ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. W. C. Angwin): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn to Tuesday, the 17th November.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What is the object?

Hon. G. Taylor: I will be pleased to support the motion if the Minister will give us the slightest indication of the necessity for it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I did not think it was necessary to do so.

Hon. G. Taylor: I would like to have some reason for the request that the House should adjourn for eight days.

Mr. Panton: We have had a strenuous time.

Hon. G. Taylor: The hon. member does not need a rest.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do.

Hon. G. Taylor: I do not desire to oppose the motion, but I think we should have some explanation.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am not afraid to give the reason for the adjournment. During the last week or two it has been recognised that many members have been absent from both sides of the House. If hon. members insist on coming back they may do so, and perhaps I shall get my Estimates through without any debate. However, as the Federal elections are in progress, it was thought an opportunity might be afforded members to participate during the forthcoming week, and then be able to deal properly with the business before the House, after the poll.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is a pity we did not know you intended to adjourn.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: You knew about it.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No, we did not.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Irrespective of what the member for Mt. Margaret (Hon. G. Taylor) may require, I feel the need for a rest.

Hon. G. Taylor: You will, after a week on the hustings.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 8.50 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 10th November, 1925.

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. E. H. Harris, leave of absence for six consecutive sittings granted to Hon. H. Seddon (North-East) on the ground of urgent private business.

BILL—DAY BAKING.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 4th November.

HON. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan) [4.44]: When this Bill came from another place, passed as it was by an overwhelming majority, I thought there was little in it that might cause controversy in this Chamber. It is a simple measure to provide that baking shall not take place between 8 o'clock in the evening and 5 o'clock in the morning. Therefore it is a Bill which, on the face of it, this House might have passed without much difficulty and without much debate. But those who have sponsored it have, for some reason which is unaccountable to me, taken up considerable time in trying to press it upon the House; and consequently I thought, as Mr. Holmes often puts it, that perhaps there was a nigger in the wood pile. Feeling that, I have looked through the Bill again, and have traversed the speeches of Mr. Hickey, who moved the second reading, of Mr. Gray, who spoke to it, and of Dr. Saw, who also supported the measure.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Were you looking for the nigger?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I was looking for the imp in the wood pile.

Hon. E. H. Gray: You will have a job to find one there.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Curiously enough, all who have spoken have put up the strong-

est possible case against the Bill. The Honorary Minister said very little about the measure, but took us through the proceedings of the Geneva Conference, and told us that the delegates there desired this measure and that it was absolutely essential. I have no doubt that the delegates who attended in Geneva were basing their decision upon what they knew to be the conditions of baking on the Continent. I have been into some of those bakeries, especially in Italy; and I must say that I would not care to eat the bread produced there. But those are conditions that do not prevail here, and I fail to see why we should always go to some foreign country to see what is done there and then come here and try to pass the same legislation. But, of course, distant fields generally appear to be green. I have no doubt that, looking at it from this distance, many in this State regard Moscow as a veritable paradise for the working man; but I would suggest that some of the delegates who now and then go to Geneva and other places to learn and then come back to teach us, should go to Moscow, and then probably they would return satisfied that the working man here is in a paradise and that if he went to Moscow he would be in the other place.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Have you been to Moscow?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: No; I have read a good deal about it, and concerning what is done there. I have been to a number of other places in Europe.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: There are some people who are galloping to Moscow.

The Honorary Minister: You speak for yourself!

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Mr. Gray, who represents another section of the Labour Party, and has had considerable experience of baking, did not deal much with the Bill, but dwelt upon the manufacture of bread. He went into the chemistry of yeast and told us how the germs acted, how carbon-dioxide was given off and how alcohol was produced in the process. He told us that it was very bad to eat stale bread.

Hon. E. H. Gray: I did not say that.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I always eat new, hot bread when I can get it. I am fortified in my method of living by what Mr. Gray said regarding the chemical action that takes place during the manufacture of bread. When we remember that the import duty on every gallon of alcohol and whisky is 35s., we realise that drinking those stimulants becomes expensive. On the other hand, I find that if I eat new bread, I can get enough alcohol into my system to satisfy my requirements, without going to the expense of buying spirits.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Where did you get that from?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: From your speech.

Hon. E. H. Gray: I did not say anything of the sort.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: You said that alcohol was given off.

Hon. E. H. Gray: I did not say anything of the kind.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Alcohol in its heated state is more gaseous, making it more possible of rapid absorption into the system than if the alcohol is taken cold. We know that we live by absorption. The food we eat gives off gases which permeate the system. The gases affect the blood and cause nutrition, the rest passing off. If I can secure my supplies of alcohol from new bread better than from cold bread, I comply with my requirements more cheaply. That is one reason Mr. Gray gave us to show why I should eat new bread.

Hon. E. H. Gray: On a point of order, Mr. President, the hon. member is wilfully misrepresenting what I said. I did not use the statement that the yeast generated alcohol in the process of bread making. I did not suggest that in any one statement that I made. It is absolutely ridiculous.

The PRESIDENT: I am certain the hon. member would not wish to misrepresent you in any way.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I have no wish to misrepresent the hon. member, but I have made references to what I understood Mr. Gray to say.

Hon. E. H. Gray: It is absurd to talk that way.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I rather appreciated the point because, as I said, I eat hot bread and as I do not drink much whisky, I could invigorate my system by absorbing a little more alcohol as a result.

Hon. E. H. Gray: You are talking nonsense now.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: It may be nonsense. As a matter of fact, that is how I regarded the hon. member's remarks. Dr. Saw continued the debate and also told us that it was bad to eat new bread. He urged that we must eat stale bread. I always eat new

bread whenever I can get it and when there is a baker's holiday and I cannot get my requirements fulfilled, new bread is made for me at home. Dr. Saw told us that persons of my proclivities are like ostriches, having depraved stomachs. I must yield to the opinion of the doctor, but from that aspect I would point out to Dr. Saw that, while I eat hot bread, my family eat stale bread. Perhaps that is a question of domestic economy, but the fact remains that I have never had occasion to go to a doctor to secure a prescription for indigestion. On the other hand, members of my family who eat stale bread are constantly going to the doctor for that purpose. While Dr. Saw says that the eating of stale bread is conducive to good health, the eating of hot bread being to the contrary, I have given my personal experience. I do not wish to impute motives, but if my experience is that of others, the doctors are able to profit through people eating stale bread. There is another question. We have had a considerable amount of scientific teaching so far. Dr. Saw said it was bad to have bread exposed because, as he said, flies come along and contaminate it. In the first instance, he tells us the flies partake of various kinds of filth and when they have taken their fill, fly away and lodge on bread or some other article of food. Such is their anatomy that before they are capable of taking another meal, it becomes necessary for them to vomit what they have first eaten. This they do on the bread. The corollary is that it is better to bake bread at night when the flies are asleep rather than during the day when they are on the wing and full of vigour. It is then that they alight on the filth and subsequently fly away to lodge on bread or other eatables.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I think the question is rather one affecting the spread of hours during which baking can be carried on.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: That is so. The spread of hours necessarily involves the question of day or night baking. I am trying to point out to the House that night baking, according to Dr. Saw, who favours day baking, is preferable because flies are not about at night to contaminate the bread.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Bread is not delivered during the night time.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: The point is, when is the bread made? It could be delivered easily in air-tight envelopes, as Dr. Saw suggested. Those hon. members who advocated the passing of the Bill have really urged reasons against it. I intend to vote for the second reading of the measure with a view to trying to improve it a little bit when we reach the Committee stage. I am going to do so upon humanitarian grounds. The workers in Western Australia want fewer hours. They want more time off and I cannot see why they should not have it if it is possible without injustice or extreme inconvenience to the community. There is no reason why the bakers, in common with others, should not have time off during which they could go with their families to the pictures, to the trots, to the races, or even to the whippet races. If they are not working, they should have a few hours off to spend in enjoyment as I suggest. If they have time off, they must have some outlet for their surplus energies. If we give them opportunities to go to such places of amusement as I have mentioned, some advantage will accrue to the State. Revenue is now collected on tickets of admission to the pictures. This State is not too affluent, and so every little helps the Treasurer. If we can get these bakers and others free at night to go to the pictures and pay the amusement tax, so much the better will it be for the revenue. On these grounds only will I vote for the second reading.

Hon. J. Nicholson: What about newspaper workers?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Speaking personally I should be extremely pleased if hon. members were to pass through the House a Bill providing that in future there should be no morning newspapers, only afternoon newspapers. It would suit me very well.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: The hon. member would not support such a Bill, of course?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Possibly I would do what has often been done before, namely, discover a reason why I could not attend in my place while the Bill was going through. However, jocularity apart, for the reasons I have given I will support the second reading and in Committee try to effect a little improvement in the direction indicated by Dr. Saw, namely, that bread while being distributed should be put up in sealed cartons and so rendered immune from dust and contamination by flies and in other ways.

On motion by Hon. C. F. Baxter, debate adjourned.

BILL—DIVORCE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from 27th October.

HON. J. W. KIRWAN (South) [5.3]: This is a very short Bill of two clauses. Better demonstration could not be supplied than that afforded by the Bill of the need for a House of review. Moreover, it is an exemplification of the old adage that hard cases make bad laws. No doubt the wrong that the Bill proposes to rectify will be rectified if the Bill be passed. But my objection to the Bill is that while rectifying certain wrongs it will leave the door open for the creation of far greater wrongs. Because of that I will oppose it. I am surprised that Mr. Lovekin, a man usually of considerable discernment and good judgment, should have introduced such a Bill, altogether overlooking the fact that it opens the door for the securing of divorce under circumstances that would spell grave injustice. The Bill will greatly extend the facilities for divorce and collusion, and will virtually mean that poverty may be made a ground for divorce. When two persons marry, they agree to abide together and stand by each other through all the troubles of life, in sickness or in health, in riches or in poverty. Already one of the grounds for divorce is sickness.

Hon. A. Lovekin: It doesn't say, "or in brutality."

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: That disease should be made a ground for divorce is, in my view, a blot on our statute-book. Now the Bill proposes to go a step further and make even poverty a ground for divorce. I do not quarrel with the speech made by Mr. Lovekin in moving the second reading. With the greater part of it I am in accord, and I will even go so far as to say that probably the Bill itself will accomplish what Mr. Lovekin intended it to do. It is with other things the Bill will accomplish that my quarrel lies, for the Bill will do serious harm to our domestic life. Marriage is the very basis of our society, and anything that tends to weaken the marriage tie is undermining the whole fabric of that society. In another place the Bill was passed without a division and practically without comment. It has remained for this Chamber to discover the far-reaching effects of the measure. I ask every member to read the Bill closely, giving its provisions their full interpretation, in which event I am confident they will reject the measure; in fact, I shall be rather disappointed if Mr. Lovekin himself does not vote against it. When moving the second reading, Mr. Lovekin declared that the Bill could be agreed to unanimously by this Chamber and that in all probability there would be little or no discussion upon it; in fact I think he was rather hurt when the Chief Secretary spoke against it. I cordially agree with every word the Chief Secretary uttered in opposition to the Bill. But the Minister opposed it on the general principle that too much was being done in Australia to furnish facilities for divorce. In support of that contention he quoted a number of statistics as to the evils attendant upon easy divorce, and showed how it was undermining our national life. With all that I cordially agree, and in addition, I want to point to a phase of the Bill not touched upon by the Chief Secretary, namely, its actual interpretation. On the Chief Secretary sitting down, the second reading was about to be carried, when I moved the adjournment of the debate. Some members objected to my action, holding that so simple a Bill might well be passed in a few minutes. However, in moving the adjournment I was actuated by what occurred in this Chamber in 1919. In the session of that year we had just such another Bill, a Bill of only a few clauses, sent down to us from another place where it had been passed unanimously. I objected to the Bill, pointing out that it had a meaning far beyond what was suspected by its sponsors. In each House the Bill was introduced by a lawyer, and so it had all the sanction of legal interpretation. However, I, as a layman, had the temerity to differ from the legal members regarding that Bill. I fought it at every stage, dividing the House on the second reading, several times in Committee, and even on the third reading. But on each occasion it was my opinion against legal opinion, and so my opinion went for naught. What was the result? The first case to be heard under that measure when it became an Act was taken by the present Chief Justice. He said the Act was a blot on the statute-book, and that it was a disgrace. The result was that the then Government took up the matter, and at the earliest opportunity brought down a Bill repealing the vital sections of the measure that had been passed despite the protest of the minority in this House. The Bill now

before us is likely to have similar results. It it true that this Bill will achieve what Mr. Lovekin intends it to achieve, just as the other Bill achieved what its sponsors desired. But the question is, what other things will such a Bill achieve? If the Bill before us be examined it will be seen that it is very far-reaching and must inevitaoly lead to vicious and pernicious consequences and assist collusion. Mr. Lovekin claimed for the Bill that it would relieve taxation—as if taxation ought to be taken into consideration in relation to divorce! He said the measure was perhaps unique, inasmuch as it directly relieved taxation, instead of adding to our burden. The Bill, he said, was very simple and would, he was sure, meet with the support of all members of the House. I, for my part, am perfectly sure that it will not. Then Mr. Lovekin went on to say——

The PRESIDENT: Is the hon. member quoting from "Hansard" of this session?

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: Certainly not. I am only incidentally referring to the hon. member's speech. I think I can quote the necessary portions of his speech from memory. The hon. member inferred that, because there is something like £6,000 expended by the State for the relief of women who at present are separated from their husbands, and whose husbands do not pay the maintenance orders made against them, immediately this Bill was passed those women would be married and the State would be relieved of the responsibility.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Did I say all of those women would be married?

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: The hon. member inferred that a large number of them would be married.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Some of them.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I think it would be found that the number who would be married would be an insignificant minority indeed, and that the relief financially to the State would be very small indeed. According to the hon. member, the main purport of the Bill, if I may again refresh my memory from his speech——

The PRESIDENT: In the exceptional circumstances the hon. member may do so.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: The hon. member said —

> It seems to me quite wrong that because a woman, whose husband is a waster and runs away, applies for and obtains a maintenance order which is not complied with, and the husband goes away for three or four years and perhaps is living with another woman, the wife should still be tied to that man.

That is all very well. Such a woman would be relieved from the marriage ties with that man. That is the real object the hon. member has in view. But while having that object in view, he is sponsoring a most dangerous Bill that will leave the way open for making poverty a cause for divorce. I do not know that this House or any other Parliament would agree to poverty being made a ground for divorce. Such a thing would be in advance of anything that has been done by any Parliament that I know of, and certainly by any Parliament in Australia.

Hon. A. Lovekin: You mean poverty on the part of the man?

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: Take the case of a man against whom a maintenance order has been obtained. If he is struggling and battling hard to maintain the relationship with his wife and children, and if misfortune overtakes him and he cannot pay, then under this Bill the omission to pay could be made a cause for divorce. The man might have paid regularly up to a certain point, but if bad times struck him and he was unable to pay, even an occasional lapse might be made a ground for divorce. In other words, if the man became poverty-stricken, and was desirous of paying and yet could not pay, the fact of his not paying would be sufficient ground for divorse.

Hon. J. Duffell: What about the woman's conscience—taking money under those conditions?

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: The words in the Bill are—"on the ground that the respondent, being the petitioner's husband, has during the period aforesaid failed to make such payments periodically as required by the decree, order or covenant, either entirely or repeatedly and habitually." What is the meaning of the words "repeatedly and habitually"? No interpretation has been offered by those who have brought forward the Bill. If a man is not constant in his payments, notbwithstanding that he is striving and battling and denying himself in order to maintain the relationship with his wife and

family, if on one or two occasions he is unable to meet the payments, he may be divorced, not only from his wife but also from his family. Is that fair, right or just, or in accordance with any law that should be passed by this Chamber?

Hon. A. Lovekin: If he were fair, he would be with his wife and family, and not with some other woman.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: There are many circumstances in which a man might agree to separation from his wife. It might be due to no fault of his wife or himself, but they might agree to a mutual separation. Where the man is anxious to hold on to his wife and children, this provision may be made a medium by which a woman could secure a divorce and a man would lose not only his wife but also his children, simply and solely because he had got into financial trouble. I refuse to believe that a Chamber such as this, which has always been noted for its fairness, would agree to such a measure. The Bill is far in advance of anything that has been proposed in any of the Legislatures of Australia.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That is not the reason at all.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: No meaning other than the one I have suggested can be placed upon this Bill. I would not support a measure that would open still wider the door for divorce and enable even poverty to be made a cause for divorce. I shall vote against the second reading, and shall be disappointed indeed if a majority of members also do not oppose the Bill, which is so grossly unjust and contrary to all idea of what is right and proper.

HON. A. J. H. SAW (Metropolitan-Suburban)) [5.22]: I intend to oppose the Bill. Measures that have previously been brought before Parliament with a view to widening the causes for divorce have met with my approval. The causes that have previously been advanced, such as desertion for three years, habitual intemperance or lunacy of an irrecoverable nature over a period of five years and where such has been certified to be incurable, have certainly been legitimate grounds for divorce. I join issue with the Chief Secretary in his reference to a certain case where a man had been a lunatic for that period, had been eventually released, and had found that his wife had been able to get a divorce. I am quite willing to admit that in cases of lunacy a mistake might occasionally be made, but I maintain that if a mistake of that kind is made, the harm that is done is by no means commensurate with the evil that results when a wife is tied to an incurable lunatic and has been denied the right of divorce. It may be that a case such as that to which the Chief Secretary referred has occurred, but even if it has occurred, it is not fraught with so much danger as where people have been confined to lunatic asylums, have been in and out perhaps over a period of years, and in the intervals have returned to their homes, resumed cohabitation with the wife and been the means of propagating descendants likely to be affected with hereditary taint. This Bill, however, is of an entirely different character. The reason why I intend to oppose it is that I believe it will open wide the door to collusion. It is entirely on that ground that I oppose it. The Bill provides that where people have been voluntarily separated under a deed over a period of three years, and one of the parties--the husband usually, of course—fails to make his payments repeatedly and habitually, it is to be a ground for the wife seeking relief in the divorce court. If husband and wife have been separated either under an order of the court or voluntarily by a deed of separation, there is nothing to prevent collusion at the end of the period of three years. There is nothing to prevent their agreeing that one party shall cease to make his payments in order that the wife might go before the court and obtain a divorce. That would be entirely wrong. If, during the period of separation, the husband has been guilty of adultery, undoubtedly the wife has recourse under the present law if she can prove adultery. Similarly, if he deserts her and ceases all communication with her over a long period, that would be regarded as a ground for divorce. But this Bill goes further: after a period of voluntary separation for three years and the cessation of maintenance payments under such loose terms as "repeatedly and habitually" —and Heaven only knows what such loose terms mean—the wife is to have power to claim divorce. That would be opening wide the door to collusion and would eventually do infinite harm to the State.

On motion by Hon. J. Duffell, debate adjourned.

BILL—LAND DRAINAGE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from 29th October.

HON. A. BURVILL (South-East) [5.28]: A measure of this description is long overdue. The whole of the swamp country from Perth to Bunbury and all the way round to Albany, on which we now grow potatoes and which will produce butter, bacon and cheese to meet all our requirements, is waiting for a Drainage Act. Until the drainage problem in the South-West is successfully grappled with, we cannot expect the local production of butter, bacon and cheese to overtake the importations that at present are being made. I am firmly of opinion that once this country is brought under cultivation, we shall produce sufficient of these commodities, not only to supply our own needs, but to become a competitor with the Eastern States in exportations to other countries. We have already done that with wheat. There was a time not many years ago when we used to import wheat, but now we export it. We now export wool of better quality than do the Eastern States. The same thing applies to apples, and will, I believe, apply to other fruits later. I have seen a few of the drainage boards that are in existence, and none is giving proper satisfaction. In cases where the settlers, either as individuals or acting collectively, construct their own drainage works, matters are generally satisfactory. Even where drains are properly constructed circumstances have arisen in many cases, where they have been made partially inoperative, or destroyed by other drainage works having been constructed, either by the drainage department or the Railway Department. I will give a specific instance to show how this state of affairs has grown up, and how the want of a proper drainage Act is hampering the settlers in the South-West. The Act is unworkable and almost useless. At times it is dangerous in the hands of the department. The system provides that an application for the establishment of a drainage board or a drainage district must be made by the majority of the settlers concerned. An area is then marked out, and a majority of the people affected have to say they are in favour or otherwise before the board is inaugurated. This is provided in Section 4 of the Act of 1900. This is where the system fails. In every district there is a watershed, that is the land inside a certain area with an outlet to the sea. At present hardly any cognisance is taken of the watershed when a main drain is constructed. I received a report of the Under Secretary of the Department that there were 13 drainage boards in existence, controlling a total area of 126,428 acres. The areas range from 22,000 acres to 440 acres. I asked the department if they could give me an idea of the area of the watersheds in which these boards were situated. The answer they gave me was, "We have no idea of the approximate area of each watershed." The engineers have been working in the dark, or in a haphazard fashion. This, for the most part, accounts for the failures. In the drainage areas in the South and South-West the water comes rapidly off the hills along well-defined watercourses. In the lower reaches, where the swamp areas are, the watercourses spread out and swamps of varying sizes are formed. This is where the richest land is that requires to be drained. The outlet from the swamps is towards the sea. Sometimes the outlet runs into a river or another watercourse, or into a creek, and the water then flows into an inlet, and thence into the sea. Sometimes there is a sandbank across the inlet, and this closes the inlet at different times of the year. The Bill does not provide that a watershed shall be proclaimed a drainage area. In Committee I propose to move an amendment to provide for this. It is because this has not been done that mistakes in the past have occurred. It is not necessary that the whole of the watershed should be proclaimed a drainage district, but that these watersheds should be proclaimed and taken cognisance of by the engineers. Provision must be made where main channels are being constructed for the maximum quantity of water that will come from the watershed. At the head of these watersheds creeks are sometimes cleaned out. Sometimes, too, there are small swamps there, and places where the water is held back for the best part of the winter. There has also to be taken into account the ringing of the timber. All these factors make for extra water. The absence of proper attention to these factors is the prime cause of the partial or total failure of the drainage schemes that have been put into operation by the Water Supply Department. I know of a case that occurred recently at Young's Siding on the Denmark line. At this place there are settlers at the head of the watershed, and at

various places between that and the railway line. The water difficulty became so bad that something had to be done both for the sake of the Railway Department and the settlers themselves, as well as the road board. A drainage reserve had been made some years before, and two drainage boards had been established further down the watershed. These boards have been in existence for some little time. As usual, the main watercourse was not big enough. The Railway Department decided to go halves with the Water Supply Department in an attempt to get rid of the water. A drain was surveyed and put in. As a member of the road board supervising that district, I had a look at the work when it was started, and noticed that the engineer was putting in a 7ft. drain. I told him that was no use, and the local settlers agreed with me. We had seen the railway line under water, and the fires in an engine extinguished by the water. Notwithstanding this, a 7ft. drain was being constructed, and still the back country had to be drained. The engineer persisted in the work, and when the winter rains came it was found that the drain would not take anything like the required quantity of water. A drainage board was formed and this took over the drain. The people at the back wanted the drain continued further along the watershed, but they were informed that the drain could not take the water and that it would be no use extending it. The principal engineer of the department then had to rectify the blunder that the other engineer had committed, and he was able to find a way of taking the water round without interfering with the drainage works that had already been carried out. If the watershed had first been proclaimed and surveyed this trouble would not have occurred, and yet the department say, "We have no idea of the approximate total area of each watershed." The money that was spent was wasted because the officer in charge was ignorant as to the amount of water that would come down. No drainage district should be proclaimed in any watershed until proper provision is made for an outlet for the water to the sea. All main drains and watercourses and outlets to the sea should be made national works. The settlers will have enough to do to pay for their main drains, their smaller drains, and their clearing and fencing. This will take them long enough without their being called upon to make main watercourses for the use of posterity. I have already pointed out that, because of the contour of the country, the hills throw down a lot of water during the winter, and it costs a lot of money to construct main drains big enough to carry it off. The settlers cannot be expected either to make or maintain main drains. In years to come, when all the subsidiary drainage has been constructed and all the clearing has been done, it may be possible to hand over these drains to the residents in any particular drainage district. It is idle to expect the settlers to maintain main watercourses and outlets to the sea. I approve of the constitution of drainage districts, after an area has been constituted that will take in the watershed. I consider this amendment is a great improvement on the old Act. Under the Act it rested with the people to say where any drainage area should be mapped out. That is a matter for the engineers and the Lands Department. It may be contended that the settler should have some say in the matter. Clause 60, Subclause 4, contains provision whereby after plans and specifications of the proposed drainage have been approved by the engineers, the persons affected have to say whether or not they approve of the scheme. That is sufficient safeguard for the settlers. If a scheme is put forward that does not meet with their approval, either from an engineering or the expenditure point of view, the majority of the settlers can veto it. Some amendment is required to obviate a deadlock, which I think is likely to occur because of the manner in which the clause is worded. Another part of the Bill provides for a maximum rate per acre. That, too, will be a safeguard to the settler. I agree with the provision that small drainage districts may be amalgamated with others. Such a district may be handed to an irrigation board or a road board. As time goes on this part of the Bill will be useful. There are areas as small as 440 acres, 610 acres, 3,000 acres and 5,000 acres. Once the drainage is completed, there is no reason why some of these districts should not be amalgamated. It should not then be necessary to elect a drainage board with its officials and annual cost of maintenance. There is always a certain amount of overhead expense attached to such boards. When a small area is completed, it could well be amalgamated with another area. I should like to have seen provision made for dealing

with small and isolated swamps. They could be controlled either by the Minister or first of all controlled by the Minister and then handed over to the road boards. Some of these swamps are held by one man, some by two, and some by three or more. Some are also held by men who have smaller swamps below them. Where the swamps are held by one individual, there is never any trouble; where they are held by two, and difficulties arise, there is no law in existence by which those difficulties can be settled. Let me give an instance. On the Great Southern line there is an area of about 300 acres of swamp owned by two men who have a fence running straight across the centre of the property. Desirous of draining the land, one of the original owners put in a drain on his own property. By so doing he also drained the adjoining man's property. The man who first drained the property wanted the other to do his share and the reply came that he was too busy and could not. Then trouble began. Then the man who originally constructed the drain filled it in again. One of these men died and another took his place. Things went on swimmingly because they happened to be relations. Unfortunately, however, the same trouble occurred again. Another drain which had been constructed was again filled in to such an extent that it created a big lake on the adjoining property. The people who held the swamp below interviewed Mr. Wansbrough and me to see whether something could be done. Next they approached a lawyer and the advice he gave was that there was no law under which the matter could be adjusted. Next they applied to the road board, and the road board took an interest in the matter because the road was being flooded. The road board however sensibly decided to let the matter alone. Eventually, the Supreme Court was appealed to, but before the case reached the court, it was settled after a fashion. There are many people in the district I represent waiting for this drainage measure to go through, so that in the event of difficulty arising the Government may step in and construct a drain and charge each party with the cost of the work. I could quote numerous instances of difficulties having arisen where it was not possible to arrive at a satisfactory settlement on account of the absence of anything in the way of legislation. In one instance I know of, three people are involved and a deadlock has existed for four or five years simply because each will not agree to do his part. The man who has the biggest share and has drained low enough, does not want his drainage any lower. This kind of thing has been going on in the South-West for a number of years. I wish to give an illustration of what can be done by private enterprise where no friction exists. A tunnel has just been completed to drain the water at the back of the Porongorups, 23 miles from Albany, where there previously existed a large swamp. The work has been carried out by two returned soldiers who constructed a drain half a mile in length. In their case, there were no legal difficulties, because they owned the whole of the land. They got rid of the water and they did not mind where it went. They knew nothing at all about the watershed that they drained. All that they know is that they have drained the area of 400 acres, and that they were able to do the work economically. The total cost of the work was £832 18s. 6d. Compare that with what has taken place in recent years at Herdsman's Lake. In connection with the latter work, the land purchased involved an expenditure of £13,760. The drainage scheme cost £98,000 and very probably the total will yet be £115,000, and that to drain 1,300 acres of land! What happened in the first instance was this: The Njookenboroo Board drained a swamp into Herdsman's Lake and did so successfully. At that time Herdsman's Lake used to be dry occasionally. Later on Osborne Park and the other districts in that watershed began to widen and deepen their drains. The result was that the Njookenboroo gardens became flooded. As a matter of fact, a good deal of the district was under water, and I remember seeing quite a number of houses that were flooded out. That was the result of private draining; the Government had not yet come into it. When the drainage operations there are finished, the engineer in charge considers that 40 per cent. of the drainage works can be taken off Herdsman's Lake. That will mean adding £40 an acre on to those people who have land at Njookenboroo. This area of 440 acres will thus be made to carry a big burden. I would like to know who is going to pay those unfortunates for the loss they have sustained during the years when their properties were flooded through no fault of their own. That is an illustration

of allowing drainage works to be started without taking into consideration the whole of the watershed or without considering the carrying of the water out to sea. I will give another illustration to show that had judicious advice been given by engineers, success would have followed. There is an area of rich land along the Denmark line between Torbay and Bornholm. The settlers there drained their own land and everything went along successfully, but on account of the fall a certain portion scoured subsequently on to the railway line. Then the Railway Department came in. Some of the water went on one side of the line and some on the other. The Railway Department built a new bridge in the locality and threw the whole of the water on to one side of the line and flooded several of the settlers there. The Railway Department got rid of the water; that was all they were after. I took up the case on behalf of the flooded settlers, and an alteration was made. When that alteration was brought about, the road board declared that the water should have been cut off higher up. That precaution, however, was not taken. The road board then feared that certain of its road bridges would disappear. The Water Supply Department contended that the bridges were perfectly safe. A couple of years later, however, one of the bridges was washed clean away and one gap was made 30ft. wide and another 90ft. wide where the water rushed in torrents. Then trouble began. An engineer went down and said that he could not build a new bridge unless he knew the quantity of water that was coming down. Surveys were made and the quantity of water that was likely to flow was ascertained. Then the question was determined by diverting the water as recommended in the first instance by the chairman of the road board. In the interval settlers' ground scoured away and another bridge has yet to be built. If the advice of an engineer had been obtained in the first place, and the watershed had been taken into consideration, the trouble would not have occurred and a great deal of expense would have been saved. Let me give another instance of what happened in the Torbay-Grassmere drainage area. In 1911 a number of settlers were doing very well on potato land, and the only trouble that then existed was a sand bar. Others came along and seeing how good was the quality of the soil, decided to take up areas on the same watershed, but above the original settlers. Then they drained their swamps and got rid of the water by merely passing it on. An attempt was made in that district some 20 years ago to form a drainage board. A meeting was called for the purpose, but those who convened it were outvoted by the people on the upper areas. The result was that no board was formed. There was continued agitation for the formation of a board until 1911, when the department submitted plans for the drainage of 5,330 acres about 2,000 acres of which consisted of sandhills about 200ft. high. A number of the settlers did not agree with the department's proposals and said that the area was too small, and that they would never be able to stand the expense. Those who had the larger areas would not agree to the department's proposals. However, there were a number who wanted it; and under the old Act the decision went according to the wish of the majority. There were residents who had a quarter of an acre or half an acre or perhaps a couple of acres in town blocks. These residents thought that if drainage came to pass, they would create plenty of work; and accordingly they signed in favour. One of them said, "I know an easy way of getting out of paying any rates." In fact they did eventually escape payment of rates. Willy nilly, the settlers had to accept the scheme. They did not like it when they saw it, but they were assured by the engineer, Mr. Oldham, that it would be a success. They became afraid when the scheme was started, and they sent to Mr. Daglish, then Minister for Works, a protest against what were called flood-gates being put in. They asked for a flume, or some other means of taking the water to sea. The engineer had told them that the flood gates would not only keep the sea water out but also cause a permanent draining. On the other hand, the settlers considered that the flood-gates would cause the sand bar to close oftener, and also would shorten their season instead of lengthening it. At any rate, they sent a petition forward, and this is the answer they received on the 29th August, 1911, after the decision to start the works had been arrived at—

In reply to your recent communication, I have obtained a report from the departmental engineers, who do not approve of any departure from the present drainage scheme which has been adopted at Torbay. Their views are endorsed by the Engineer-in-Chief, who further states that if it be found necessary later on,

provision can be made for altering the scheme in the direction shown by experience to be an improvement. If a flume proves to be necessary, it could be provided; that is, if the work you expect the flume to do is not performed by the flood-gates.

That letter was addressed by Mr. Daglish, Minister for Works, to Messrs. J. Shirley and others.

Hon. H. Stewart: Would it not be as well to read out the petition that was sent in?

Hon. A. BURVILL: I have not a copy of the petition here, but I may say that to read out all the documents connected with the matter would occupy a long time. However, the answer shows what the petitioners were after. The scheme was put in, and then certain alterations were wanted. It was pointed out by myself that if the scheme were put in without provision for diverting the water from certain lands, these would be permanently flooded. The Government turned the water out of a swamp into the lake, but, unfortunately, they took no notice of the suggested alteration with regard to flood gates. The works, having been completed, were handed over to a drainage board. The board functioned for a while, and were just on the point of imposing rates. In fact, they had fully considered the question of rating; but in the meantime they found that the drainage scheme would not work with the flood-gates. About £7,000 or £8,000 worth of property was lost as soon as the scheme was completed. The argument put up by the engineer was that once the flood-gates got going, things would improve. However, they did not improve. Then the Government took the scheme over, administered it themselves, and imposed a rate of 1s. 6d. per acre. The settlers refused to pay the rate, and the Government sued 31 of them. The hearing of the case lasted eight or 10 days, and the settlers won. Unfortunately, however, the Government were fighting the settlers with the taxpayers' money. Next, the water supply board went to court. The settlers won again, a lot of the ground being exempted. But this was not the end of the settlers' trouble. Their trouble was to get rid of the water, so that they could again cultivate the land as they used to do. Their position had been bad before the drainage scheme, and they did not want it to be made worse. I shall not go through the whole correspondence, but shall now proceed to the year 1916. Some of us had been hammering away at the department to get matters improved, and at last I received a letter dated the 3rd March, 1916, which I shall read. Mr. Price, who was then member for Albany, had brought the matter up repeatedly in another Chamber, but had been unable to obtain any redress. The letter, which was signed by Mr. H. C. Trethowan, then Under Secretary for Water Supply, reads—

I have the honour to advise that your letter of the 11th January last, and preceding communications extending over a considerable period, have all received the careful attention of the department. Your correspondence consists for the most part of various allegations against the Torbay-Grassmere drainage works, and you have put forward from time to time various propositions for the consideration of the department. The whole of your representations against the drainage works have been categorically and specifically rebutted by the department's engineers, and, in view of this, the Minister is not prepared to entertain the proposals which you have put forward from time to time. I am also instructed to advise you that it is the department's intention that correspondence with you on these matters shall now cease.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: Who was the Minister then?

Hon. A. BURVILL: Either Mr. W. D. Johnson or his immediate successor. I made up my mind that I would never again write to an Under-Secretary for Water Supply. Then there was a change of Government. Several times when we seemed to be approaching a solution of the difficulty, there would be a change of Government and the position would again be camouflaged. Sir James Mitchell, then Mr. Mitchell, became Minister for Water Supply; and he was approached by Mr. Scaddan, who was acting for Mr. Price in that gentleman's absence. I had written to Mr. Scaddan pointing out the difficulties of the position, and received the following reply, dated the 31st October, 1916, from Sir James Mitchell—

I have received your letter of the 23rd instant, forwarded through Mr. Scaddan, and am sending it on to the Water Supply Department for comment. As I am leaving for Melbourne on the 4th proximo in connection with wheat matters, it will be impossible for me to visit your district for some little time. Please note that I have issued no instructions that correspondence in connection with your drainage scheme must cease.

The PRESIDENT: Is the hon. member arguing in favour of the Bill or against it?

Hon. A. BURVILL: I am arguing in favour of the Bill, and am pointing out the absolute unworkableness of the old Act, and

the need for drastic amendment not only of that measure but also of the administration of the Water Supply Department. Later, Sir James Mitchell came down and inspected the scheme. He immediately condemned it. His conclusion, like that of the settlers, was that eventually the sand between the gates and the sea would become shallower—which in fact it has done—and that the position would become increasingly difficult. He also said that there would be no further worrying about rates until the scheme had been remedied. At that period several of the settlers affected went on a tour of inspection of other drainage schemes. Not one of these other schemes which we saw was a success. At Capel we found that positive damage had been caused by the drainage works. A settler there had some paddocks of very fine grass, which had taken the prize as the finest grass paddocks in the State at the time. Those paddocks had been ruined by stagnant water on the land as a result of the drainage scheme. He took us over the paddocks, and we found that the grass could be pulled off the soil like a wig off a man's head. This was due to the impounding of various salts and magnesia. By reason of evaporation in the course of a few years, the accumulation of salts and magnesia had destroyed the grass. As regards the other schemes there were also many complaints. With regard to the Torbay-Grassmere scheme, a deputation waited on Sir James Mitchell later, and he promised redress. In the meantime a new engineer had been put in charge of the scheme. Instead of giving redress to the settlers, he proposed that further drainage works should be carried out and more water brought down. The settlers interested agreed to the carrying out of the additional works, but they wanted the Minister for Water Supply to keep his word and start the work at the outlet. I should mention that Sir James Mitchell had become Premier, and Mr. George, Minister for Works. Mr. George withdrew all help that had been granted by Sir James Mitchell as regards the opening of the sand bar, although he must have known that the bar was causing increased expense to the settlers.

Hon. E. H. Gray: That is why you support the Labour Government, is it?

Hon. A. BURVILL: Maybe. However, politics do not enter into this question at all. It is purely a matter of maladministration. The following letter was written to Sir James Mitchell, on the 17th December, 1919, by Mr. Ernest H. Pember, of South-street, Albany:—

I am writing on behalf of the Grassmere-Torbay settlers re the drainage scheme. We have received a letter from the Hon. J. Scaddan in reference to this work, and are very much surprised at the contents of his letter. In fact, it came as a bombshell after the definite promise made to the deputation which waited on you at Parliament House some few months ago, that the matter of an outlet at at the Inlet would receive prompt action. Now we have received a letter stating that the department intend spending £500 in deepening the drains in the Six-mile Swamp, and bringing more water down on the lands below the lake, before providing an outlet. We are very much surprised at the action of the Minister controlling the Drainage Department, for we are quite sure that if he knew this scheme from personal knowledge he would not sanction this money being spent in the Six-mile Swamp, as it will make the position of the settlers below the lake worse than ever. The settlers here are getting disheartened at the injustice done them by the Government, through no fault of their own. We have stood this injustice for seven years without any effect, although the Ministers of the department have made promises to see that we get the relief asked for. Both Mr. Scaddan and Mr. Johnson at election time admitted that we have just cause to complain, and there it rests. I wrote to Mr. Scaddan after the visit of Mr. O'Brien, the engineer, to our district, stating that the settlers were disappointed with the inspection made by the engineer. We are quite sure that no man can inspect this drainage district in a few hours. Mr. O'Brien was here for about five hours, and it is impossible for any man to inspect and report on this scheme without seeing the whole of it. If Mr. O'Brien has furnished a report on this scheme, it has not been done from personal observations. We expected an independent report, and this we did not get. However, we are leaving the matter in your hands believing that the promise you made to the deputation will be honoured, and that we will get the justice due to us and so long asked for at your hands. The scheme has ruined the district, and we are only asking for what every Britisher and law-abiding citizen deserves—justice. We have every confidence in your doing something for us. In closing, we all join in wishing you the compliments of the Season. On behalf of the settlers, etc.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. A. BURVILL: Before the tea adjournment I quoted a letter from Mr. Pember to Sir James Mitchell. Nothing eventuated as a result of that communication and nothing was done to open the sand bar or to rectify the mistakes that had been made. Further petitions were prepared and presented, and then a movement was started by the Albany Chamber of Commerce and the municipal

council at that port. They were interested in the matter and considered that the position had been in such a state of muddle over a number of years that the time had arrived when the position should be rectified. Prior to the drainage scheme having been accepted, it was customary for two special trains to be run weekly for the purpose of collecting vegetables and potatoes during the seasons. Subsequent to the drainage scheme being undertaken, those special trains have not been run, nor are they likely to be run. The representatives of the Chamber of Commerce and the municipal council examined the position in conjunction with their engineers and secured all the information available. At that time Mr. Scaddan was member for Albany and Mr. George was the Minister in charge of this particular branch of the Government operations. As Mr. George was about to visit Albany in connection with harbour and road board matters, and as he was also to go to Denmark, it was considered that an opportunity would be afforded to have the matter finalised. The settlers were got together and were advised that if they wanted to accomplish anything, they would have to show a united front. Up to that stage there had always been differences of opinion between the settlers. Hon. members can readily understand that in such circumstances this was no unusual position. Naturally, when the Minister wanted to send more water below, those who were below the point of discharge grumbled. This sort of thing was nicely manipulated so that there was a little embroglio amongst the settlers, and the department pointed out that the settlers could not agree amongst themselves. That state of affairs continued for a long time. When the local Chamber of Commerce and the Albany Council advised the settlers to arrive at an agreement, a scheme was devised, with the aid of the local engineers, to which all the settlers agreed. Mr. George came to Albany, and a deputation representing the settlers concerned waited upon him. Mr. George was asked to view the drainage scheme as the settlers desired to put certain proposals before him. Mr. George refused to go, as he had already seen the works, but promised to send two engineers who were to arrive the next morning. It was arranged that Mr. George should telegraph to the engineers and that the settlers should meet them at Elleker. Three settlers were deputed to meet them, and they were present with traps ready to take the engineers around for three or four hours and to return in time for the officials to catch a later train. When the engineers arrived I acted as spokesman. I explained to Mr. O'Brien what Mr. George had said. I told him that we were to go with the engineers and show them the particular parts we were interested in. I also told him that they would meet the settlers at a certain point during the tour. Mr. O'Brien listened to what I had to say and then replied, "I'm damned well not going with you. I've had enough talk with you over it. I am not going to inspect it. We have an officer here who will give us all the reports we want." Then he hopped on the train and left us standing there like three jackasses. I returned to Albany and reported on the incident to the Chamber of Commerce, to the council, and also to Mr. Scaddan, who told us to take no notice of what had happened, but to go on with the deputation. We did so, but we got no further. I shall not go into the details, because it would take too long. Nothing came of the matter. When we realised that we would not get any redress in that way, we approached Mr. Scaddan and asked him to move in the direction of having a private engineer sent down to report. This was done, and Mr. Shields, an engineer who reported on the Bunbury harbour works, was despatched to inspect the drainage scheme. He was not known to any of us. He spent several days inspecting the scheme and thoroughly investigated it. In his report he suggested a remedy which was simplicity itself. The scheme as it obtained then consisted of flood gates at the sand bar near the outlet, the whole of the streams in the watershed emptying inside the gates. Mr. Shields' scheme was to shift the gates and put the outlets of the streams below them so that the water from the streams went direct into Torbay Inlet, in which event the water would not have flowed back over the land, as it does now. However, the scheme was turned down. We could not get any further ahead. Matters have continued to get worse because the drainage is going on all the time in the district, both by the Government and by others. When Mr. Shields examined the scheme he realised, as we knew, what was the effect of the position. There are some 200 or 300 acres that have been valueless since 1912 or 1913 owing to the mineralised nature of the land. There is a mineral similar to that which affects the Osborne Park bores, and the effect of this

was that when the water flowed back, under the drainage scheme, it became stagnant and the land became useless and has continued so ever since. The then Government Geologist, Mr. Woodward, reported on the mineralisation of the land, and said that the remedy was drainage and lime. There had been no trouble prior to the drainage scheme; here we were told that the remedy was drainage and lime, despite the fact that we were already being rated on account of the drainage works. When the Labour Government came into power the present member for Albany (Mr. Wansbrough), who knew the conditions that obtained in the area, went into the matter again. We asked the Government to honour the pledge that had been given by Mr. Daglish when he was in office. The Honorary Minister in charge of Water Supplies visited the district, together with the Under Secretary, and during his inspection saw more of the scheme than any engineer has seen so far. He told us that he would do nothing until the new Engineer-in-Chief had had an opportunity to examine the scheme. In the meantime, however, I would like to conclude my references to this matter by showing the extraordinary difficulties under which the settlers are working. Some little time ago there was considerable agitation regarding the opening up of the sand bar. On nine or ten occasions during the winter the settlers had opened the bar as they wanted to get their land free in order to have it ready for the early ploughing. They communicated with the department, intimating that they considered that as the Government had put the obstruction there, they should do something towards opening up the sand bar. The answer they received from the Under Secretary was couched in terms somewhat like these: The department, whilst repudiating liability for the failure of the drainage scheme, expressed the opinion that they had done their share by providing scoops for opening the bar, and instructing their local officer to give advice and assistance to the settlers. It is true that the department have a local officer, but he was taught all he knew about the opening of the sand bar by the settlers themselves, and they did not want any business such as "teaching grandmother to suck eggs." The department further stated (2) that no serious losses of potatoes through flooding had occurred for the past two seasons, and (3) that the high level of water in the inlet was higher during the last summer months than during previous years, and that there had been no losses of any magnitude for several years, which had been the case prior to the drainage scheme. Finally Mr. Munt said that no sane individual would attempt to grow crops on the area in question during the winter months. Here is the reply, dated the 5th August, 1925, that was despatched on behalf of the settlers, under instructions from the Coastal Districts Producers' Union of W.A. (Elleker Branch), and signed by J. Mowforth, J. M. Brighton, and Geo. P. Burvill:—

We acknowledge the assistance of the department in providing scoops for the opening of the inlet, but as to the instructions to the local officer to advise the settlers, we attach no value whatever. (2), This is admitted, but no reference is made to the losses of maize, pumpkins, swedes, peas and beans, etc., and green fodder which is considerable. (3) The high level of the water during the summer months was due solely to the action of the flood gates blocking in the water during the early spring. We deny the statement that there have been no losses of any magnitude for several years, whilst previously there were heavy losses. We assert emphatically that there have been far heavier losses since than prior to the drainage scheme. Previous to the scheme we could always crop and cultivate the lands for fully eight months (November to June), while since the scheme, six months (November to April) is the limit, which means considerably less acreage being planted and consequent losses thereby. Also many acres which were previously cropped, and which cost up to £25 per acre to clear have been idle since the scheme, resulting in heavy losses to the owners while being mulcted in rates and taxes for same. Owing to the action of the sheet piling keeping the water in the inlet at a higher level than formerly, the subsoil is continually saturated with stagnant water, which destroys the bacteria and reduces the crops fully 30 to 60 per cent. The concluding paragraph adds insult to injury by stating that no sane individual would attempt to grow perishable crops on the dangerous areas around the lake during the winter season. Will Mr. Munt kindly inform us how he reconciles the above statement with the fact that his department levied an annual rate of 1s. 6d. per acre, and sued the settlers for that amount, and produced sworn evidence that the scheme had effectively drained these lands and even took the case from the Local Court to the Supreme Court to establish that view? Whatever the opinion of Mr. Munt, the engineers, or even the Minister himself on this question may be, or how they may camouflage the issue, the fact remains that the settlers in the Torbay-Grassmere drainage area are at present, and for several years have been smarting under a sense of a grave injustice being inflicted upon them by the Water Supply Department of Western Australia.

Now here is the experience of one man. On the 2nd of this month a settler wrote—

Last summer, with a loan from the Agricultural Bank, I had five acres cleared at a cost of £125, intending to crop the land this season. At present date, 2nd November, owing to the Inlet being blocked, the water is now only two inches below the surface, and as if I crop the land I would require to have the crop off by, at latest, end of March, so the position seems a hopeless one. The land averages between four and five feet above sea level.

On the 5th August, on behalf of the settlers, I wrote to the Minister pointing out the awkward position of the settlers. I showed that one drain went out of a certain swamp about five chains, and up to the end of July, through the backing up of this inlet five miles away, this drain ran for only 12 days. This was due solely to the defective scheme. Mr. Munt replied as follows:—

In reply to your letter of the 3rd August with further reference to the question of the bar being closed, I am directed by the Hon. Mr. Cunningham to inform you that he regrets this being the case, and to remind you that he looks to the settlers to take steps to open the bar as and when required.

On the 7th August I replied to Mr. Munt as follows:—

I thank you for your letter of 5th inst., re opening and closing of sand bar at Torbay Inlet. I note your statement that you "look to the settlers to open the bar as and when required." Might I respectfully point out the injustice of this: The sand bar, once it was opened at Torbay Inlet always kept open during the winter months prior to 1912; the trouble only arose during spring and autumn. The extra openings now made in winter are caused by the flood-gate structure erected by your department in 1912. Therefore, it is just that the department should bear this added cost of extra and difficult openings made in winter, or, restore the natural winter flow of water to the sea. The position is further aggravated by the extra water being brought down within the watershed by other Government and private drainage. The position is, and has been for some years most unfair to the few injured settlers who now bear the whole burden of the faulty works.

The PRESIDENT: I am not clear how this correspondence applies to the second reading of the Bill.

Hon. A. BURVILL: I am showing how the existing Act is hindering settlement.

The PRESIDENT: But we are dealing with the Bill.

Hon. A. BURVILL: I am aware of that, but I want certain amendments in the Bill to prevent a recurrence of these things.

The PRESIDENT: Surely they should be dealt with in Committee!

Hon. A. BURVILL: I will move my amendments in Committee. Just now I will say no more about the scheme, except to point out that about five of the settlers have to go to the trouble of opening this bar, which ought to be a Government responsibility, and which is made ten times worse by the Government having erected their structure down there. I hope the Bill, when we shall have finished with it, will make it impossible for these things to continue or recur. In Committee I will put up amendments as to the watershed, and to provide that main drains shall be a national work. In drafting my amendments I have had the help of the Engineer for Water Supply, Mr. Arney, and I have studied the Drainage Acts of New Zealand. I have found the summary attached to our Act of great assistance. There are in the Bill really only 39 new clauses, and of those six have been amended. The Bill contains a provision for one man one vote. In Committee I will move to bring that into line with the provision in the Road Districts Act, for in matters of this sort, involving large expenditure, the one-man one-vote principle is not fair. The New Zealand Act of 1915 provides that the rate shall be levied within the drainage area, and notwithstanding that the land may be Crown land. There the Crown has to pay rates just the same as anybody else. In respect of Crown lands of which there is no occupier for the time being, the Minister is deemed to be the occupier, and all rates payable in respect of such lands are payable out of Consolidated Revenue, without further appropriation than is represented by the Act. I will support the second reading, but in Committee I will move amendments calculated to make the Bill as near fool-proof as possible.

On motion by Hon. J. Duffell, debate adjourned.

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

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [7.54] in moving the second reading said: Heavily increased expenditure has been involved in relation to the undertaking now in progress to provide Perth with

an ample supply of water, and provision for increased rates must be made in order that the proposition may be placed upon a sound financial footing. The ex-Premier and the ex-Minister for Water Supply indicated that the amendment of the Act to increase the rates would not be submitted until the water was supplied. That stage will be reached during the present financial year, and the increased rating should operate from the 1st July, 1926, for the financial year 1926-27. The Bill provides that the Act shall come into operation by proclamation. It is proposed to take this step as from the 1st July, 1926. It is advisable to show the difference between the existing Act and the Bill. Under the Act the maximum rate on the unimproved capital value of land is 2d. in the pound; in the Bill it is 4d. Under the Act sewerage and stormwater rates taken together represent 1s. 6d. in the pound. In the Bill they are separated, and it is 1s. 6d. in the pound on the ratable value for sewerage and 3d. in the pound where the capital unimproved value system is adopted. Stormwater is to remain at 5d. in the pound, while if the capital unimproved value system be adopted it will be 5/6ths of a penny in the pound. All minimum rates will remain as at present. It cannot be denied that provision for increasing the rates should be made without delay. For six years past there has been a succession of deficits on the scheme. In 1918 there was a deficit of £1,692 on water supply revenue account, this being the first of a succession of annual deficits on this account. The water rate for that year and the following year, 1919-20, was 10d. in the pound on annual values, but in 1920-21 the rate was increased to 1s. in the pound, the maximum rate leviable under the existing Act. The increase was partly to cover the annual deficits due to increased interest charges on capital works and higher operating costs. The annual deficits since 1918-19 have been:—In 1919-20, £6,691; in 1920-21, £3,729 (rate increased from 10d. to 1s.); in 1921-22, £6,743; in 1922-23, £8,289; in 1923-24, £17,575; in 1924-25, £28,200. It is estimated that the deficit for 1925-26 will be about £35,000——

Hon. A. Lovekin: And in 1936 it will be £247,000.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The main reason for this large estimated deficit being additional interest charges on water supply works or improvements in recent years. The capital expenditure on water supply account, not including hills scheme, has been—1918-19, £23,432; 1919-20, £39,030; 1920-21, £104,-040; in 1921-22, £85,311; in 1922-23, £87,-992; in 1923-24, £241,266; in 1924-25, £129,-1291 or a total of £710,200. The interest on this expenditure is a charge against water supply revenue account. The capital expenditure on the hills water scheme is kept in a separate account, the interest being capitalised pending the utilisation of the works. Since 1918-19 it has become evident that, to meet the annual deficits and to cover interest charges on extensive works and improvements and the augmentation of supplies, additional revenue would be required. The position has been emphasised in the annual reports presented by the Minister to Parliament each year. These reports from 1919-1920 to 1923-24 indicated that interest charges and maintenance costs were increasing, and that as the limit of rating power has been reached and additional revenue from water sales would be negligible until larger supplies were available, the authorisation of work to augment and improve the supply would necessitate an increase of rates in order to pay the cost of interest, maintenance and other charges. The additional interest charges on completed works for each year since 1918-19 have been as follows:—1818-19, £2,097; 1919-20, £3,998; 1920-21, £3,452; 1921-22, £6,773; 1922-23, £4,979; 1923-24, £10,182; 1924-25, £10,916. The total additional interest charges are £42,-397. Since 1918-19 the department have had to pay from 6 per cent. to 6¾ per cent. interest on all capital expenditure, whereas before the war the rate of interest was only 4 per cent. The Melbourne water supply scheme was carried out during a period when cheap money was available, and the ratepayers there benefit accordingly. A large amount of the development work here has had to be undertaken during the period when the interest rate on money was high. We have had an extensive hills scheme and other costly improvements to effect when money was dear. This means higher annual interest charges against water supply revenue account, apart altogether from the additional maintenance expenditure necessary on the new works. The expenditure on maintenance and management of works in 1918-19 was £35,881, a very large sum. Here are the figures of expenditure on maintenance and management for each year since:—1919-20, £44,829; 1920-21, £54,468; 1921-22, £58,905; 1922-23, £58,018; 1923-24, £64,979; 1924-25, £68,221. The increase in operating and management expenses as

between 1913-14—the pre-war period—and 1924-25 has been £36,738 or 117 per cent.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Have you figures showing maintenance separately?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes; I have full information but it would take a considerable time to deal with each item separately. I shall be able to give full details in Committee. There has also been an increase in the basic wage rate from £2 14s. to £4 per week. The wages bill in 1913-14 was £12,844, while in 1924-25 it was £25,118—just double the amount. The increase was due to expansion of operations and also to increased wages. The cost of stores also has risen during the period under review, especially the cost of fuel, which is used for pumping operations.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: And the reduction of the working week from 48 to 44 hours.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Management expenses increased by £4,684 or 70 per cent., due to increases in salaries and also to increase of staff. The increased salaries account for 47 per cent. of the extra expenditure, and the balance of 23 per cent. is due to enlarged activities, which is counterbalanced to some extent by the added revenue earned as between 1914 and 1925, namely, 61 per cent. The increased expenditure plus the additional interest charges account for the deficits in the corresponding years, and indicate that the time has arrived when something should be done to obviate the deficits. We should endeavour to make the proposition pay. The development and progress of a water supply coincide with the general progress of the city and its environs, and the building development in the metropolitan area has been very evident during recent years. The extensive development of the metropolitan area and the continuous increase in population made it necessary sooner or later for the Government to take action to meet the increasing demands for water. In 1920 Mr. Ritchie, engineer for the Melbourne water supply, was asked to submit a report and proposals for the augmentation of our supplies. In recommending a scheme for a supply from the Canning River and its tributaries, he fixed a programme of works to ease the financial burden by spreading the expenditure over a term of years. In 1922-23 the position became so acute that the Government of the day decided to inaugurate a comprehensive scheme of works to add to the supply, and the ex-Premier, in March, 1923, when outlining the scheme, made the following remarks:—

> On every additional million of capital expenditure, the annual interest charges would be between £50,000 and £60,000. As the money was being expended, however, the population would be expanding and there would be more people to foot the bill. Maintenance charges, too, would also increase, and the money to cover such charges must be collected from the people by way of rates and sales of water. These facts must be borne in mind. The present capital cost of works was £1,300,000. When the new works were completed, the capital cost would be £3,000,000. This would not mean doubling the cost of supplying water, but a considerable increase would result on account of interest charges. He did not think anyone would object to the additional cost entailed by the new proposals.

The works of improvement include:—

	£
Melville Reservoir	43,850
Mt. Eliza No. 4 Reservoir ..	47,063
Osborne Park	43,579
Buckland Hill	21,243
New filters at Osborne Park	15,759
Total ..	£171,530

Enlargement of mains—	£
24in. main, Cottesloe to Fremantle	38,431
24in. main, Melville to Fremantle	28,777
18in. main, Melville to Fremantle	26,573
30in. main, Mt. Eliza to Claremont	59,034
Total ..	£152,815

The whole of these extensive works, as well as many other works including main extensions, enlargements, etc., costing about £75,000, have been completed and the cost has been added to capital account, thus necessitating the payment of annual interest charges. The effect of these interest charges on revenue account for the years 1923-24 and 1924-25 is as follows:—increased interest, 1923-24, £9,344; 1924-25, £20,456. It is estimated that from 1925-26 the total increase for interest and sinking fund on this complete programme of works of improvement will be no less than £28,000. The estimated cost of works proposed for the augmentation of supplies is £2,853,359, and the expenditure to the 30th June, 1925, with capitalised interest, was £410,545. The pipe line from Churchman's Brook dam and Wongong Brook reservoir will be completed

by December next, and also a pipe line to the Canning reservoir site, and pipe-head dams will be provided at each of those sources of supply. As already indicated, the interest on capital expenditure on the hills scheme is being capitalised, and therefore is not a charge against the water supply revenue account. Nor is it at present a burden on the ratepayers, but when the works are sufficiently advanced to give a supply to the metropolitan area, a proportion of the capital expenditure will have to be charged to the general capital account and bear interest as a charge against water supply revenue account. This will have the effect of further swelling the annual deficits unless the water rate is increased, as proposed by this Bill, in order to meet the deficiencies. In considering this prospect of an increase in rates, the following points are to be borne in mind: At present there is an annual deficit of £28,200, and to cover this the water rate should be 1s. 3¾d. in the pound, without taking into consideration the expenditure on the hills scheme. Therefore the difference between the rate of 1s. 3¾d. and 2s. in the pound, as provided in the Bill, represents the annual expenses on the hills scheme up to the year after the completion of the Wongong reservoir. Increased water allowance will be granted for any increase in the rate. Consequently, any ratepayer who now pays an appreciable amount for the use of water will not be penalised to any extent under the Bill.

Hon. J. Duffell: What would you term an appreciable amount?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Some ratepayers use water very extensively. For instance, there are ratepayers who have flower gardens.

Hon. J. Duffell: They are excessed for that.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: A considerable quantity of water is consumed by them, and they will not be unduly penalised owing to the increased rate.

Hon. J. Duffell: It will not make any difference, because they pay the 2s. in the pound on the large quantity, and they will have to pay for excess water in addition to that at a high rate.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: They will have a considerable quantity of water.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Will a larger quantity of water be allowed at the higher rate?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. Say a ratepayer is rated at £20 under the Bill, as against £10 or £15 at present. He will be able to use considerably more water under the Bill than at present.

Hon. J. Nicholson: And he will be paying more.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes; he will be paying more. He can cut out the higher rate in water.

Hon. V. Hamersley: But will not the price of water be put up?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No increased rate can be imposed except by the Minister. Prior to the commencement of each year the Minister will review the financial position of the department. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. Lovekin, debate adjourned until the following Tuesday.

BILL—PRIMARY PRODUCTS MARKETING.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 27th October.

HON. A. BURVILL (South-East) [8.20]: While commending the Government on an attempt to place before us a marketing Bill, yet I regard the measure as premature. It is an attempt to apply a Queensland Act to Western Australia. That Act, so far as I can ascertain, is not a success in Queensland as regards soft fruits or tomatoes, or indeed as regards any fruits other than pineapples and bananas. Again, Queensland has a ready and fairly large market for its fruits in Sydney and Melbourne. When the Bill was before another place, a copy of it was sent to the various associations of fruitgrowers in my constituency. From the Mt. Barker fruitgrowers I have received a communication dated the 13th September and reading—

At a meeting of the growers of this district held yesterday evening the Primary Producers Marketing Bill was thoroughly discussed, and the following resolution was passed:—"We, the Mount Barker fruitgrowers, having considered the Fruit Marketing Bill, as submitted by the Minister for Agriculture, do hereby publicly protest that such a measure should have been introduced. We fail to see any part or clause of it that would be anything but a danger to the industry.

The secretary continues—

I was also requested to ascertain if it would be possible for you to attend a meeting with four of our members at Mount Barker at an early date and discuss the matter. Mr. H. Stewart, Mr. A. Thomson, Mr. A. Wansbrough, and Mr. W. T. Glasheen are also being asked, and possibly you could arrange a date with them

Hon. J. Nicholson: Did you see what the Cannington growers said the other day?

Hon. A. BURVILL: As a result of that letter a number of members of Parliament, including Mr. Stephenson, met the Mt. Barker committee and went thoroughly into the Bill with them. The Mt. Barker growers have not only canvassed their own district, but all the other districts within their area. They have consulted 130 growers, with orchards from 5 acres up to 240 acres—fifteen of them having over 50 acres. I have read their opinion to the House. In speaking with the deputation we pointed out that originally the Mt. Barker growers had quoted Mr. Ranger on the Queensland Act, and had seemed to be favourably impressed with his opinion; we asked why they had changed their view. The reply was that having gone thoroughly into the matter and seen how the Queensland Act worked, they had come to the conclusion which I have read out. I am also in receipt of Mr. Ranger's opinion on the Act. It is that he does not think the Queensland Act or any similar measure would be of any use to Western Australia. The Bill covers not only fruit, but all primary products. The wheat growers do not want the Bill. They already have a voluntary pool, with which they are satisfied. As for potato growers, I have received a letter from those at Ellerker expressing absolute opposition to the Bill. The same remark applies to the growers at Narrikup. Further, I have received a letter from the Retail Dairymen's Industrial Union of Employers protesting against the Bill. Some hon. members will be aware that the manager of the Mt. Barker Co-operative Fruitgrowers' Society, Mr. Booth, recently visited England. At the time the Mt. Barker growers expressed the opinion which I have read out, Mr. Booth had not returned from the Old Country. Since then they have, at my request, discussed the matter with him, to see whether their opinion would alter. The result is that they confirm the resolution which I have quoted. They also state that they are entirely opposed to certain features of the Bill, especially Subclause 5 of Clause 5—

Forthwith after or contemporaneously with the making of an order under Section 4, the Governor shall by regulations prescribe—(a) the number of persons of which the board shall be composed, and what persons shall be capable of being elected; (b) the method by which such persons shall be elected, the method of voting, of ascertaining the result of the elections, and of the appointment of a returning and other officers, and any other matters incidental to the election of such members which it may be necessary to prescribe; (c) the tenure of office of members of the board, and in what events a member's seat shall become vacant; (d) the method of filling vacancies caused by effluxion of time and casual vacancies; (e) the method of appointment of a chairman of the board, in what manner questions shall be decided by the board, and generally the conduct of the board's business . . . . .

The Mt. Barker growers fail to see what power will be left to be exercised by the growers if all these powers are given to the Minister. They also fail to see how it is possible for the Minister to decide what quantity of fruit should be made avalable for local consumption. When asked whether they could put up something better than the Bill, or suggest what ought to be done, they replied, in sum and substance, that the Bill should be withdrawn and that the existing Fruit Advisory Board should submit to the Government the essentials for marketing facilities. I understand that the board are to be dissolved. The growers consider that the board should be kept in existence. It is stated that the six meetings of the board cost the Government £150 a year. The board send representatives to the Commonwealth Council of Fruit Marketing, but the expense of this is borne by the Federal Government. The Mt. Barker growers consider that meetings of the board should be held to elaborate methods which will enable a satisfactory measure to be introduced. Further, they hold that the board should be given power to form duly registered associations of growers, and that this should be done at a nominal fee covering the expenses of members of the board. With regard to other products, such as potatoes, they offer no solution. Mr. Booth points out that in South Africa a marketing scheme has been in operation for the last three years. I have here a copy of the report of the Fruitgrowers' Co-operative Exchange of South Africa Limited. Though I do not wish to weary members, I regard this docu-

ment as so important that I shall read it. It is in two languages, but I shall read it in only one—

Early years of industry: The first attempts at transporting South African fresh fruits to Europe were made during the latter years of the last century, when a few small parcels—carried mostly in the stewards' cool chamber of the mail vessels—were landed overseas in fair condition. These early attempts were sufficiently encouraging to direct attention to the possibilities of growing commercial quantities of fresh fruits for markets in the Northern Hemisphere, and large areas were planted out. To cater for the traffic, insulated chambers were constructed on the ships regularly serving South African ports.

Expansion: Ten years ago export amounted to:—season 1913-14, deciduous, 451,635 boxes; season 1915, citrus, 39,761 cases. At this period many thousands of both citrus and deciduous trees were planted with an idea to future export. Owing to the shipping conditions during the war, the industry experienced a temporary set-back. None the less expansion was recorded, and two years later (i.e., 1921) there were exported—deciduous, 438,836 boxes; citrus, 231,499 cases.

Shipping delays cause loss: Owing to these greatly increased quantities and an absence of central control, export at this period was conducted under most adverse conditions. Long delays in shipment, owing to shortage of steamers' cold chamber space, and the inability of the land cold stores to successfully cope with the requirements of fruit for export resulted in very heavy losses from deterioration. During the citrus season quantities amounting to 60,000 cases were at one time awaiting shipment at Cape Town, the waiting period before shipment being as long as six weeks.

Formation of the exchange: As an outcome of these conditions, the fruit-growers realised that the industry would receive a most serious and lasting set-back unless immediate action was taken to remedy matters. They united together, and having personally guaranteed a fund of close on £2,000 for three years, formed (with the assistance and approval of the Government) the Fruit-growers' Co-operative Exchange of South Africa, Limited. This body embraced fruit-growers of the whole of the Union of South Africa and Rhodesia. The exchange was formed as a national organisation and primarily to place the export fruit trade of the Union on a sound basis by arranging for the shipping of the fruit and organising the marketing and distribution overseas by producers themselves.

Voluntary levy: By consent of the majority of the growers, and with the approval of the Government, it was agreed that a 5s. levy be imposed on each ton of fruit shipped, this levy being collected by the Government and handed over to the exchange to be used for the benefit of its members. The Minister of Agriculture reserves the right (in consultation with the exchange) of ear-marking part of the levy for any specific purpose deemed advisable.

Further development in export: The 1922 season showed a total export of—deciduous, 787,925 boxes; citrus, 331,701 cases. In 1923 there were exported—deciduous, 1,012,628 boxes; citrus, 411,432 cases.

Immediate results of organisation: Owing to the organised co-operative methods of the exchange, shipping facilities were arranged with the steamship companies with such successful results that the long delays in shipping of the previous seasons became almost negligible. The case for the establishment of a national co-operative organisation, embracing all interests in fresh fruit export, was thus fully justified from the shipping point of view alone.

Structure of the exchange: Based on the Agricultural Co-operative Societies Act of 1922, the structure of the exchange aims at giving every grower representation. The method of doing so is as follows:—

(1) Grower: The fruit-growers of South Africa, all of whom are eligible to join.

(2) Local Co-operative Companies: All matters affecting their industry are discussed by the local co-operatives, and from grouped areas of these companies delegates are annually appointed who represent their local companies on the "provincial" or "central co-operative companies." When conditions are suitable local co-operatives handle their members' produce on a co-operative system. It is hoped that, in the near future, facilities will be arranged with the Land Bank, by which all the local companies will be enabled to purchase packing material for their members, security for loans being based on produce.

(3) Central Co-operative Companies: The principal functions of these are to collate and decide on all local and provincial matters which are brought before them, and pass on the result of their deliberations to the respective "sub-boards" of the exchange, the members of which are annually appointed by the central co-operatives.

(4) Sub-boards: The articles of association of the exchange provide for "sub-boards" or "divisions" in citrus, deciduous, and pine-apple fruits. Each sub-board has final and complete control over all matters which purely affect its respective division.

(5) The Federal Body and the Exchange Board of Directors.

Federal Board: The central companies acquire membership in the federal body. Collectively the directors of the sub-boards become the directors of the federal body. The federal board is entrusted with authority over all matters of general policy and management both in South Africa and overseas, which are common to the industry as a whole. Funds for this purpose are of necessity a first call on the levies. This federal board has a total of 15 directors, eight of whom represent citrus, five deciduous, and two pineapple interests.

Present Directorate: The personnel of the present directorate is:—Citrus sub-board: Transvaal, four representatives; Cape province, Rhodesia, Natal, four representatives. Deciduous sub-board: Orange Free State, one representative (chairman of the exchange); Western Province, four representatives. Pineapple sub-

board: Eastern Province, two representatives. It will be seen that the structure makes provision that all co-operative exporters of fresh fruit in South Africa shall be in a position to voice their opinions on any matter touching on the industry, and that the responsibility for management shall be in the hands of representatives placed in authority by the votes of all growers.

Committees: The detailed work involved in carrying out the decisions of the federal board is delegated to committees appointed by that body.

Federal finance: Federal finance is controlled by a committee consisting of two Transvaal citrus and two Western Province deciduous directors.

Membership: Individual membership is limited to bona fide growers of fruit. Speculators are not eligible. No grower is compelled to join the organisation, but, every grower who produces or who purposes producing fruit for export has been urged to join and assist in strengthening the movement. Control by members is exercised on the sound democratic principle of "one man one vote" irrespective of the quantity of fruit exported. To-day the exchange has as its grower-members practically all the deciduous exporters and over 80 per cent. of citrus growers.

Non trading: The federal exchange is not a trading body, but one of its main objects is that of providing a service which will indicate to growers the best channels for sales or purchases. Buying and selling can only be carried on by the local co-operative companies.

Non-political: No political interests whatever have any consideration in the exchange.

Recognition: The exchange is now fully recognised by Government as the only authority capable of voicing growers' opinions on all matters connected with the fruit industry among which are packing, rail transport, conditions, government regulations covering grading and marketing, port storage and handling requirements and overseas markets. All the shipping companies engaged in the transport of South African fresh fruit accept the exchange as speaking for the great majority of growers, and pay tribute to the assistance they receive by treating with this one body.

Overseas representation: One of the features essential to the continued success of the exchange is the appointment at the earliest possible moment of a representative in London. This representative will be entrusted with the duty of advising the South African producers and reporting on all questions relating to distribution, sales and advertising overseas, and the purchasing of materials. The principle of this appointment has been endorsed by the leading distributors and salesmen handling South African fruit in the United Kingdom, also by Mr. Karl Spilhaus, Union Trades Commissioner for the Continent.

Control: Those whose interests are against co-operation amongst producers delight in creating around the question of control, a fog of misunderstanding. It should be clearly understood that what the exchange aims at in control is not sought with the intention of displacing or upsetting in any way the highly specialised channels of sale overseas as represented by houses of repute who handle South African fruit. It is, however, vital to the existence of the exchange that control should be exercised over its members' produce if it is to be of service to growers in—(a) the engaging of shipping space; (b) making arrangements for the provision of adequate railage, transport, and storage facilities; (c) the co-ordination of distribution overseas; (d) the provision of security to the Land Bank in respect of advances made to members for the purchase of packing material, etc.; (e) any matters in which general benefits to the industry can only be secured by co-operation.

The National view: The board of the exchange recognise that in all matters and particularly those of shipping and port facilities for handling fruit, the broadest possible co-operative vision must be maintained, the industry being South African and not admittive of any preference to areas, provinces, or ports.

Opposition and criticism: It was not to be expected that a national co-operative movement of such magnitude, particularly whilst in its initial stages, should escape criticism. The attacks which have been made and are still encountered may be divided into two classes. Firstly, criticism from within, giving expression to the opinions of genuine co-operators who are desirous of seeing a strong organisation by which producers shall, with their own voice, control their own produce on national and democratic lines. From such constructive criticism nothing but good can result. There are not a few growers who have failed as yet to grasp the aims of the exchange or to realise the need for co-operation, and their criticism is too often based on a viewpoint which considers only local or personal advantage. The record of agricultural co-operation in other countries shows that this is to be expected, and can only be overcome in the course of time. Secondly, criticism from, or directed from, outside. The main attacks which the exchange has to meet fall under this category, and although not acknowledged as such, they are in reality engineered with the definite object of wrecking the exchange. The real authors are opposed to any form of co-operative strength taking shape amongst primary producers. The interests of these opponents of the exchange lie largely in living off the individual, and in maintaining a state of scattered weakness amongst growers. At no time in its existence will the exchange be free from attacks from such quarters.

Work accomplished: The exchange has been in existence less than three years, and has had many difficulties inseparable from the formation of such an organisation to contend against. Sound work has, however, been accomplished. By dint of long effort shipment of fruit has been rescued from a state of chaos and placed on a sound working basis, and a fair and practical system of order of shipment is operating at all ports. It would not be correct to state that all difficulties connected with shipping are solved. Despite the marked contrast between the conditions of to-day and those existing prior to the inception of the exchange, much

criticism centres around shipping matters. The exchange have asked the Government to hold a full inquiry covering the whole subject of the shipment of fresh fruit from South Africa. As an outcome of this inquiry it is hoped that control of transport will be put on a permanent and legalised basis. The activities of the exchange have resulted in considerable changes of great moment in regard to handling at the ports prior to shipment. Constant pressure has been brought to bear on Government departments to bring about changes advantageous to the grower, an instance of which is the centralisation of the inspection staff under a chief Government fruit inspector. Recommendations have been made from time to time to the Minister of Agriculture with regard to the fruit export regulations—as these have represented the considered opinion of growers, they have invariably been acted upon. From its inception the deciduous sub-board have pressed for the construction of quayside cold storage at Cape Town as being of vital necessity to the development of the soft fruit industry. The outcome of this effort has now reached a stage where results are in sight. In the meantime the question has become one of great urgency. With an export prospect of well over a million boxes this coming summer, such construction alone can avert wholesale disaster.

The future: Fruit being a primary product, the continued successful exploitation of overseas markets is a matter of vital importance. Experience has proved beyond any question that to meet the requirements of the developments in production in South Africa, a sustained and organised effort by all concerned is essential. The growers have not only initiated their organisation, they have established it. Healthy progress in the expansion of fruit export is dependent upon a systematic attitude being maintained by Government and public opinion towards the efforts of the producers to control and protect the future of their own industry.

That is as far as South Africa has gone, but it is far in advance of anything we have in Australia. Despite the enormous length of their railways and the fact that they have to operate in two languages, they have established a far better system for the carriage of perishable produce over the railways than we have here. I brought this matter under the notice of Mr. Scaddan when he was Minister for Railways, with the result that the flat rate of 1s. 6d. on fruit was initiated. Since then the present Minister for Railways has introduced the "cash-on-delivery" system on merchandise. The principal feature of the "c.o.d." system in South Africa has not been tried here. Under that system a person in Perth could order fruit or potatoes from the grower and they would be delivered at his door, where he would pay the freight and also pay for his produce, together with a slight commission. The money would be transmitted to the station-master at the railway station from which the produce was originally consigned. If that system were adopted here, and if the advisory board, which was lately discontinued, was allowed to operate, meetings held amongst the fruitgrowers and producers, and steps taken as in South Africa, then the Bill could be withdrawn or remodelled so that a measure that would prove more beneficial to the growers could be presented to hon. members. Something in the direction of co-operation must be achieved. I wish to see such co-operation on a voluntary basis, and not compulsory. That is necessary if our producers are to continue. The present system of marketing is too haphazard. When Mr. Willmott was speaking he had a good deal to say in favour of the middlemen and the agents. I do not altogether agree with his remarks. The agents do very good work so long as they are our servants, but too often they become our masters.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: Who is exploiting the markets to-day?

Hon. A. BURVILL: We have gluts in connection with our perishable products, and a good deal of money is made by the agents when there is a glut, be it artificial or otherwise.

Hon. E. H. Harris: How do you suggest that difficulty can be overcome?

Hon. A. BURVILL: It can be overcome by the growers co-operating and preventing the agents from becoming their masters, but, to a greater or less extent, their servants.

Hon. E. H. Harris: That is the voluntary system.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: How do agents make money out of gluts? The lower the price, the lower the commission!

Hon. A. BURVILL: I will give one illustration.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You were referring to the agents.

Hon. A. BURVILL: Two or three years ago there was a glut in tomatoes, which sold at from 1s. to 3s. a case. One would naturally suppose that the consumers would get the benefit of the cheap tomatoes. On the other hand, they were obtainable at the hand barrows in the street—that was the cheapest place where one could get tomatoes at the time—for 3d. a lb. At that rate a profit was being made of quite 2d. a lb.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: What about the open markets?

Hon. A. BURVILL: It was the same there.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: The growers had it in their own hands there.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: What has been the average price of tomatoes during the last three months?

Hon. A. BURVILL: I do not require to answer that question. I want to establish the point that the agents make most of their money when a glut is being experienced. I have shown the enormous profits made in the retailing of tomatoes at 3d. a lb. when they were sold at an average of 1s. 6d. a case. When tomatoes brought a decent price, they averaged about 12s. 6d. a case. At that time they were retailed at 5d. a lb. The retailers were well satisfied with a small profit. They were not satisfied with that when there was a glut. At the same time, the consumer does not get any benefit from the position.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: Why did they oppose the central markets, which would have given them control of their own produce?

Hon. A. BURVILL: I will not offer any opinion on that subject. Last season the buyers so manipulated prices that they were able to get potatoes from the growers at £3 a ton less than the price at which they could procure supplies from the Eastern States. They were still trying to decrease the price of potatoes and had got it down to £7 a ton, the retail price being then 2s. 3d. a stone. We got the potato growers together and they operated a sort of price-fixing commission for themselves, by which means they prevented the agents from manipulating one grower against another. The prices they were able to obtain were reasonable, and in the course of a few months the growers got control of their own produce.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: What happened last year?

Hon. A. BURVILL: I am telling you what happened. That is one improvement that can be effected. The voluntary system of co-operation amongst the fruitgrowers and producers, together with assistance from the Government in the direction of transport facilities, forming agencies and providing cool stores for fruit at the point of export represent further improvements that can be made. I commend to hon. members the system inaugurated in South Africa and suggest that the Bill be withdrawn and this question further considered, so that another Bill may be drafted that will meet with the approval of the growers. It is useless to pass the Bill because every grower with whom I have come in contact does not desire it. I intend to vote against the second reading.

On motion by Hon. H. A. Stephenson, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.55 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 11th November, 1925.

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

BILL—INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

To discharge Order.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.33]: I move—

That the Order of the Day for Committee progress on the Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment Bill be discharged from the Notice Paper.

In view of the importance of the Bill, it is incumbent on me to give my reasons for the unusual step I am taking. When I shall have finished, I think most people will agree that no other course was open to the Government, consistent with self-respect. On Thursday night last, when the Bill was in Committee, and when we reached Clause 57, comprising the proposed new Section 101, which provides for the determination of the court as to the basic wage to be laid before Parliament, Mr. Lovekin moved an addition to the clause,