

Hon. C. H. Simpson: That will mean that this legislation will terminate at the same time as the legislation dealing with Co-operative Bulk Handling?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Yes. It not only applies to the payment for the installations for the handling of this product, but it also applies to the way the production of barley has been extended to date. In this respect the W.A. Barley Marketing Board has done an extremely good job. It has been endeavouring to improve the quality and yield of the six-row Atlas variety. Also, as a result of its investigations, it has made excellent strides in regard to another strain called Beecher. If the results it has obtained to date continue, this will prove to be one of the best means of improving not only the quality, but also the yield of barley grown in this State. The results obtained to date are very encouraging and the reports that have been received from overseas, where the barley has been sent for testing, have also been extremely favourable.

So it will be seen that the Barley Board is not a body that is just waiting for its period of three years to expire. It has taken upon itself these various responsibilities in the hope that Parliament will see fit to continue the legislation from time to time. However, it must be realised that for this board to function properly some guarantee of continuity is necessary, and that is the reason why the Bill is before the House today.

This year is the first in the history of barley growing in Western Australia that has seen a surplus of two-row barley used for malting purposes. Up to date we have had to rely on South Australia to fulfil the requirements of the maltsters. But now we have reached the stage where two-row barley can be exported. I commend the growers on their attitude in this respect, because six-row barley is a much better yielder than two-row barley in the majority of the growing areas of the State, though there may be one or two areas where two-row barley can be better grown. The growers have seen the wisdom of producing the article which can be consumed on the home market, and I commend them for that attitude.

At present, Co-operative Bulk Handling is building new bins in the Nyabing area because more barley is grown there than wheat. Those new installations have to be paid for. They are to be paid for by the barley growers themselves, and there is need for the extended period for the operation of the Act to enable the payments to be spread over the years.

I make these points because I have heard a certain amount of opposition to the period proposed in the Bill. I ask members to give consideration to them. If at any time the method of the marketing of barley is to be changed and some

other method is to be evolved over the years, there will not be much trouble in amending the Act to allow that to be done. Where the method is functioning well as it is at present, it is only right that the Barley Board should be given the opportunity of looking after the future of the industry as far as possible. I support the second reading.

On motion by Hon. L. C. Diver, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.48 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 25th October, 1955.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 7.30 p.m., and read prayers.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

- 1, Spear-guns Control.
- 2, Main Roads Act Amendment.
- 3, Commonwealth and State Housing Supplementary Agreement.
- 4, Police Act Amendment.
- 5, Legal Practitioners Act Amendment.

QUESTIONS.**HARBOURS AND RIVERS.***Annual Expenditure.*

Mr. BOVELL asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What amounts were expended on Western Australian harbours and rivers generally for the years—

1947-48;
1948-49;
1949-50;
1950-51;
1951-52;
1952-53;
1953-54;
1954-55?

(2) What separate amounts were expended during each of the above years on—

- (a) Kwinana;
- (b) Albany;
- (c) Bunbury;
- (d) Busselton;
- (e) Esperance;
- (f) any other harbour project?

The MINISTER replied:

The particulars required are as follow:—

(1) Expenditure on harbour and river works generally from the 1st July, 1947, to 30th June, 1955—

	£
1947-48	258,764
1948-49	284,071
1949-50	534,929
1950-51	831,404
1951-52	1,675,830
1952-53	1,586,803
1953-54	1,727,140
1954-55	1,475,181
	<u>£8,384,122</u>

(2) Expenditure during each year on the following projects:—

	£	£
1947-48—		
Kwinana	—	
Albany	11,757	
Bunbury	32,049	
Busselton	4,292	
Esperance	3,188	
Other Projects—		
Fremantle	70,776	
Geraldton	25,889	
Dredging plant	4,797	
North-West Ports	54,484	
Improvements to harbours and rivers	51,532	
	<u>207,478</u>	
	<u>£258,764</u>	

1948-49—

Kwinana	—
Albany	24,138
Bunbury	58,450
Busselton	5,829
Esperance	3,757

Other Projects—

Fremantle	62,910
Geraldton	25,462
Dredging plant	6,041
North-West Ports	57,213
Improvements to harbours and rivers	40,271
	<u>191,897</u>
	<u>£284,071</u>

1949-50—

Kwinana	—
Albany	51,137
Bunbury	115,286
Busselton	8,223
Esperance	3,747

Other Projects—

Fremantle	74,613
Geraldton	28,484
Dredging plant	165,129
North-West Ports	63,250
Improvements to harbours and rivers	25,060
	<u>356,536</u>
	<u>£534,929</u>

1950-51—

Kwinana	—
Albany	157,254
Bunbury	206,856
Busselton	13,639
Esperance	3,271

Other Projects—

Fremantle	295,138
Geraldton	27,314
Dredging plant	41,461
North-West Ports	70,225
Improvements to harbours and rivers	16,246
	<u>450,384</u>
	<u>£831,404</u>

1951-52—

Kwinana	—
Albany	535,165
Bunbury	285,118
Busselton	18,411
Esperance	4,414

Other Projects—

Fremantle	647,344
Geraldton	29,954
Dredging plant	24,706
North-West Ports	105,262
Improvements to harbours and rivers	25,456
	<u>832,722</u>
	<u>£1,675,830</u>

1952-53—

Kwinana	224,589
Albany	374,915
Bunbury	108,221
Busselton	10,409
Esperance	5,358

Other Projects—

Fremantle	684,817
Geraldton	37,529
Dredging plant	19,983
North-West Ports	107,119
Improvements to harbours and rivers	23,863
	<u>873,311</u>
	<u>£1,596,803</u>

1953-54—

Kwinana	....	....	547,392
Albany	....	....	244,446
Bunbury	....	....	78,642
Busselton	....	....	30,169
Esperance	....	....	6,028

Other Projects—

Fremantle	....	....	430,783
Geraldton	....	....	42,453
Dredging plant	....	....	117,762
North-West Ports	....	....	192,206
Improvements to harbours and rivers	....	....	37,259

820,463

£1,727,140

1954-55—

Kwinana	....	....	405,205
Albany	....	....	73,858
Bunbury	....	....	66,347
Busselton	....	....	22,837
Esperance	....	....	7,904

Other Projects—

Fremantle	....	....	549,244
Geraldton	....	....	65,764
Dredging plant	....	....	84,553
North-West Ports	....	....	147,318
Improvements to harbours and rivers	....	....	52,141

899,020

£1,475,181

Total Expenditure.

Kwinana	....	....	1,177,186
Albany	....	....	1,472,880
Bunbury	....	....	950,969
Busselton	....	....	113,809
Esperance	....	....	37,667

Other Projects—

Fremantle	....	....	2,815,625
Geraldton	....	....	282,849
Dredging plant	....	....	464,432
North-West Ports	....	....	797,077
Improvements to harbours and rivers	....	....	271,828

4,631,811

£8,384,122

JUNIOR EXAMINATION.

Candidates and Results, 1954.

Mr. ANDREW asked the Minister for Education:

(1) How many students from private schools in Western Australia took the junior examination last year?

(2) Will he give the numbers from each private school who—

(a) sat for the examination;

(b) passed;

(c) the percentage of passes?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 1,485.

(2) The Education Department does not conduct the public examinations. The university is responsible for the examinations and does not keep the information in the manner requested but only as a list of candidates. The answer could be obtained only by an exhaustive search of the records which would entail several days' work. It is not considered reasonable to ask the university to undertake this unless the hon. member has a very urgent need for the information.

KWINANA.

Refined Cargoes, Wharfage, Pilotage, etc.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What number of ships (and the tonnage of same) has arrived at Kwinana with refined cargoes?

(2) What amount of wharfage and pilotage should have been paid on these cargoes?

(3) What amount was paid on the cargoes?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Nine. Tonnage: gross 77,753; cargo 66,401.

(2) and (3) Not applicable under the oil refinery agreement Act.

WINES.

Eastern States Firms and "Tied" House Policy.

Mr. CORNELL asked the Premier:

(1) Is it a fact that a large number of wine saloons in this State are "tied" to firms that have their headquarters in the Eastern States and are marketing wines of Eastern States origin?

(2) If so, does he agree that this must have an adverse effect upon the production and sale of Western Australian wines?

(3) If the answers to Nos. (1) and (2) are in the affirmative, will he give consideration to legislation enabling all wine saloons to stock Western Australian wines?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) There are 48 wine saloons in Western Australia.

(a) From available records approximately 25 per cent. of which are fully tied to Eastern States firms with local sales organisations.

(b) A number of other wine saloons are partially tied to Eastern States firms on a 75 per cent. basis.

(2) Yes.

(3) Yes.

BETTING.

Eviction of Tenants for Shop Accommodation.

Hon. C. F. J. NORTH asked the Minister for Police:

Can steps be taken in future cases to prevent the setting up of betting premises where an eviction of tenants is involved in the process?

The MINISTER replied:

Yes.

COAL.**(a) Tabling of Railways Commission Files re Contracts, etc.**

Mr. MAY asked the Minister for Railways:

Will he lay on the Table of the House all files dealing with—

(a) cost plus contracts for coal;

(b) agreement made by the State Government and Amalgamated Collieries of W.A. Ltd., whereby 60 per cent. of the State Government's coal requirements are supplied by this company?

The MINISTER replied:

In view of the number of papers involved, some of which are under constant reference on account of the tenders for new supplies which are now being considered, it is suggested an inspection of the files be made at the office of the Railways Commission, where facilities to do so will be made available to the hon. member.

(b) Tabling of Electricity Commission Files re Contracts, etc.

Mr. MAY asked the Minister for Works:

Will he lay on the Table of the House all files dealing with—

(a) cost plus contracts for coal;

(b) agreement made by the State Government and Amalgamated Collieries of W.A. Ltd., whereby 60 per cent. of the State Government's coal requirements are supplied by this company?

The MINISTER replied:

Because of the fact that tenders have just been called for coal and are now being considered, the files are in constant use by the commission. They will be made available for the hon. member's inspection at the offices of the State Electricity Commission.

RAILWAYS.**Locomotive for Wagin-Lake Grace Line.**

Mr. PERKINS asked the Minister for Railways:

What types of locomotives is it proposed to use on the Wagin-Lake Grace line during November, December, January and February?

The MINISTER replied:

"W" class.

BILLS (5)—THIRD READING.

1. Administration Act Amendment.

2. Roman Catholic Bunbury Church Property.

3. University Medical School.

4. Zoological Gardens Act Amendment.

Transmitted to the Council.

5. Local Authorities, University of Western Australia Medical School Appeal Fund Contributions Authorisation.

Passed.

BILL—SUPERANNUATION AND FAMILY BENEFITS ACT AMENDMENT.

Third Reading.

THE TREASURER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [7.43]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON (Cottesloe) [7.44]: Last Thursday I endeavoured to move an amendment to this measure and met with apparent difficulty in doing so. The amendment would have overcome certain anomalies under the Act in connection with widows. Apart from seeking to move the amendment in question, I asked the Treasurer whether he would have inquiries made along the lines I suggested. He promised to do so, and I wonder if he could let me have his views on that matter. At the time, mention was made that the Bill could be recommitted. The amendment is a small one and would present no difficulty to its being incorporated in the Bill.

THE TREASURER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam—in reply) [7.45]: I regret to say I have not had time to look into this matter. As the hon. member would very well know, there have been some special tasks on hand for the Leader of the Opposition and myself, and consequently it has been difficult to find time to look into a number of matters that are urgent. The Government would have no objection, I think, to giving the board a discretionary right in regard to cases such as those instanced by the member for Cottesloe in the speech he made on the Bill the other evening. I would be prepared, on that basis, to have an amendment drafted which could be moved by the Chief Secretary in the Legislative Council when the Bill is in the Committee stage in that House, if that would meet with the wishes of the hon. member.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Thank you; it would.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time, and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR POLICE (Hon. H. H. Styants—Kalgoorlie) [7.47] in moving the second reading said: The purpose of

this Bill is to ease the strain on the courts and to make the processes of law less involved for persons who have committed minor traffic offences. The Commissioners of Police at their annual inter-state conferences have for some time discussed this problem with a view to having it dealt with by other than court proceedings.

There has been a very steep increase in the number of charges listed for hearing in the Metropolitan Police Court, a large proportion of which are for traffic offences. This, of course, is not due to any increased incidence of law-breaking by motorists but is due to our bigger population and the large number of vehicles being licensed each year. As a result there has, of necessity, been a considerable lag before it has been possible to bring cases before the court.

As members will appreciate many charges under the Traffic Act and regulations are of a minor nature. In about 60 per cent. of these cases the offenders plead guilty and do not trouble to attend the court. Others, less cognisant of the procedure, appear at court and plead guilty. This results in a considerable waste of time, both to the offenders themselves and to police officers, as well as to the courts.

The Commissioner of Police, on a number of occasions, has expressed concern at the time off the roads taken up by police officers while inquiring into offences, preparing briefs and attending courts in connection with minor traffic charges. The Commissioners of Police, at their annual conferences, have agreed on the urgent need for avoiding as much as possible the growing necessity for the police to devote so much valuable time to minor traffic matters.

In 1950, Cabinet rejected a proposal that Western Australia inaugurate a system similar to that existing in Colorado and other States of America. This method gives an offender the alternative of being either fined on the spot by the arresting officer, or of being prosecuted through the courts. If the offender agrees to an immediate fine, the police officer gives him what is termed a penalty assessment notice. This notice shows the nature of the offence or offences and the total fine payable. The offender then has five days in which to pay the fine at the Police Department.

While the Commissioner of Police agreed that this scheme had certain advantages and that it would most certainly reduce the time spent by officers on minor traffic matters, he was not agreeable to the fines being collected by the Police Department. He considered the power to inflict and collect penalties for breaches of law was that of magistrates and Crown Law officers.

A system to deal with minor traffic offences outside the courts was brought into operation in New South Wales on the

1st July, 1954. This action is taken under that State's Transport Act and enables regulations to be made for the imposition and collection by prescribed officers of the Public Service of penalties for minor traffic offences. These regulations refer only to parking offences, but enable extra charges to be preferred when offenders are booked for parking offences. These additional charges are for minor offences, such as incorrect lights, no reflectors, no number plates, etc.

The New South Wales regulations provide that when a person is notified that he has committed a parking offence, he may elect to pay the fine at the Police Department. The notice to the offender includes advice that, if it is ignored, the Police Department will understand that the offender prefers a court hearing. Since this system has been operating, the daily average number of notices sent out has been 300. Of this number over two-thirds have elected to pay the fine by post, and the average daily revenue has been £170.

On examining the Bill, members will observe that it provides only for the making of regulations. The proposed regulations would be of a lengthy nature, and, if included in the Bill, would considerably increase the size of the Act. So that members will be fully aware of what is intended by the proposals, I have arranged for each to be supplied with a copy of the regulations it is proposed to promulgate if the Bill is accepted by Parliament. They have just been distributed to members.

Another reason why it is preferable to create the provisions by regulations is that it may become necessary to amend them after trial. For instance, it is proposed at first to make them applicable only to the metropolitan area. As a result of their trial in the city it may be decided to extend them to other areas. It may also be found desirable to add to, or subtract from, the list of minor offences shown. Because of these possibilities, the Bill has been kept as short as possible. All proposals incorporated in the regulations could be amended with more facility than could the Act.

The Bill provides for the making of regulations authorising the infliction and collection by prescribed officers of the Public Service of fines for minor traffic offences. It also provides that the offender may elect to have the case heard in the usual way by the courts, and that the regulations may be applied to any prescribed part or parts of the State.

The regulations provide for only one prescribed officer, who shall be the Under Secretary for Law. The procedure will be for the Police Department to send particulars of the alleged offences to the Crown Law Department. If the department considers it warranted, a notice must be served on the alleged offender

within six months of the date of the alleged offence. The form of notice is shown at pages 8 and 9 of the proposed regulations. It advises the recipient that if he would prefer court action, he may ignore the notice and court process will take place in due course. If the offender decided to pay the fine without argument, he would complete the form shown on page 10 of the regulations and deliver or post the fine to the Crown Law Department.

The minor offences that can be dealt with in this manner are specified on pages 5, 6 and 7 of the proposed regulations. The scale of penalties are shown at the foot of page 7, and as members can see, they are not of a severe nature, being 10s. for a first offence, 15s. for a second, and £1 for a third and each subsequent offence. These penalties are the same as those in New South Wales; and while they are somewhat low, it was thought that as the whole scheme is a new departure, it would be better to err on the side of leniency at first.

I would refer members to proposed regulation No. 423, page 4, which provides that if the Crown Law Department does not consider that the fines are adequate to meet a particular offence, the case shall be dealt with by a court. It is quite feasible that certain persons may be constant offenders, and their continued offences then should be met by heavier penalties than the regulations prescribe.

The proposals I have outlined have been discussed with the magistrates and the Clerk of Petty Sessions who have expressed their approval of the scheme. This Bill has been passed by the Legislative Council. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. V. R. Abbott, debate adjourned.

BILL—CHILD WELFARE ACT AMENDMENT.

Message.

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

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR CHILD WELFARE
(Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [7.55]
in moving the second reading said: The first amendment in this Bill is to alter the word "secretary" wherever it appears to the word "director," and to make provision for the appointment of an assistant director.

For many years, the Child Welfare Department was under the administrative control of an officer who was described in

the Act as the secretary, which is, I think, a term not appropriate in a department such as the Child Welfare Department. The use of the term "secretary" does not give anybody anywhere near an accurate impression of what the head of the Child Welfare Department is expected to do; nor does it give an accurate description of the duties the Act imposes upon him. Therefore, it is considered that the use of the term "secretary" in relation to this department is considerably out of date, and the Bill proposes to substitute the word "director".

The Bill also proposes to make provision for the appointment of an assistant director. The officer to occupy that position would, as the term "assistant director" denotes, be an assistant to the officer who would be the director under the terms of the proposed amendment. I think that in most States of the Commonwealth the term "director" is applied to the head of the department, and it seems to me to be altogether a more acceptable term and a much preferable term than "secretary".

This department, as members would know, is one that deals with the welfare of children who, for the most part, are very much under-privileged; and the use of the term "secretary" in relation to the head of such a department seems to be very far removed from the sort of term which should apply, and which should describe the officer in charge of the department, and therefore in charge of the activities carried on by the department, year in and year out.

Another amendment proposes to extend quite considerably the jurisdiction of the Children's Court. Under the present law, only cases in which offences have been committed by children are capable of being tried in the Children's Court. It is proposed to increase the jurisdiction of the court by providing for the hearing of cases in which offences have been committed against children as well as by children. If I remember rightly, this was the law some years ago. I think it might have been during the term of the member for Stirling that the law was altered, and I cannot remember any substantial reason for the alteration which was then made.

However, the passing of time—with regard to the position which exists in relation to allowing only cases where the offences have been committed by children—has shown that it is desirable, particularly in the interests of the children, that the additional cases I have mentioned should also be tried in the Children's Court. Officers of the Child Welfare Department, the magistrate of the Children's Court, leading officers of the Police Department and a number of other people with considerable experience in these cases, have all recommended that the jurisdiction of the Children's Court should be extended along the lines I have indicated.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Would that include a case where a man would ordinarily be tried by a jury?

The MINISTER FOR CHILD WELFARE: Yes, I think it would. I believe it would provide for all cases where offences were committed against children. The desire is to protect the welfare of the child. The object is to ensure that charges which are made against people who have committed offences against children shall be heard within the atmosphere of the Children's Court rather than in the atmosphere of some other court. In this matter we must have supreme regard for the interests of the children who would be affected.

Another amendment provides that a child under the age of 14 years shall not be liable to imprisonment. Under the existing law, children under 14 years of age are liable to imprisonment, and it is thought that the present law in that regard is somewhat archaic. It is considered that where children under 14 years of age commit some offence which might be serious enough under the existing law to allow them to be imprisoned, the time has arrived when the Government or the State should be able to make available for the correction of such children, facilities outside of an actual prison. Therefore, the Bill proposes that in the future no child under the age of 14 years shall be liable to be sentenced to imprisonment.

The only other amendment in the Bill is to substitute a new Second Schedule for the existing schedule, and the sole purpose of this amendment is to bring the Second Schedule up to date. Several changes have been made in regard to the institutions set out in the present schedule, and these changes have taken place over a considerable period of time. It is thought that advantage should be taken of the opportunity the Bill presents to bring the schedule up to date. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. F. Watts, debate adjourned.

BILL—UNIVERSITY MEDICAL SCHOOL, TEACHING HOSPITALS.

Message.

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

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 20th October.

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON (Cottesloe) [8.5]: I propose to support the Bill. The Premier, in the absence of the Minister for Health, moved the second reading last week, and I feel the Bill is essential as it helps to pave the way for the establishment

of a medical school in Western Australia. The purpose of the measure is to provide a set of conditions under which arrangements can be made to ensure that facilities are available in certain hospitals for the teaching of medical students. In short, the Bill seeks to arrange that training hospitals will be nominated and ready to accommodate the students of the medical school when it begins to function.

The Bill states further that where the Senate is of the opinion that a public hospital is suitable for the teaching of medicine, it shall give written notification to that effect to the Minister who shall present the notification to the Governor and, upon proclamation, the hospital is then proclaimed to be a teaching hospital under the provisions of the Act. Certainly with that purpose I have no quarrel whatsoever. As a matter of fact, I have only one or two observations to offer and, possibly, a minor amendment or two to which I hope the Minister will agree.

At this stage I would like to say that the establishment of a medical school will bring before the various advisory committees established here and before the Department of Health, a number of ticklish problems. Apparently in a number of hospitals there is a certain percentage of private cases. One of the problems is, how to overcome the question of teaching medical students where there are private cases. Will we adopt in Australia, in time to come, the procedure that is adopted in the United States where, I believe, the great majority of hospitals are run by private enterprise?

In that country, I understand, a condition of entry to a hospital is that the patient must submit to examination as far as the teaching of medicine is concerned. Even in this State I am led to believe that in certain branches of medicine teaching is rather difficult now. I refer to the branches of gynaecology and midwifery. In these particular branches it is difficult for a student to obtain the necessary experience that he must have before he can operate or function efficiently as a medical practitioner on his own behalf.

The Minister for Health: We have the King Edward, and other hospitals.

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Yes, but even so I believe that about 50 per cent. of the patients at King Edward are private cases. The Minister may be able to inform me further on that point. If the Minister is not able to give an informed statement on the question, I feel it is a problem that must be tackled firmly, before long. My suggestion in regard to the problem is that it is rather urgent. Perhaps my appreciation of it is rather premature, but I believe that is not so.

The Minister for Health: What do you say is the real problem in regard to the teaching of gynaecology and obstetrics?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The teaching of medical students.

The Minister for Health: Why would it be a problem?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: These branches, in particular, are dealt with privately so that there is not the usual number of cases where demonstrations can be given for the benefit of students so that they may gain the necessary experience. This is going to be a problem. In the Fremantle Public Hospital about 42 per cent. of the cases are private cases. The Royal Perth Hospital is essentially public in that about 95 per cent. of the cases are public cases and only about 5 per cent. would be private cases. The trouble in regard to teaching there does not apply.

The Minister for Health: Would not the same problem arise in New South Wales and Victoria?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The Minister might be able to give me some information on that point. I think that shortly a medical man is to come here from the Eastern States and he might be able to advise the Minister in this regard. I mention these matters because I feel, in my appreciation of the Bill and the implementation of the scheme, that these problems may arise. The measure sets up advisory committees where the hospital has no managing body and I feel that the composition of the advisory committee—at least in one instance—could be widened to include one more person.

Clause 5(3) deals with the position of the advisory committee and it says that the committee shall consist of a person nominated by the Senate, a person nominated by the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Western Australia; the Commissioner of Public Health or a person nominated by him; and if there is an honorary medical staff of the hospital, a person nominated by them, but if there is not an honorary medical staff, a medical practitioner nominated by the Minister. I think it will be realised that the advisory committee might well be composed of four medical practitioners. Even the person nominated by the Senate might be a doctor, as I understand there are two doctors on the University Senate.

The Minister for Health: This measure was drawn up in collaboration with the medical profession and therefore would meet their wishes.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I appreciate the point, but as the advisory committee is to deal with all sorts of matters in regard to the operation of the legislation, I feel that an advisory committee composed wholly of medical practitioners might tend to be too narrow in its field. I suggest that it might be wise to increase the advisory committee in this instance by one person nominated by the Minister,

being a person other than a medical practitioner, but one well versed in hospital administration, for instance.

In Western Australia we have a number of excellent hospital administrators who are not medical practitioners and the experience of such a man would be of great value to an advisory committee. I do not suggest that the advisory committee appointed to a teaching hospital, established under the Lunacy Act or under the Mental Treatment Act, should have its number increased by one, owing to the peculiar circumstances associated with those hospitals, but in this instance I feel that the addition could be of real advantage.

If the Minister desired, he might nominate one of the present board members who do such good honorary work. I hope the Minister will give consideration to the points I have raised before the Bill reaches the Committee stage. I would like the Minister's advice on Subclause (5) of Clause 5. As a subclause one might logically expect its operation to be confined to the clause but, as I read it, it has very wide scope. To avoid any possible misunderstanding it might be as well to make Subclause (5) a separate clause. Subject to these observations, I support the Bill.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. E. Nulsen—Eyre—in reply) (8.20): As members are aware, the Premier introduced this measure and I have not had time to examine it thoroughly. However, I am pleased that the member for Cottesloe has raised various points and I will give them consideration as soon as possible. I appreciate the hon. member's remarks in regard to the K.E.M.H., the Royal Perth Hospital and the Fremantle Public Hospital. He said that 42 per cent. of the patients at the last-mentioned institution are private patients, but I do not know that that would affect the position detrimentally, seeing that the same situation must prevail to a considerable extent in the Eastern States. I do not know whether on a per capita basis there is more public hospital accommodation available in the Eastern States of Australia than we have in Western Australia.

With regard to the medical school and the teaching of medicine, I know that Dr. Henzell has been in touch with the medical profession and I believe this measure represents their views. I know that I have not interfered in any way and I do not think Cabinet made any alteration to the provisions of the Bill. I suggest that we proceed with the measure and deal with it in Committee as far as possible and then, if necessary, we could report progress. On the other hand, we could complete the Committee stage and then, if desirable, I would be prepared to have any necessary alteration made to the measure in another place.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair; the Minister for Health in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Functions or advisory committee:

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I move an amendment—

That after the word "Senate" in line 39, page 4, the words "a person well versed in hospital administration other than a medical practitioner nominated by the Minister" be added.

As I said, during the debate on the second reading, as the advisory committee may be requested to advise the Minister on any matter relating to the provisions or operations of the legislation, I feel it would be as well to include someone—other than a medical practitioner—who is a sound administrator.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I think the amendment would prove of advantage and therefore I support it.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: This may not be important, but during the second reading I did say I would refer to it in Committee. The Minister will note that the advisory committee proposed to be appointed under this clause can operate on a wide scale. The subclause seems to limit the meaning in so far as it refers to the functions of the advisory committee.

The Minister for Health: It states that the Minister may request.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Yes, he may request the advice of the advisory committee on any other matter.

The Minister for Health: No, I do not think so.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I only felt that it should be clarified. I do not oppose the subclause and if the matter is not considered important, I will not press for any amendment.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 6 and 7, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

BILL—PENSIONS SUPPLEMENTATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1955-56.

In Committee of Supply.

Debate resumed from the 20th October on the Treasurer's Financial Statement and on the Annual Estimates, Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair.

Vote—Legislative Council, £7,453:

MR. ACKLAND (Moore) [8.34]: When introducing the Estimates, the Treasurer, at the commencement of his speech, said something about the economic position of Australia and before he dealt with the economic and financial position of the State he criticised the Commonwealth Government for permitting a repetition of the economic position in which Australia found herself in 1951. He reminded members that during that period and as month succeeded month, the trade balance of Australia went from bad to worse and became more and more out of balance.

The Treasurer also went on to say that once having put the matter right, special care should have been taken to keep the financial position in a reasonable state. Now, in 1955, four years after the first postwar period of restriction on imports, Australia is back in the same position as she was in 1951. The Treasurer would have us believe that the whole of the responsibility for this state of affairs rests upon the shoulders of the Commonwealth Government.

I think the Treasurer knows that this is only partly true and only part of the story. He must remember that, as month followed month, the Prime Minister of Australia, together with the Commonwealth Treasurer, Sir Arthur Fadden, issued to the people of Australia many warnings; and when they did not have any effect, they threatened what would be done unless the position was rectified. One of the steps that could have been taken to rectify the position could have been for Australian costs to be reduced by better service being given by labour and to make it possible for Australian exporters to send their commodities overseas to compete reasonably with the rest of the world.

There is little, if any, justification for the statement that panic action was taken by the Commonwealth Government either in 1951 or just recently. I am of the opinion that the sudden and extremely alarming drop in wool prices was the cause of the Commonwealth Government realising that it had to take the action that it did promptly. The present adverse trade balance is by no means the full responsibility of the Commonwealth Government. The present and also past State Governments must carry some of the responsibility for the present position and for the unreasonable high cost of everything that is purchased by the people in this country.

The State Treasurers, when they go to Canberra year after year, always clamour for more and more money whether in the form of grants made to the three smaller States or by way of loan funds. I am of the opinion that the Commonwealth Government has had a far better realisation of the spending capacity of the various States according to the labour that was available. If more loan

moneys had been provided, we could have got very little extra work done because there has been insufficient labour available to carry out the work. It would have meant that there would have been even higher costs than those we have experienced in Australia over the last few years.

I am not referring solely to the present Government by any means, but I do not believe that the State Governments of Western Australia for years have had anything like value for the money they have spent on the construction of schools, hospitals, housing or any other public work. The cause of the bad economic position of this country today goes far beyond the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government. In fact, it goes back to all State Governments and to the private individual.

For my part, I wish there was someone in Australia today with sufficient authority and moral courage to stand up and publicly declare to his followers—whether they be on the right or the left side of the House—to the heads of industry and to the leaders of the various political and industrial bodies that they have some responsibility and that they must reduce costs more, as has been done in England. Sir Anthony Eden has coined a phrase—the United Kingdom must produce or die. I consider that this phrase could be used to apply to Australia's position today. If we do not produce at a lower cost than we are doing, we will not be able to meet our commitments. One can see that becoming more and more evident as each month goes by.

I will now return to the wool position. Earlier I mentioned that there had been a marked decrease in wool values. Members may find it interesting and perhaps significant when I say that whilst overseas I met three different people who I understand occupy rather important positions in the wool trade. Although these three men were in different branches of the trade, it is significant that they said that the price of Australian wool would have to be reduced to 48d. a lb. before the wool position became static. I do not know whether members realise it or not, but today, or even last year when wool was more than 70d. a lb. it was till the cheapest fibre in the world compared with other fibres either natural or synthetic.

There was no justification for the statement that the wool position would not become reasonably sound until the price of wool had dropped to 48d. per lb. It has been said—I believe with a great deal of justification—that the foundation of Australia's economy is resting upon the wool industry. There are some who believe that that industry is in the hands of a few sheep barons. However, it should be pointed out that there are 50,000 sheep owners in Australia who own nearly

60,000,000 sheep between them. The average sheep flock is between 1,200 and 1,500. So there is a large number of small sheep breeders, quite apart from station-owners.

To give some idea of how the wool industry has advanced, 150 years ago 245 lb. of wool was exported from Australia, but for the year ending 1954, 1,100,000,000 lb. of wool was exported overseas. This wool was sold at about 71d. per lb., so that will give members a good idea of the importance of the wool industry to the Commonwealth, and an indication of how a depression in the price of that commodity will affect the whole life of the community. During the depression years of 1930, wool was sold for as low as 8½d. per lb. One of those interested in the industry reminded me of this when he told me that the price should be depreciated from its present level to 48d. per lb.

It is quite true that wool was sold at 8½d. per lb. in the depression, but even with the lower cost of commodities at that time, no one grew wool at that figure. People who were then producing wool were, in the main bankrupt because of the low return. During the war years wool increased in value to 14.6d. per lb. at the end of 1946. It is interesting to realise that the price rose for the years 1950 onwards, as follows:—

			per lb. d.
1949-50	....	....	63.35
1950-51	....	....	144.19
1951-52	....	....	72.42
1952-53	....	....	81.8
1953-54	....	....	81.5
1954-55	....	....	70.88

Those were the average prices for wool sold throughout the Commonwealth, but at the first Western Australian sale this year there was a reduction to an average of 51.55d. per lb. Although there was an increase of 2½ per cent. at the second sale, the price during the sale just concluded was back on a par with that ruling during the first sale. Instead of being criticised for taking prompt action when the price of wool dropped so much—a drop of 38 per cent. compared with last year—the Commonwealth Government should be commended for trying to preserve Australian credits overseas by its quick introduction of the restriction on imports.

The Minister for Health: Can wool be produced profitably at 48d. per lb.?

Mr. ACKLAND: I do not think so. The price of 52d. per lb. is as near to the cost of production figure as one can get—that is, for the majority of the growers and more particularly for those who do not have all their eggs in the one basket. Producers with other means of livelihood can grow wool at a lower figure perhaps than those who keep sheep as their sole means

of livelihood, particularly those who are not operating under the most advantageous conditions.

The unique position occupied by Australia in the wool world would justify the Commonwealth Government giving consideration to action along another line. Instead of placing a restriction on the importation of goods, it would be thoroughly justified in putting an embargo on the export of wool unless it returned to the grower and to Australia a reasonable price.

Mr. Lawrence: You mean a restriction, not an embargo on the export of wool?

Mr. ACKLAND: That is so. Today Australia possesses more than 50 per cent. of all the sheep and wool produced in the world. It has nearly 72 per cent. of the merino wool that is produced. It is essential for manufacturers of woollen goods and other articles requiring wool to use merino wool. Although Western Australia is by no means the biggest wool-growing State in Australia, last year we sold 422,000 bales from nearly 13,500,000 sheep. That represents a return to every man, woman and child in this State of approximately £60 per head. This year there will be less money in circulation than last year because that amount will be reduced to approximately £40 per head.

The ever-increasing protective tariff barrier that is being erected has possibly been the biggest factor in increasing the cost not only of the secondary but also of the primary products. Secondary products do not count very much in the economy of Western Australia because none can be exported from this country but they do increase the cost of products that can be exported. As far as I know, the only manufactured article exported from Western Australia is the tractor. Every tractor manufactured in Western Australia is assisted by a subsidy of £240 from the Commonwealth Government. If my information is correct, the company producing this tractor owes the State Government £2,500,000 to £3,000,000. I have often considered that the assistance granted by the State Government does not improve the position of the State very much, but if that sum had been available for improving water conservation and water supplies in the dry areas, it would have been used much more effectively.

Why should wool growers not be given some legislative protection? We find that shearers, rouseabouts, cooks and all those engaged in the production of the raw material, as well as those employed by the wool-brokers, the fellmongers and the manufacturers of woollen goods, are given protection and a reasonable standard of living. In 1952, when wool was sold at 144.19d. per lb., the shearers received £5 18s. 6d. per 100 for shearing. Yet in 1953, when the price was 80d. per lb., their

pay was increased to £6 13s. per 100., although there had been a drop of 45 per cent. in the price of wool. The rates of shearers which are supposed to be calculated on the wool prosperity allowance, was increased from £5 18s. 6d. to £6 13s.

It is in the interests of the wool growers and of all the people in this State for the Federal Government to give consideration to the restriction of the export of wool from this country, except at a reasonable price. I do not suggest there should be stand and deliver tactics.

Mr. Lawrence: Does that apply to the shearers?

Mr. ACKLAND: The shearers come under an award. With wool at 144d. per lb., the shearer was paid less for his work than when it was sold at 80d. per lb. Today with wool at 51d. per lb., the rates of pay which apply to the great portion of the industry remain the same.

Mr. Johnson: What would happen to the wool if it was not exported? Would it be stored in sheds at Midland Junction?

Mr. ACKLAND: I do not think that would happen. When the wool manufacturers in the United Kingdom and other parts of the world realised that wool should be sold below a certain figure—the price dropped from 70d. to 50d. at the last sale—it looks as if those people had put their heads together to bring the price down. There is not a surplus of wool in the world. When wool was sold at 70d. per lb., it was the cheapest fibre on the market, whether raw material or synthetic.

Glancing through the "Quarterly Review," I noticed that during 1953-54 primary production in Western Australia was valued at £97,000,000. I understand that about 90 per cent. of our primary products are exported, so the value of primary products exported must have been between £86,000,000 and £87,000,000. During the same period, the whole of secondary industry production in Western Australia was valued at £55,000,000. I should be interested to know just how much overseas credit was made available to this State by the sale of the products of those industries. I have already mentioned that on every tractor produced at Welshpool, the Federal Government pays a bounty of £240, and the industry is head and shoulders in debt to the State Government.

I am not one of those who believe that the manufacturers or workmen of Western Australia cannot do anything that their opposites in any other part of the world can do, but I know they are not doing it. The more one moves about, the more one becomes conscious of that fact. We could in the past and we could in future do anything that those people are doing, but here we have the cancer of protection, and behind protection both the manufacturers and the trade unionists are sheltered. To me, it appears that the Tariff

Board does not ask for efficiency in industry. Evidently all one has to do is to go along and say that he cannot meet overseas competition, and protection is granted him. There must be a great deal of inefficiency with the manufacturer and the administration, and, of course, we all know, whether we admit it or not, that the trade unionists are not pulling their weight.

In Sweden, I saw men who were working 48 hours week after week, and they were granted no smoke-ohs. In Germany I do not know whether the men work in relays but in the building trade they were working from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., and I can assure members that they were doing something. The member for Leederville sneers and passes remarks that go right over my head, but in the United Kingdom men of his type are telling the workers that they must pull their weight, and the manufacturers are doing the same.

Instead of preaching class hatred, employers and employees there are working together. In the factories, the management and the labourers are doing their best to reduce costs, and the result has been that they have been able to regain markets which they had previously lost, because of this "get together" spirit. Men in the United Kingdom, such as our Premier here, are telling the workers that they have a job to do, that they are being treated well, and that they must play their part in return for the treatment they are receiving. Instead of always bemoaning the ever-rising cost of living and asking for more amenities and more concessions, it would be in the interests of the men who are called the workers if their representatives told them that they themselves would be benefited if they gave greater value for the money they receive. I should now like to say something about cereal growing.

Mr. Brady: You know more about that than about workers in the metropolitan area.

Mr. ACKLAND: Wherever one goes in the metropolitan area, one cannot fail to see that the majority of workers, whether in factories, on the roads or anywhere else, are not giving value for the money they receive.

Mr. Brady: What about the heads playing golf?

Mr. ACKLAND: That sort of thing happens just as much in the country as it does in the city. I do not care where one may go in Western Australia, whether it be Main Roads Board work, State Electricity Commission work, or work for the local governing bodies, one will find slackness everywhere.

I should like to refer to the Premier's remark about the number of employees in the clothing trade, which he said had fallen considerably. That is natural when we know how much cheaper clothes may

be bought in other countries. I have before me particulars of the cost of the raw wool used in the manufacture of the cloth for a suit. The statement reads—

What was the cost of raw wool used to make your suit?

Owing to misleading propaganda during the war, the Commonwealth Prices Commissioner, at the request of the Australian Wool Board, investigated the matter in 1945 and reported as follows:—

Elements of cost in a £12 tailor-made suit:

	per cent.
Raw wool	4.0
Conversion to yarn	4.4
Weaving	4.6
<hr/>	
Total cost of suiting	13.0
<hr/>	
Cost of distributing suiting	3.5
Lining and trimmings	12.0
Tailor's cost of making (including employee's wages)	36.5
Sales tax	5.0
Tailor's margin to cover overheads	30.0

That was in 1945, but the position today is the same if not worse. I am not sure what the price of wool was at that time, but it is interesting to know that at present, in a suit costing £25, which I believe is the price charged by many tailors, the value of the wool was 70d. last year, or approximately 18s. for raw wool in a £25 suit. So, when the Premier speaks about the fewer people being employed in the clothing industry, we need not go far to find the reason. A suit that costs £30 in Perth can be bought in London for £16 sterling, equal to £20 Australian, and the suit at £16 sterling is of much better quality than one which could be bought in Perth for £30.

Mr. Johnson: What was the purchase tax in England?

Mr. ACKLAND: The price of £16 included purchase tax. I should now like to read some small extracts from a report in the "Daily News" of the 3rd October of a statement by the Minister for Agriculture at the Royal Show—

Without new wealth created every year by the overseas sales of the produce of our soils, it would not have been possible to develop the secondary and tertiary industries which are now playing their part in the State's economy.

I shall not read the whole of his remarks.

The Minister for Agriculture: Yes, read the lot.

Mr. ACKLAND: They were good, but I do not wish to use the time at my disposal by reading all of them. The Minister also said—

The measure of our prosperity will always be the measure of our success in the sphere of primary production. In the magnificent livestock, the grain, fruit, dairy produce and other tangible results of good husbandry seen at the Royal Show is the evidence of agricultural development achieved, often despite handicaps.

Much of our land was low in its initial fertility and suffered the disadvantage of a sparse rainfall. Its bounteous productivity today is a tribute to the skill of our farmers and agricultural scientists.

At the Royal Show this year, as in other years, the many splendid exhibits provide convincing proof of successful achievements in a sphere which is of immeasurable importance to every Australian.

When speaking on the Marketing of Barley Act Amendment Bill a few weeks ago, the Minister for Agriculture said—

It is also known that the wheatgrowers in this State have initiated something which is to their everlasting credit, and that is that instead of depending on government finance and offers for research work, they have inaugurated a fund to which they contribute 4d. a bushel for the purpose of conducting research work in the industry. Every member should be pleased that there is such a type of farmer in Western Australia.

With every word of that, it is only natural that I agree because I know it is perfectly true. In my opinion, we are entering upon one of the critical stages in the history of Western Australia. The Minister has said that the primary producers are playing their part. I want to know what the Government is going to do in the way of assisting them. I do not ask for bounties or subsidies; I do not believe in them. If an industry cannot stand on its own feet after having been given a reasonable start, it is not worth persevering with.

The Minister for Agriculture: In your opinion, which is the section that most needs assistance today?

Mr. ACKLAND: I would make it possible for the farmers to carry on. Instead of loading them with ever-increasing freights as a means of making the railways pay, an effort should be made to render the railways efficient. That should be done instead of the Minister for Transport condoning the practice of inspectors, at any hour of the 24 hours of the day and night, stopping men leaving the city with essential parts for their farm machinery in their

vehicles. These inspectors search the vehicles to see if the people are contravening the State Transport Co-ordination Act. It must be obvious to every member of the Government that it takes more than a week for a farmer to get an essential part for his farm machinery when it is transported by the railways. As a result, the farmers come into the city and pick up the parts they want. Whether they are prosecuted or not is beside the point.

To think that men should be receiving wages for doing pettifogging irritating jobs like that is hardly a sign that this Government is appreciative of what the primary producers are doing—and the Minister said that the primary producers are doing a good job and the Government is appreciative of it! In my own town of Wongan Hills the mail service today is not as good as it was in 1920 because the Government has decided that it does not intend to run the same number of trains or buses. That is the sort of thing which is aggravating to primary producers.

Mr. Brady: Today farmers all drive their own cars; they do not patronise the railways.

Mr. ACKLAND: As the member for Guildford-Midland knows so much about it, I hope he will get up and tell us all the things that farmers do. Of course, they run their own cars! Does not the hon. member do the same?

Mr. Brady: Of course I do!

Mr. ACKLAND: The hon. member could walk over his electorate in an hour or two.

Mr. Brady: Why do not you tell the whole story instead of only half of it?

Mr. ACKLAND: I am telling the full story.

Mr. Johnson: It shows that he does not know the story.

Mr. ACKLAND: I can assure members that I shall never go to the member for Leederville to get any information because he knows possibly less than any other member here.

The Minister for Housing: Now you are getting nasty.

The Minister for Agriculture: It was not a very nice thing to say.

Mr. Johnson: It is not a true thing to say, either.

Mr. ACKLAND: About a quarter of an hour ago I set out to talk about the grain trade but once again the member for Fremantle succeeded in drawing me off the trail. However, it means that he will have to listen to me for a little longer and I hope that he thinks his baiting has been worth it.

As I tried to say once before, we are now finding ourselves in a dangerous situation. Had it not been for the fact that I wanted to find out the position and condition in regard to our biggest customer,

I would not have visited the United Kingdom this year. For years I have been reading what Dr. Sutton said about the f.a.q. standard of wheat. I did not agree with it, but I was not in a position to refute it definitely. I also wanted to know why the United Kingdom was not buying our wheat as in previous times; I was concerned about the number of wheatgrowers in Australia who were becoming bitter with the United Kingdom because of her attitude towards our wheat industry—a bitterness which existed in Canada in 1952 and which I never dreamed would exist in Western Australia.

Because of those things I wanted to know what was going on and with the kind assistance of the Minister for Agriculture in Great Britain, Mr. Heathcote Amery, I was able to meet the people whom I thought could give me the most information. Before I sit down I want to tell members about those discussions, but I think it is a good plan to get a background of the wheat position here first. During the year 1953-54 we produced 36,100,000 bushels of wheat in Western Australia and at the end of September this year, which is two years after its production, we still had 5,000,000 bushels of that season's wheat unsold. That wheat is deteriorating every day and in one country silo it is down to as low as 73 per cent. of the f.a.q. standard because of the ravages of insects. It is almost impossible, because of our climate, to keep them out of our wheat when it is stored for any lengthy periods.

During the year 1954-55 we produced 30,600,000 bushels of wheat and that was one of the smallest crops for a number of years. But not one bushel of that crop has been sent overseas in the form of wheat and at the end of September we had more wheat stored than had been grown during the previous year. We had 25,000,000 bushels from last year and 5,000,000 bushels from the previous year.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: What is the estimate this year?

Mr. ACKLAND: It is going up every day. The last estimate I heard was 42,000,000 bushels but I would not be a bit surprised if it went as high as 44,000,000 or 45,000,000 bushels unless, owing to the unseasonable weather we are experiencing, rust or some other fungus disease develops. Because of the type of weather experienced over the last two or three weeks, it is possible to have rust infestation. Last year the handling company in Western Australia had to erect a 5,000,000 bushel capacity bin at Midland Junction; that was quite superfluous to the ordinary needs of this country and this year the company is building storage space for 10,000,000 bushels, spread all over Western Australia.

It means that the company which handles our wheat in Western Australia has storage representing 200 per cent. of its normal requirements. As Australia is

anticipating a crop of 195,000,000 bushels this year, and there is a market in Australia for only 58,000,000 to 60,000,000 bushels—that is, for home consumption and stock feed—and it is not anticipated that any more than 90,000,000 bushels will be sent overseas, it will be seen that we will have between 140,000,000 and 150,000,000 bushels in hand at this time next year.

Mr. Brady: Can the hon. member explain why it is that India is importing rice rather than wheat whereas previously it imported wheat instead of rice?

Mr. ACKLAND: That country is importing wheat today, including small quantities from Western Australia.

Mr. Brady: The authorities there are importing bigger quantities of rice.

Mr. ACKLAND: Had it not been for the floods in Pakistan and India they would not have needed so much. Maybe they will need more wheat from us as a result of those floods.

Mr. May: You were going to tell us why Great Britain will not take our wheat.

Mr. ACKLAND: I am coming to that. Before doing so I am giving members some of the background in regard to the position in Australia. Because of the number of interjections I am hopeful that some member will be kind enough to move that I be granted an extension of time, if necessary. At this time next year we will probably have on hand the equivalent of a year's sales, both for home consumption and overseas.

I think it is time that both the Federal and State Governments decided on a policy in regard to the position. The latest statement from the Federal Government, in regard to its policy, was "Grow more wheat." We have heard no other word since then.

While there is a guarantee of the cost of production, it will be difficult to persuade farmers not to go on growing wheat. I do not believe in restriction of acreage but I think that the Federal Government must decide what it intends to do with the surplus. It must decide to give the wheat away or pay the people who grow it the full cost of production as a first advance instead of only 10s. a bushel as it did last year. I doubt whether the grower will get any more than that 10s. for at least another 12 months. The Minister for Agriculture might not agree with me and he would probably know more about the position than I do.

In my opinion, the State Government has a duty also. The Commonwealth Government cannot introduce legislation without the assistance of the States. The State Government controls the Bulk Handling Act and under the provisions of that statute Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. is compelled to take delivery of all the wheat offering. There are many advantages in that, as the company has a mon-

opoly. But in a state of crisis, such as exists at present, I think that the Minister for Agriculture should promptly bring down legislation to authorise the company to receive a percentage of the wheat according to the capacity it has for storage. It is time we heard what the Commonwealth and State Governments intend to do.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: How much wheat will the Commonwealth export this year?

Mr. ACKLAND: The Australian Wheat Board expects to export 90,000,000 bushels; there does not appear to be a market for any more. The Commonwealth Government gave the growers a guarantee on 100,000,000 bushels for export. Although the wheat delivered by the growers may be of f.a.q. standard, should it not be up to that standard when it is ultimately sent overseas the loss is born by the growers. While I was in London two shiploads of wheat, one from New South Wales and one from Western Australia, were docked because they were not up to the f.a.q. standard. As submitted the year the wheat was grown, the Western Australian wheat was not much below it but the New South Wales wheat was docked several pence. The Commonwealth Government does not carry the responsibility of that docking; it is carried by the grower, even though he may have delivered his wheat in a splendid condition. I think some move must be made to reduce our crop from about 180,000,000 bushels, which is the average, to about 100,000,000 bushels until such time as the surplus has been sold.

Mr. Court: Would that docking be due to the deterioration in storage?

Mr. ACKLAND: Yes. But in the first instance it may be the responsibility of the farmer for delivering wheat which had too high a moisture content. Even though a farmer may deliver f.a.q. standard wheat, he does not necessarily get paid on that standard; he gets paid on the average of all the overseas sales. It is anticipated that there will be storage for every bushel of wheat that is grown this year in this State. Some people may have to hold their wheat till March, but there should be storage for all. It would be ridiculous if the holding company were to be asked to build storage for an additional 20,000,000 bushels of wheat next year; it would make the holding capacity of the normal season 250 per cent.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Can the farmers store it, or does that present a difficulty?

Mr. ACKLAND: It presents great difficulties. The Act does not specify when the company should take all the wheat, but it says that it must take all the wheat presented during the season, and something must be done about it. I mentioned earlier that, through the good offices of the Minister for Agriculture in Britain, I was able

to meet a lot of people who could give me a great deal of information which I knew would be of interest to the wheat growers of Western Australia, if not to the members of this Committee. I had interviews with those associated with the corn trade and the flour millers, and I was able to visit the research stations and private farms.

I think it is advisable to let the Committee know the type of man one met, because that would have a bearing on whether what I say has any substance in it or not. On the 13th June this year, I met at the Baltic Exchange Chambers in London the following people:—

Lance Willett, Esq., (chairman, National Federation of Corn Trade Associations, Ltd.)

Laurence Hosegood, Esq., (president, London Corn Trade Association, Ltd.)

Alan B. Baker, Esq., (president, National Association of British & Irish Millers.)

Leslie W. Phillips, Esq., C.B.E., (vice-president, London Corn Trade Association) and immediate past chairman, National Federation of Corn Trade Associations.

D. R. Thom, Esq., (member of executive, London C.T.A.)

We became a little heated at times during our discussions, and I think the chairman was a little concerned because the next day he wrote me a letter. I do not propose to read all of it but will merely refer to the relevant portion. The following is part of the letter which I received from the chairman on the 14th June:—

I gather that you were greatly interested in the views of those members of the "Baltic" whom you met.

Our comments or criticisms were all intended to be highly constructive and we do so hope that nothing that was said or implied will make you feel that we are lukewarm in our feelings of very great friendship towards your country.

I can say definitely on behalf of the trade, that we are most anxious to do everything that we possibly can to assist and encourage trade relations between Australia and the United Kingdom.

The matter we discussed was: Why was the United Kingdom—our biggest customer—not buying wheat as she did previously? I pointed out to them that for some years they had purchased wheat from Australia for as much as 6s. per bushel below its overseas value. Although I did not admit it there, I will do so here, that England did not use any force to persuade Australia to enter the International Wheat Agreement. That agreement was entered into willingly by both the Federal and State Governments in this country and also by the

wheat growers themselves. As I have described previously, they were looking for an elusive security, but it turned out to be bad business.

When, at the end of that agreement, the United Kingdom could see that there were 300 per cent. more wheat stocks in the world than previously, I believe with a great deal of justification and good business acumen she said, "We will go on the free market and not enter a second international wheat agreement."

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member's time has expired.

Mr. Hearman: I move—

That the hon. member's time be extended.

Motion put and passed.

Mr. ACKLAND: I thank you, Mr. Chairman, and members, for giving me a little more time. I am sorry I was unable to do what I wanted to in the period allotted to me. I do think the people of Australia, the wheat growers in particular, have the least cause for complaint against the British Government for the action it took. We entered into this arrangement with our eyes wide open. It was done with a great deal of alacrity and enthusiasm. When one enters into a bad business arrangement—and there were many of us who were emphatic that it was a bad business arrangement—we have no reason to complain afterwards.

After the war, Great Britain went back to private enterprise and permitted the merchants to handle the wheat and flour trade. England can buy very much cheaper from other parts of the world. It happens that in the English loaf of bread there has to be 50 per cent. of high protein wheat, and the only places from which they can get that in reasonable quantities and of an assured quality, are Canada and the U.S.A. They need something equivalent to Manitoba No. 1. It can be grown in Australia but not economically.

Beyond that 50 per cent., they are not very interested where they get their wheat, as the other 50 per cent. required as filler wheat. Australia has to compete with the English grower, with France, Argentine, Sweden, the U.S.A. and with other parts of the world. The cost of production in this country, which is estimated at 12s. 7d. a bushel Australian ports, is far dearer than the price at which the English millers can buy their wheat elsewhere. When I was in England the millers were purchasing their wheat from the English farmers at £22 a ton. The farmers were getting a subsidy from the English Government which returned to the growers £33 10s. a ton, or 18s. 6d. a bushel sterling.

Much the same conditions exist in France. The English farmers were growing 40,000,000 more bushels than they did

prior to the war. The French Government has a policy of subsidising its growers and they get a subsidy for all the wheat they export overseas. This is the position with which we are faced. We have to reduce our costs or these countries must give up their subsidies before we can compete with them. It is interesting to note what great importance the United Kingdom places on agriculture, and England is one of the greatest industrial nations in the world today, if not the greatest. We find that she is subsidising her agriculture to the extent of £A350,000,000 a year.

We hear members say that the poultry grower should be given cheap wheat. In the United Kingdom the Government subsidises the poultry grower to the extent of £20,000,000 sterling a year, so he can afford to buy food for his stock and make a reasonable living. For every acre of new land which is ploughed up, the English farmer gets £7 12s. an acre subsidy. If he does not kill a calf and decides to rear it, he gets £7 10s. a head. If he breeds sheep in the hill country, he receives a subsidy of 5s. a head. This year they received an additional fertiliser subsidy of £3,500,000. When a farmer limes his country—and lime is needed in the United Kingdom—70 per cent. of the cost price of the lime is paid to him by way of subsidy. It will also be interesting to note that 25 per cent. of all fertiliser costs are subsidised.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: That is what you call "being on clover."

Mr. ACKLAND: They are on clover, but what I am trying to say is that it is becoming more and more impossible for us in this country to compete against these conditions. We have the best filler wheat in the world. It is not as high a protein wheat as Manitoba No. 1 but for the percentage of filler wheat that the United Kingdom needs, we have the best. In their discussions with me, these gentlemen said, "We are not interested in Governments. We are millers; we are bakers; we are in the corn trade and have to produce the cheapest loaf possible to the 50,000,000 people living in the British Isles. You must come down and meet the other sellers in competition before we can trade with you."

Mr. May: You will have to shift Australia nearer London to do that.

Mr. ACKLAND: The Premier had something to say about freights. He bemoaned the fact that shipping companies had put their freight rates up. The freight to transport wheat to England is more than 4s. 6d. a bushel to which other charges are added. Last week the English millers were buying wheat in England at the equivalent of 9s. a bushel Fremantle. Our high freights and insurance, etc., are responsible for this small return of 3s. 7d. below production costs. The price has risen this week to 9s. 3½d.

The shipping companies are not only responsible for the freight costs. Members have heard it said that I went to Europe on an apple ship. A ship of 4,000 tons can be loaded and unloaded in some northern European ports in seven days. I saw 100,000 case of apples taken off in 3½ days in Gothenberg, and the ship could be loaded in another 3½ days. I was told it took 9 days to do the same in South Africa. I am told that the same ship took 18 days to load in this country, and it had to take not 4,000 tons, but only 250 tons.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You do not want to believe everything they tell you!

Mr. ACKLAND: I know that these things are true.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You know nothing about it at all! You are going on hearsay.

Mr. ACKLAND: I know that this is true. The hon. member would consider, and so would I, that the Fremantle lumper is better than the lumper at Colombo.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: He is as good as the Western Australian farmer.

Mr. ACKLAND: Very likely. Of course, if he will do it! But 500 tons of tea were put on at Colombo out of lighters in three hours the other day.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You should go and live in Colombo.

Mr. ACKLAND: I do not want to do so; I prefer to live here. I was told by a captain who was in charge of a wheat ship that if he goes to an American port the bulk heads are put in the ship in 24 hours, but it takes a full week in any part of Australia. The lumpers are going to feel this strain as much as anybody else. Nobody can tell me that industry cannot do more. It is not entirely the responsibility of the Federal Government that the embargo was placed on imports. The responsibility is everybody's, because we are not meeting the markets; we cannot export and sell our goods overseas.

The wheat growers have played their part. In 1949-50 they sold wheat for home consumption at 7s. 2d., and under the International Wheat Agreement at 12s. 1d.; and that year the overseas value was 18s. 6d. The following year the home consumption figure was 7s. 10d.; the International Wheat Agreement figure, 16s. 1d.; and the price on the open market, 20s. 6d. The next year the home consumption price was 10s. and it rose to 12s.; the International Wheat Agreement price was 16s. 1d.; and the overseas figure was 20s. 6d. So the wheat growers in this country are doing their part.

However, wheat growers will have to take a holiday, because we cannot have a situation here similar to that which occurred in Canada, where churches, skating rinks, halls and houses were full of wheat because there was nowhere else to put it. There will have to be a reduction if we are to prevent that occurring.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: I thought you were going to suggest that two grains should be grown where one is being grown now.

Mr. ACKLAND: I do not think the hon. member knows what he is talking about.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You would be able to sell it to Pakistan and other places a bit cheaper than.

Mr. ACKLAND: I thank members for their indulgence in giving me extra time. I have not kept to my notes as I should have done, but I do want to bring home to members the importance of the present position. It is not going to affect the wool growers or the wheat growers as much as the general community, and it is up to this Parliament and those who occupy the Treasury Bench to see what can be done to make it possible to meet our overseas commitments in the overseas markets.

Mr. Court: What is the world surplus of wheat?

Mr. ACKLAND: It is nearly 200,000,000 bushels.

Mr. Court: What is the chance of getting some countries to consume that assuming that we even gave it to them or sold it at a ridiculously low price which they could afford?

Mr. ACKLAND: I do not know. My job is the growing and handling of wheat. As for what is the right procedure to adopt with reference to marketing, I am afraid members must go to somebody with a knowledge of marketing which is much greater than mine. But I know the seriousness of the position; and with our ever-rising costs, it will go from bad to worse, and we are likely to finish up in a state of unemployment which may be as great as that which occurred in a previous period.

MR. PERKINS (Roe) [9.50]: I have been very interested in studying the comments of the Treasurer when introducing the Budget. I was particularly interested in his remarks about the general economic position facing Western Australia and Australia as a whole. In the early part of his speech, he dealt quite extensively with the unfavourable balance of trade facing Australia at present, and he was rather critical of the Commonwealth Government for allowing the position to drift to the point where a considerable deficit had taken place. I gathered from his remarks that he thought that as soon as there was an indication that our imports were exceeding our exports to any considerable extent, action should have been taken to place restrictions on imports.

It is rather an interesting argument, but I am wondering whether the Treasurer has really studied the position as closely as he studies many matters that he introduces to this House. Obviously it is a subject which caused the Commonwealth

Government considerable concern; and because that Government is finally responsible for the overall economic position of Australia, specially-trained officers are employed to advise it on this particular question. I have no doubt that it was not without very solid reasons that the Commonwealth Government delayed the placing of restrictions on imports.

I thought the Treasurer was trying to develop the argument that if those restrictions had been imposed earlier, that would have very largely solved the problem; that, in effect, Australia could have produced those goods that were imported, without any damage to its economy. It must be obvious to every member that, if Australia is going to produce some of the goods that at present are being imported, it will need an expansion of present factories and the use of considerable labour and material in the extension of the factories as well as circulating capital for the running of the factories. At a time when the Australian economy is strained to its utmost and when the economy is more or less in a state of unbalance, if we are going to put a greater strain on the manpower and material available within Australia, the result must be to bring about further inflation.

This is a very serious question and one of great concern to members representing country electorates. In saying that, I am alluding not only to the farming electorates, but also to the goldmining districts, which are just as vitally concerned as are the districts producing wool and foodstuffs. It is very evident that for a majority of our primary products, we have reached a point where costs are very close to the prices we are receiving. If there is any further serious inflation, it is obvious to anyone who closely studies the position that immense difficulty is likely to beset even those primary industries which so far have been regarded as being very buoyant.

A number of our primary industries have been facing difficulties for a considerable time. In saying that I have in mind particularly the dairying industry, and I understand that various branches of the fruit-growing industry are also confronted with a very difficult position. Therefore it will be understood why I say this problem of increasing costs is of very serious concern to members representing country electorates. While all members no doubt feel concerned about preserving the overall prosperity of Australia, we who represent country electorates naturally tend to pay particular attention to those areas.

If that is the position, it follows that we should be paying close attention to the question of rising costs. The member for Moore tonight has dealt with some aspects of that question. The position could be that, if there is any further

serious increase in primary production costs, we shall reach the stage where the total production of those industries will become static, and then we may experience an actual decline in those industries. If that occurs, the country areas will not be the only ones that are affected; it will inevitably cause considerable difficulty for the economy of Australia as a whole.

I do not suggest that we shall have another depression like that of the thirties, but it could well be that the time of prosperity we have experienced since the war could come to an end. I do not think that that is necessary by any means. I believe there is scope in all branches of industry in Australia, primary and secondary, for a great increase in efficiency. It is only natural during a period of rapid expansion that inefficiency should tend to creep in, but this is a problem that must not be overlooked if we are going to maintain economic stability.

Personally, I do not believe that the solution lies along the lines suggested by the Treasurer. I consider that the imposition of import restrictions is only playing with the problem. The real need is to build our economy in such a way that imports and exports will tend to balance. The fact that the present imbalance has occurred is an indication that there is a weakness in our economy. I think we could take notice of what has happened in other countries of the world. We in Australia in recent times have probably been expanding our economy to a greater extent than has any other country that could be named.

Some outside capital has come into the country in the shape of new industries and in the setting up of branches of foreign industries, but the amount of that capital is, I understand, very small in proportion to the total expansion of the capital resources required in Australia in recent times. The problem is an interesting and complex one, and it affects every branch of industry in Australia. A great deal of lip service is paid to the question of holding our costs, but I am wondering just how much action is taken in many of these branches of industry which are sheltered to a considerable degree from fierce outside competition.

The same might be said about some of our government departments. While money is readily available, the tendency is to get the job done and not to worry unduly about the cost, and that, I am afraid, is what has been happening in recent times. I think we have reached the point when close attention must be paid to this question of costs, not only from the point of view of making our funds in Australia go as far as possible, but also from the point of view of preventing the rising price spiral which will, first of all, affect the exporting industries which cannot

readily pass on the costs that will ultimately spread throughout the economic fabric of Australia.

I want to deal with one or two special points. The electorate I represent is largely a grain and wool producing area. At the present time we are concerned about the lower price being received for wool, but I think the greatest concern in the wheat and wool areas is in connection with the mounting wheat surplus. This is a serious embarrassment to the Governments, the handling authority and the producer. I have asked a series of questions of the Minister for Agriculture in an endeavour to obtain from him a public statement as to the policy of the Government; or, at least, the steps that are being taken to formulate a policy.

Of course, I know it is difficult for any State Government, or for the Commonwealth Government for that matter, to make a forthright statement of policy at the present time without taking the risk of political repercussions. The Minister may have misunderstood my questions, and thought I was trying to secure political points, but actually nothing was further from my mind. The questions which I directed to him were designed purely to obtain a statement of policy so that everyone would know where he stood. I have been asking the Minister when a meeting of the Agricultural Council is going to be held and whether he will take the most active steps possible to see that the question of a wheat policy for the whole of Australia is placed high on the agenda for the conference. The Minister has stated that there will be a meeting of the Agricultural Council in the very near future, and that the question of wheat will be considered at that meeting.

I am afraid the hon. gentleman has not gone nearly as far as I would like him to go. I wanted him to state that he would make the strongest efforts possible to see that the Agricultural Council comes to a decision on this vital question. The Commonwealth has the control of imports and exports, and it is responsible for the overall trading policy of Australia. It is also responsible, in the final analysis, for trade agreements between Australia and the other nations of the world, so, naturally, it is in a key position to decide what the Australian policy shall be in regard to the production of any commodity.

In recent times, the Prime Minister, rightly I believe, has met leaders of industry and various key trade union representatives in order to decide on what policy shall be adopted in certain industries; and I believe the Prime Minister has received a good deal of co-operation from both the employers and the employees. I am now suggesting that the same thing should be done in the matter of declaring a policy for the wheat industry. I realise it is difficult for any individual State to take action; that it is a politically dangerous

question; and that the right approach to the problem seems to be to link the Commonwealth and the States in any declaration of policy.

The Australian Agricultural Council is representative of both the Commonwealth and the States and, as I understand the position, it was created for just such a purpose as this. As most members know, before wheat is grown, preparations have to be made a considerable time in advance. Some of the preparations for the next season's planting have already been made. A lot of country has been fallowed; possibly some of it can be used for the production of other grain.

In the very near future the growers will also be taking their superphosphate, will be arranging for the acquisition of any additional machinery that is required, and will be making plans to deal with any other essential requirements for the growing of the wheat crop. These plans affect all sorts of things and, of course, the various importers, manufacturers and business houses of Australia can only decide on their respective programmes when they know what the likely consumption of their commodities will be. So it requires no imagination to realise how important it is that a declaration should be made on the highest level as to the policy of the Commonwealth and the States in regard to wheat production. It is not fair to the growers or to the various business houses of Australia to leave the position floating as it is at present.

If members inquire from the machinery firms and others concerned in this State with supplying the essential requirements of farmers, they will find that at present those organisations are largely marking time as the farming community does not know what the position is going to be next season. If the Agricultural Council comes out with a forthright declaration that wheat production must be reduced, we will know where we stand.

It is useless for a growers' organisation to do it, and it would also be wrong for them to make a pronouncement because I think it must be done at government level. I do not think this question is the responsibility of either the Commonwealth or any individual State, but that it is a decision that must be made by the Commonwealth in conjunction with the various wheat growing States—

The Minister for Health: Do you think it wise to reduce the production of wheat?

Mr. PERKINS: I am not in possession of all the facts and I do not think the Minister would like to say whether or not it would be a wise move. It would be a serious matter to suggest that we limit wheat production or any form of food production when there are many people in the world who are not getting sufficient

to eat. If the Commonwealth and the States together can devise any plan whereby food can be made available to the countries where more grain could be eaten—without upsetting the overall grain trade of the world—perhaps we would be justified in continuing our normal wheat growing operations.

Mr. Brady: Some of those countries require extended credit.

Mr. PERKINS: Neither the Premier, the Minister for Agriculture, nor any other member of this House has all the information necessary to make a reasoned declaration in that regard.

Mr. Lawrence: Why not give it to them?

Mr. PERKINS: I would not have any objection to that, provided the producers did not have to do the giving. They would have to be protected.

Mr. Lawrence: They could afford it.

Mr. PERKINS: We can all be quite good at giving away other people's property. All I am saying is that we should make a reasoned approach to this problem. The officers of the Federal Government should have the fullest information on this matter and I have no doubt our State officers also have some information. When all that information is pooled, I would like a declaration of policy so that we may know where we stand—

Mr. Lawrence: I suppose you know the meaning of the word, "declaration"?

Mr. PERKINS: I will leave the member for South Fremantle to give a dissertation on that. Whether I am using exactly the right word or not, I think members know what I am getting at.

Mr. Court: Is there any world authority which has determined the consumption potential of these Asian nations—assuming finance was not a consideration?

Mr. PERKINS: I cannot answer that question. I think some of these problems are very complex indeed and that it would be dangerous to launch out on a big scheme. It would be necessary to test the position, possibly in a small way, before doing anything on a big scale. Many grandiose schemes that have been worked out on paper did not work too well in practice.

I remember reading, not so long ago, about the ground-nuts scheme in Africa. There is a book in the parliamentary library dealing with that scheme, and it tells us that the appropriate authorities in Britain went to endless trouble to get the best possible advice on each branch of agriculture involved and on the various mechanical problems and so on that might be met with, together with the geographical factors and all the other relevant points, but finally the scheme broke down and members know what a hopeless mess it was in the end.

If they care to read that book they will find that the ground-nuts scheme broke down on what might at first have been considered to be trivial points. It was the personal equation which to a large extent, was responsible for the failure of that scheme. My next point is that Australia is a very good market for the various manufactured and processed goods that we import, particularly from Great Britain. Some of us who are engaged in primary production have thought that the Federal Government for many years past—this does not relate to any particular political party—has used its bargaining position very poorly indeed in the various trade agreements it has made with other countries.

Perhaps after giving careful consideration to this question, the Commonwealth Government could go a considerable way towards improving the wheat export position by using its bargaining powers in that regard. I well remember reading in "The Liverpool Corn Trade News"—I think it was in 1951 when restrictions were placed on imports from Great Britain and there was a slackening which at the time was called a recession—an article on the economic position of Australia. As members know, that is an authoritative journal, well respected throughout the world. It published a very critical article by its editor on the trade policy followed by Great Britain up to that time.

Members know that following the war Britain's policy was to import her food requirements as cheaply as possible, and to that end she made various agreements, one of them being the International Wheat Agreement, which was an excellent instrument for securing wheat at something less than world parity prices in a period when foodstuffs were scarce, following the war, and world wheat prices went up to a fairly high level. Great Britain had considerable success and bought her wheat at a good deal cheaper by that means. Similar agreements were made in regard to other food-stuffs.

As the editor of "The Liverpool Corn Trade News" pointed out, Britain had secured her food from Australia at a price cheaper than she would have had to pay for it on the world price ruling at that time. The result was, as the editor pointed out, that Australia's overseas balance in Britain was less by that amount, and Australia had found it necessary to place restrictions on the importation of manufactured and processed goods from Great Britain. Because of the import restrictions in 1951, Lancashire experienced the worst depression it had known—at least within living memory.

The reaction of the editor of "The Liverpool Corn Trade News" was that it would be better if Britain paid a little more for her food and kept Australia's overseas trade balance in England a little higher. This would keep Australia happy and she

would thus keep importing Lancashire textiles; the British manufacturers would be kept going and the British economy generally would remain on a sound basis.

The Minister for Health: Quite a reasonable conclusion.

Mr. PERKINS: Of course, it was a well reasoned conclusion, as one would expect from the editor of such a paper. With the situation that exists at present, it could well be that Great Britain in particular would be susceptible to that sort of reasoning, and Australia could quite easily improve her export position with great advantage to all concerned. We would be able to get rid of a good deal of the wheat out of our silos and it would make the wheat available for consumption in Great Britain.

I do not pose as an authority on this question and I realise that there are many problems associated with it. But I think that the closest attention should be given to it by the various people who are entrusted with Australia's trade problems—whether they be Commonwealth or State officials. If the question is put to the Agricultural Council meeting, we could quite easily get a worth-while declaration of policy from that body, which would give us something more concrete than anything we have had for some considerable time.

There are many problems in our country districts which are being aggravated by the uncertainty of the present position. In the Roe electorate in particular, many men have taken up Crown land since the war and have had some measure of success in its development. It applies not only to the Roe electorate but also to the electorates of Mt. Marshall and Eyre and, indeed, to other parts of the State. But it is in the area I have mentioned that the greatest scope for development has existed, and men looking for land have gone in and seized the opportunity to develop it.

Those who started in the years immediately following the war and whose properties were sufficiently developed to reap the benefit of the high prices have fared quite well. But in a great many cases men had only limited capital and I know a number of them who had only £800 or £1,000, or the equivalent of that sum in plant and machinery and, because of the limitation, have been unable to develop their holdings sufficiently to reap the benefit of the high prices. Their progress has been much slower as a result, and in some cases they had to do contract work for neighbours or had to take other work to tide them over the early stages.

A great many men who have attempted to establish themselves in the period since the war have done so with some measure of success. I introduced a deputation to

the Minister for Agriculture; it comprised men from the area that I represent, and I believe it is typical of most of the outer agricultural areas of the State. We asked that these men should be treated as liberally as those of an earlier generation were treated—we were talking of those farmers who had opened up the agricultural areas of Western Australia from 1906 or 1908 onwards.

As most members know, the greater part of our wheat belt, and some of the South-West portions of the State, were opened up by men with limited capital, and the main agency for providing the amount of capital required, in addition to the small amount that the men had, was the old Agricultural Bank. Under that system, the bank lent money not on the security which the men could produce at that time but on the security of the additional development that was likely to take place. A certain amount per acre was allowed for clearing, fencing, the provision of water supplies and so forth up to a limit, I understand, of about £1,400 or £1,500 per settler. That was a godsend, and a great many men in Western Australia, who are prosperous farmers today, have that system to thank.

But in the period since the war, even that small amount of assistance has not been available to new settlers. Members will recall that when the then Premier Hon. F. J. S. Wise, introduced the Rural & Industries Bank Act, he particularly stressed the point that, in addition to the bank doing the job which the old Agricultural Bank had done during an earlier period, it was also intended that the bank should carry out the functions of an ordinary trading bank. Under the Agricultural Bank system, once a man had become established the bank could not provide the ordinary trading bank facilities. As a result, the tendency was that after a man had developed his property to the stage where he did not require Agricultural Bank assistance, he shifted his affairs to one of the trading banks.

What the then Premier had in mind was quite sound. However, members will know that although that Bill provided for an agency section of the Rural & Industries Bank, unfortunately, in the period since the war and since the bank started operating, it has been short of the funds necessary to cope with all its activities, and the tendency has been to concentrate on the ordinary trading bank side of the business and to spend only a limited sum on the agency section. The result has been that most of the assistance available to these new settlers in recent times—especially those whom I have been concerned with—has been limited to that granted under ordinary trading bank conditions. I believe the Rural & Industries Bank has been very generous in some cases, but, of course, the commissioners who deal with

the trading section of the bank's activities have had to be extremely careful to ensure that any advances made should be repaid within a reasonable time.

As I understand the position, there have been some changes in the policy applying to the trading bank. These changes have been arrived at partly as a result of pressure from the Central Bank. The tendency has been to avoid long term commitments by any trading bank. I understand the idea of ordinary banking business is to confine advances to those purposes which provide a reasonable possibility of repayment within as short a period as possible.

Any advances made for clearing, fencing or for the provision of water supplies on farm properties where there is not much margin of profit must result in that capital being tied up for a considerable time. Therefore, it seems proper that that type of advance should be provided by the agency section of the Rural & Industries Bank which was created for that express purpose.

I subsequently introduced a deputation of these settlers to the Treasurer stressing the urgency of the position. I will say that he gave that deputation a very favourable hearing, which was appreciated by its members. The Treasurer, of course, made it clear that the loan position was difficult and that, whilst he realised that they had put up a good case, possibly the degree of action that he could take would be limited by the loan funds available.

While I do not know how much loan money has been made available by the Treasurer to the Rural & Industries Bank since then, I hope that when he introduces his Loan Estimates, he will refer to this particular question because I think he will agree that it is indeed an urgent problem. Many of these settlers are as good as we have ever had in our agricultural areas. They are working far harder than most of us in this Chamber would have liked to work at any stage.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You speak for yourself.

Mr. PERKINS: No doubt the member for Fremantle has worked hard in his day, but I have never seen any man work harder than a number of these settlers whom I have interviewed.

Mr. Lawrence: You have never seen the member for Fremantle work.

Mr. PERKINS: He is in an area where there is not the same necessity to work as hard as he has done.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: He can still work harder than some of your cockies anyway.

Mr. PERKINS: The point is that these settlers I have in mind have developed their properties to the stage where they have done a good deal of clearing and are

growing excellent cereal crops, but in some cases there is little fencing carried out, and in others no fencing has been done at all. In odd cases there may be some properties fully fenced which enables the settlers to carry stock.

However, in a period when grain production is something of an embarrassment to us and there is a good market for both wool and wheat—even although wool prices may not be as high as they were, there is still a good market for wool—it seems absurd that we should be forcing men into this position as a result of the lack of necessary finance to enable them to produce commodities that are in short supply instead of producing grain for which there is no market.

In regard to properties that are only partially fenced or have no fencing at all and have inadequate water supplies, if finance were made available to provide these facilities it would be possible for the settlers to run stock; probably sheep. In some cases it might be desirable to run beef cattle as well. However, if given the requisite assistance, they would place themselves into a sounder financial position personally and they would assist to improve the economic position of Australia generally. The position is very serious indeed as I told the Treasurer when I introduced the deputation to him.

I repeat to the Chamber that unless some assistance can be given to these men, I feel they will have to leave their properties or, at the least, they will be unable to make any further development. That is undesirable from the viewpoint of the settler himself and the State generally. In these times, when the number of new settlers is comparatively small in relation to the total production of the State, it is wrong that we should allow this position to develop.

These are men who struggled hard to get themselves established. They are men of grit and it does not seem right to me that, as they have been prepared to risk their hard won savings, they should receive other than sympathetic treatment from the Government of the day. I hope the Treasurer will deal in some detail with this question when he introduces the Loan Estimates, because, in my judgment, it is extremely serious.

I meet a number of these men from time to time and also receive quite a good deal of correspondence from them and they are all asking me what the Government is going to do to make some assistance available from the agency section of the Rural & Industries Bank. All I have been able to tell them up to date is that I do not know. I know nothing more than the answer given by the Treasurer to the deputation when I introduced it to him and when he said the loan position was difficult.

Naturally, I know the loan position is difficult, but I also know that loan funds are being found for many other projects in this State. If loan money can be found for one project it should be possible to find it for another. To my mind it is merely a question of priority, and he would be a very brave man indeed who would say that this type of assistance does not come within the highest priority. I am glad I have had the opportunity to explain to the Committee the difficulties which face these particular settlers, because while I have no doubt that the Treasurer and his Minister for Agriculture know the position well, I feel that other members in this Chamber should also be conversant with what obtains.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.43 p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, 26th October, 1955.

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

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the Medical Act Amendment Bill (No. 1).

QUESTION.

HOUSING.

Readjustment of Land Prices.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON (for Hon. A. F. Griffith) asked the Chief Secretary:

On the 12th December, 1952 ("Hansard," p. 2973), the Hon. G. Fraser moved the following motion:—

That this House requests the State Housing Commission to readjust the prices charged to ex-servicemen (clients of the War Service Homes Commission) for lots purchased from Melville Road Board about July, 1947, to a figure more in conformity with the cost to the Housing Commission.

(1) Did the Minister move this motion with a view to placing before this House his considered opinion on the matter?

(2) Was he representing on behalf of the purchasers of land under the War Service Homes Act in the district mentioned a desire by those people to have the prices of this land readjusted by the State Housing Commission?

(3) When he framed the motion, did he do so with the idea in mind that the motion, if carried, would assist the people in question?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) No. I took this action on my own initiative and was submitting my personal views.

(3) I framed the motion with the idea of drawing the attention of the Government to the matter, and with the object, if possible, of obtaining uniformity in connection with charges for land to persons being assisted under the War Service Homes Act. At that time most of the land concerned was not built on.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1. Junior Farmers' Movement.
2. Coal Mine Workers (Pensions) Act Amendment.

Passed.

BILL—MARKETING OF BARLEY ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. L. C. DIVER (Central) [4.36]: I have examined this Bill since yesterday. As the Minister said, it provides for the deduction of fractions of $\frac{1}{4}$ d. or less per bushel of barley from the proceeds of sale due to those barley growers who are prepared to assist the Soil Conservation Fund in this State. Firstly, the Western Australian Barley Marketing Board will decide the best manner in which the money is