

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 28th June, 1949.

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

BILL—TUBERCULOSIS (COMMONWEALTH AND STATE ARRANGEMENT).

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

As to Rescinding Resolutions.

On motions by the Chief Secretary, resolved:

That the resolution passed on Wednesday, the 8th December, 1948—

That the House meet on Fridays—be rescinded.

That the resolution passed on Wednesday, the 24th November, 1948—

(1) suspending Standing Order No. 62 (limit of time for commencing new business);

(2) suspending Standing Orders to enable Bills to be passed through all stages at any one sitting and consideration of messages from the Assembly considered forthwith—be rescinded.

The PRESIDENT: I declare the motions carried by an absolute majority.

BILL—CHARITABLE COLLECTIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 16th June.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [4.44]: I was much surprised to find that this measure was necessary. Having taken an active part in charitable work and charitable organisations, I was greatly interested in the

legislation already passed by Parliament. Not being a legal man, I was under the impression, after having made a study of the Act, that every section of work carried out by charitable organisations was effectively covered. Penalties are provided up to £50 for breaches of the Act, and provision is made for the requisite legal proceedings to bring offenders before the court. Therefore I could not understand an organisation, after having obtained a license from the department, deliberately infringing the provisions of the license and entering into an illegal contract.

The Chief Secretary: No, not an illegal contract.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: My impression is that such a contract would be illegal.

The Chief Secretary: We desire, by this Bill, to make it illegal.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: To come to an understanding with anyone when that understanding infringed the provisions of the license issued by the Minister appeals to me as being illegal, and I naturally thought that the money paid under such a contract could be recovered in the court. Consequently, I could not see why an amending Bill should be necessary. However, I have made a close study of the Act and the Bill, and have been assured by those in authority that there is a weakness in the Act and that this measure is absolutely necessary to deal with anyone who infringes the conditions of the license.

The organisation set up under the Act has done very fine work. From my own knowledge, the services of an experienced and sympathetic officer have been made available to various organisations to assist them in their work of collecting funds from the public. I stress the point that this has nothing to do with the street appeals; the Street Collections Act effectively covers those appeals in every detail. The Chief Secretary has assured us that the Bill will have the effect of tightening up control, and if organisations in future are foolish enough to disregard the conditions of the license, the money disbursed may be recovered and paid back into the funds.

I wish to add a word of praise for the efficient manner in which, during the war and since, the department has carried out

the supervision of the two pieces of legislation—the Street Collections Act and the Charitable Collections Act. As the Chief Secretary pointed out, it is necessary to protect the public as well as the committees. Very often people, in their enthusiasm, attempt to do foolish things, but such actions will be prevented in future by the exercise of proper control and close co-operation between the officers of the department and the officials of charitable organisations. This is a short Bill containing only two effective clauses, and I support the second reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban—in reply) [4.48]: Mr. Gray is under a slight misapprehension. Nothing illegal has been done. What happened was that the Woorloo colony anticipated collecting about £20,000 and entered into a contract with an organiser on the basis of a 10 per cent. payment plus expenses. Actually £17,000 or thereabouts was collected and the amount netted was £13,000 odd, so that a very large sum of money would have been payable to the organiser for a comparatively few weeks' work.

Negotiations were entered into and finally the amount of commission to be paid was settled, but there were certain features of the transaction that the department disliked. Therefore it was considered that the department, or the advisory committee which has done such excellent work under the Act, should be granted the additional powers set out in the Bill. Under those powers, the advisory committee will have authority to view any contract entered into and approve or disapprove of it. If it does not approve, then there will be no binding legal contract. In this instance an honest error was made by the committee controlling this fund.

To avoid anything of that kind in future, before any organisation that has permission to collect funds for charity can enter into any contract for the payment of moneys to organisers and such people, it must obtain the approval of the Minister. That is all there is in the Bill. It is not intended to cover something that has been

done illegally but to prevent in the future the entering into contracts which may be inadvisable.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—MARKETING OF BARLEY ACT AMENDMENT (CONTINUANCE).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 16th June.

HON. A. L. LOTON (South-East) [4.53]: This is only a continuance Bill to define the period for which the Act shall operate after December, 1949, when it is due to expire. The purpose for which the Barley Board was appointed was to control the marketing, sale and disposal of barley. On that board are three producers—Messrs. Forrester, Kelsall and Roberts. The maltsters have one representative in Mr. Barrett and the brewers are represented by Mr. Jacoby. The representative of the Minister is Mr. Thomas, who is chairman. The prices that the board has obtained for growers over the last two years and the anticipated price for the barley delivered last harvest justify the continuance of that body. The final price for the last harvest has not been determined. The growers have had one dividend and the second is under consideration. The figures are as follows:—

	Type.	Price (less Freight).
		s. d.
1946-47	Two-row manufacturing	5 10½
	Six-row manufacturing	5 1¼
1947-48	Two-row manufacturing	7 4½
	Six-row manufacturing	15 10½

The estimated prices for 1948-49 are 7s. 6d. less freight for the two-row manufacturing type, and 8s. 6d. for the six-row type. I think those figures are very convincing, and for anyone to say that the board has not functioned efficiently would be to cast a slur on it. The quantity delivered to the board for the 1948-49 season was 403,000 bushels of the two-row type and 189,000 bushels of the six-row type. The two-row

type has all been used in this State by the brewers and approximately five per cent. of the 189,000 bushels of the six-row type has also been used by them for various purposes. Part of the six-row type delivered—namely, grain damaged by seasonal conditions, badly harvested, or not up to standard—has been disposed of as stock food and the remainder exported. It has been necessary to import a quantity of two-row malting barley from South Australia; so it will be seen that the avenue for anyone interested in growing barley in this State is still wide. With the decline in wheat prices, farmers in some areas will no doubt seek the permit necessary to enable them to grow barley and will undertake the production of this grain as being a more remunerative crop than wheat. I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

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

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 16th June.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM (East) [4.58]: I do not propose to say very much about this Bill. I really do not think there is any necessity for its introduction; but I daresay the parliamentary draftsman or the legal advisers of the Crown Law Department have been looking through the Act and found a very small mistake in the printing or in the drafting. The mistake was that the word "and" was included in one of the subsections, and it had to be removed. That seems to be the most grievous thing that happened.

On looking up the Oxford Dictionary, I cannot see that there is much difference between the meanings of these two words. The word "parasite" is proposed to be deleted from the measure, and, of course, a disease may not be a parasitical disease or pest. In the Oxford Dictionary, the meaning of "parasite" is—

Interested hanger-on, toady: animal, plant, living in or upon another and drawing nutriment directly from it.

The dictionary gives the meaning of the word "pest" as follows:—

Troublesome or destructive person, animal or thing.

And, as a more rare usage, "pestilence." In the parent Act, the fruit-fly is described as a pest. I am referring to the original Insect Pests Amendment Act, which later was repealed and replaced by the Plant Diseases Act. Why not say that the word "disease" includes parasites and pests? I think we may be changing the meaning of the word unnecessarily.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: We might have a parasite to destroy the red mite, and we would not wish to annihilate that parasite.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I agree that there are some useful parasites, such as the cactoblastis.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: We would not wish to destroy that.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: No. All these parasites are provided for by regulation. The fruit-fly is specifically mentioned, and, under the regulations, any parasite can be included or excluded. I suppose if the Minister or his department desires the change, it can be made, but I do not think it is necessary.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [5.4]: My interest in this measure arises mainly from the fact that the Act was designed to protect certain forms of food, and it is essential that we, in this State, have available some edible fresh fruit. I do not know whether the powers included in the Bill will give the Minister any great additional authority, but I feel the time has arrived when he should be given considerably more power and when we, as a people, should do considerably more in an endeavour to control some of our plant parasites or pests.

In this regard, I refer particularly to the control of fruit-fly. All the original Act says about the control of fruit-fly—in effect—is with reference to the formation of a fruit-fly eradication fund. The measure was altered in 1946 by the introduction of a compulsory baiting scheme and since then certain other changes have taken place in relation to the amount of money that can be levied, and so on. In spite of this, I do not

think that, as a community, we are yet conscious of the damage the fruit-fly is doing in our midst.

Under the original Act, as amended, there are definite powers to do certain things with regard to the entry of orchards, the destruction of infected fruit and like matters, but I do not think we have yet developed the necessary powers for a concerted attack on this pest that is robbing the State of a considerable income and depriving a number of people of employment, as well as depriving large numbers of our people of the fresh fruit that they should be eating. In order to stimulate interest in the fruit-fly, I intend to retail something of its life history and the controlling of it as a pest.

The fruit-fly comes from a family that is given the common name of Trypetidae. Its characteristics are well known and can be summarised briefly in order that the fly itself may be readily recognised. It is much more common to see the maggot of the fruit-fly than the fly itself, which is not as large as the common house-fly. Most of the types of fruit-fly have mottled or banded bodies, with mottled wings that are carried outspread, and some of them move their wings in rhythmical fashion up and down. The body of the insect is often reddish-brown or approaching a red colour. A characteristic of the female is the short sharp ovipositor with which she lays the eggs under the skin of the fruit. Certain other branches of the family burrow under the leaves of plants, or lay their eggs in the flowers.

It is true that many of the fruit-flies have completely harmless habits, but that which is so prevalent here, the Mediterranean fruit-fly, causes considerable damage to our fruit crops. As I go through the life history of this fly, I hope to indicate certain measures that I think the Minister might consider introducing, as I believe it is his intention to bring down further alterations to the Act. Whether they are intended to apply purely to the fly-baiting scheme or to full control of the pest I do not know, but I will point out some of the changes that I think are more necessary than just an alteration of wording such as is to be accomplished by this Bill. There is another form of fruit-fly, the Queensland fruit-fly, which is one of the few types of native Australian fly that attack the maturing fruit.

The Mediterranean fruit-fly has become widespread throughout most of the world owing to the transport of fruit having taken place in the early days from southern Mediterranean countries. The first recognition of this particular fly in Australia was in this State in 1897, and the second a year later in Sydney. The fly was probably brought here with a shipment of oranges from Mediterranean ports, and so, for 50 years, it has been one of our greatest pests and an attacker of maturing fruit in this State. I believe this particular fruit-fly is now the most destructive fruit pest in the entire world. It is not simply isolated in Western Australia, but is a problem throughout the Commonwealth and in orchards in most other parts of the world. There are, however, a few areas in which success has attended efforts either to prevent the introduction of the fly or to eradicate it after entry.

There is a good deal of information available on the possibility of preventing further spread of the pest, or controlling the fly, within the State. Some idea of the economic situation of the fruit-fly is given in a small paragraph with regard to the ravages of Mediterranean fruit-fly in places such as Honolulu. It was discovered there in 1910, and has now spread to all the Hawaiian Islands. Because of the climate favouring its growth, it is stated to have become a serious and permanent check to horticultural pursuits and to have ended all fruit exports save pineapples and bananas.

In this State the fruit-fly has a serious economic aspect. When I began inquiring about its effect on the fruit industry here, I learned that Mumzone Products Ltd. had practically decided to shut down on the canning of fruit in this State, owing to the ravages of the fruit-fly. I will read extracts from a letter that I received from that firm—

Apricots: We had intended to can a considerable quantity of this fruit but when supplies became available and the processing line was set up, it was found that about double the quantity of labour had to be expended after the fruit had been cut into halves mechanically, to try and avoid the possibility of any contaminated fruit being passed into the cans. Our costs for this operation showed that we would be selling the product at a loss, and we therefore stopped canning and diverted the balance of the fruit already delivered into jam. This also was not very profitable as equal care had to be taken before the fruit

could be placed in the coppers. It was necessary to reject any further supplies and to inform growers that we could not accept their fruit.

A pamphlet issued in South Australia states—

In Perth, Western Australia, a 40-lb. box of apricots, bought this summer for jam, yielded only 3 lb. of clean, maggot-free fruit.

That has gone out as a statement to the rest of the world. Dealing with figs, Mumzone Products Ltd., say—

This crop was even more affected by fy than the apricots and in order to avoid any possibility of grubs being included in the jam, we were only able to process a very small quantity. We understand that quite large quantities of fig jam were manufactured in the State, but we ourselves were not prepared to risk any contamination. Unless something drastic is done to keep the fruit clean, we shall not be processing any of this very popular jam during the coming fruit season.

Dealing with plums, the firm says—

Here again the fruit was affected, although not quite so badly as in the above mentioned cases, nevertheless we only made jam from the plums available and have obtained our supplies of the canned article from our South Australian factory.

With regard to pears, they say—

Although up to this year this fruit has been free from the pest, a small quantity was affected by fy this season and had to be burnt. We view with alarm the possibility of the incidence being higher during next year, particularly in view of the great shortage and large demand for canned pears in Western Australia.

Another firm that I rang told me they were not canning any fruit, as the right types of fruit for canning were not grown in Western Australia and that it would need a good deal of education of the fruitgrowers before proper types were produced. They also said that the trouble with the fruit-fly was too much to bear, and if the fly obtained a hold in a factory of that kind it would be almost impossible to handle it. The canning of fruit and the making of jam in Western Australia have become imperilled by the ravages of fruit-fly and any powers we can give the Minister should be supported in this House in an endeavour to free the State of the pest. I believe that with a really concerted effort over a number of years in pursuance of planned action, it could be done.

Let us look at the life cycle of the fruit-fly for a moment. It is from that course that we may learn what is necessary in order to control the pest. Take the adult fly. It pierces the skin of the fruit and lays its eggs just below the skin and may lay anything from three to 10 eggs. The eggs hatch under the skin and the maggots burrow towards the centre of the fruit, feeding thereon as they go. The only sign on the fruit of the presence of maggots may be a small yellow patch at the point of entry of the fruit-fly. The maggots may leave the fruit and drop to the ground and perform the act of pupating in the soil.

It is much more common for the fruit, which is affected by maggots, to fall from the trees before being fully matured. That provides an opportunity for the fruit-fly to enter the topsoil. The period of pupating is shorter in summer than in winter. The adult fly emerges from the topsoil and can feed on the foliage of the tree. For a period of from three to seven days it will feed on the sap of the tree and other substances and then can start the process of egg-laying again. This is one of the reasons for baiting trees for the prevention of reinfestation. That is why the method of spraying is resorted to and the foliage is dealt with. When spraying is thoroughly carried out, the object is to prevent the tree being affected once more.

Each part of the life of this insect has an important bearing on the question of its eradication. First of all there is the fact that the fly pierces the skin of the fruit. We must remember that the pest is very poorly equipped for flying. This makes it possible to isolate an area of infestation and to attack the pest in that locality by the spraying of the trees. This isolation may be done by spraying with D.D.T. or by means of what some regard as a more modern bait, which consists of a mixture comprising 2½ lbs. of sugar, 2 oz. of tartar emetic and 4 gallons of water. It is interesting to note that the spraying of trees in the isolated area need not be uniform; the spraying can be done on one side only of the tree and still act in preventing the further life cycle of the fly, because the insect cannot travel more than a certain distance. The pest may also be attacked by a host-free period, to which I shall refer later.

It is of interest to note that it is only the trained eye that can determine that apparently sound fruit on the tree has been infested. Thus it is that we want experts and inspectors to assist in the campaign that should be launched to clear out the pest. Two factors are of importance and they should be more widely known by everyone. The first is that the early fall of sound fruit must always be regarded with suspicion. It may not occur; but if it should happen, it should give rise to suspicion of the presence of fruit-fly, and the matter should be investigated at once. The other point of interest is the presence of maggots on sound fruit. If that should be noted, it is more than likely that they are of the fruit-fly variety. There are practically no other types that will affect the fruit at that stage, and so it is most important when maggots are seen on apparently sound fruit that they should be dealt with, because they will certainly attack the matured fruit.

Another point is that they usually pupate on the topsoil but it has been found that even when diseased fruit has been buried to a depth greater than two feet in normal soil, the fly can still emerge from that depth. Thus it is quite useless to deal with the situation by burying fruit that has been affected by fruit-fly. Notwithstanding that fact, when one commonly sees fruit lying on the ground, the practice usually adopted to get rid of it is to dig the fruit in. Either the fruit must be boiled or the maggots must be killed by heat. Thus, if we are to have any determined campaign for the eradication of this pest, that point must be borne in mind. Another alternative that has been adopted is to take the fruit in weighted bags or baskets and dump it a long distance out at sea. The point is that burying is of no practical use whatever.

The time of pupation is also interesting because it raises problems within our own State. It may last from 12 to 14 days in summer, while in winter, particularly such as we enjoy here, it may continue for from 25 to 50 days. Thus the time that elapses is directly affected by our climate, and here it is quite possible for the life cycle of the fruit-fly to make it necessary to extend our effort all the year round. The fly, of course, returns to the foliage. We have learned that the soil may harbour the pest for as long as 50 days. From

four to seven days elapse before they commence to lay their eggs and then they may live, as flies, in a mild climate such as we have here, for some 40 days in summer and up to 65 days in winter. This means that flies may live well into the winter, with the result that any plan we adopt to combat the pest must have application all the year round. We must start dealing with them en masse in summer if we are to get rid of the pest to any extent.

We must bear in mind that the fly can bridge the winter months by existing in late hanging fruit such as the fig, of which much is to be seen in the metropolitan area. During the lifetime of the fly, which, allowing for seven or eight days during which it is not active, can be put down at, say, 57 days, one fly may lay eggs every three or four days. If we consider that it may lay any number from three to 10 each time and multiply that by the number of laying periods during the 57 days of its life, we get some idea of the number of eggs that one fly can produce. One of the best measures that could be set out in the Bill to deal with the situation would be provision for the compulsory stripping of trees on a fixed date. When we realise the length of time the pest can pupate in the soil and live as adult flies, we must appreciate that by some means we must cut short the life cycle of the fly.

As I have indicated, one of the most difficult of trees to deal with in relation to the fruit-fly is the fig because so much of that fruit hangs on the tree till late autumn, and in these figs the maggots slowly mature. When the fruit drops to the ground it enables the full life cycle of the fly to be completed. Particularly is that important when we note the number of such trees in and about the city. I feel that this is one measure that should be definitely laid down; I do not know if it is covered in the regulations, but I hope it is. I am mentioning these points so that the Minister, when he replies to the debate, may let the public know what is being done and thus endeavour to make everyone feel that he has a part to play in the campaign that must be waged if the State is to be rid of this pest.

It is interesting to note that the fly first attacked stone fruits and then the citrus groups, particularly grapefruit. Now the Valencias are affected severely, while during the last two seasons or so we have seen how it has attacked other fruits, particularly figs, which are most important in maintaining the life cycle of the fly. Another point with regard to the life history of the pest is that the maggots remain in the fruit for about 10 days, only leaving when mature. Thus it is possible to buy fruit and take it to the far corners of the State. Then when the fruit obviously becomes fly-blown, it is thrown away, thus providing the exact requirements for the continued life cycle of the pest.

All over the world where this problem has arisen it has been held that travellers, and more particularly motorists, can constitute the greatest peril in spreading the fly. Obviously, it is possible to buy fruit in the metropolitan area and take it to any other part of the State, and when it is found to be affected it is thrown aside and thus helps in spreading the pest. It is useless to provide that orchardists shall not send affected fruit from one part of the State to another if there is nothing to prevent travellers from doing that very thing. What is necessary is to create a public consciousness of the need for greater control over the pest, and if that were done we would make some progress towards its eradication.

One important feature about the fruit-fly is that it can actually live in the wrappings in which fruit is packed. Should fruit be wrapped in a bag, for instance, and it is found to be affected by the fly and is thrown away, the maggots can live in the wrappings for some considerable time. Therefore, although we may exercise certain precautions regarding the fruit itself, nothing we do in that direction can prevent the continuity of the life cycle unless added precautions are taken. We must give the Minister a great deal more power with regard to the policing of the regulations and we must even go to the extent that they will apply not only to the orchardists, but to every person throughout the State who handles fruit at all.

The outbreak in Adelaide provided us with some lessons from which we can learn a great deal. One point that was made clear was that the trouble arose not so much from the commercial orchardists as from the person who grew a tree or two in his back-yard. In the Adelaide outbreak both the Mediterranean and the Queensland fruit-fly were present, and they were discovered in certain areas and in some back-yards. So far as I was able to discover, no commercial orchard in South Australia was attacked by the fly. That must teach us the lesson that while all sorts of attempts may be made with regard to baiting and so on, what is essential is the development of a consciousness on the part of every individual to ensure that the necessary safeguards and preventive measures are carried out not only by commercial orchardists but by the back-yard grower. Unless that is done, the position will continue to be difficult.

I am not sure that I would not be in favour of going so far as to allow the Minister and his department, if they gave the assurance that the step was necessary for the elimination of the fruit-fly pest, to compel the eradication of all fruit trees, apart from those controlled by commercial orchardists, for a period of five years. If it were considered a useful course to adopt, I would be in favour of giving that power to the authorities. If we are to do anything at all to clean up the pest in Western Australia so that we may buy fruit with a feeling of security, we must take as rigorous steps as we may to increase the control over fruit production. I would be behind the Minister in any steps he may desire to take, provided he and his department can assure us that the action proposed is part of an organised plan to rid us of the fruit-fly pest. The methods adopted in South Australia were very similar to those adopted in the State of Florida, U.S.A., in 1929. Briefly, they can be summed up by saying that they consisted of fruit stripping, of bait spraying, of D.D.T. spraying and fly trapping. All of those four measures must be used. It will not take long to read what is set out in this well-constructed document which I have here, and which sets out the details of the plan. It reads—

Fruit Stripping. In the vicinity of an outbreak, all fruit is removed as rapidly as possible. Maggots and eggs which may be therein are thus destroyed. Later, and more gradually, all fruit in which fruit-flies may deposit eggs is removed from the area. The objective is to keep the area free of egg-laying facilities throughout winter and early spring.

That rather emphasises the points I brought out in regard to certain fruits here.

Bait Spraying. Patches of a solution of sugar and tartar emetic are squirted here and there on trees and shrubs throughout the area and are renewed weekly. The bait stimulates the natural food of adult fruit-flies, nectar and honey dew, but is poisonous to them.

The article then proceeds to deal with D.D.T. spraying; I do not think that need be discussed in detail. Proceeding—

Fly Trapping. Glass traps, charged with an attractive bait, are hung in trees on which fruit-fly has been found. Such traps serve the dual purpose of capturing flies, and indicating progress of eradication. Each of the four phases has a direct objective, and all are aided by the slowing of the fruit-fly life cycle which comes with the onset of winter.

What progress was made? The article proceeds—

In 1947, when fruit-fly was first reported, maggot-infested fruit was found over an area of 2½ square miles of suburban Adelaide.

In 1948, infested fruit was found throughout an area of 200-300 acres.

In 1949, maggots have been discovered on fruit on about 30 trees in four separate suburbs.

The fact that they were able to catch an infestation early and deal with it would not necessarily apply here, because of the extent of the area over which the fruit-fly is now present in Western Australia. That is a very large area, but not so large as to make us desire not to tackle it, because the area which was dealt with in Florida comprised some 10,000,000 acres, between 15,000 and 16,000 square miles. Within this area was located 72 per cent. of the bearing citrus trees of Florida, or 120,000 acres of citrus and 160,000 acres of fruits and vegetables. The article continues—

A year later two small recurrences were found, and these were again dealt with by the methods outlined above. Since then no further fruit-flies were discovered, and this position has continued to the present time. The Florida campaign stands as the most notable example of the eradication of an insect; it was con-

ducted in an area of intensive horticulture, in which the fly was widely dispersed at the time of its discovery.

I give those details in order to emphasise that, notwithstanding that we have a widely scattered area which is infested today, I do not believe it is so big that we should regard tackling it as hopeless. One of the interesting features in regard to our own State and the spread of the fruit-fly was told to me by persons who have spent their lives in an orchard. They pointed out that some control should exist over those who have orchards bigger than they can handle; because if they allow fruit to remain on their trees without the labour to pick it, that fruit only becomes a menace to the surrounding district and a complete harbour for the fruit-fly pest. I would agree, as I said, to any suggestion that the Minister might make to the House to set before us something of a campaign such as that which took place in Florida and in which the public would be educated to the immense damage that the fruit-fly pest is doing to our State.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: I wish the House would give me £100,000 to do it.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I think the House would be behind the Honorary Minister if he asked that representations should be made to the Commonwealth Government to assist in eradicating this pest. If I remember rightly, Florida did not tackle this problem by itself; it was assisted by the American Congress, because that Congress realised that the eradication of the pest from Florida was not a local but an American problem. The document from which I have been quoting states—

An immediate appropriation by Congress of four and a quarter million dollars was made, and subsequent appropriations up to the conclusion of the campaign brought the total expenditure to seven and a half million dollars.

Therefore, it was not the local area affected by the fruit-fly which attempted to tackle the problem; the matter was regarded as one which obviously had an appeal to the whole country. The matter must be so regarded in Australia. South Australia is fortunate in that it has no fruit-fly. It has an export trade of £100,000 per annum of fresh and canned

fruit. I take it that the £100,000 covers the whole export trade. In this State, however, I understand we are prevented from exporting almost anything in the way of fruit products. I have heard it said, and I would like the Minister to confirm it if it is true, that we have not got the tomato rot fly, but nevertheless we are prevented from exporting tomatoes from the State because of the presence of the fruit-fly in such quantities within the State.

Hon. L. A. Logan: You mean export abroad?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: Yes, not intra-State. This measure is not sufficient to meet the needs of the people to control this pest. I would ask the Minister to hold up the passage of the Bill, because I doubt whether he can introduce another measure during the present session dealing with the pest. He should consider introducing into the House a measure which would give complete control over the pest and which would provide for a settled campaign. I am certain that such legislation would receive the full support of the House.

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—East—in reply) [5.39]: As I have already given notice of my intention to introduce another Bill dealing with plant diseases, it is not my desire now to refer to the many points made by Dr. Hislop in his extremely interesting and helpful speech. I am grateful to him for raising the points he did, as I am most concerned about the prevalence of fruit-fly in this State. I shall have quite a lot to say on the matter when I am introducing the Bill I have mentioned. With regard to Sir Charles Latham's comments on the measure, I do not know whether or not he had read it. I am not concerned about his dictionary's meaning of the word "pest," because that word is defined in the Bill. All this Bill does is to substitute for the word "parasite" in the parent Act the word "pest" which word is later defined in the Bill. My advisers inform me that as at present "disease" means "pest," it would be possible for people to get out of doing what they are supposed to do. Some pests are not necessarily parasites and if the Bill is not passed the result would only be endless argument.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—MARKETING OF POTATOES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 16th June.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [5.44]: The object of this amending Bill, as I see it, is to correct a state of affairs that was not visualised when the parent Act was framed. Because of the comparatively small quantity of seed potatoes that are used annually in this State, it was provided that a grower might, under conditions proposed by the board, dispose of this grade of tuber to another grower without going through any extensive process. It has, however, been found that while the majority of growers carefully observe the conditions of the Act, others of a less scrupulous nature ignore it. The fact that they have been able to do that has been blazoned abroad, and the practice shows some promise of increasing. In some cases they have gone so far as to market as seed, portion of their crops that should be used for domestic consumption and which could not reasonably be described as seed. Others have disposed of seed of questionable value.

These practices are open to very serious objection. In the first place they are unfair to the grower who markets his seed in the correct manner and pays the board the small levy or tax on the sale of potatoes. Secondly, as the Minister informed us, the amount is only 1d. per cwt. or 1s. 8d. per ton, and it is not looked upon by the grower with disfavour. Thirdly, if they are allowed to continue they can cause the distribution throughout the State of potatoes that are diseased or otherwise unsuitable for planting. Fourthly, they tend to break down all the efforts made by potato-growers and their associations who produce the highest grade article.

It is unfortunate, but it is I am told a fact, that some of the offenders are not of our nationality, and they may be ignorant of the position, but there are others who are wide awake and who deliberately evade the law. The amendment means, unless I read it incorrectly, that all potatoes must be marketed through the channels provided by the law. I have gone to some trouble to contact some of the potato-growers in my province, and they are amongst the keenest and most successful growers in the State. Without a single exception, they are wholeheartedly in favour of the amendment.

The growers of good clean seed really stand to gain considerably by the fact that they are definitely able to obtain a higher price in certain circumstances for their product. I can well remember the period when the potato-grower, when sorting over his crop, simply threw the smaller potatoes into a pile and the others into a bag; or he put potatoes that were deformed or badly cut aside and said, "They will do for seed." In those days seed rarely brought more than two-thirds of the market price of the whole or edible potato, but in the intervening years a new set-up has come into existence, and growers have found that in order to produce high-grade crops, they must have high-grade seed. That is why they are quite willing to pay a levy on seed as well as on the ordinary marketable potato.

I understand that when a grower produces what the Potato Branch of the Agricultural Department terms "approved seed" he is able to secure—and readily does secure—about £1 a ton over and above the price paid for the ordinary domestic potato marketed at the time. If he gets the department to go further and certify the seed—that is, it is certified as being true to name and true to the best characteristics of the variety—then he can get up to about £2 10s. a ton additional. As I have said before, shrewd growers and those who are out to see that they get the best possible price for their product, and obtain the highest yield, very readily pay the increased figure.

There is not much more I can say on this small Bill. Apart from the few remarks I have made, it is self-explanatory. I feel

sure it is a step in the right direction. It cannot possibly do any harm. The amount involved, so far as those people who evade the regulations are concerned, is almost infinitesimal. Just to indicate the extent to which some of the less scrupulous growers go, I was told of a case—I cannot verify it, but I have good reason to believe that my information is correct—where one person put together 10 or 12 bags of potatoes and sent them up here to a compatriot who used them in his business, and they were described merely as seed potatoes, and no levy was paid.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West) [5.54]: The apparent purpose of the Bill is to collect from producers of seed potatoes a levy equal to that paid by the producers of potatoes for consumption, but the real value to my mind is much greater than that. It enables the board to keep a watch on the producers of potato seed. Today the production of potatoes, as is the case with other industries, has become specialised. It is just as carefully controlled as the breeding of sheep, stud horses, or anything else. The production of potatoes has gone up from an average of about four and a half tons per acre to as high as 15 tons in some cases. That is mainly due to a study of the industry and careful methods of growing.

It will be of interest to mention one particular family of growers at Benger. One of the sons determined to specialise in the growing of potatoes. He started by going carefully through the growing crop, first of all, and picking out the plants that were not healthy looking—plants that had curly leaf and anything else, visible to the eye, that were not up to standard. He later developed a method of watching the potatoes dug, so that if a plant had four potatoes on it, he would discard it, but that which had nine potatoes on, he would put aside, until he built up a pedigreed seed producing clean looking and high producing plants. Today he can sell every potato he grows at the maximum premium, mentioned by Mr. Mann, of £2 10s. a ton. His last crop averaged 15 tons to the acre, which is equal, I might say, to a return of about £250 per acre gross, not net, on today's price.

So it is important that a watch be kept on the seed, not only to see that the producers pay the levy, but that the board may guarantee that the seed sold is of high quality. My son had an unfortunate experience this year owing to seed being sent, not through the board, but from one grower to another. He bought seed that had been approved by the board, and he bought it through the board. When the seed came he was not pleased with it, and he wrote and reported to the board that the seed, in his opinion, was not up to standard. An inspector was sent down, and he condemned the seed. He did not condemn it altogether, but said it was not worth any premium. The £2 10s. premium was deducted, and the grower was prohibited from ever again selling his crop as seed. It was subsequently found that this particular seed was diseased, and it all had to be dipped. That was done only last week.

Not only is the importance of a levy apparent, but a tag or check should be kept on all seed sold by the board. What happens, of course, is that a grower who anticipates that his crop will be good enough for seed, notifies the department and an inspector is sent there, and he goes through the crop as it is being graded. If it is an exceptional crop, he approves of it as being suitable for seed. If the grower wants it certified, I think some other inspection is made at digging time. In effect, if it is to be pedigreed seed, he watches it being dug and sees that the right stuff is put into the right bags, and so on.

The industry is becoming very important, and I am glad to say the yields are increasing tremendously by proper methods of cultivation and by the careful selection of pedigreed seed. It is just as important to have good seed today as it is to use a pedigreed bull in breeding cattle for dairy purposes. I support the second reading of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban) [6.0]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 2.15 p.m. tomorrow.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [6.1]: I am not going to oppose the motion, but I rise to voice my protest at the Chief Secretary wishing to adjourn until tomorrow when there is no business on the notice paper for us to do. We find now that this is the third day on which we have sat. The first day we were here for 40 minutes; the second day for 30 minutes, and after a week's adjournment we come here and sit for approximately an hour and a half and we have practically disposed of the whole of the items on the notice paper. Now we are asked to agree to an adjournment of the House until 2.15 p.m. tomorrow. We come here tomorrow. What for? There is nothing to do.

I know it is our job to be here when there is business to do, and we do not object when that is the position. What we do object to is when there is no business at all and we are asked to attend. It would be better if the House adjourned until such time as the Government had some business ready for us and then members would not object, no matter how long they stayed. I protest at the fact that we are asked to come here for a few minutes at a time.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban—in reply) [6.2]: I am rather surprised to hear the remarks of Mr. Fraser. Of course he is better informed than I am, but the other place will get on with its business and will be sending such business up to us. I am also somewhat surprised to hear him say that it is not necessary to get on with our work. We will have four Bills on the notice paper which must be read a third time and I am anxious, as no doubt is the public as well as others interested, to have that business brought before another place. Until these Bills have been read a third time by this House, it is impossible for us to send them on. It is my desire, as well as that of my colleague, the Hon-

orary Minister for Agriculture, to have these Bills dealt with and sent to another place.

I assume that the Legislative Assembly will get on with its work as it is anxious to attend to public business, and I am anticipating that we will have further work from that Chamber in the very near future. For that reason I ask members to agree to the adjournment until tomorrow afternoon. The House cannot be adjourned conveniently to the ordinary hour of 4.30 p.m. owing to the unfortunate position of lighting and transport, and there is no desire on the part of the Government to keep members here until the peak period of transport. Therefore if we get through our business early tomorrow afternoon it will be all to the good. If it is inconvenient for Mr. Fraser to come along and attend—

Hon. G. Fraser: It is not inconvenient when there is business to attend to.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I should say that if the business is disposed of in a quarter of an hour, it will be to the hon. member's advantage, but if he desires to stay and enlighten himself, he might go along and listen to questions somewhere else. However, I do ask the House to agree to the desired adjournment.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 6.4 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 28th June, 1949.

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