the Bill, which is a bad method.

The private member suffers under considerable disadvantages when endeavouring to serve the section of the community

which he wishes to serve in this way. But I cannot be dragged along the trail because of the wishes of the member for Moore, when I believe it is against the interests of the State to pass the Bill. It is my considered opinion that the passage of the measure would be very much against the interests of the State. Its rejection might cause some growers a certain amount of heartburning for the time being, but just to please them we cannot ride roughshod over the interests of other sections of the community. I do not think it is possible, with any number of amendments, to make a good Bill out of this, because I do not think a private member can encompass it. I believe it is a job for the Government, if the Government has a mind to do it, and if it has not, it should say, "It must not be done," and do nothing about it.

I propose to leave the question there for the time being. If the Bill gets into Committee, I shall do my best to knock out some of the demerits and put some merits into it. But I do not think it ought to go to the Committee stage because, I repeat, I do not feel it is within the powers of a private member to get through the House, legislation on questions like this, which can deal adequately with the subject with the proper safeguards. We would not tolerate the giving of legislative sanction to a financial arrangement made behind the back of Parliament; and that is what we would be doing if we passed the Bill. Where will the pool get its money from if we do not allow the trustees to provide it? But there is nothing in the measure which says the trustees are going to provide funds. Are we to pass the Bill in the knowledge that the trustees will provide the funds or take control of the board; or should we have a Bill which provides that the Government shall guarantee the funds, and that the board shall carry out its operations subject to the control of the Minister?

I close on this note—and I am led to make reference to it as a result of my experience as a Minister—that shortages of commodities do occur from time to time. We had a shortage of wheat a few years ago, and stockfeeders could not get it. Poultry farmers in my electorate were ringing me up at all hours of the day saying that their poultry would starve if we could not get them wheat. I asked questions in the House about it. As a result, and because of some activity on the part of the Government—I believe because the Government had the necessary power—wheat was subsequently made available. I will say this to the credit of Mr. Braine, that when I got in touch with him and told him that there were stock feeders in my district who could not get wheat, he said, "If you ascertain the names of the merchants from whom they are dealing, I will see that wheat is made available through those merchants to them," and he was as good as his word.

But these shortages do occur, and fortunately the Government had power to deal with the situation which arose then; but if under the Bill we establish a board, and, because the board sells all the oats there is a shortage in the State, the Government will not be able to do anything about it because there will be no Government control. If the Minister were to ring up the chairman of the board and say, "I think you are exporting too much oats; you might leave the State short," the chairman could say to the Minister, "I am sorry; you mind your own business."

Mr. Perkins: The Commonwealth has power to control that. It has to give an export permit for oats.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: And the Commonwealth would give it; but if all the oats had gone out of the country, it would be too late to do anything. What safeguard would that be? At the time when the export permit was being sought there would be ample oats available—and they would be exported—but when a shortage subsequently developed of what use would it be to say that the Commonwealth issued the permit?

Mr. Perkins: You are advocating a permit in regard to oats different from that which exists in the case of meat.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I am dealing with cereals; oats, barley and wheat.

Mr. Perkins: It does not apply to any other food.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: No, but it is a comparable subject. Surely the member for Roe does not suggest that we need not worry about the occurrence of shortages. We know that they will occur, just as we had a shortage of butter this year and will have a worse one next year, so it must be the responsibility of someone to exercise overall control. The underlying principle of this Bill is to set up a board which can dispose of oats at the best price offering and at the minimum cost, so that the growers will get the maximum return. Let us suppose that the price for oats overseas is excellent; would the growers expect the board to let that market go and hold the oats here because someone might need them later on? Of course they would not!

Mr. Ackland: Do you know that the present pool kept back 250,000 bushels of oats, and saved Western Australia from a shortage?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That may be so, but 250,000 bushels out of 30,000,000 bushels is a different proposition from the amount that would be kept back in the case of oats—

Mr. Ackland: I am talking about oats; 250,000 bushels that was kept back.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: And was that sufficient?

Mr. Ackland: Yes. They got rid of the last of the oats the other day as it was no longer needed.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The member for Moore knows that the manager of Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. has considered this question and wants to know whose responsibility it will be. He is not anxious to have it. We must not lose sight of the fact that, as the Bill stands, no-one has this responsibility. It could not be sheeted home to anybody if there was a shortage.

The Attorney General: I doubt if they would be entitled to.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: To what?

The Attorney General: As the trustees for the growers are they not bound to get the maximum price?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Bill says so.

The Attorney General: That is what I think.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Bill says they must dispose of the product to the best possible advantage.

Mr. Perkins: You are advocating that the board, on behalf of the growers, should hold the oats here in the expectation that somebody might want them next year, the year after or some other time?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I am not advocating anything, but I say—I will say it again lest the member for Roe should forget it—that there is a responsibility upon someone in this State to see that the interests of the local consumers are adequately safeguarded with regard to the products that are required.

Mr. Perkins: You are trying to throw that responsibility on the producer.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I am not. I am trying to place the responsibility on the Government, because that is where it should be, but so far we have heard not a syllable from the Government as to whether it accepts responsibility in the matter, thinks someone else should shoulder it, or believes that the question should be left to work itself out, the attitude being that, if the worst happens, it is just too bad, because the Government could not care less. That was my initial complaint when I rose to speak. In fairness to the Opposition the Government should have given a lead on this question. Why should it have been left to me to rise and deal with the Bill in the interests of members? That is not our job. There should have been a lead from the Government in this regard.

It is the invariable practice, when a private member introduces a Bill, for a member of the Government to take the adjournment so that the effect of the measure can be considered from the State

angle. As was expected, the Minister for Lands secured the adjournment of the debate on this Bill. I discussed the matter with my Leader and said, "What will happen with regard to this Bill? Surely the Government will take the adjournment, because that is the usual practice," and he replied, "Yes most certainly it will," and the Government did so, but, to my amazement, when the time came for the Minister for Lands to speak he had no such intention.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: He gave it away.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Up till the present, although private members have spoken to the debate, we have not had the slightest indication—apart from those answers of the Minister for Lands that I quoted earlier, and they represented his opinion last March—not a syllable from the Government to indicate whether it favours this legislation or not. The Government has certainly let the member for Moore down in neglecting to give an indication, and has failed in one of its main functions, which is to give a lead to members of the House as to how proposed legislation should be dealt with from a State point of view. As you may have gathered, Mr. Speaker, I am opposed to the second reading.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

On motion by Mr. Bovell, debate adjourned.

## MOTION—OBITUARY.

*Late Mr. W. M. Marshall, M.L.A.*

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray) [7.31]: During the tea adjournment the sad news was received that Mr. Marshall, the member for Murchison, had passed away. As members know, during the parliamentary recess the late gentleman went into hospital and, after leaving hospital, he visited the House on one or two occasions. But the reports that were received of his health at that time were of a most disquieting nature. In the hope that his health would improve, he went for a sea trip to Darwin. But today news was received that he had entered the Darwin hospital and, as I have already stated, we were informed tonight that he had passed away.

The late gentleman entered Parliament in March, 1921, and was a member of this House for 31 years. Because of his long period of service in this House, he earned the title of "Father of the House." He was Chairman of Committees and later became Minister for Mines, Railways and Transport. As members know he was a keen political student, particularly when dealing with the question of economics, and members will recall the many motions on the subject of finance that he moved in this House. I had to reply to many of those motions and although I disagreed

with his views in that regard I knew that he had given a great deal of time to and had done a good deal of research concerning the question and no-one could doubt his sincerity of purpose.

We also know that he had a great knowledge of Standing Orders. He was a most efficient Chairman of Committees, and that is no easy task. The late hon. member, because of his great knowledge of Standing Orders, was able to fill that position capably and he had the confidence of us all. He was prepared to share his knowledge with members, irrespective of the party to which they belonged. We all know he paid close attention to his parliamentary duties and he seldom if ever left the Chamber during a sitting. We often hear a member referred to as being "a good sitter," such a term could rightly be applied to our late friend. As I said, he was a member of this House for 31 years and during that time he represented the same constituency of Murchison. That in itself is a clear indication that he retained the confidence of his electors over that long period and he enjoyed their respect as well. The more one came to know him, the more apparent became his good qualities.

I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that every member of this House will have heard the news with considerable regret because he has left many friends to mourn his passing. I intend to move a motion and after it is carried I propose to move that the House adjourn. I move—

That this House places on record its deep regret at the death of Mr. William Mortimer Marshall, M.L.A., a member of this House and a former Minister of the Crown, and tenders to his widow and the members of his family its sincerest sympathy in the loss they have sustained, and desires the terms of this resolution to be communicated to his widow by Mr. Speaker.

**HON. J. T. TONKIN** (Melville) [7.36]: In the temporary absence of the Leader of the Opposition I rise to second the motion moved by the Premier. In doing so I thank the Premier for the worthy tribute he paid to our late colleague and my personal friend. We will miss Bill Marshall from this Chamber; his strong resonant voice will no longer resound through these halls and we will miss, too, his earnest theorising on a subject which was dear to his heart. I think you, Mr. Speaker, and the late hon. member had a lot in common in some of the theories which he expounded and in which, up to the time of his death, he continued to believe.

That is the way it is with members of Parliament; we become strongly attached to ideas and we believe this is the place where we can give expression to them,

and in doing so convince others and so effect an improvement in the order of things which we feel will be for the common good. No person who knew the late Mr. Marshall could doubt his definite sincerity of purpose. His earnestness was such that he impressed everybody and he made many friends. On meeting him for the first time one found it difficult to understand him; one had to know the late hon. member to appreciate his real worth. He had a heart of gold and once he regarded you as a friend he would stick like glue, and there are many members on this side who have had personal experience of his staunch support and will miss him greatly now that he is no longer with us. Quite recently we had a similar motion on the death of the late Mr. Panton. The party on this side has had a grievous loss in a short time in the passing of two ex-Ministers, but their deaths serve to show that men are mortal and that the time comes when one or the other disappears from the stage. However, when our time comes, if we can leave the stage with so much accomplished, as have the late Mr. Panton and the late Mr. Marshall, we will not have lived in vain.

There will be many people who will regret Mr. Marshall's passing, not only in this House but outside of it. He made many friends throughout this State because of his meticulous attention to his parliamentary work and the earnestness with which he pursued any cause he felt he should uphold. We will, of course, express to his widow our condolences at her loss and all we can do is to accept the position, as indeed we must, when it comes to apply to anyone whom we have known so long. In losing the father of this House, we have lost a friend and associate whose place it will be difficult to fill. I second the motion.

Question passed; members standing.

*House adjourned at 7.42 p.m.*