

cers of the department? They might easily prove to be busybodies making themselves a nuisance.

The Minister for Labour: We do not propose to appoint the member for Swan a visitor.

Mr. SAMPSON: If the Minister made that appointment he would perhaps in that exceptional instance be displaying some wisdom. The clause amounts almost to a reflection on the Minister's department. I doubt whether a number of inexpert and casually appointed visitors would be of service to the Child Welfare Department, which I am most anxious to assist.

Clause put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	..	19
Noes	..	..	..	..	12

Majority for .. .. 7

#### AYES.

Mr. Berry	Mr. Raphael	
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Rodoreda	
Mr. Fox	Mr. F. C. L. Smith	
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Styant	
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Tonkin	
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Triat	
Mr. Leahy	Mr. Willcock	
Mr. Millington	Mr. Withers	
Mr. Nulsen	Mr. Cross	(Teller.)
Mr. Pantou		

#### NOES.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. North	
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Sampson	
Mr. Hill	Mr. Seward	
Mr. Latham	Mr. Watts	
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Willmott	
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Doney	(Teller.)

Clause thus passed.

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 10.59 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

*Wednesday, 19th November, 1941.*

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

### QUESTION—STATE HOTELS.

#### *Barmen's Wages and Conditions.*

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Has his attention been directed to the statement of the secretary of the Barmaids and Barmen's Union that barmen employed at the State hotel at Gwalia receive £8 8s. 3d. per week, plus double rates for holidays, a fortnight's holiday on full pay, an afternoon and evening off each week, long service leave and superannuation? 2, Has he noticed that this is advanced as a reason why the miners at Gwalia should pay more for their beer at the State hotel than is charged at the private hotels in Leonora? 3, Does not this suggest that the State hotel at Gwalia is conducted for the benefit of the employees rather than to serve the community and make profit for the taxpayer? 4, Does the same scale of wages prevail at other State hotels?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes. 2, I am aware that an individual expression of opinion was made through the columns of the Press. 3, No. 4, All employees of the State hotels are paid at award rates.

### MOTION—HAY CROP.

#### *As to Relief to Farmers.*

HON. G. B. WOOD (East) [4.34]: I move—

That this House—having considered the position of farmers who, in 1940, cut hay when it was anticipated that there would be a state of emergency in regard to the shortage of hay, and who subsequently found themselves, owing

to changed and more favourable seasonal conditions, without a market for the same—is of the opinion that the proposals of the Government for the relief and assistance of such farmers are not only inadequate but unfair and impracticable, and calls upon the Government to evolve some fair and practicable method of relief without delay.

In moving the motion, I have no desire to attack the Government in any way for something which it did or did not do. My object is to try to do something for those farmers who, on the advice of the Government—perhaps on the advice of other people—came to the rescue of the State at a time when a considerable quantity of hay was needed to save the situation. I shall make my remarks as brief as possible, but unfortunately I must read a considerable amount of documentary evidence to bolster up my case.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: To prove your case, not bolster it up.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: To help it or justify it. "Bolster up" means the same thing. However, the hon. member knows perfectly well what I intend to convey and so he need not have interjected. I shall read a letter written by the Minister for Agriculture to the Hon. E. H. H. Hall. It is in answer to a letter which Mr. Hall wrote to the Minister in order to state a case for one of his constituents, who was in a bad way through having cut his hay. The letter reads—

I have had a review made of your communication of the 21st October, together with a letter which you enclosed, dated September 19th, from Walter J. Teakle of Isseka. The following are the facts in connection with the chaff position dating from August of 1940:—

1. Owing to the serious outlook in respect to the hay position, the Government, through the Agricultural Bank officers, took stock of the fodder prospects in August of last year. The reports indicated a serious shortage unless inducement was offered to cut crops estimated to yield from 10 to 15 cwt. of hay per acre.

2. The Minister for Lands convened a meeting of all interested parties on the 18th September, 1940, when Mr. W. A. White, the Prices Commissioner, agreed to fix a maximum price of £8 10s. per ton for chaff, Perth.

3. The Government offered £3 10s. in stack for hay and requested the Agricultural Bank to purchase up to 20,000 tons at that price. The branch managers and field officers approached farmers, and for three weeks not one ton of chaff could be purchased.

4. During this period, meetings of growers were held at Northam, Morawa, Carnamah and Pingelly on or about the 30th September, 1940, demanding £4 10s. per ton in stack on a 25s. freight basis, equal to £5 10s. per ton in stack in Grass Valley.

The Hon. G. B. Wood, M.L.C., attended the various meetings and advised farmers not to sell as the farmers could get on the fixed price equivalent to £5 8s. per ton in the stack.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Hence your motion!

Hon. G. B. WOOD: The letter continues—

5. The Chairman, Mr. S. B. Donovan, had to personally visit the various growers before any purchases were made at £6 10s. per ton chaff on rails and there were very many settlers even at that price who refused to sell. For instance, at Cunderdin and Meckering a quota of 3,000 tons of chaff was offered to those districts at the price mentioned.

An advertised meeting of farmers was held and they refused to sell, as they were of the opinion the price of chaff would go to £8 to £10 owing to the season's outlook.

That was the attitude of many of the farmers in every district visited by Mr. Donovan, and it was not until after the Government had procured its requirements and announced it was off the market that those who had previously refused to sell offered to sell their hay.

I do not intend to read further from this letter, because I think Mr. Hall may wish to say something about it. But I do intend to refer to Clause 4, in which it is stated that I attended various meetings and advised farmers not to sell, as they could get on the fixed price equivalent to £5 8s. per ton in the stack. I shall not say what I think of that statement, because you, Mr. President, would probably call me to order. All I say is that it is untrue. I have not been to Morawa or Carnamah for 10 years, and it is a long time since I was at Pingelly; nor did I advise the farmers at the four meetings that they should not sell on the fixed price equivalent to £5 8s. per ton in the stack. I attended only one meeting mentioned in the letter and that was the one held at Northam.

That statement was made to Mr. E. H. H. Hall to justify what the Government did in pushing the responsibility on to a private member, or a person who was trying to help the farmers at that time. It was a most amazing statement to make. Who it was that told the Minister I did this, I do not know. My attitude right throughout has been that I did urge the Government at the time, when a state emergency existed, to offer a reasonable price so that the farmers would cut sufficient hay. Things looked very black indeed, and it seemed to me, and I think the Minister also thought so, there would be only about half the requirements cut for this State. Therefore he encouraged farmers to cut hay and I encouraged the Govern-

ment, as much as I could, to offer a reasonable price. But to say that I went to the farmers and told them not to sell under £5 8s. is incorrect.

The Chief Secretary: Did you advise them in that direction at Northam?

Hon. G. B. WOOD: No, I did not. I was, I think, asked to call that meeting. When I arrived I was voted to the chair. I had an idea I would be chairman of the meeting, and I rang the Minister for Labour, as member for Northam, and said, "What about coming along to our meeting?" We had nothing to hide. He said he was ill, and did not attend. We did ask Mr. Gillies, manager of the Agricultural Bank, and Mr. Sugden, an inspector of the Agricultural Bank. I was not at any of the other three meetings.

In his letter, the Minister for Lands states that farmers would not sell their hay. I am not concerned with those people who would not sell. I am prepared to admit there were farmers who would not sell hay at a fair price, and some who wanted a good bit of money for it. Quite a number of those farmers are in the Central Province and not in my province. I could read dozens of letters to this House such as the ones I am about to quote. I will only read three. This is a letter written to me by Mr. Arkell of Milng, which is not in my electorate. He says—

Am writing to draw your attention to the way the Government has failed to shoulder the responsibility which rightly rests on it, in regard to those farmers who, in 1940, in response to the urging of the Minister for Agriculture, cut a lot of their crop for hay. These farmers have lost heavily through being unable to find a market for the hay. While fully realising that the eleventh-hour change in the seasonal conditions was the chief factor in complicating the situation, nevertheless I maintain that had it not been for the appeal and urging from the Minister for Agriculture most of us farmers who do not ordinarily cut any hay for sale would certainly not have done so last year.

Mr. Wise was quite right in saying what he did when he did. He appealed to us farmers who had decent hay crops to cut as much as we possibly could, and we considered he spoke with authority. It is now up to our Government to show that they are prepared to back up their Minister for Agriculture, and not leave us to carry the whole burden.

To explain the position as it affects me personally, some of my crop was very suitable for a hay crop and although I had never before cut more than just my own requirements of hay, in view of the probable acute shortage I cut about sixty acres of hay for marketing.

This crop cut nearly two tons per acre and it was the best portion of a paddock of 125 acres. The balance of that paddock when harvested averaged 25½ bushels of wheat per acre, so it is reasonable to assume that, if the sixty acres had been harvested instead of cut for hay, I would have been 1,800 bushels of wheat to the good; but instead of that I had all the expense and trouble of cutting, stooking, carting, stacking, thatching, and insuring.

I have now received the Government's advance, on loan, at 25s. per ton on seventy tons—

Hon. A. Thomson: It is only a loan too.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Yes. The letter continues—

—and in order to get that I had to sign away all my rights, title and interest in that 95-ton stack, and am debarred from using so much as a sheaf out of it until the whole advance has been repaid.

Now, sir, if that is a fair thing, then my idea of fair play is a bit wrong somewhere.

Will you take up this matter in your House and endeavour to get more just treatment meted out to us by the Government, which should, in all reason, take a considerable portion of the responsibility for the considerable financial loss we have been led into, and oblige.

The point raised there is very interesting, and may not be fully understood by members. Before that man can have a chaffcutter on his property to cut hay, he must repay the loan. He has to go elsewhere to borrow the money. That Government agreement is a diabolical one. I have a letter from Mr. Truman, of Calcarra, in which he states—

I understand you are taking up the matter of those farmers who cut hay in 1940. These are the facts in regard to my own case:—

The Agricultural Bank Inspector called and looked over my crop and advised me to cut the lot. Later at my annual sale (off shears) he took one of the Heads to look over my crop. After studying the position I only cut an additional 50 tons. Owing to the low price I kept back 35 to 40 tons and kept same as a reserve stack. Unfortunately, owing to extra hay it was very awkward for me to finance the year's operations. I still have this hay unsold.

I definitely would not have cut this extra hay but for the Agricultural Bank Inspector's advice.

Wishing you the best of luck in your efforts to assist farmers who came to the rescue of the State in a time of stress.

P.S.—As secretary of No. 7 Wool Executive which comprises Irwin-Moore electorate I hear of many more cases.

The next letter is from Mr. Kelsall, of Moora, in which he says—

Your letter of the 22nd inst. to hand re the hay position. I enclose for your information copies of two letters sent to Mr. F. J. S. Wise and his answer to my first letter. He did not

even have the courtesy to answer my second letter. The two letters explain the position as it affects me and so far as I am concerned the position is still exactly the same.

The hay is still mine and all my efforts to get rid of it have been of no avail. Last month I even tried to sell it to a neighbour whose home is fairly close to the stacks for the ridiculous price of £1 per ton but he still would not take it.

As the hay is situated at the other end of my farm and is during the winter time practically impossible to get at (that being the time when I use the biggest part of my chaff) and also petrol rationing having to be considered, it has been more economical for me to cut a fresh lot of hay this year which is still to be carted and stacked, than for me to attempt to utilise the two "Wise" follies stacked at the other end of the farm.

With regard to the references to Mr. I. Thomas, who, by innuendo, let me understand that it was my duty for the sake of the country to cut my crop as hay, you will notice how in his comments to the Minister scurried for cover to protect himself and left the poor old farmer to stew in his own juice.

Mr. Thomas is a departmental officer. I will now read the letter written by Mr. Kelsall to the Minister for Lands:—

Whilst in Perth last week I attempted to wait on you with regard to the position in which I unfortunately find myself placed with the wheaten hay which I cut last September-October, but I was unable to see you.

As the result of the many representations which appeared in the Press during last hay season under your good name, I felt it my duty to cut as much hay as I could. I have never before cut hay for sale and thoughts of cutting it for that purpose would never have entered my head except as the results of the statements appearing at the time.

I was fortunate in having a partially good crop of wheat which I anticipated would yield about ten bags per acre. Instead of following the usual procedure of harvesting it as grain, I turned it into hay with the first result that the ordinary farm routine was disorganised till the hay was placed in the stacks, and instead of having some £400 to £500 on which I had budgeted I had two big stacks of hay containing 150 to 180 tons, which, unfortunately, I still own and for which I am unable to find anyone willing to buy it. On several occasions I have tried, through the ordinary marketing channels, to sell the hay, but without any success, and whilst in Perth this time was told by one of the merchants that they had collectively agreed not to buy any more hay from growers.

This, of course, leaves me in a most unenviable position as the hay is of no use to me, as for my own purposes I have always cut oaten hay and I have on hand quite sufficient for my needs. In addition, the season promises well and there is no prospect of my carrying the hay over till next season as it is not reasonable to assume that anyone would purchase old

season's hay when once the new season's crop is available.

The advance of 25s. per ton is of no use to me as I am in the hands of one of the trading banks, and anyway the advance would not help me to sell the hay which is really my desire.

At the hay-cutting time I discussed the matter with Mr. Jones (the then Under Secretary for Agriculture) and Mr. I. Thomas, who, during the conversation, made a rough approximation in his head of the amount I should receive for the crop both as hay and as wheat, and it was found that there would be but little difference in the cash return to me whether I dealt with it as hay or as grain. Mr. Thomas then said it was for me to decide, but he, too, made me feel that there was a national need for the hay and so I felt it was up to me to "play the game," even though it would upset the whole farm routine during the coming harvest period. So I cut it.

Now, sir, I have on my hands this hay which is of no use to me whatsoever, and so I appeal to you to suggest some practical means of helping me to realise on these two stacks of hay.

The reply of the Minister for Lands to Mr. Kelsall, dated the 15th July, read—

I have your letter of the 7th instant in which you refer to the chaff position because of wheaten hay cut last September-October.

You make mention of an interview with Mr. Thomas, and Mr. Thomas's comments are as follows:—

With reference to the letter received from Mr. H. L. Kelsall of Moora, I have to advise that I recollect the conversation referred to by Mr. Kelsall. This occurred as we were returning from the conference of growers, merchants and others called by the Hon. Minister in September last, when the gravity of the possible shortage of hay from the then growing crop was most acute. This conference was called following upon a request to the Hon. Minister to take action to have the maximum price, as then fixed by the Price Fixing Commissioner, increased as it was intended, owing to short local supplies, to import from South Australia and the fixed maximum price did not permit of this.

During the conversation with Mr. Kelsall, the question of the anticipated price to the grower was raised by him and as a result of the information from the conference, he was informed that an announcement by the Hon. Minister through the Press could be expected within a day or two. I cannot recall the conversation in full but it was somewhat on the lines as stated by Mr. Kelsall. It will be noted that I made it clear that it was for him to decide, and although I cannot definitely recollect having done so, I, more than likely acting with caution as on several other occasions, would have suggested to him to get in touch with one or other of the chaff merchants regarding the disposal of the hay before cutting. On 25th September last, it was announced through the

Press that the Government was operating extensively for forward delivery at a minimum price of £3 10s. per ton in stack or the on-rails chaff equivalent. In this direction I am aware that officers of the Agricultural Bank operated in the Moora district.

Further, I have been informed that Messrs. Pavey and Co., chaff merchants, of Northam, operated in the Moora district during the months of October-December and bought hay at £2 10s.-£3 per ton in the stook, but farmers generally were reluctant to sell, hoping for a better price, and when the chaff-cutting plant was in the district in January, merchants were still operating and willing to buy at £2 10s. in the stack. I fear that the present difficulty in disposing of the hay is due to the fact that chaff-cutting plants are not available in the district and considerable expense would be incurred by merchants to transfer a plant.

Mr. Kelsall states that the advance of 25s. per ton is of no use to him as he is in the hands of the trading banks. I understand, however, that this does not prevent him from taking advantage of it provided he complies with the conditions.

It is noted that Mr. Kelsall cuts oats for his own use and whilst oats hay has certain advantages, particularly as it is not liable to hay itch when stored, wheaten hay is of equal nutritive value and can be used without any disadvantage as fodder. Should he not be able to dispose of the hay, I would suggest that he use the wheaten hay for his immediate requirements, holding his oats hay in stack and only cutting sufficient hay from his present crop to meet his fodder conservation requirements.

Circumstances during last September appeared to be so desperate that the Government was approached from all interests to take action to safeguard the position in regard to quantities being available, and at that time I stated that "even if the maximum effort is sustained to cut all suitable crops for hay, there will still be a shortage before the summer months are reached. This being so, farmers who cut hay are almost assured of a market at a price basis which is remunerative above the best that could be expected for wheat."

Subsequent to that time, October rains made possible the cutting of hay in districts where farmers had approached the Government for relief because of the inability to cut hay. At that time also the matter was reviewed by all farmers' interests as well as those likely to need hay for use during the following months.

In short, everything that could be done—acting in good faith with every endeavour to state the position clearly and to avoid any misleading inferences being drawn—was done.

Realising that some difficulty undoubtedly existed with farmers who not normally cut hay, the Government agreed to make advances, to which you refer.

Very many farmers who did cut hay in large quantities above their normal requirements refused to sell when the price would have been more remunerative to them than the anticipated crop of wheat promised during September last.

If your hay is unencumbered, there is no reason why an advance should not be available to you.

What the Minister stated in his letter is substantially correct. I do not blame the Government for its action at that time when the outlook was so bad and farmers were advised to cut their crops for hay. The statement that certain farmers would not sell their hay is also correct, but I am concerned about those farmers who have never had an opportunity to sell their hay.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: How much did the Government buy altogether.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: About 30,000 tons. The statement that officers of the Agricultural Bank were operating in the Moora district is refuted by Mr. Kelsall in his second letter to the Minister for Lands dated the 23rd July as follows:—

I have to thank you for your letter of the 15th inst., re my appeal to you to suggest some practical means of my getting out of the mess I am in through cutting hay last spring as the direct result of your statements in the Press. Certain suggestions are made in your letter but I very much regret having to state that so far as I am concerned they are not practical.

In your letter you state: "If your hay is unencumbered there is no reason why an advance should not be available to you." May I point out that even if I could get my bank's permission to accept the advance by the time insurance and any other charges had been met the nett saving at 25s. per ton on 150 tons would not be more than about £5 even were I to hold the hay in the stacks unbroken for a full twelve months. And as you of course know, hay over twelve months old is a deteriorating asset. Again old wheaten hay here gets the "itch" very badly and so it would not be wise to hold it too long. Another point is that there is sufficient hay in those two stacks to last me for my purposes for about three years, consequently the suggestion gradually to use it for my own purposes is impracticable.

The hay is stacked at the other end of my property from the homestead and the expense to me of cutting, bagging, etc., so far away would add materially to my costs when I have other hay stacked against my shed where I store it in bulk.

To put it bluntly, Sir, the above suggestion does not help me at all as my need is to sell the hay, which ordinarily I would have harvested as grain and disposed of through channels with which I am familiar, as against ones of which I have no experience.

Further in your letter you quote Mr. Thomas as saying: "On 25th September last it was announced through the Press that the Government was operating extensively for forward delivery at a minimum price of £3 10s. per ton in stack, or the on-rails chaff equivalent. In this direction I am aware that officers of the Agricultural Bank operated in the Moora district." I apparently missed the statement in the Press, and so far as the latter sentence is concerned, inquiries on my part in Moora at that time failed to give me the information that the Agricultural Bank was operating in this district. They apparently kept very quiet about it.

You also state "farmers who cut hay are almost assured of a market at a price basis which is remunerative above the best that could be expected for wheat." I knew from my conversation with Mr. Thomas that I probably would not receive as much for my crop as hay as I would have for grain, but I still felt I had a patriotic duty to perform to my State, and I like you, acted "in good faith."

On different occasions I tried to sell the hay to the Westralian Farmers, but each time they said they did not want it then, but possibly they could do something later on, but it turned out that they were unable to. Mr. Howsell was also unable to buy it and last time when I was in Perth told me that the buyers had agreed not to buy more hay, at any rate, for some time. It was that statement that made me write to you as I could not then see any future prospect of getting rid of the hay.

I am not "squealing" at extra interest charges, dislocation of farm routine, and the like, that my action in cutting hay has cost me, but I am deeply hurt to feel, because I acted against my private interests for what your statements had led me to believe was for the State's good, I have left on my hands two stacks of hay which are quite useless to me and which had they been harvested as grain would have reduced my overdraft by more than £400.

Again, Sir, I appeal to you to suggest some practical method of realising on this hay for which I have no use.

I shall not read any more letters. A few weeks ago at Wongan Hills I was talking to Mr. Smart, who put in 10,000 acres of wheat and who has two other farms. He has £400 or £500 worth of hay at Waddy Forrest with which he does not know what he is going to do. On his farm at Wongan Hills are all his stock, and he does not know what to do with his hay. I said to him, "What did you cut the hay for?" He replied, "Because of what I read in the papers, advice from Ministers and other people saying it was the right thing to do as the State needed the hay." Hay was cut in districts where hay had never been cut before.

I first got into this hay racket through the Perth merchants. Mr. Rowsell, who represents a number of hay merchants in Perth—I think he is the secretary of the Chaff Merchants' Association—rang me up one day and said, "We are in trouble with the Price Fixing Commissioner. Mr. Rowsell knew I had had a little to do with Mr. White regarding wheat prices, and so he thought I was the right man to get on the job. He further said to me, "I want to convene a conference with Mr. Wise to see if we can get the Price Fixing Commissioner to raise the price of hay. We have hay offered to us, but we cannot buy it on account of the low price at which the Price Fixing Commissioner will let us sell. We know other farmers who have hay averaging half-a-ton to the acre, and we could buy that hay if the Price Fixing Commissioner would give us a chance."

I went to the Minister for Lands and said, "We shall have to get the Price Fixing Commissioner on the carpet and see if he will do something to make the position practicable. There is plenty of hay in the country which cannot be sold." As the result of that interview the Minister said, "All right, you will have a conference." I do not want to read all the newspaper reports, but representations were made to the Commissioner. He was asked, "What about pushing the price up?" He replied, "Yes, I will do that; there will be very little hay cut unless I do," or words to that effect. He made the maximum price in Perth £8 10s. per ton. He said, "That will allow farmers on a 25s. freight basis to get £4 10s., and of course the lower the freight the higher the price the farmer will get." That allowed merchants 10s. per ton and other charges.

Hon. L. Craig: The Act gave him no authority to say what would be the price.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Yes. As members are aware, regarding the meat business he threatened to gazette certain prices. He did possess a certain amount of power. Although there was a deal of ill-feeling between Mr. White and me over the meat, there was good feeling between us after the meeting at which the price of hay was put up. Where the Minister got the figure of £5 8s. from, I do not know. It was said to have been worked back at Grass Valley, where the freight was lower and where there were not

so many charges—the merchants' profit may have been written down. The suggestion was made that farmers would get £5 8s. I maintain that the Minister and the Price Fixing Commissioner did the right thing. They offered a lot of encouragement, which was undoubtedly quite right at the time, to cut hay all over the country. They talked about sending binders to places where they had never been before. Farmers who had never cut hay in their lives before were then encouraged to cut it. Mr. Kelsall's letter states the position of dozens of farmers who have never had an opportunity to sell their hay at any price. I have to prove to the House that this Government did encourage farmers to cut hay.

Hon. L. Craig: A good deal was cut at the instigation of members of another place, Country Party members.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: It appeared the right thing to do. The Minister agreed to it. But then the position changed. Never in my life have I known an instance where such a little bit of rain did so much good, according to opinions expressed by the people. Had the season not changed, everything would have been all right.

Hon. L. Craig: It was an act of God.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I regard this as a national matter. The State should carry the burden to a greater extent than offering these unfortunate farmers a miserable advance of 25s. per ton on only 75 per cent. of their hay. I repeat, it was a miserable offer to make; there is no other name for it. Twenty-five shillings per ton on hay which they cut for their country's good! That is my sore point, and the sore point of all these people. It was the duty of this State to do something more for the farmers who did come to the rescue.

At the first conference the Minister for Lands gave the people quite a lot of information as to the State's total requirements of hay in normal circumstances. According to the Minister, the figure was in the vicinity of 400,000 tons. I quote the Minister's words—

The total requirement of hay for the whole State under normal circumstances appears to be in the vicinity of 400,000 tons. So far as we can gauge from the State Statistician's figures, the chaff handled by merchants approximates 30,500 tons per annum, 20,000 tons of which passes through the metropolitan area. A very close examination of figures received through every Agricultural Bank district office suggests that the maximum tonnage we can

expect this year is round about 200,000 tons. This being so, farmers who cut crops for hay are almost assured of a market on a price basis which is remunerative above the best that could be anticipated for wheat. We knew of the tremendous shortage likely to exist, and with the price of chaff at £8 10s. on a £1 5s. a ton freight basis, allowing 10s. for merchants' charges, the hay price works back to a maximum of £4 5s., according to rail distances from Perth, distance from the siding, and quality of the product. With the restriction of time remaining for cutting for purposes of hay and the restrictions imposed by limitations of available machinery, even if the maximum effort is sustained to cut all suitable crops for hay, there will still be a shortage before the summer months are reached. The price for clover hay of fair average quality will be £5 5s. at sidings.

The Minister made very definite statements, encouraging farmers to cut all the hay they possibly could. I have learnt from two towns, York and Northam, that only 50 per cent. of the binder twine used last year, which was a bad year, has been used this year. This makes me think there is a lot of hay still held by people who normally cut hay. As I said before, I am not concerned with those people although their normal market was ruined for them. At the same conference the Minister said—

The Government, which had been watching the prospective chaff and hay position for many weeks, was concerned not only through the Agricultural Bank but from a State-wide angle. Officers of the Agricultural Bank had made an estimate of prospective crops in each district, and it was now known that the north-western areas and the area between the Wongan and Midland lines offered a very good prospect. Unfortunately there were not enough facilities for harvesting these bigger crops for hay in the Grass Valley-Northam districts, where hay was a major industry; there would be many cases in which binders would not leave the sheds. Thus it might be possible to arrange for cutting under contract or the leasing of binders from districts where the machines were plentiful.

I wish to demonstrate to the House that I tried to help the Minister to the utmost of my power at that time. The Minister went on to say—

If the farmer was not looking for a lead from the Government he was looking for a lead from those who would normally purchase his crop. There was much controversy as to whether the market should determine the price or whether the farmer should have some definite price announced to him. It was the opinion of the Agricultural Bank Commissioners that a price should be guaranteed. If a guaranteed price was wanted, he wondered whether there would be any conflict with the Profiteering

Prevention Act Amendment Bill, introduced by Mr. G. B. Wood in the Legislative Council, under which agricultural and pastoral products in the ownership of the farmer would be excluded from the purview of the Prices Commissioner. The position was one of great urgency; it was a matter not of weeks but of days.

Then I am reported as saying—

I must speak against my own Bill. It would not be in the best interests of farmers to take such a course in a drought year like this. Conditions this year will probably never recur.

At another stage I said I would withdraw the provision regarding hay if that would make the Government's position easier. In spite of that the Minister insinuated in his letter to Mr. Hall that I had been trying to hamper the Government's efforts. Some more meetings were held, including one at Northam about this time. Under the heading "Avon Valley Farmers' Claims" the "West Australian" published an account of the meeting despatched from Northam on the 30th September and reading—

Mr. G. B. Wood, M.L.C., who was voted to the chair, said that at the recent conference at which the Prices Commissioner (Mr. White) had fixed the maximum price for prime chaff at £3 10s. on a 25s. freight basis, representatives of the growers had been led to believe that that price would represent £5 8s. to a farmer at Grass Valley.

That was twice mentioned at the conference.

That had seemed very satisfactory, but something had happened after the conference and today the Agricultural Bank was offering only £3 10s. in the stack. Many crops would not yield much more than half a ton to the acre, and it was impossible for growers to cut half-ton crops and make any profit out of £3 10s. in the stack.

If that is all the evidence the Minister has against me, he is sadly lacking in discretion in charging me as he has done.

Several speakers emphasised that unless farmers were offered a fair return, they would refuse to cut their crops for hay. They were meeting that afternoon not in any selfish spirit but because they realised that it was in the interests of the State that hay should be produced to feed starving stock.

Mr. C. W. Martin said that the Minister for Lands (Mr. Wise) was trying to bluff the farmers by foolish statements in the Press to the effect that the Minister for Commerce (Mr. Cameron) would compel them to cut their hay crops. The merchants were getting a "rake-off" of £1 a ton for every ton that went through the market. That was not going to help the drought-stricken farmers. It seemed that the merchants had a certain amount of pressure in Perth.

A resolution was carried regarding high prices. I was in the chair, but I did not attempt to exert any influence. The report states—

Mr. Smith (Beverley) moved:—"This meeting is of the opinion that a price of £4 10s. per ton in the stack on a 25s. freight basis for f.a.q. hay should be offered by the Government as a minimum inducement to insure that a sufficient quantity of hay will be cut to meet the State's requirements."

Following that meeting, we had a deputation to the Minister, which I introduced. It consisted of Messrs. J. V. and P. O'Driscoll, and urged that in order to encourage the cutting of adequate supplies of hay, a price of £4 10s. in the stack should be guaranteed. Nowhere can it be found that I urged the farmers to take anything less than £5. The report of this deputation, which appeared in the "West Australian" of the 4th October, 1940, stated—

The Minister in the course of his reply said that the request involved financial difficulties as, on the basis of the minimum State requirements, £900,000 was involved. The Government was investigating every possibility of securing additional finance in order to keep on buying hay. It was buying in every district where hay was available at prices not less than £3 10s. a ton for hay or its chaff equivalent, sometimes more. They would admit that there were complications in the price factor. While their districts grew hay varieties of wheat, some other districts grew only grain varieties, which affected the value of hay. He was giving every possible encouragement for the cutting of hay. On the previous day three banks had sought an assurance from him that there was going to be a hay shortage, as a number of their clients were able to cut hay if they could finance it through the banks. They asked if it was safe to give farmers advances on hay up to the wheat equivalent; and he had answered in the affirmative. He believed that the best way to encourage the cutting of hay would be by legislation to empower the Price Fixing Commissioner to fix a minimum price for hay. If that were done, the commissioner would have to take into consideration seasonal circumstances, possible yield, demand, and the shortage of supplies both here and in the other States; and he thought the price so fixed would substantially meet the requirements of the deputation.

Mr. Wood: If it will facilitate your action in the direction you suggest, I am quite prepared to withdraw the Bill I have on the notice paper for an Act to amend the Profit-sharing Prevention Act.

The Minister said that would clear the way. He would discuss the matter with the Premier (Mr. Willecock), and he was quite prepared to give immediate consideration to an amending Bill to enable the minimum price of hay to be fixed. He was determined that all Government



requirements of hay should be secured at a price remunerative to the grower in comparison with the price of wheat, and at the same time fair to the consumer.

That is a definite statement. The Minister did definitely urge the people to cut hay. I repeat that it is a State matter and we should stand by these people. I have another letter from Mr. Patrick, who urged the farmers to stand up for £4 10s. because the merchants were proposing to pay them from £3 to £3 10s. for their hay. I am sorry I cannot find the letter, and I will not delay the House by looking for it. To show that what I am saying is not merely my own opinion, I will read a letter which was written by Mr. H. S. Seward, M.L.A., and appeared in the "West Australian" of the 17th June, 1941, up to which date nothing had been done. Mr. Seward's letter stated—

Last September, when the State's prospect of securing its requirements of hay looked very remote, the Minister for Lands and Agriculture (Mr. Wise) appealed to farmers to cut hay wherever possible, at the same time pointing out that, even viewing the matter from the financial aspect alone, farmers would profit by so doing; in fact he went so far as to indicate a price of £4 per ton in the stack for hay. As a result of this appeal, farmers did cut hay wherever possible, instead of allowing the crop to ripen for grain. When hay cutting was in progress the Agricultural Bank's representatives went around and secured the bank's requirements at £6 per ton for chaff delivered at the siding, which approximated the price for hay indicated by the Minister. But, quite naturally, the bank secured its requirements from farmers grouped closely together, thereby reducing cutting costs.

It is quite true that the Agricultural Bank's officers did that. There was no grievance at Beverley and York because they bought up their requirements there, but they did not go to Grass Valley. What Mr. Seward says is true; they did not go to the unfortunate people who had been urged to cut hay, people whose crops were supposed to be better. Mr. Seward's letter continues—

There were, however, farmers in more isolated districts, and in later ones, too, who, when they were in a position to determine just what amount of hay they had to sell, found that the bank had ceased buying, and the best price they could get was £2 per ton in the stack, and even less than that. In other districts, too, where there are not any cutters operating, farmers were unable to obtain a quote for their hay. Very naturally, and quite justifiably, these farmers felt that they had been seriously misled, while in some cases their ability to finance their current season's operations was jeopardised. They therefore sub-

mitted a claim for compensation to the Government for the difference between the best price they could obtain for their excess hay, that is hay cut over and above their normal requirements, and £3 10s. per ton in the stack.

What is the Government's reply to this claim? That provided the hay is stacked, thatched or otherwise protected against the weather, insured, fenced off, and not the subject of any mortgage or encumbrance, it will advance the owner up to 25s. per ton for fair average quality hay, such advance to be repaid when the hay is sold or the stack is broken, the advance to be free of interest the first year and to carry an undetermined rate of interest if the hay is carried over to the second year.

The condition "to be free of any mortgage or other encumbrance" will, of course, render almost every farmer who might otherwise be eligible for the advance ineligible. But apart altogether from that, of what use is it to offer to lend a man up to 25s. per ton when he has lost money by responding to an appeal made by the Government? We are entitled to believe that when a responsible Minister speaks, as did the Minister for Agriculture last September, he has full knowledge of the facts before him, but if subsequent events which he could not foresee prove him wrong, then the Government, and not the farmer, should suffer any financial loss that is made.

Hon. A. Thomson: That is the most important point.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Yes. As I have already indicated, we do not blame the Minister for what he did in September, but we do blame the Government for the attitude it has since adopted. Mr. Seward's letter went on—

I know, of course, that some farmers refused the price offered by the Agricultural Bank, and, being unable since to obtain a better price, they consider the Government should now give them the price they refused, but I have no sympathy for such men.

Hon. A. Thomson: None of us has.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: No, we are not putting up a case for those men.

Hon. L. Craig: How will you differentiate between those and the genuine men?

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I think that could be easily done. It could be readily proved which men were hay growers last year and which were not.

Hon. L. Craig: You could not differentiate between them.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I think we could. We may not be able to make a hard-and-fast rule. Some may suffer.

Hon. A. Thomson: It could be proved that a man was offered £3 10s. and refused to accept it.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I know people who refused and people who did not. I know that all those people in Mr. Hall's district were not hay growers. Mr. Smart and others never in their lives cut hay for sale. However, to finish Mr. Seward's letter. He wrote—

But the others who, as previously stated, answered a national call and so refused a known price for their crop if stripped for grain, have, I consider, a just claim for compensation against the Government, and I appeal to the Minister to reconsider his decision to only loan money to such farmers as can comply with his very restrictive conditions.

I have one more letter to read and will not delay the House much longer. We had another conference at Northam to which I was invited and another deputation to the Minister. That was the occasion on which the Minister said what he would do and this is where I offer the greatest criticism. After the meeting I led a deputation to the Minister to see what he proposed to do. Nothing had been done for some months and the Northam, Grass Valley and people in the northern areas as well as others were getting restless. A report in the "West Australian" on the 3rd April, 1941, reads as follows:—

"It is not possible for the Government to take over and control the distribution of the old season's hay," the Minister for Agriculture (Mr. F. J. S. Wise) told a deputation of farmers which waited on him yesterday to ask that something should be done by the State Government to stabilise the hay market. A tremendous amount would be involved, he said. Nor was it possible legally to fix a minimum price.

Of course, the Minister did suggest three months before that a minimum price would be fixed. That was when I said I would withdraw my Bill. The report continued—

The hay position, the Minister said, had caused him a great deal of worry. Last September, when a serious shortage was feared, the Government went into the market for twice its normal requirements in an effort to save the hay growers from exploitation, the price offered being £3 10s. in the stack. Despite the low price today, there was no real surplus. Actually there was a terrific shortage.

"In respect of those who could have sold their hay at a normal and remunerative price," said the Minister, "the Government feels no responsibility. Little responsibility is felt for farmers who cut not as much as usual but all they could cut and who could be classed as commercial hay growers. It must be borne in mind that the late rains of September and early October altered the outlook considerably. For those who do not normally cut hay, such

as tractor farmers or horse farmers, who cut above their own requirements, there might be some responsibility and it is for these that I am greatly concerned."

What did the Government do for those unfortunate people about whom the Minister was greatly concerned? This is what the Government did: It offered them a miserable loan of 25s. per ton on portion of their hay.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I must interrupt the hon. member in accordance with Standing Order No. 114, unless the Council otherwise directs.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I move—

That the hon. member be allowed to continue his speech.

Motion put and passed.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I have indicated by reading letters how futile the Minister's offer of 25s. really is. Members will see how useless is such a proposition. The farmers do not want anything of the sort. They do not require a loan, especially under such conditions as those I have indicated. I shall read a clause from the contract that the farmers have to sign. It is—

If hay marketed or stack broken or used for feed, the whole advance to be repaid before cutting commences.

Any practical farmer knows what a terrible imposition that would be. It would necessitate a man borrowing from someone in the Terrace in order to pay off the loan from the Government before he could do anything with the hay.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: He would be lucky if he was able to borrow from anyone in the Terrace!

Hon. G. B. WOOD: How the Government could include such a provision in the contract I fail to comprehend.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You know we have had evidence of wheat having been stolen.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: What a farce that is! Simply because a little wheat has been stolen, the impossible burden I have indicated is to be placed upon these unfortunate farmers. The Minister expressed concern about their position and all the assistance he could offer was 25s. a ton.

Hon. A. Thomson: And he did not give that amount to them, but merely offered them a loan.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: That is so. It was merely a loan. I have moved the motion in the interests of unfortunate farmers who have had a very raw deal. Men like Mr.

Kelsall and others in ordinary circumstances would shudder at the thought of going to the Government for assistance. Those people have had an exceedingly rough time. In asking the House to agree to the motion I assure them that, apart from the Press reports and letters I have read, I know the actual position. I can substantiate all that has been said from my personal knowledge.

The Chief Secretary: Have you any suggestion to make as to what the Government should do?

**HON. E. H. H. HALL** (Central) [5.34]: I second the motion and shall be brief in the remarks I intend to make in support of it.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I must point out that the motion carried by the House referred only to Mr. Wood, and permitted him to conclude his remarks. I cannot hear the hon. member unless the House passes a further motion authorising the continuance of the debate.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I move—

That the debate be continued.

Motion put and passed.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I shall not delay the House for more than a few minutes. I have a letter from Mr. Walter Teakle of Isseka. I shall not read it, because the position he traverses has already been covered by Mr. Wood in his speech. I know the farmers who have been mentioned and, like them, Mr. Teakle is a man of high reputation in the district. He wrote to me on behalf of a number of farmers in his locality. As Mr. Wood has pointed out, these farmers do not usually cut for hay, but when the Minister issued his appeal, they responded. We give the Minister credit for having made the appeal in all good faith, and we do not for one moment accuse him of deliberately misleading the farmers.

Members generally realise that Mr. Wood himself is a practical agriculturist and he rightly said that never before has so little rain done so much good. We all appreciate that the Minister honestly endeavoured to do his best for all concerned but, as Mr. Craig suggested, by an act of Providence the position turned out to be quite satisfactory. All we ask is that the Government shall come to the aid of men who, through their sense of patriotism, re-

sponded to the appeal that the Minister made to the farming community. That is all I wish to say on the motion. Mr. Teakle and men of his calibre have been placed in a most unfortunate position. They have lost much money because of this regrettable happening and they should not be called upon to sustain that loss unaided. I do not think there is a single taxpayer in the State who, in view of all the circumstances, would suggest the Government was not justified in doing something to assist the farmers, to whose position attention has been drawn.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

### **BILL—BROOME TRAMWAY EXTENSION.**

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

### **BILL—INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT.**

Read a third time and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

### **BILL—POTATO GROWERS LICENSING.**

Report of Committee adopted.

### **BILL—LAND DRAINAGE ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**HON. J. J. HOLMES** (North) [5.40]: The Bill calls for very close scrutiny. I draw the attention of hon. members to the Bill appearing next on the notice paper. They will see that it deals with rights in water and irrigation. In my opinion, the main issue involved in both Bills is the question of minor works. In the Land Drainage Act that the Bill before the House seeks to amend, the whole position is specified from A to Z setting out what shall be done, how work shall be carried out, who shall be responsible and who shall not be responsible. That Act comprises 177 sections, and, in my opinion, the small Bill now under discussion will undermine all those 177 sections. It will do that by giv-

ing some outsider authority to construct minor works, whatever that may mean.

I have looked through the principal Act and have not been able to discover anything to indicate what minor works may be. Should we pass the Bill and it becomes an Act, unless we include some limitation or clarification, a good many people in the South-West, including potato-growers, of whom we have heard so much of late, will be in trouble. The Bill raises the issue of giving some outside authority the right to decide what work shall be done, and whether or not it will be classed as a minor work. It may be that work to be undertaken will be associated with existing drainage schemes that may give evidence of the blunders of some engineer. I do not say that that would be the position, but we know that architects and engineers have made blunders. The question arises as to whether rectification of the blunders of an engineer in connection with some drainage scheme might be considered a minor work, and members can see where that would lead.

If we pass the Bill as it stands, who is to define what will be a minor work? Presumably it will be the engineer in charge. Possibly—I do not say that he would be—the engineer in charge might be the individual responsible for the original works. Members will appreciate where the Bill may lead us unless we include some limiting provisions that the measure does not now contain. Under the existing Act, owners of land in drainage areas have certain rights conferred upon them. If the construction that I place upon the Bill is correct, it will take away from the owners the protection with which the Act invests them.

I wish to refer to some figures quoted by Mr. Tuckey yesterday. I think I have them correctly, and have tried through “Hansard” to pick them up. I understood Mr. Tuckey to say that one big drain in the Harvey district cost £270,000, and that the work was carried out by sustenance men. I do not know whether the rate-payers concerned were charged with the cost of the scheme. I do know, however, that last year Mr. Thomson told the House that a lot of excavating work down there had been carried out with harrows and men with shovels, and that the cost had worked out at 4s. 6d. a yard when the same work could have been done by mechanical

appliances for about 7d. a yard. Assuming that the big drain to which I have referred cost £270,000, and could have been carried out at 7d. a yard instead of 4s. 6d. a yard, members will see there could have been a saving on that work alone of about £200,000. I do not say that the figures are correct. The work may have been a charge on the State, or may not have been.

If these works are carried out in that manner, what may happen if we start out on a number of minor works to correct blunders that have been made in the first instance or may yet be made? There are no drainage works in my province, but I think we are all charged with the duty of protecting the interests of the country. We have loaded our secondary industries to an extent in this State that they cannot compete with our neighbours in the Eastern States. We have loaded them to the extent that the only thing that is protecting us at present is the scarcity of interstate shipping; otherwise we would not be doing as well as we are with our secondary industries.

If we are going to load our primary industries with unreasonable charges, which should never be placed upon them, primary industries which have to compete with products on the world's markets, we shall ultimately place them in the unfortunate position that I think our secondary industries are facing today. I have felt it my duty to point out the dangers of the proposal, and of extending the powers already contained in the Act, as is suggested by this Bill. I should like members to note that the same powers are asked for in this Bill as are asked for in the measure that follows it on the notice paper.

**HON. W. J. MANN** (South-West [5.48]: As was the case with previous speakers, I am concerned as to what may be put over in the guise of minor works. One or two really minor works may not affect the position, but a number of minor works that may be undertaken to cover up some previous deficiency, or to bring about a new state of affairs, may indeed prove dangerous. I point out that engineers usually have a different conception of what constitutes a minor work from that held by the average citizen. Drainage engineers in particular are accustomed to calculating in many thousands of pounds, and fre-

quently in hundreds of thousands. A £5,000 job may be regarded by an engineer as a minor work. We are entitled to know exactly what is proposed by this Bill. A minor work may be one that constitutes a drain to link up some channels, and there may not be much more than that in it.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Should we not describe what a minor work shall be?

Hon. W. J. MANN: I do not know how we could arrive at such a determination, but I do think we should be possessed of more knowledge of the position. I want to know where we stand, and what we may be letting the people concerned in for if we pass the Bill in its present form. I support the second reading.

**HON. J. CORNELL** (South) [5.50]: This Bill does not affect the province which you, Mr. President, Mr. Williams and I represent.

Hon. G. W. Miles: But it affects the taxpayers of the country.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I agree with much that has been said by those who have preceded me. If members will turn to Section 60 of the Act, which the Bill proposes to amend, they will find a reference to the construction and maintenance of works. The section states—

Subject as hereinafter provided and to the approval of the Governor the board of a district may construct and maintain drainage works within such district.

“Works” or “drainage works” are defined as follows:—

Includes drains, flood gates and walls or other defences against water made or used or intended to be used for drainage or diverting water from land, and extends to tunnels, engines, buildings, pipes or other things appurtenant thereto or used or intended to be used in connection therewith.

Subsection 2 says that before undertaking the construction of such works, the board shall do certain things.

Hon. H. V. Hamersley: Very important things.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Subsection 4 says—

If within a period of one month after such publication a petition against the proposed works is presented to the Minister, signed by persons who constitute a majority of owners of rateable land within the district, the board shall not carry out the proposed works.

The Bill proposes to add after the word “works” in line 1 of Subsection 2 the words “except such minor works as the

Governor may exempt from the operations of this section and Section 62 of this Act.” Section 62 states—

(1) Notwithstanding the existence of a board the Minister may, subject to this Act, construct and maintain works in any district.

(2) Before undertaking the construction of such works the Minister must comply with the requisitions of Section 60 . . . .

In other words, the Minister must comply with the provisions of Section 60, under which the majority of the people affected may veto the proposal.

Hon. G. W. Miles: This Bill will deprive them of that privilege.

Hon. J. CORNELL: That depends on the interpretation of the words “minor works.” I have a knowledge of engineering works in connection with mining, sufficient to know that one alteration alone cost more than the expenditure on the original structure. Some safeguard should be given to the people who are likely to be affected. We know the word “minor” has many interpretations. I do not refer to the definition given by Mark Twain. A minor work depends on the meaning given to such an undertaking by engineers from time to time.

Hon. W. J. Mann: The position will be governed by circumstances.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Everything will depend on circumstances. Very often the imaginative powers of the engineer will govern the position. What he may call a minor work may, to those who have to meet the cost, be deemed to be a major work. I think there is a danger in taking away the power of veto that is given to the ratepayers concerned under Section 60 of the Act. Some rights should be reserved to them.

**HON. A. THOMSON** (South-East) [5.55]: This Bill is likely to affect portion of the province I represent. Mr. Holmes was good enough to mention some figures I quoted last year. We have to remember that a great deal of the work concerned has been done by sustenance workers. On that occasion the matter to which I refer was the building of a weir in the South-West. It was the policy of the Government to provide as much manual labour as possible. Whilst it could have constructed that weir at a much lower cost by adopting ordinary modern machinery, the Government decided to carry on under the older method.

The point I wish to raise is this: Is it fair and reasonable to tax the ratepayers, those who have to pay for these drains, on the capital cost, when the work could probably have been carried out, if cheaper methods were employed, at a much reduced cost?

Hon. L. Craig: They are not rated on that basis.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Are they not rated at so much per acre?

Hon. L. Craig: For maintenance only.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The taxpayers meet the capital cost.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Then the ratepayers are better off than I thought they were.

Hon. J. Cornell: Better off than those who come under the goldfields water scheme.

The Chief Secretary: They are a long way better off.

Hon. A. THOMSON: In the circumstances there is very little more that I can say. Certain aspects were mentioned by Mr. Craig. He pointed out that some ratepayers derived no benefit from these schemes, and yet had to pay a considerable amount of tax each year because of the drainage system. I was under the impression that one of the cardinal principles laid down was that people paid for services rendered.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Not in connection with the Government.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Apparently that is not the policy of the Government at present in office, nor of any Government. I do not wish the Chief Secretary to think I am specially selecting the Government of which he is a member. The Bill proposes to amend Section 60 of the Act, which enables ratepayers to veto works proposed in their district. It is possible for a succession of minor works to be carried out over a lengthy period which in the aggregate would mean a considerable increase in the rates to the people concerned.

Hon. L. Craig: We could define minor works as those which involved a certain rate.

Hon. A. THOMSON: If the hon. member has something in mind to overcome that difficulty I shall be glad to hear it when the Bill is in Committee. I have no doubt the Chief Secretary will give us information as to the intention of the department so that we may be in a position to tell the people we represent where they stand. Some members have indicated that public works en-

gineers have definitely suggested that a certain thing would be done without any increase in payment on the part of the people concerned, whereas we know that, owing to changed circumstances, those who were under the impression that they would be free of additional charge now have to face a bill of £36 a year. As I now understand the capital cost is not to be charged to the ratepayers there is no necessity for me to say more. I support the second reading.

**HON. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [6.0]:** I feel very concerned about the measure, which I know has, to a great extent, been misunderstood. Frequently when it is necessary to carry out some irrigation works, it is found that a blunder has been made. The department then says that drainage works must be constructed. It is well known that land must be drained before it is irrigated; drainage and irrigation go hand in hand, as it were. Unless land is well drained before it is irrigated, irrigation does more harm than good. Already in parts of the South-West land that has been irrigated has become waterlogged and sour. Its condition has become worse than it was before it was irrigated.

The Chief Secretary: Where has that occurred?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I understand that in many areas water cannot get away on account of insufficient drainage works.

Hon. J. Cornell: That happened at the Harvey orange grove.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I believe that was completely destroyed. What I have said is applicable not only to Western Australia but to many other countries in the world. How is the Government to overcome the difficulty which will be created by this measure? The Act contains explicit provisions that estimates must be prepared of these works and submitted to the people concerned, so that they will know the extent of their liability in connection with such works. As Mr. Holmes has pointed out, that applies also to another measure which is to follow the one we are now considering. In that respect they are identical, because provision is made in the principal Act for surveys to be completed and plans and particulars of the work to be given, including the cost and the revenue likely to be obtained, as well as the charges to be made against the people concerned. These particulars are to be published for one month. If no objection is

raised to them within that period, the Government may then proceed with the work.

I am of the opinion that the people to be charged with the cost should be supplied with complete information before the work is put in hand; but under this measure the people's rights in that respect will be placed absolutely on one side. They will not be consulted. The work will be put in hand; and the people will find that someone, like a thief in the night, has suddenly taken possession of the property from which they are deriving their livelihood, and that will take place after they have put in years of work on it. The owners will have had no opportunity to obtain information about the works in order to ascertain whether they can meet the additional charges with which they will be burdened. I view that position with much concern. That is all I have to say on the Bill.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West—in reply) [6.5]: From the contributions to this debate it would appear members agree that the Bill is justified. More than one member, however, desires to be fortified with some assurance as to the part of the Bill dealing with minor works. The suggestion has been made that there should be a definition of "minor works." I am advised that much consideration has been given to the framing of a definition which would adequately cover the phrase. So far, there has been no successful solution of the problem. Many small works must be carried out from time to time, and I am informed that it would be extremely difficult to define them. Usually, the works are required to be put in hand urgently. These small works are in the interests of the settlers who will be affected. It is a fact that the capital cost is not taken into consideration when levying rates on the settlers in respect of these minor works.

Hon. A. Thomson: That is merely an act of grace on the part of the Government.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY**: The settlers are rated to provide only for maintenance. What is more, experience has shown that the rates received for that purpose are insufficient to cover the cost of maintenance, because there is a considerable deficit amounting to thousands of pounds yearly. However, I am not saying anything about that. I do not think any departmental engineer—or, as has been suggested, the

Under-Secretary of the department—would be likely to suggest that a certain work should be classed as a minor work for the sake of hiding anything. A work would be defined as a minor work for two purposes; first, because it would be necessary for the work to be put in hand immediately, thus saving the two months required to go through the usual formula; and, secondly, in order to avoid expense.

Hon. J. Cornell: If the rates represent services rendered, my objection goes.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY**: What I have said is true.

Hon. J. Cornell: It does not matter if payment is not to be made for the works.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY**: I think it can be accepted that the department would not countenance any action on the part of one of its engineers which would savour of hiding some blunder previously made. That was the suggestion made by one speaker.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I said a blunder might have been made.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY**: Members will see how the hon. member qualifies his remarks.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I did so at the time.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY**: Some members let their imagination run riot. I consider I am perfectly in order in suggesting that Mr. Holmes allowed his imagination to run riot in the remarks he made on the Bill. Could anyone imagine anything more ridiculous than his suggestion that, on the figures quoted by some member of this House at some time in the past, and on other figures quoted by another member during this debate—

Hon. J. J. Holmes: None of which has been disputed.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY**: —we could arrive at a stage where we could save £200 on a £750,000 job? The hon. member has enough commonsense not to believe that, but he tries to put it over in this Chamber. I take it he is intimating to members that it is necessary to be careful.

Hon. G. Fraser: Another nigger in the woodpile!

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY**: When it is pointed out that the figures he has quoted have nothing whatever to do with the case, he just sits back, smiles and says, "That is all right."

Hon. J. J. Holmes: No. I only gave those figures to show what might happen under "minor works."

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Minor works amounting to £270,000! As I have said, the department has given much consideration to framing a satisfactory definition of the term "minor works." If we are not to trust the department, and particularly the Engineer-in-Chief, in a matter of this kind, I do not know how we can get over the point.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Go to the Taxation Department. It will give you a definition of minor works.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The only method I can see is to fix the estimated cost of the works. Even that method will not prove altogether satisfactory.

Hon. J. Cornell: That would not get you anywhere, if the works are not to be paid for.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Just so. This is one of the difficulties that arise from time to time and it is very hard to find a practical solution. The department informs me that it might be practicable to have a limit of, say, £500, or an estimated cost of £500; but even that would not completely overcome the difficulty. Some member suggested a few moments ago that a number of minor works, amounting in the aggregate to many thousands of pounds, might be carried out quickly in succession. I do not think the department would be unscrupulous enough to try to do anything of that kind.

Hon. A. Thomson: I did not suggest that it would be unscrupulous. That was not the word I used.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is my interpretation of the hon. member's remarks. He said that it would be possible for a number of such works to be carried on in quick succession and that settlers would experience great difficulty in meeting what they would be called upon to pay in respect of them. In my opinion, no department could be charged with even considering that line of action. If members feel there should be some limit, the suggestion I have made might meet the situation, that is, to limit the estimated cost of these minor works to, say, £500, maintenance rates only to be charged to the settlers. That would be

a deterrent to some of the happenings which some members think might possibly occur.

Hon. A. Thomson: Could you tell us what the department has in the past considered to be minor works?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: On occasions, I understand it has been necessary to stop a drain or to carry out some small work rendered necessary owing to climatic conditions. Occasionally it has been found necessary to construct what is termed an ancillary drain in order to meet some situation that has arisen. Taken by and large, the information supplied to me is that these minor works are really essential works which the settlers themselves, more often than not, ask to be put in hand. I have nothing further to say in reply. There will be further opportunity for discussion in Committee.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

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

#### *In Committee.*

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Amendment of Section 60:

Hon. W. J. MANN: It would be wise to put some limitation on the expenditure in regard to these minor works. I suggest that after the word "works" in the fourth line the words "the estimated cost of which would not exceed £1,000" be inserted.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I suggest, if Mr. Mann is moving that amendment, that he should first move for the deletion of the word "minor."

Hon. W. J. MANN: I will do that. I move an amendment—

That in line 4 the word "minor" be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I move an amendment—

That in line 4 after the word "works" the words "the estimated cost of which shall not exceed one thousand pounds" be inserted.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: If the members immediately concerned in the drainage areas are satisfied with that amendment, I offer no objection. Mr. Mann is one of those so interested. I do, however, point out that it may be £1,000 today and another £1,000 a week hence. I desire to correct an interpretation put on my remarks this afternoon by the Chief Secretary. I have never



attacked anybody who was not present to defend himself. What I said this afternoon was that this measure may be used to cover up a blunder of some engineer who may or may not have committed it. I mentioned no names. I know the cost of the drainage scheme is not charged against ratepayers.

Hon. A. Thomson: It is provided in the Act that they can be charged.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I know they were not charged. I gave some figures and Mr. Thomson gave other figures of what some public works may or may not have cost. The present proposal might be carried out in a similarly strange manner.

Hon. W. J. MANN: This portion is really the crux of the Bill. My interpretation of "minor" works—

The CHAIRMAN: There are no such things as minor works now.

Hon. W. J. MANN: It is a type of work necessary, particularly, in time of flood, to be carried out by the department in order to preserve existing works and lessen the chance of damage. Under the present Act the department has no power to do that unless particulars of the projected work are advertised and the people concerned consulted, which would take from one to two months, when it might be too late to cope with the possible danger.

The Chief Secretary: It might lead to greater expenditure.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Many settlers would probably urge that this be done.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 5 to 10, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

## **BILL—RIGHTS IN WATER AND IRRIGATION ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 12th November.

HON. G. B. WOOD (East) [7.40]: The Rights in Water and Irrigation Act was amended in 1939 but it was subsequently found that that amendment did not give the department sufficient power, which is the reason this Bill is now before us. I opposed the amendment in 1939 and I oppose it on this occasion. My reasons are the same as I stated then, that certain people have definite rights to water. Those rights were confirmed in 1914 in the Rights in Water and

Irrigation Act, and I have no doubt that people bought land thinking, properly so, that they had the right to that water. We were told in 1939 that the Canning River would probably not be brought under the aegis of the Irrigation Commission. On that occasion I moved an amendment, which was defeated, to exempt the Canning River. The present Bill is now introduced, apparently, to deal only with the Canning River. I suggested in 1939 that this matter should go to a select committee so that we could hear the divergent views of the people. Some were supposed to have wanted water control, and many did not. We who represent the East Province find that none of the people at Gosnells or Kelmscott desire Government control. I have here what is really a petition signed by quite a number of people which will bear out what I say. This letter or petition is addressed to Mr. Hamersley, Mr. Baxter and myself, as members of this Chamber representing the electors of the East Province, and states—

We desire to solicit your particularly close attention to the various implications of the proposed legislation to deal with rights in water, their limitations and the bearing it will have on present lawful holders who have held these rights and used them over a long number of years.

Land held in fee simple with boundaries shown in bed of Canning River at Kelmscott, forms portion of proposed control. We desire to draw attention to the fact that it has been in constant use for a period of over fifty years without interruption or interference.

The water right has been of considerable value—fully reflected in the unimproved values as made and fixed by the Deputy Commissioner of Taxation and adopted for rating purposes by the local Road Board, whose rate books fully reveal the differentiation of values on similar classes of land with and without access to water, a difference that clearly shows what has been paid over a number of years for the privilege which is now threatened.

If it is proved to be desirable in the public interests, that the rights in water should be resumed, re-organised and placed under control, we strongly urge that before those rights can be resumed, or abrogated to the present holders, they should be acquired by legitimate resumption, carrying as such resumptions do or should do adequate compensation for the loss sustained.

If and when such legislation is carried into effect, the control should remain with the local authority, and not be permitted to pass a management foreign to and without sympathy for those whose living depends upon the favourable consideration of their requirements.

We trust that the interest you are taking on our behalf, which will have a profound bearing

on a large number of struggling settlers, will meet with the success we hope for.

That communication is signed by Mr. Molyneux, Mr. Salter, Mr. Roberts and others. A letter from the Secretary of the Armadale-Kelmscott Road Board to the Under Secretary of the Water Supply Department, dated the 30th April, stated—

I acknowledge your letter referring to your intention to proclaim the Canning River and its tributaries as shown on your plan No. P.W. 29369, under the Rights in Water and Irrigation Act. Upon receipt of your letter, this board agreed to co-operate with the other boards concerned in calling a meeting of all the ratepayers concerned to enable them to state whether or not they agreed to the proposal.

Notice that such a meeting would be held at the Gosnells Hall on the 28th April, 1941, was given each ratepayer concerned by circular letter sent through the post. The meeting was duly held and was attended by about 170 ratepayers from the Armadale, Kelmscott and Gosnells road districts, who, after a full discussion, passed the following resolution:—

That we lodge an objection against control until we know more fully what the cost of this control will be.

This board does, therefore, notify you of its objection to the above-stated proposal.

In face of this, I have no option to opposing control of the Canning River. Another meeting, held in the Roleystone district was attended by 35 ratepayers, and they were unanimous that no control should be taken over their water rights. If the second reading is passed, I hope the Bill will be referred to a select committee. The cost of making an inquiry would not be great, and the taking of evidence would not occupy long. Then members would be informed of the people's views and would know the exact position.

Hon. J. Cornell: The Bill does not refer exclusively to the Canning River.

Hon. W. J. Mann: The Bill is State-wide.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: That is so, but the Canning River was mentioned by the Minister. In 1939 Mr. Craig interviewed some of the departmental officers, who told him that the Canning River would not be brought within the scope of the measure. As the people are very much concerned and practically 98 per cent. of them are against control, I must oppose the second reading.

**HON. V. HAMERSLEY** (East) [7.48]:

I take the same attitude as does Mr. Wood. The measure will affect at present principally the people in the Armadale, Kelmscott,

Gosnells and Roleystone areas, but will apply to the whole of the State. Those people have been alive to the danger that would arise from new works being constructed, and my sympathies are certainly with them. The usual source of supplies has been cut off, because the flow of the main Canning River has been affected by the construction of the very large dam to augment the metropolitan water supply. The people in the lower reaches, consequently, do not get the large supplies of water that previously were available; they have to depend upon small tributaries instead of the main river.

Under the Act, when works were being constructed, land-owners had to be advised of the extent, cost and estimated rating so that they would be fully apprised of the charges for which they would be responsible each year. Many of these settlers have had a hard struggle to develop their holdings. In the best of times there is not much money to be made out of their selections, and generally these people have had a hard row to hoe. However, they have engaged in mixed industry, some keeping poultry, bees and undertaking other sidelines to augment the returns from their trees. Irrigation has been made possible by natural streams created by the development and improvements carried out by the settlers on the hillsides, and thus dry valleys have been converted into good irrigable land.

Under this Bill, the settlers will lose their right of bringing their case before the authorities and pointing out what their holdings are capable of bearing in the way of annual rates. They will have to accept whatever works the Minister and his officers choose to undertake, without reference to them. Naturally, the people are disturbed about the infringement of their rights, especially as in many instances high prices have been paid for them. Well-improved places have been purchased at high prices, and the fear is that the rights in the water will be taken from them for the benefit of other people. The settlers are entitled to know what new works are contemplated and what the cost will be. By passing the measure, we shall be taking away the right of a majority to protest against the construction of new works, which would be a serious matter. Surely they should be entitled to express their opinion! Surely their opinion should be respected! As the measure will deprive them of their rights, I hope the second reading will not be passed.

The settlers affected should not be called upon to bear the responsibility for works that they cannot afford. No fewer than 170 ratepayers attended the meeting mentioned by Mr. Wood to consider this matter, and unanimously voted against the measure. The wiser course to adopt would be to vote the Bill out. This would give additional time for consideration, and the Government would have an opportunity to impress upon landowners the importance of any projected works and perhaps could persuade them that their fears were groundless. If that were done, the opposition at present being offered might be allayed. On the information now available to them, however, they strongly object to the Bill. Unquestionably they should be given more information about works that might be foisted on them.

I ask the House to do justice to these settlers who have been struggling hard to build up homes—some of them very fine homes. I repeat that they have created springs and water supplies which form tributaries to the Canning, and members should bear in mind that the carrying out of improvements of the kind has always been encouraged. From whatever point of view the measure is considered, the settlers are entitled to full and fair consideration.

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

## **BILL—METROPOLITAN MARKET ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 11th November.

**HON. J. M. MACFARLANE** (Metropolitan-Suburban) [7.58]: Before offering any comments on the Bill, I would like to express my thanks to the Chief Secretary and the Honorary Minister for the courtesy they extended to me last week by affording me an opportunity to investigate the position, and I hope they will not consider me guilty of any ingratitude when I say that I have decided, as a result of my inquiries, to oppose the measure.

Hon. J. Cornell: That is poetic justice.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: The Chief Secretary, in moving the second reading, urged the need for power to check competition from people engaged in private treaty. The measure has been introduced to bring all private treaty business within

the Metropolitan Market, that is, the ordinary trading between man and man. To seek such power, in my opinion, is asking too much, and largely on that account, I must vote against the second reading. Those who listened carefully to the Chief Secretary will have noticed that most of his remarks referred to the fish section of the market and the trouble being experienced with people handling the fish supply. I shall deal with that matter more fully at a later stage. The trouble with the trust is that it has over-capitalised its interest, and the high rates being charged to tenants have led to the growth of outside competition.

Quoting the Chief Secretary again, I mention that the amount borrowed for the purpose of completing the markets was £155,000, and the balance now is £208,000 by reason of the superannuation fund established at £19,000; and the reserve fund, which represents only profits from the rents I presume, brings it up to £208,000, out of which nearly £115,000 interest has been paid during the years the trust has been in existence. Our friends the primary producers, who frequently speak about the way in which interest is a burden on the producers, should take some note of the position and try to have this interest reduced somehow, because it will go on in perpetuity and become an immense burden on industry. To the trust it will always be a source of trouble, because the trust has to keep its rates up to such a height that competition from outside is coming in, with the result that those who are able to leave the trust's buildings and seek business premises elsewhere will naturally feel inclined to do so. There will always be a feeling of unrest and trouble as long as present conditions exist.

In my estimation the cure is for the trust to carry on for a considerable time without further extensions or further ambitions, so that it may compromise and make the tenants more satisfied with the conditions as to costs under which they labour. The case that has been cited about fishermen wanting to buy a block of land and work outside the trust's area arose from the present position. I worked under the old conditions, when the markets were spread all over the city, and know the difficulties under which men attending those markets suffered. I was heartily in accord

with the markets as they were established under the Act. The effect has been to mass all auctioneers and producers and buyers. It also brought along packers and other people who were associated with the business of auctioning produce, and they too became tenants. The result was a good and satisfactory arrangement in regard to produce consigned for auction in the metropolitan area. The system also covered the prescribed lines mentioned, and likewise the products and provisions of such. That was not perhaps objectionable insofar as the market area was concerned; but when it comes to the metropolitan area, it is quite a different thing and does infringe upon the rights of the individual.

The private treaty or commission business will affect traders and travellers who are getting a living by ordinary business methods known to have been in existence for hundreds of years. If two or three men are gathered together in a place defined as a market, the matter can be carried to an absurd extent. I and two or three others might be standing on a corner talking about business and somebody might come along and say, "I have a line offered me by a producer in the country, who wants me to sell it for him; will you take it at a price which would cover cost to myself and commission?" I would not be able to purchase in those circumstances. I would have to say, "You must take your line up to the market before I can handle it," and I would have to bear the cost of the extra handling.

Then there is the Apple and Pear Board, which makes big sales of apples outside the area and which sells as agent for producers. Jam makers, too, would be affected in their prescribed lines. That is something that will rather upset the trading community. I must refuse my support to such a proposal. I have lived through the period from the establishment of those markets up to now without ever having been able to put my hand on any particular instance where the producer has benefited from the establishment of the markets. For that reason I say the markets have failed to do that which the country expected of them. I admit that the producer can sell to anybody direct any particular line where there is no commission involved, where there is only a straight out sale; but there are many instances—they have come under my notice and under that

of others—where the contrary is the fact. The producer often wants his line placed, and therefore offers a small commission, which this Bill would not permit the agent to receive. The position would be very difficult in any case, because who could say that commission was not paid upon any of these lines if they were traded anywhere in the community? There would be a search for someone to prove that the transaction was done through an agent and therefore was outside the scope of this Bill.

The prescribed lines are fish, fruit, vegetables, poultry, eggs and meat. Meat is not mentioned in the Bill. We have had many arguments here regarding the consigning of calves and pigs to the market, because of the competition of the Midland Junction abattoirs, which desire that these animals should be sent to Midland Junction to be killed and marketed there. However, the matter has been settled, and the place has been run satisfactorily as a beef market since that time. I feel that our action in opposing the transfer of that class of killing to the Midland Junction abattoirs has been justified.

I have lived all my life as an ardent advocate of freedom to buy and sell from and to whom one likes, without restriction; and I strongly object to being brought at this time of my life under conditions that will take away from me that freedom. I have stated my conviction that the trust has become too ambitious; and I think that can be proved merely by a walk through the place, without speaking to anybody or making any inquiries at all. The original buildings were fairly compact, and it looked as if the trust would be on the right track in keeping them so. Of late years, however, the trust has spread the buildings. It built shops facing Wellington-street. If one goes along there today, even on market days, one is rather depressed to see a long row of shops where little business is being done, while a good many of them are empty.

The trust also provided for open markets, an enterprise that has never developed there. The facilities are provided without being used. Again, there is a cafeteria at the western end of the area. In view of the expenditure incurred, the cafeteria should have provided for the requirements of those associated with the operations throughout the whole trust area, whereas it will not provide for half of them, and the others have

to put up with the inconvenience of going elsewhere to look for refreshments. Further, there has been the removal of the poultry to a new section, which is a pretty costly one too. It is very nice to look at, but if one talks to the tenants one finds that they are paying too much for their comfort. The way they talk has done a good deal to unsettle the trust and to make it feel that it will lose some very good revenues from those tenants unless it can retain them.

Passing through the area where they were established, it will be observed that there was an arrangement made for a tenant to take the area over at a good deal of expense to the trust to make it suitable for the business. The tenant did not turn up. From listening to discussions I found that this tenant was one of the men concerned in the matter about which Mr. Baxter was making some inquiries. This was suggested as one of the reasons why the men failed, and the matter was considered to have a political flavour also. The prospective tenant did not take the space and I do not know whether that agreement was made before the poultry and egg section was moved or whether it was made afterwards. But the space is not fully rent-producing as it was when the egg and poultry people occupied it.

In regard to the poultry and egg section new conditions have been established, and that is a serious matter. These dealers were all under the auctioneering system until the voluntary Egg Stabilisation Board came into existence and took charge of the marketing of eggs in the metropolitan area. Now, a new formula has been laid down whereby a commission of 5 per cent. is included in the charges before the price is fixed. Those of us outside the area are to be brought into that space whether we like it or not, unless we find some other way of reverting to straightout purchase.

Hon. A. Thomson: Cannot the producer send eggs direct to you?

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: Yes. There is a formula which prescribes 5 per cent. commission as part of the charges before the price is fixed.

Hon. A. Thomson: In effect, you have the opportunity of obtaining the benefit of 5 per cent. if the eggs are sent to you?

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: Hitherto we have been straightout buyers at a price. Under the new formula that scheme will be upset, because we shall be brought under

the Metropolitan Market Act if the Bill is passed. There are eight of us engaged in the metropolitan area in exporting eggs to Great Britain.

Hon. A. Thomson: Do you have to pay 5 per cent. on that?

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: It is allowed in the cost.

Hon. A. Thomson: Will you have to pay that if this measure is passed?

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: We shall have to go to the market and pay the charge there.

Hon. A. Thomson: That is what I am trying to find out.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I think this discussion might take place in Committee.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: There are eight of us engaged in the export of eggs and we are all conforming to the conditions set up under the new marketing scheme which I contend has proved to be in the interests of the producers during the past year. The measure will affect us in this way: We shall not be able to carry on our businesses satisfactorily. There are three egg and poultry exporters in the markets in Perth and two in Fremantle.

The Chief Secretary: You are exporting on commission?

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: No, the Federal Government is buying straightout from the ship. Last year the British Ministry bought the supplies available.

The Chief Secretary: How would the Bill affect you?

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: Under the voluntary egg scheme a commission of 5 per cent. is allowed before the selling value is fixed. If this measure is passed we shall have to go to the market because we are general agents acting for the producers. I myself, Bairds and another firm associated with the Western Ice Co., which is a very large exporter of rabbits, are engaged in the export of eggs, and all of us will be affected. Eggs will have to come to Perth before they can be sold, and it will not be possible to sell them on commission outside the established area.

A tremendous number of eggs is bought on what is called contra account by other firms in town, and there are sure to be other firms like Bairds which will be engaged in exporting as well. Some of us have been engaged in this business for many years and to bring us under the aegis of the trust

would not be fair. It would be against the best interests of the producers because it would entail the employment of labour in carting the eggs backwards and forwards. That would add to the cost, and firms would be conducting part of their business in one place and part of it in another. I will not deal further with outside trading because the Chief Secretary did not speak about it at length. I have mentioned the matter to indicate some of the difficulties. I am sure the Chief Secretary will be glad to have the information I have supplied, because I do not think he has been instructed exactly as he should have been.

I wish to refer to the case of the fisherman who was alleged to have bought a block in Wellington-street with the idea of entering into competition with the trust. The facts are these: The man found trading under the trust expensive and bought the land. He was not dealing in fresh but dry fish, and he considered he was justified in taking his business outside the market area. He bought the land and applied to the City Council for a license to conduct his business in the area. The City Council refused to issue the license. I was told that that refusal was largely due to the fact that a city councillor was a member of the trust. It can be seen that influence was exerted to persuade his fellow councillors to refuse the license. However, the man was not satisfied with the council's refusal and applied to the Commissioner of Health who, after investigating the case, informed the City Council that it was wrong and that the man should be granted the license. Judging from the remarks of the Chief Secretary I gather that wiser counsels prevailed and that the man came to an arrangement with the trust, and has been accepted as a tenant of the trust. The land has been sold. Without going to the trouble of securing amendments to the Act the trust could get itself out of many of its difficulties by negotiating with tenants in regard to cheaper rents.

The statement was made that there were two men in the metropolitan area who controlled the fish trade, and it was necessary to require the fish to go through the market, and to prevent any being sold outside by private people. My investigations into this matter disclosed that there might have been some attempt in this direction a couple of years ago by the Geraldton Fisheries which started a shop in Barrack-street and

set out to control prices and monopolise the business. However, they failed badly, so badly that ever since they have been marketing through the auctioneer of the Market Trust. I discussed the matter with the manager of the auction rooms and I found that those two men who were supposed to be monopolists and also the Geraldton Fisheries, are now buying and supplying through the auctioneer, and the auctioneer has no complaint to make. He is not behind this amendment. There was power to control any body of fishermen who wanted to monopolise by so arranging their supplies that no one particular man or group could make a purchase of one lot to the exclusion of anyone else.

The auctioneer was good enough to let me have the sales book for a week in order that I might investigate the consignments sent in, which showed that lots had been broken up into small parcels suitable for small fish shops throughout the metropolitan area. Any member who cares to investigate the position from the sales point of view will find that what I have stated is a fact. I also found that the two men mentioned as being monopolists were not sufficiently strong financially to create a monopoly if they had so desired. That is the information I have and I am satisfied that it is fairly correct. The Geraldton fish company is not now operating in business as formerly but is working through the markets. I suppose experience will prevent those concerned from making any further effort.

The point I make is that I would not deny the company the right to make sales of fish to any private person or shopkeeper outside the markets in the ordinary course of trade. To do that would be unfair and unjust. I want that class of business left open to traders of all descriptions. I want them to be able to trade freely and to engage in private treaty throughout the metropolitan area, but the proposal in the Bill to give the trust the power to control operations from Fremantle to Greenmount is altogether too extensive.

The Chief Secretary: That is not the area covered by the Bill.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: The metropolitan area is not defined.

The Chief Secretary: It is defined specifically in the principal Act.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: Is it? I have not perused that provision. Statistic-

ally the metropolitan area extends from the sea to Greenmount.

The Chief Secretary: I am only correcting you and pointing out that the Bill is confined to the environs of Perth.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: I shall look into that point.

The Chief Secretary: You should have looked into it before adversely commenting on the Bill.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: I have been mainly concerned about the cost of fish to the consumer. I desire that he shall not be exploited, and if one may judge by the prices displayed in the shops, one would be inclined to think that exploitation has been indulged in. I have investigated that aspect thoroughly and I am convinced that the reason for the prices must be regarded as a charge against the war. In pre-war days fish supplies were procured from England, Africa, New Zealand and the Eastern States, but owing to war conditions shipping space is not available to continue that trade, with the result that supplies have practically ceased to be procurable from all those sources.

Another factor influencing the position is that most of the fishermen locally have been Italians, who were interned at the outbreak of war. That had the effect of largely curtailing local supplies. I am informed, however, that fish is now being secured from the grounds extending from Geraldton down to Albany, but even so supplies are short and do not meet the demand. These factors have influenced retail prices. One member said, "Explain this to me: Why is the price of fish so high in the shops if you can buy snapper at 6d. a lb.?" That question certainly required investigation before an answer could be furnished. I can now inform that hon. member that for over two years snapper has not been sold at 6d. a lb. Ordinary quality snapper has been sold at 8½d. a lb. and better quality at 1s. a lb.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: You are quoting wholesale prices?

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: Yes. Dhufish has sold from 1s. 1d. to 1s. 5d. a lb. When the head, tail, fins, insides and bones have been taken out of the fish, what remains is bound to be a bit expensive.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I know of half-a-ton of Shark Bay snapper being sold yester-

day at 7½d. a lb. and retailed in the shops at 2s. 6d. per lb. Explain that!

Hon. A. Thomson: Ask him something easy.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: I can only say that the information I have conveyed to the House was based on that furnished to me by the auctioneers.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I saw the fish displayed in a shop at 2s. 6d. a lb.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: I have seen dhufish in shops at 3s. 4d. a lb. I am trying to explain why such prices have to be charged. Filleted fish obviously must be dearer and that accounts for the prices displayed in shop windows.

From my investigations regarding the fish position, I am sure that no harm has been done to the Market Trust. As regards other produce such as eggs, poultry, vegetables and so on, no harm has been done to the revenue of the Market Trust. For that reason, I urge that the Government has no right to ask Parliament to grant a further extension of the powers vested in the trust, even though the application of those powers would be over a smaller area than I had anticipated. As a result of my investigations I feel I must oppose the second reading of the Bill.

**HON. L. B. BOLTON** (Metropolitan) [8.37]: In the main I support the remarks of Mr. Macfarlane. I have made certain inquiries regarding the position and I also have been approached by several business people of the city. With Mr. Macfarlane I carried out the investigation. My intention is not to cover the whole of the ground traversed by my colleague. To me the Bill appears to represent a definite interference with the freedom of trade. The principal points advanced during the course of the debate have had relation to the question of fish supplies. I, with other hon. members, would readily support any proposal having for its object the provision of cheaper fish for the people. I am convinced that the Bill will not have any such effect.

Hon. A. Thomson: It will probably make fish dearer.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Possibly so. While I appreciate the remarks of Mr. Holmes, who first addressed the House on the Bill, I say, with every respect for that hon. mem-

ber, that much of the information he furnished to members was entirely incorrect.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You have been bluffed.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Then I was bluffed in good company. I had documentary evidence before me which indicated that what Mr. Holmes told the House was definitely wrong. With Mr. Macfarlane, I attended the fish markets and investigated several sales sheets of which we were given our choice. I asked first for that day's sales sheets because I wanted to convince myself on the point of whether the fishing industry was in the hands of two firms. I wanted to find out if that statement was correct or otherwise. My investigations showed that the statement was not correct. I do not propose to quote the details of the sheets, but we took one particular line of 39 dozen and found that the fish had been sold to 11 different buyers. Three of those buyers, we were told, were looked upon as large buyers and they certainly bought more fish than the other eight.

The Chief Secretary: What kind of fish?

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: They were whiting. Then we were given a batch of sales sheets for this month and we were asked to select any sheet we liked. We picked out a sheet referring to one day last week and selected a line of snapper. It represented approximately 2,000 lbs. of fish which had been brought down from Geraldton and that consignment was sold to 18 separate buyers.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: At what price?

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I have not the price but Mr. Macfarlane quoted those details. I think the fish was sold at 7½d. In respect of those 18 separate buyers for that particular line, three firms bought considerably more than the others. Of those three, two were the firms referred to by Mr. Holmes in the course of his speech and the other firm is also looked upon as a large buyer. It seems to me that the Bill will not alter that position at all. While chief consideration has been given to the question of fish supplies, I am more concerned about the freedom of trade as applied to poultry, eggs and other produce. I am quite satisfied that the Bill, if agreed to, will mean added costs to the consumer. Clause 2 proposes to amend Section 12 which deals with powers of the trust, *inter alia*, by adding the following new paragraph:—

prohibit the sale by wholesale in the metropolitan area of fruit and vegetables (except pota-

toes and onions), fish, poultry, and eggs by agents elsewhere than in the market established under this Act. For the purposes of this paragraph "agent" means a person whose business, either alone or as part of or in connection with any other business, is to sell on behalf of producers or other persons any of the goods referred to herein on commission, whether such sale be by auction or otherwise.

That appears to me to be a direct interference with trade. The paragraph further says—

Nothing in this paragraph shall prevent any person (not acting as agent for a producer) from selling or exposing for sale in his own shop or warehouse any prescribed produce, products or provisions.

The proposed new Subsection 2A provides—

No person other than the original owner shall sell fish by wholesale, whether by auction or otherwise, within the metropolitan area unless the fish has been sold previously by auction in the market established under this Act. In this subsection "original owner" means the person by whom or by whose servants any fish are taken from any waters and includes the first owner of any imported fish after the landing of such fish in Western Australia.

That brings imported fish within the scope of the Act.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: And it includes the waters of the world.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Where, I ask members, is that going to lead us? As we know, there is an extremely large consumption of imported fish in this State. Does it mean that the importers, before they are permitted to re-sell the fish, must take them to the metropolitan market? Probably the Chief Secretary will be able to explain the matter, but if he is unable to do so I am afraid I shall have to vote against the second reading, because definitely that is an interference with freedom of trade. It will affect this city materially with respect to prices.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: It is against the Federal Constitution.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: So far as I can judge, the Metropolitan Market Trust generally has done and is doing an excellent job; but, as was pointed out by Mr. Macfarlane, it is making good profits, or at least satisfactory profits. I suggest that in order to make the market more attractive—particularly the empty shops referred to by previous speakers—the trust should consider whether it can afford to reduce the rents, and thus make the market a more popular business centre. At first I thought



the measure had some good points in it; it may have, but I would certainly like an explanation from the Chief Secretary, when he replies, of the points I have put forward.

**HON. A. THOMSON** (South-East) [8.48]: I am somewhat unhappy in my mind as to what the results of this measure will be. As introduced by the Chief Secretary, it sounded quite satisfactory from the viewpoint of the Metropolitan Market Trust. But how will it affect the producers of the State? Mr. Bolton says that the Bill, if passed, will mean increased cost to the consumers, which, of course, means decreased returns to the producers, because invariably all charges are deducted from the proceeds to be received by the producers. From the remarks made by previous speakers, and from my own interpretation of the Bill, it means that all commodities will be forced into the metropolitan market, and that will certainly mean low prices for the producer.

I ask members to cast their minds back to last year, when I moved unsuccessfully for the disallowance of regulations regarding eggs. We were told that those regulations were for the absolute benefit of the producer. As a matter of fact, they have resulted in the producer receiving 1d. to 1½d. per dozen less for his eggs. I endeavoured to obtain information from Mr. Macfarlane respecting the export of eggs. He will correct me if I am wrong in what I am about to say. You, Mr. President, said it was disorderly for me to interject, but I was really trying to clarify the statement made by Mr. Macfarlane. I understand that the exporters of eggs receive 5 per cent. commission. Is that correct?

**Hon. J. M. Macfarlane:** By way of information, I desire to say that returns are furnished which include 5 per cent. as a charge against the producer.

**The Honorary Minister:** Does that include the cost of candling?

**The PRESIDENT:** Order!

**Hon. A. THOMSON:** Mr. Macfarlane clearly indicated that if all the agents who are now exporting eggs are compelled, by virtue of this Bill, to send their eggs into the metropolitan market, that would in effect be establishing another branch of the business. In turn, it would mean increased expenditure by the firms concerned. So we shall have the same old vicious circle; the

producers must of necessity pay the extra cost that will be so incurred, a cost which they will be unable to pass on. From that point of view, I am somewhat worried as to what will happen if the measure is passed.

The Bill proposes to prohibit the sale by wholesale in the metropolitan area of fruit and vegetables (except potatoes and onions), fish, poultry and eggs by agents elsewhere than in the market established under this legislation. I do not doubt the sincerity of the Minister; he is earnest in his endeavour to get the measure passed and put his case plainly before the House. I was at first favourably inclined to support the measure, but the more I study it, the more anxious I become as to what the ultimate result will be.

**The Chief Secretary:** You might change your mind again.

**Hon. A. THOMSON:** The Chief Secretary will have to give a more satisfactory explanation. With regard to fish, I do not see how the position outlined by the Chief Secretary will be remedied by this measure. The Bill says that no person, other than the original owner, shall sell fish by wholesale, whether by auction or otherwise, within the metropolitan area unless the fish has been sold previously by auction in the metropolitan market.

**Hon. J. M. Macfarlane:** That is a double-header!

**Hon. A. THOMSON:** It means there will have to be two auctions of the fish. In turn, that means increased cost to the consumer and a decreased price to the fishermen. The Chief Secretary has indicated that there will be no difficulty about the large fish, but what on God's earth is there to prevent some person from purchasing all the fish and putting them into cold storage to provide against a shortage?

**Hon. J. M. Macfarlane:** Except that the auctioneer would stand in his way.

**Hon. A. THOMSON:** I cannot see that the result will be beneficial to the fish industry. One is certainly staggered to find that "original owner" means the person by whom, or by whose servants, any fish are taken from any waters, and includes the first owner of any imported fish after the landing of such fish in Western Australia. I believe the day will come when we shall have a large fish industry in this State, but it certainly will not be during the war period. When the war is over I hope

we shall have in the industry, instead of foreigners, people from the Old Country who understand the industry thoroughly. When Sir James Mitchell went to England in order to secure people for our group settlements, I endeavoured to point out to him that the harvest of the sea was an important matter and that there was a considerable amount of wealth in it. Unfortunately, I got no encouragement from him or from the Federal Government. If we had a large body of Britishers in this industry in Australia today, we would be in the happy position of having the use of their services in our coastal defence.

For the life of me I cannot see why the average Australian will not take on the gutting and cleaning of fish in the way that people do in England. If the industry is to prove successful here we shall have to consider ways and means of bringing out some of the people I have mentioned, those who have been brought up in the industry. I certainly do not favour the clause providing that imported fish must be sold in the metropolitan market. Probably the Chief Secretary will be able to give a satisfactory explanation, in which event I might change my mind again. He certainly will have to put up a strong case to induce me to vote for the second reading of the Bill, because I am afraid it will result in the placing of an additional burden upon the primary producing section of the community. For that reason I feel at present much inclined to vote against the second reading.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—LOTTERIES (CONTROL) ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**HON. H. SEDDON** (North-East) [8.58]: Although this is a simple continuance Bill, it has evoked an enormous amount of interest, first, because of the remarks made by Sir Hal Colebatch and the figures quoted by him, and secondly, because of the interesting and enlightening address by our new member, Dr. Hislop, who threw fresh light upon the activities of the Lotteries Commission. Previous speakers have referred to the work done by the Commission in equipping our

country hospitals. That work was done very largely on the advice and with the co-operation of the Medical Department.

A much wider field was indicated by Dr. Hislop in which this Commission might engage, especially in regard to the work carried out by hospitals that might be regarded as central district hospitals, because this State is very large. The Kalgoorlie hospital is the type I have in mind because there, through the establishment of the Commonwealth laboratory, we have equipment which does not exist in any other hospital in the State outside the metropolitan area. As a result of Dr. Hislop's speech yesterday a new avenue is opened up for consideration in respect to the distribution of funds raised by lotteries. I have always opposed the system of raising funds by lotteries for hospitals and other charitable purposes. But, of course, it has become an established part of the policy of this State and a large number of people, not only in Western Australia, but outside the State too, subscribe money to the lotteries conducted by the Commission.

The objection I have to lotteries is that, like other forms of gambling, they are demoralising. They encourage people to hope they will get something for nothing. That is not a desirable thought to create, especially in the minds of the younger people. An argument might be put forward that many people regard life as being largely a matter of luck. They say, therefore, "As our prospects are very limited perhaps luck will help us out and assist us to lead a fuller life than we are enjoying at the present time." So the idea of engaging in gambling is encouraged. The answer to that proposition is this: A good deal of what is called "luck" in the lives of certain people is due largely to the results of their training, which enables them to take advantage of opportunities that other people do not perceive. It is far better to encourage our young people to put up a battle for life rather than sit back and wait for luck to come their way.

A suggestion has been made during the debate to increase the hospital tax. Many of us hear criticism of the hospital tax, especially throughout the country areas because those people have a pretty heavy burden to carry with their medical funds. The population is scattered and people have quite a job to meet their obligations, even in maintaining their little country

hospitals. They thought they would derive a great deal more advantage from the hospital tax than has proved to be the case. Before we approach the question of increasing that tax, we shall have to do much more educational work in the way of letting the people know exactly how the money is spent. When we tell them that £284,000 was raised last year they say, "Well, what was done with the money?"

The Medical Department might do a great deal in telling people how that money has been expended and what has been the advance of medical science in the way of new equipment provided for the various hospitals. Once people realise what they will receive from a small increase in taxation, we will not find the opposition raised that is apparent at the present time. I propose to vote against the Bill. I expect there will be no change from the decisions of the past.

**HON. G. FRASER** (West) [9.5]: I intend to support the measure, and I make no apology for so doing. When I go before the Creator and the Great Book is opened, if the only mark against my name is that I encouraged people to gamble to the extent of purchasing a lottery ticket, I will not have much to fear. I cannot understand opposition being taken to this measure on the ground that because we conduct a lottery we are encouraging the people to gamble. If this State does nothing worse than encourage people to purchase a half-crown lottery ticket, it will not have done too badly.

**Hon. J. Cornell:** Open shop betting is worse.

**Hon. G. FRASER:** I will not be drawn into a discussion on that matter. At the moment we are dealing with the half-crown lottery. I agree that there are not many people who buy tickets because some portion of the money goes to hospitals. Very few, if any, purchase tickets for that reason. They buy them because they think they have a possible chance of winning. Although not many do win, at least we know that six or seven people each year receive a lift that they could otherwise never hope for.

**Hon. J. M. Macfarlane:** In Victoria and elsewhere.

**Hon. G. FRASER:** Everywhere. During the debate it has been stated that the local

lottery has become unpopular because it takes much longer to fill than previously. That can be accounted for in many ways. One of the greatest factors is that so many of our young men have gone oversea. They are natural gamblers; they have gone away to gamble with their lives.

**Hon. J. Cornell:** I think the old ladies are better at it than they are.

**Hon. G. FRASER:** Possibly so. I suggest, however, that that is one factor. Again, we find it is not only the lotteries in Western Australia which have slackened off. From memory the Golden Casket, one of the greatest lotteries in Australia, took some months instead of the usual few weeks to fill its latest big sweep.

**Hon. A. Thomson:** That is one of the largest lotteries in Australia.

**Hon. G. FRASER:** I place no reliance on the suggestion that the local lottery is unpopular because of the length of time it takes to fill. I congratulate Dr. Hislop on his contribution to the debate. It was very pleasant to hear; the delivery was good, and in the main, it was what I might term a very good maiden speech. Whilst I congratulate him on most phases of his speech I am not so enthusiastic about the material he put forward.

**Hon. J. Cornell:** Now you are knocking it down.

**Hon. G. FRASER:** One of the first things which would be said in this Chamber at any rate, if we adopted the hon. member's suggestion, would be: "What, another board!" That really was the essence of his contribution.

**Hon. L. B. Bolton:** It would be an honorary board.

**Hon. G. FRASER:** He suggested a board on the lines of the Victorian body. He quoted that board and what it had done. One can only assume that his suggestion was for a similar type of board to be established here. If it were and we gave it authority to do what the Victorian board does, it would be rather costly. I would not vote for the creation of another department in this State.

**Hon. J. A. Dimmitt:** You have changed your attitude.

**Hon. G. FRASER:** It is my voice, and not the echo of someone else. Whilst that board has done excellent work, if we create a similar body in this State to do the same type of work, it could not function with-

out the creation of another department. The work undertaken by the Victorian Charities Board is being done admirably by the present Lotteries Commission.

Hon. J. Cornell: Dr. Hislop inferred that the whole thing needed consolidating—the hospital fund and the Lotteries Commission.

Hon. G. FRASER: But at the same time he suggested segregating the distribution from the collection. That being so, we would still have the Commission to raise the money, and would then have to create a fresh board to expend it. Whilst the Victorian board has done very good work we have to remember that it has a paid official who can receive up to £1,000 a year. I do not know what he draws. If we create a board to do that work, we will need at least one official who will draw a very large salary. The Victorian board, as at present constituted, should be in a position to have information we could not expect our Lotteries Commission to possess, because it performs both duties. Comparisons can always be odious, and that made by Dr. Hislop regarding our Lotteries Commission and the Victorian Board was just as odious as usual, because the functions of the two are entirely different.

Hon. J. Cornell: Did not the old lady say they were "onerous"?

Hon. G. FRASER: Mr. Cornell has evidently been out with the old lady! This is the second or third time he has quoted her. If such a board were created all institutions to receive aid from it would have to be registered. Everything has to be taken into consideration if additions to buildings and matters of that description have to be undertaken.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: Well, why not?

Hon. G. FRASER: The cost would be very great.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: The economic advantages would be very much greater.

Hon. G. FRASER: I do not think so.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: It has been proved so in Victoria.

Hon. G. FRASER: That may be so in Victoria, but here we have a Commission raising money and distributing it and the cost of administration is not taken into account.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: It is costing £1,000 a year.

Hon. G. FRASER: That is cheap considering that the best part of £40,000 to

£50,000 a year is raised and distributed. I quoted the salary of only one official.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: What about the Commission here?

Hon. G. FRASER: The salaries here will amount to much more than £1,000 a year, including the salary of the secretary.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: The chairman receives £1,000 a year.

Hon. G. FRASER: At the most £1,400 or £1,500 would cover the cost of running the Commission, together with the secretary's salary.

Hon. J. Cornell: No, it is about £3,000.

Hon. G. FRASER: That includes the staff, but I am speaking of the Commission itself. I am not including in my figures the clerks employed in the office whose salaries, I presume, are embraced in the 18 per cent. representing the cost of running the lotteries. I am satisfied that the Commission has done a good job. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. How many members have received complaints regarding the distribution of the funds? I have heard of none. The Commission has received applications and has distributed the money according to the best methods.

Hon. A. Thomson: And you do not get any unless you prove you are entitled to it.

Hon. G. FRASER: That is so. I have approached the Commission many times and have had to prove my case up to the hilt. I have heard a lot of complaints from non-prize winners, but from the point of view of administration, so far as I know, there has been no complaint. While the members of the Commission are doing a good job, I am prepared to allow them to continue, and without additional evidence, I could not agree to the suggestion put forward last night that we should divide the duties of the Commission. I support the second reading.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [9.16]: First of all I want to thank Dr. Hislop for the very informative speech he delivered last night. I have not a word to say against the Lotteries Commission. I agree that it is doing a very good job, and I do not think that any reasonable person can cavil at anything it has done. I have not heard of any complaint. At the same time I think the Commission can be compared with the board of charities mentioned by Dr. Hislop. The time is approaching when we could well do with a board of the kind suggested. With

my colleagues, I have had quite a lot to do in endeavouring to get assistance from the Government for country hospitals. To us it has always seemed a great pity that there was not somebody to whom we could go other than the Minister—I am not saying anything derogatory of him—and put up our case.

The Chief Secretary: In connection with what?

Hon. W. J. MANN: In connection with the building and furnishing of hospitals. I visualise a board thoroughly conversant with the requirements of hospitals, thoroughly versed in the special architecture necessary, and competent to advise the country people as to what was best and to ensure that the money raised partly by local effort and partly by Government subsidy, or in any other way, was wisely expended. Various hospitals, some of them in the portion of the State I represent, are anything but convenient. They were built on a small scale in the first instance and have, by piecemeal methods, been extended by additions merely to provide floor space but not to provide facilities for effective working.

I know of one case—Donnybrook—where the people have been endeavouring for years to get a hospital. They raised, by voluntary subscription, about £1,300; the road board agreed to borrow a couple of thousand pounds, and the Lotteries Commission agreed to subsidise to the amount of about £2,000. We have been fighting for that hospital for years. In the first place the Minister or the department agreed to send down plans for a hospital. We believed that the expenditure of £4,000 on a building would provide all that was necessary, but the department came along with plans for a building that would have cost about £9,000, and immediately put us out of court. We thought over the matter for a long time and another plan was submitted, but it was impossible for us to raise the money. Finally a third one was brought along which was found to be within the ambit of the people.

In all those instances we had no one to whom we could go and say, "You are thoroughly versed in the requirements of a hospital and know the population and the circumstances, and should be able to help us." The average local medical man has ideas of a hospital and may be right. His training may have been such as to qualify him to put up a very good scheme. On the other hand, he might be an excellent medical man

but have no real idea of what constitutes a modern hospital building. The time has arrived when it would be to the advantage of the State to have a board such as was mentioned by Dr. Hislop. The fact that the Government subsidises all hospitals heavily is an additional argument in favour of such a board; the Government would feel that the money was being well spent. We know that through ignorance, and even with the best intentions, very much money has been ill-expended in the country. Value has not been obtained for the money, a state of affairs due to the fact that the people concerned have been more or less ignorant of the position. They have not been sufficiently versed in the matter of providing in the most approved way what was needed. They thought that an ordinary building would suit, whereas a building that might be described as ordinary would fall short of necessities.

I am not very keen about the appointment of boards, but if it can be shown that a board will mean greater efficiency and more economical expenditure of public money, I would deem it my duty to support its appointment. I honestly believe that if the idea that has worked so successfully in Victoria could be applied here, it would be to the advantage of the State. Such a board would take over the duty of the Lotteries Commission in the matter of apportioning the gifts to the various institutions. This could be done equally well as it is being done at present. I repeat that I have no complaint against the members of the Lotteries Commission, but I think the time is ripe to introduce a much bigger scheme to deal with all our charitable activities.

If there are any virtues in charity consultations—and I believe there are some—the greatest in my opinion, though it may not appeal to all members, is that it causes many people to contribute to the hospitals who would not give a threepenny bit to save a starving man. This they do unconsciously and regularly. But let one go to any of those people and see how one would fare in an attempt to get even a small sum for a charitable purpose! Such people are not built that way. By means of the lotteries, however, we extract from them quite a reasonable contribution for the benefit of the hospital service.

The question of increasing the hospital tax has been mentioned. If I thought that an increased tax would have any effect in

the direction of minimising the gambling proclivities of people in this State, I would be prepared to support it. But in that respect I am not nearly as sanguine as are some folk. I do not think there is any chance of compelling those people to be good or to forsake gambling by any means whatever. At the same time I am very much in favour of controlling gambling.

Hon. J. Cornell: Under present methods, our hospitals are drifting and drifting.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I believe we should make a very strong attempt to control gambling, but that is a subject I do not wish to discuss now. We have to bear in mind that there are consultations in Queensland, New South Wales and Tasmania with whom people in this State have done quite a lot of business. Years ago the manager of a business I owned received a letter from the Golden Casket, Queensland, offering us an agency and setting out the terms. I said, "You do not want an agency for the Golden Casket, do you?" It was pointed out that quite a lot of money was being sent from that district to Tasmania and Queensland. I said, "Very well, you can try it out and see how you get on." I tell members I was astonished at the amount of business done. Week after week and month after month we sent away to Queensland quite large sums of money for a country town. If the lotteries are discontinued, that will occur again. I understand that quite a lot of money is still being sent to Tasmania.

Hon. J. Cornell: More is being sent to Tasmania today than ever before.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I am not surprised to hear that. On the other hand, we get a reasonable amount from the Eastern States. Quite recently I was informed that 60,000 tickets in one of our consultations had been sold in the Eastern States. It seems to me that if we want to safeguard our own resources and utilise as much of our own money as possible, we must keep it in the State, and for that reason I support the Bill. Naturally the consultations throughout Australia have suffered since the outbreak of war, and I presume they will suffer still more. Last May I was in Sydney and was informed that the sweeps closed every 14 days. There the people are not permitted to buy tickets in any town or hamlet; everyone is supposed to go to

Sydney and purchase from the one establishment.

Hon. J. Cornell: They are issued from one establishment.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I hope I never see in this State the spectacle I saw in Sydney on another occasion. It was the day before the closing of the sweep, and there was a queue about a chain-and-a-half long outside the establishment while inside there was barely room for the people fighting for tickets.

Hon. G. Fraser: Two sweeps a week are run there.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I think it is being overdone. Our method is much superior; people are not forced to buy charity tickets. I support the Bill because I am satisfied that if it is not passed we will be cutting off our nose to spite our face and will lose much revenue for no good purpose.

HON. T. MOORE (Central) [9.33]: I support the Bill. I rise because I want to support the excellent work the Lotteries Commission is doing in my province. Before proceeding, however, I desire to congratulate our new member, Dr. Hislop, on his maiden speech. He was certainly interesting; but, if he does not mind my saying so, I would have liked him to deal with the matter more extensively than he did. I would have liked him to tell us how the money is raised in Victoria. He told us how well it was distributed. But where is it obtained and how much is received? I am satisfied that boards could effectively distribute the money here, but the trouble is that in this State there is a shortage of funds. Unlike Victoria, we are a handful of people scattered from the Leeuwin to Wyndham. In the district of which I have the honour to be one of the representatives there are 12 hospitals, and I believe the district to be about as big as Victoria. It will therefore be seen at once that Victorian conditions cannot be compared with those obtaining in Western Australia. It would not be a comparison; it would be a contrast. I know Victoria. I was reared there.

Hon. W. J. Mann: A long time ago.

Hon. T. MOORE: It is almost 40 years since I left Victoria, but I have often returned there.

Hon. J. Cornell: You would not know Victoria if you went back again now.

Hon. T. MOORE: Victoria is the brightest spot in Australia. It is a sound, solid, rich State.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Were you born there?

Hon. T. MOORE: Yes, and I know it very well.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Why did you leave it?

Hon. T. MOORE: Because I could not make a living there. That is why I came to this State, where opportunities were greater. Those who favour the idea of a board are, I think, inclined with me to learn first where the funds are to come from. In this connection, I was rather surprised to hear our old friend, Sir Hal Colebatch, lamenting the fact that we had to run these awful things called lotteries. But he was not here at the time the lotteries were inaugurated. He did not see the spectacle that we saw then in the streets of Perth, otherwise I feel quite sure he would have been as indignant as Mr. Mann. I can remember what he described. I think the subject is getting on Sir Hal's mind and therefore I advise him to forget it and let us forget it. Mr. Mann pointed out that when he went down the street, boys, and even women, were trying to induce him to buy tickets in a crossword puzzle. The state of affairs in those days was shocking; we had all kinds of dummy sweeps, if I may so term them. Something had to be done and so the Lotteries Commission was formed.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: But those conditions could have been suppressed by law.

Hon. T. MOORE: Yes, but I point out that two members who attempted to stop it were put out of Parliament. I say that advisedly. Most members here believe it, too.

Hon. J. Cornell: Many others went with them at the same time.

Hon. T. MOORE: Well, it went a long way towards the losing of their seats. I am not too sure that it was not also instrumental in assisting to put a former Lotteries Commissioner out of Parliament: I refer to the first chairman of the Commission, Mr. Clydesdale. We have, however, a very fine man in his place.

Hon. J. Cornell: Hear, hear!

Hon. T. MOORE: The evil was rampant in the city in those days. Those concerned in the private sweeps run in those days were more or less trying to thief from each other. So far as the present half-crown

lottery is concerned, I do not think Sir Hal Colebatch need worry much as to whether it will demoralise our young people.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: I did not say that. I said it was economically stupid, but I did not bother about the morals of it.

Hon. T. MOORE: Sir Hal has had some experience of direct giving. Has he ever heard anything suggested in that regard in this State? I well recall the appeals made year after year for the Perth Hospital. I know who gave. It was Jack Smith who gave every time, while Bill Jones slipped from under. That is what happened. The same man gave all the time. Mr. Mann pointed out that whilst everything was not in favour of lotteries, they were the means of providing money sorely needed by our hospitals. Even churches conduct bazaars. They start with the very young people, but I do not think it affects them in the slightest degree. There is no harm whatever in that kind of gambling. I have seen many young men gambling in this country. We have a national game and members of the forces during the 1914-18 war showed the other fellows how to play it. When they returned, after having been away for years, they settled down and made some of our finest citizens.

Hon. J. Cornell: If they play it here, they are rounded up.

Hon. T. MOORE: We are not allowed to play our national game.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: Do you mean two-up?

Hon. T. MOORE: Well, it is known as Australia's national game. I actually saw it played in the Strand in London, when the London police went on strike. That is a positive fact. They were on strike while I was on leave and the boys said, "What an opportunity!" The police merely looked on. But the playing of the game did not have the slightest effect upon our men.

I realise well what the Commission has done for the hospitals of this State. In my younger days, when I was in the timber country, we took upon ourselves the obligation of direct giving. All those who came to the mills had a certain amount deducted from their wages; we could not have relied absolutely on direct giving. This money was devoted to paying our doctor and hospital fees. The doctor had a sum set aside for him. I understand a similar system prevailed right throughout the goldfields. It

prevails today. The men not only pay hospital tax, but contribute to the upkeep of the hospitals in their district, in what Sir Hal Colebatch would say was the proper way. Sir Hal was not practical in his suggestions. I like practical men, not men with theories.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: Another farthing added to the hospital tax would provide more money than is obtained from the lotteries.

Hon. T. MOORE: Men receiving the basic wage, and even less, have paid the hospital tax for years, yet, when they fall sick and go into hospital they are called upon to pay the hospital account, unless they can secure someone to put up a case for them before the board showing they are unable to pay. The willing men pay, but others avoid paying. That is one of the things I have against the hospital tax. A member said during the course of the debate that the Labour Party opposed this tax when it was introduced. They were, however, satisfied with Mr. Munse's Bill.

What a different measure it was! He provided in it a return for the people who paid the hospital tax. That was the idea behind his measure, although I realise that it may have been instrumental in getting the then Government into trouble. I do not think, however, that the benefits covered by that Bill could have been provided. Nevertheless, had we proceeded on the lines of that Bill, it would have been possible to impose a hospital tax that would have provided free treatment for men on the basic wage. I have said this before. The doctors certainly treat these poor people liberally; but they must find the money to pay for the hospital account. If they cannot meet it, then they are in a very unfortunate position. I hope the hospital tax will be raised. I am quite willing that it should be, but let us have benefits from it for those who need them.

Getting back to the work done by the Lotteries Commission, I can but say that it is remarkable. In my province, we have hospitals from Three Springs to Wiluna, and I have never heard one complaint from them about the Lotteries Commission. So the Commission must be an excellent one if it can satisfy a whole community, and that is what it has done. The men composing the Commission certainly have had wide experience. They understand country people. Do not forget that it is only men who understand conditions in the outback that can do a job

like this. I would not like city dwellers to try to run country hospitals. Everywhere I go, I hear nothing but praise for the Lotteries Commission. I hope it will continue its good work. I am not at all worried about the falling off in revenue, because that is only to be expected in these times.

I am a little uneasy about the possible effect of Dr. Hislop's speech in connection with what we consider our achievement in the back country in the installation of X-ray equipment. I have wondered whether it might have the effect of undermining the faith our people have in that equipment, which we believe is pretty good up to a certain point.

Hon. J. Cornell: What the doctor wanted to convey was that a little learning is a dangerous thing.

Hon. T. MOORE: Still, we had to have the plants. I think Dr. Hislop will admit as much. They certainly seemed to a layman to be real acquisitions, and I am still inclined to believe, in spite of the doctor's remarks, that we should not take them away, and if we are not prepared to remove them, I would not like people to be upset by the hon. member's remarks and feel that they ought to come to Perth for treatment.

While I am on this question, I want to pay a tribute to the doctors we have had. It seems that we have been very fortunate in this State in having some very good doctors who have been able to diagnose cases very well. I know people who have been sent to Perth from outlying centres and it is surprising how closely diagnoses of their ailments by country doctors have approximated those made by their city colleagues. I think Dr. Hislop will realise the truth of that statement as a result of his knowledge of the men we have outback. Those men are reliable and we are very lucky to have them. The trouble is that many have left the back country and we are going to have the greatest difficulty in retaining those who have remained. I do not know how we are going to get on without them.

Meekatharra is without a doctor after having had one for many years. It is very hard. I hope something can be done in that regard and that it will be possible for arrangements to be made for country hospitals to be looked after, because I am sure that doctors available will become fewer. The struggle we are engaged in elsewhere



will lead to a call for additional medical men, and something will have to be done to ensure that outback hospitals are not neglected. One could find fault with the Commission for not doing all that should be possible, but no blame is attachable to it, because in this struggling State of ours it is difficult for the necessary money to be raised.

**HON. C. F. BAXTER** (East) [9.48]: The Lotteries (Control) Act has been in operation for nine years and it is pleasing to note the interest that has been displayed in connection with the Bill providing for its continuance. There has been more debate this year than has taken place on any former occasion except when the parent Act was passed by this Chamber. There have been more recommendations for alteration of control even than when the original Bill was introduced. Mr. Moore put his finger on a tender spot, namely, the financial position. We find that gradually but surely the amount subscribed to lotteries is diminishing. One speaker said that that is apparent right throughout Australia, but it is not so. In Sydney there are two lotteries a week and a few months ago it was almost impossible to secure a ticket unless one applied two days before the closing day. There was a big overflow from one lottery to the next and there were queues, not on closing day only but every day. That was the position in the latter part of August when I was there.

**Hon. T. Moore**: There are a million and a half people there.

**Hon. C. F. BAXTER**: From what I can understand through discussion, the decline of our State lotteries has been occasioned by one fact only and that is the poorer chance of winning a prize, due to the heavy extraction from the money subscribed for charities and expenses, which amount to close on 50 per cent. Consequently, when a person buys a lottery ticket, 1s. 2d. at least of the amount is not available for prize money. People are learning quickly that they have more opportunity of winning prizes in other sweeps, and it will be found that business between this State and Tattersalls was never so brisk as at present.

The Chief Secretary: How do you know that?

**Hon. C. F. BAXTER**: I know just what is flowing through, though it is illegal to

transact business in that direction.

**Hon. J. Cornell**: No, it is not; it is possible to send applications through the post today.

**Hon. C. F. BAXTER**: Under our Lotteries (Control) Act—

**Hon. J. Cornell**: That does not get over the Postal Act.

**Hon. C. F. BAXTER**: Our Act prohibits the sale of any Tattersall's or outside tickets in this State, but any number of them are obtained through agents. It is suggested that lotteries are demoralising. There may be something in that contention when tickets are displayed before young people wherever they go throughout the city. There is some justification for Mr. Seddon's remarks. Other speakers have referred to the gambling instinct. They have forgotten—or perhaps they were not here—the time when the Lotteries (Control) Act was placed on the statute-book. It was not only a matter of cross-word puzzles—

**Hon. G. Fraser**: And money words!

**Hon. C. F. BAXTER**: Yes; but of street collections and private lotteries. The position was frightful. That is why this House agreed by a majority of seven to place the Lotteries (Control) Act on the statute-book. I do not think anyone was overjoyed about it, but it was the lesser of two evils—very much the lesser evil. As Mr. Moore said that, combined with one or two other factors, had a very bad effect on some of our then members and Ministers who did not survive the next election, mainly because of their part in having the Act placed on the statute-book, an Act that prevented abuses that were rampant.

As regards the Commission, there have been many recommendations for an alteration. I do not approach it very often but I know of its administration, which is very sound indeed. There is a fair amount of work involved in running a sweep and allocating the funds. Much has been said about appointing an honorary commission. I do not think any persons could justly be asked to carry out in an honorary capacity the work done by the Lotteries Commission. More especially does that apply to the chairman, who is a tiger for work, and who gives good service. To ask that an honorary board should do the work is to ask too much of anybody. The Lotteries (Control) Act has been responsible for wonderful service to charities, particularly at the end of

1932, when the world was in the throes of a financial crisis and when even £1,000 meant a tremendous lot to the Government. Unfortunately, the Government that introduced the measure did not enjoy the benefit. No funds were distributed prior to the members of that Government being told by the people to take a back seat. The existence of the Lotteries (Control) Act, however, has had the effect of assisting many charitable institutions, and those of us who supported the original Bill have been well repaid for the buffeting we endured at the time.

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

*House adjourned at 9.55 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Wednesday, 19th November, 1941.*

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

### QUESTION—STATE HOTEL, GWALIA.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM asked the Minister for the North-West: 1, Is the State hotel at Gwalia closed? If so, what has caused the closing of this hotel? 2, When is it likely to be re-opened?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST replied: 1, No. 2, Answered by No. 1.

### QUESTION—GAS PRODUCERS.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Industrial Development: 1, Does he know whether it is a fact that there is a shortage of material for the production of gas-producer units, which shortage is alleged to be due to shipping difficulties? 2, Is it a fact that "Nasco" gas-producers—a product of General Motors—have recently been shipped from the Eastern States to Western Australia and are now available for sale in this State? 3, Will he make representations to the proper authority for priority to be given to material for the manufacture of gas-producers locally so as to assist those engaged in a local industry? 4, If any representations have already been made on this subject will he give information as to the results achieved thereby?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT replied: 1, There is no shortage of material at present. 2, It is understood a small number of "Nasco" gas-producers has been shipped from South Australia to Western Australia. 3, Representations have already been made. 4, The results achieved have been satisfactory.

### QUESTION—MOSQUITO PEST.

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister representing the Minister for Education: 1, Is he aware that during a comparatively recent schools' broadcast, the audience was informed that in Western Australia there are many mosquito-eating bats, and also that in a large city in the United States, mosquitoes had been completely eradicated by erecting large towers which housed the bats during the day time? 2, Aside from whether such information has engendered in our children a contempt for the inadequate attempts at present made to deal with the mosquito pest, will he turn over the contents of the said broadcast to the Health Department, and the local health authorities? 3, What is the name of the American city which has actually cleared up the mosquito nuisance?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST replied: 1, No. 2, Inquiries have been made, and when the information is to hand, yes. 3, Will be supplied when information is to hand.