

The MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT: I have not broken that promise yet to the hon. member. I do not think it applies to the spouse of a resident owner so that the spouse would be in a position to vote on the loan polls. The hon. member can get his interpretation of it; I will give mine. This is essentially a measure that can be dealt with in Committee because that is where the framework will be available for amendment. I ask members, if they are going to move amendments, to place them on the notice paper as early as possible because I would like to give them proper consideration and I may, perhaps, suggest alterations which may be helpful. I move—  
That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. R. G. Hawke, debate adjourned.

**ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.**

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray-Wellington): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 4.30 p.m. on Thursday, the 16th June.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 5.49 p.m.*

**Legislative Council.**

Thursday, 16th June, 1949.

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

**ASSENT TO BILLS.**

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

- 1, Land Tax.
- 2, City of Perth Electricity and Gas Purchase.
- 3, Marketing of Apples and Pears.
- 4, Matrimonial Causes and Personal Status Code.

**QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS.**

*As to Conformity with Standing Orders.*

The PRESIDENT: Before calling on members to ask the questions standing in their names on the notice paper, I would call attention to Standing Order No. 88, which reads as follows—

In putting any such question, no argument or opinion shall be offered, nor inference nor imputation made, nor any facts stated, except so far as may be necessary to explain such question, and the President may direct the Clerk to alter any question so as to conform with this Order.

I have directed the Clerk to delete from Question No. 5 the words "ceases to be a modern Shylock."

**QUESTIONS.**

**AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES.**

*As to Standard of Education.*

Hon. A. L. LOTON asked the Honorary Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Has the Government set up a committee to make recommendations with a view to bringing about a more beneficial standard of education at the various agricultural colleges?

(2) If such a committee has been set up, who are the members of the committee?

(3) Will the report and recommendations be tabled at the completion of the inquiry?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Professor E. J. Underwood, Chairman; Professor R. G. Camcron; Mr. M. McK. Clark; Mr. W. Southern; Mr. Edmondson; Mr. Worner; Mr. Wilson; Mr. Russell; Mr. W. Nunn, Secretary.

(3) It will be at least 12 months before a report will be available. Consideration will then be given to full publicity to the findings of the committee.

### MOTOR VEHICLES.

*As to American Imports and Distribution.*

Hon. H. HEARN asked the Honorary Minister for Agriculture:

(1) How many cars and utilities of North American origin were imported into Western Australia for the period from the 31st December, 1948, to the 31st May, 1949?

(2) Of this number, how many were taken—

(a) by the Commonwealth Government;

(b) by the State Government?

(3) How many were released to country buyers?

(4) How many were released to metropolitan buyers?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied:

(1) This information is not available to the Motor Vehicles Allocation Board.

(2) As the number imported is not known to the Motor Vehicles Allocation Board it is impossible to state whether any or all of them have been allocated.

(3) and (4) Answered by (1) and (2).

Note.—The number of cars and utilities of North American origin allocated during the period from the 31st December, 1948, to the 31st May, 1949, is as follows:—

|                                      | Cars. | Utilities. |
|--------------------------------------|-------|------------|
| 1. To the Commonwealth Government .. | nil.  | 2          |
| 2. To the State Government .. ..     | 12    | 12         |
| 3. To country buyers ..              | 83    | 153        |
| 4. To metropolitan buyers            | 51    | 53         |

### EDUCATION.

*As to Midday Meal for Metropolitan Children.*

Hon. E. H. GRAY asked the Chief Secretary:

In view of the acute housing shortage which compels families to live in crowded rooms and flats, thereby imperilling the physical development of large numbers of young children, besides throwing a tremendous burden on parents, particularly

mothers, is the Government prepared to provide necessary facilities for members of branches of the Parents and Citizens' Association, to prepare a midday meal for children at schools in the metropolitan area?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

In a number of cases parents and citizens' associations are already doing such work, and the department has placed and will place any facilities that are available at their disposal, but to undertake to provide buildings and similar facilities where none at present can be made available—by increasing building problems—would worsen the circumstances which the hon. member deploras.

### RAILWAYS.

*As to Employees' Homes, Salmon Gums.*

Hon. G. BENNETTS asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) In view of the Premier's recent visit to the Salmon Gums area and his inspection of railway workers' homes, and his statement that those employees were living under deplorable conditions, would he please advise whether the Government has given any consideration to providing better accommodation?

(2) If so, when will building commence?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) The Premier did not inspect railway workers' homes at Salmon Gums, but the hon. member showed him a shack occupied by a fettler who has now accepted a transfer to Pioneer where housing is available. The premises concerned are privately owned, and therefore, it is not the duty of the department to maintain them, nor is any rent received by the department for them.

In the last three years three additional houses have been provided at Salmon Gums, and it cannot be said that the need for providing houses has been overlooked at that centre.

(2) Answered by (1).

### SEWERAGE.

*As to Interest Rate on Deferred Payments.*

Hon. G. FRASER asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Is it correct that because the Treasury charges  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. interest on money advanced, the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Department has to charge 5 per cent. to its clients under its deferred payments scheme for sewerage connections?

(2) If so, will the Government take steps to see that the Treasury makes advances at a rate more in conformity with present-day interest rates?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) The Metropolitan Water Supply Act, Section 61, provides that rate of interest shall be 5 per cent.

(2) The cost of Loan funds to Treasury is approximately 4 per cent., as £41,000,000 of State's loan indebtedness is oversea and, in addition to interest, 25 per cent. exchange is payable.

### MINING.

#### *As to Assistance to Prospectors.*

Hon. E. M. HEENAN asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) How many prospectors are now receiving assistance under what is known as the Government Prospecting Scheme?

(2) How much money has been spent by the Government in providing assistance to prospectors under this scheme during the past twelve months?

(3) Does the Government intend to increase the weekly allowance of 30s. at present provided under the scheme?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) 23.

(2) Expenditure from the 1st July, 1948, to the 16th June, 1949, on prospecting sustenance totals £2,670.

In addition, moneys have been expended on prospecting equipment, mobile compressor plant, and compressors loaned to prospectors and cartage and other subsidies on their ore, which moneys would be difficult to calculate.

(3) In view of the assistance and benefits provided in addition to the weekly sustenance allowance of 30s. in the Eastern and Murchison fields and 40s. in the North-West, it is not intended to increase the allowances.

### BILL—CHARITABLE COLLECTIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

#### *Second Reading.*

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.42] in moving the second reading said: This Bill has been brought down to remedy a defect in the Act whereby several persons, and one man in particular, have tried to make a living out of collecting for charity. Under the Act, no organisation or person may collect money or goods for charitable purposes unless issued with a license by the Chief Secretary's Department. Prior to issue, the bona fides of the applicant are investigated thoroughly by the department and as close a watch as possible is kept on methods of collection, application of funds, etc. Section 12 of the Act provides that any condition may be so attached to a license.

Unfortunately, there is no provision in either the Act or the regulations to render illegal any breach of a condition of a license. The case that indicated the weakness in the Act arose in connection with a Queen contest organised last year by the Wooroloo Sanatorium Colony. This contest had as its object the raising of funds for the after-care of T.B. patients, and a license was issued under the Charitable Collections Act. A committee of the Wooroloo colony appointed a certain person to be organiser of the contest and entered into a signed contract to pay him 10 per cent. of the net proceeds of the contest, plus reasonable expenses.

The department, unfortunately, was not advised of the terms of this contract until after it was signed. When it was informed, the department immediately advised the committee that 10 per cent. was considered too high a remuneration to be paid for services to charity. The matter was reported to the Charitable Collections Advisory Committee. Under Section 13 (2) (c) of the Act, the advisory committee may recommend to the Minister that a license be revoked if excessive remuneration is paid to any person from funds collected. The committee had no wish to revoke the license in this instance, owing to the laudable object of the contest.

Legal opinion was obtained as to the best course to be adopted. This opinion was to the effect that the contract was binding on

the colony, and even if the license were revoked, the organiser would still be entitled to 10 per cent. of all moneys that had been collected. The department then endeavoured to come to some amicable arrangement for payment of a reasonable remuneration. Members will appreciate the difficulty of the position. The period of the campaign was set at nine months, and it was estimated that £20,000 would be collected, so the remuneration to the gentleman in question was to be £2,000 for nine months' work, and the department, unfortunately, had no control whatsoever over the situation. It was an honest error by the committee, and the gentleman was entitled to his money. The committee were exceedingly disturbed by what they agreed was their blunder in entering into this contract, and finally a settlement was arrived at. I do not think I need go into the question of what the settlement was. The organiser did reduce his remuneration, but even then it was far higher than it should have been in such circumstances. After the organiser had been paid and all expenses met, the net proceeds of the contest amounted to £13,508. The organiser's conduct of the contest was not satisfactory, and I do not think that I need to elaborate this point.

The Bill will prevent persons in future from making a living out of charitable collections. The department's policy has always been to encourage honorary services to charity and to discourage professional organisers. The Bill will not prevent a man being paid for his services if he obtains the consent of the Chief Secretary. The Bill provides that any proposed contract or arrangement for payment of money from charitable funds must be submitted to the Minister for approval. Any money paid under a contract that has not the Minister's approval can be recovered in the Local Court.

There is a further small amendment providing that a departmental officer may inspect the accounts and documents of any charitable organisation. This function at present is vested only in the Auditor General and his officers. In the majority of cases, the services of the Audit Department are not necessary, and it is essential that the Chief Secretary's Department have access to the books of any organisation or person to whom it issues a license. The Auditor General was mentioned in the Act

in error, because it is merely a matter for some official of the Chief Secretary's Department to attend to and see that it is all correct. If necessary, he can call in the services of the Auditor General. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. E. H. Gray, debate adjourned.

#### **BILL—MARKETING OF BARLEY ACT AMENDMENT (CONTINUANCE).**

*Second Reading.*

**THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE** (Hon. G. B. Wood—East) [4.49] in moving the second reading said: This is merely a continuance Bill which seeks to continue the operations of the Marketing of Barley Act. At the present stage, the Act will lapse at the end of this year and the industry desires its continuance for a further three years. The present Act has been highly successful and I have not heard a complaint from any section of the industry, including buyers or anyone else, so apparently they have all been satisfied with the working of the measure. Therefore, in my opinion, all those who are more directly concerned are desirous of continuing this legislation. My opinion is that it should be made permanent. However, the industry has asked for an extension of only three years and that is all the Bill provides for. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. L. Loton, debate adjourned.

#### **BILL—MARKETING OF POTATOES ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

**THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE** (Hon. G. B. Wood—East) [4.51] in moving the second reading said: This amendment has become necessary following the enactment of provision for the Potato Industry Trust Fund. As the Potato Marketing Act now stands, potatoes used for seed purposes are, in effect, exempted from the incidence of the levy. They are not legally exempted, but as these potatoes do not go to the board, there is no way of obtaining the levy for the trust fund. All that the Bill seeks to do is to bring seed potatoes under the control of the board. Consequently, instead of there being free selling of seed potatoes in future.

they will have to come under the jurisdiction of the board and will then be subject to the payment of the levy. The Act does provide for exemptions in certain cases. Section 25 states—

The board may grant a permit to any grower authorising him to sell potatoes to a person or persons (not being the board) subject to such conditions and restrictions as the board determines.

With that safeguard in the Act, the board would, in many instances, grant exemption to a grower who desired to sell his potatoes for seed to another grower.

Hon. H. K. Watson: Would the board grant exemption from the payment of the levy?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No; this Bill is designed to ensure that such people shall not evade the payment of the levy, but the provision will not prevent trading taking place between one grower and another.

Hon. W. J. Mann: That occurs mostly between neighbours.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. However, the matter will have to be referred to the board in order that the levy may be collected. That is only fair. I cannot see why a grower who sells potatoes for seed should escape the payment of the levy required. It is a very small amount, one penny per hundredweight, and the fund serves a most useful purpose. These trust funds are very useful indeed. Over the years the Fruit Industry Trust Fund has proved highly successful, and although it was first established for growers of apples and pears, subsequently citrus growers came in and now stone-fruit growers have been included. I mention this to show the desirability of establishing these funds.

Hon. G. Fraser: I thought you favoured the abolition of boards.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Who told the hon. member that?

Hon. G. Fraser: I understood that was your policy.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It was never my policy.

Hon. G. Fraser: Well, the policy of your Government.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: In my remarks on the previous Bill, I pointed out how successful the Barley Board had been. However, there is no question as to whether the Potato Board should be abolished under this measure.

Hon. G. Fraser: I realise that; I was speaking of the Government's policy.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am not opposed to boards.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: This is not a proposal to create a new board.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: There is nothing new in the idea of establishing boards for various industries in Australia. The poultry farmers have a board in every State of the Commonwealth and these boards are proving very successful. I am amazed that Mr. Fraser should try to bait me with a remark that I am opposed to boards. I have never been opposed to them.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: But the practice can be overdone a bit.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Mr. Fraser might recall that 15 years ago in this House I strongly advocated a marketing board and members agreed to legislation for the formation of a board to control the marketing of eggs. However, we are now discussing whether this particular board shall be permitted to function fully or whether some growers shall be permitted to escape payment of the levy. As I have pointed out, the Act provides for the board to grant exemption where desirable, and that is a safeguard. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. W. J. Mann, debate adjourned.

#### BILL—PLANT DISEASES ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

*Second Reading.*

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—East) [4.56] in moving the second reading said: This Bill contains about the smallest amendment that could possibly be made to an Act. It seeks to delete the word "parasite" and insert in lieu the word "pest."

In the Plant Diseases Act, reference is made to "parasite," but that term does not cover everything in the form of pests that attack plants such as fruit trees. In order that the term "pest" might not be confused with other pests, such as rabbits in the country districts or, as Mr. Forrest knows, with kangaroos, camels, donkeys and so forth in his part of the State—

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Do not go too far with that!

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Perhaps I had better not. Included in the Bill is a definition of the word "pest." I should like to read a note on the term "parasite," not a human parasite but one affecting plants, particularly fruit trees and vines.

The term "parasite" as applied in the definition of "disease" under Section 4 of the Act has a restricted meaning and is usually applied to specialised organisms which spend the greater part of their time permanently attached to, or in association with, some other organism termed "the host." This weakness in the Act was pointed out by the Crown Solicitor, who is doubtful whether power exists under the Act in its present form to enforce control measures against many insects which are commonly dealt with under the Act.

In other words, many of these insects are pests and not parasites. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. Sir Charles Latham, debate adjourned.

### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 28th June.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 4.59 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 16th June, 1949.

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