

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, September 8, 1954.

The PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir Walter Duncan) took the Chair at 2 p.m. and read prayers.

QUESTION.**ANZAC HIGHWAY RAILWAY CROSSING.**

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—Will the Minister of Railways direct the Railways Department to see that reasonable precautions are taken at the crossing on the Anzac Highway near the Keswick Bridge during Royal Show week to avoid accidents similar to that which happened recently?

The Hon. N. L. JUDE—The honourable member has my full assurance that special precautions will be taken.

ANATOMY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

BUSINESS AGENTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

PRISONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN (Chief Secretary)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It makes a number of amendments to the Prisons Act and for convenience I will deal with them in the order in which they appear. First the Bill validates the regulations made under the Act providing for the payment to prisoners of money for credit marks, and of bonuses and gratuities. It has recently been pointed out that there is no authority for these regulations in the principal Act, though payment has been included in the Estimates. Clause 3 gives the necessary authority and validates the existing regulations. Clause 3 also deals with a problem which has arisen concerning the detention of sexual offenders and children in prison. Under the Criminal Law Consolidation Act a sexual offender ordered to be detained in an institution may be detained in prison. Under the Maintenance Act, a child who proves too unruly or depraved to be kept in a reformatory may be transferred to the custody of the Comptroller of Prisons. At present these persons are in an anomalous position when detained in prison, because by virtue

of the way in which the Prisons Act and regulations are framed a number of provisions of the Prisons Act and regulations do not apply to them. In particular, they cannot be given any bonuses, remissions, privileges or indulgences, and therefore have not the same incentive to good conduct and industry as other prisoners.

The Government considers it desirable that these benefits should be available to such prisoners, and that their status while in prison should be clarified. Accordingly clause 3 enables regulations to be made prescribing the duties, liabilities, privileges and conditions of detention of sexual offenders and children detained in prison. Clause 3 also enables regulations to be made for the remission of any part of the period for which such prisoners may be detained and for applying any provisions of the principal Act or regulations to them. This last provision will enable such provisions of the principal Act as section 42 to be applied to such persons. Section 42 deals with the release on probation of prisoners, and does not at present apply to children and sexual offenders detained in prison.

Clause 3 also provides that the regulations may authorize the remissions and earnings of sexual offenders and children detained in prison at the commencement of the Bill to be computed from the commencement of their detention. Thus sexual offenders and children at present in gaol will be able to get the full benefit of the Bill. Clause 4 removes a reference in the principal Act to committal for trial under the Coroners Act. This reference is now obsolete.

Clause 5 provides for the release on licence of life prisoners. The Comptroller of Prisons has asked the Government that there should be a power to release life prisoners on licence. At present a life prisoner can only be released by exercise of the Royal prerogative and the release is unconditional. There can be no control over the prisoner's conduct after his release, and he cannot be recalled. The system of release on probation under the Act does not apply to life prisoners. The Comptroller has recommended the adoption of legislation on the lines of English legislation on this subject. Under the English Prisons Act, the Secretary of State is given power to release on licence on such conditions as he thinks fit. A prisoner so released is subject to recall at any time. Such legislation would enable life prisoners to be effectively kept under control after release for such period as may be thought desirable and clause 5 accordingly

provides in these terms for release on licence by the Governor on the recommendation of the Comptroller.

Clause 6 amends section 46 of the principal Act which creates a number of prison offences punishable by the Comptroller or a visiting justice, such as disobedience of orders, abusive or indecent language and wilful injury to property. Section 46 was originally enacted in 1869 and contains provisions which overlap or are redundant. In some cases it is difficult to know with precisely which offence a prisoner should be charged. Clause 6 makes several minor amendments designed to make the section more effective. To attempt to commit an offence under the section and to aid or abet the commission of an offence are made offences.

Clause 7 re-enacts section 47 of the principal Act, which deals with the punishment of prisoners for such offences. At present the only punishment which may be imposed for prison offences are solitary confinement, a bread and water diet or forfeiture of remissions. As re-enacted by clause 7, section 47 provides in addition for forfeiture of privileges, indulgences or earnings and for payment of compensation for damage. The section also provides that the prisoner may be cautioned. Section 47 at present does not make any provision for taking any evidence other than that of the prisoner himself or for the compelling of witnesses on the hearing of a charge against a prisoner. Clause 7 makes the necessary alterations to enable the justice to secure any relevant evidence.

Clause 8 makes amendments to section 48 of the principal Act consequential upon clause 7. It enables a court of summary jurisdiction hearing a more serious charge against a prisoner to caution the prisoner or to make any order as to forfeiture of privileges, indulgences and earnings or payment of compensation which the Comptroller or a visiting justice may make upon conviction of a lesser charge. Clause 9 provides for the debiting of prisoners' accounts where earnings are forfeited or where the prisoner is ordered to pay compensation for damage caused by him. The clause also provides for the payment of the compensation to the person entitled. Clause 10 amends section 58 of the principal Act, which make the escape of any prisoner under sentence of a court a felony. It also extends the scope of section 58 to apply to a child or sexual offender detained in prison, at the same time extending the scope of the section to cover the escape of any class of prisoner. There is at present

no provision in the principal Act making it an offence for a prisoner other than a prisoner imprisoned for a crime to escape. The Bill is very important in as much as it is designed to influence the prisoner for good, to give some consideration for his satisfactory behaviour in prison, and opportunities to rehabilitate himself rather than he should be detained permanently and thus be a liability on the State. For those reasons I recommend the measure to the serious consideration of members.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON secured the adjournment of the debate.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

The Hon. N. L. JUDE (Minister of Local Government)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time. Its principal object is to enable a council to recover road moieties, as they are commonly called, from owners of abutting ratable property, notwithstanding that a loan has previously been raised to finance the work. Section 319 of the Act provides that a council may recover the cost of making a road from the owners of abutting ratable property, up to an amount of 7s. a foot of the frontage of the ratable property. Section 328 provides in the same way for the recovery of the cost of constructing a footpath. The amount recoverable is limited to 1s. 6d. a foot of frontage. Section 424 provides that a council may borrow money by debentures for the purpose of carrying out various specified works, including the construction of roads and footpaths.

Until recently, the practice of councils was to raise money by debentures under section 424 for roadmaking and then to recover part of the cost under section 319. An ordinary suburban road at present costs between 25s. and 30s. a foot. Of this amount a total of 14s. a foot could be recovered from owners of abutting property on each side of the road. In raising loans for road works, and then recouping themselves by collecting moieties from those who derived special benefits from the works, councils were doing nothing unusual or unfair. Almost every governmental authority does the same sort of thing. The validity of this practice, however, was recently considered by the Full Court in the case of *Campbelltown Corporation v. Johnston*. The Full Court held that if a council raised money by debentures under section 424 for the purpose of constructing a road, it was not open to the council to recover

any part of the cost of the works under section 319. Although section 328, which deals with the cost of footpaths, was not in issue, it is obvious that the Full Court decision would also apply to section 328. The result of this decision is that a council must either finance the construction of a road or a footpath by recovering part of the cost under section 319 or section 328 and finding the balance out of general revenue or, alternatively, wholly by debentures. This will lead to a considerable diminution in the construction of roads. An anomaly will also arise. Some roads in a neighbourhood may be paid for by raising a loan while others are paid for out of revenue. In the one case, the owner of abutting property will contribute nothing, while in the other he will be liable to pay the amounts provided by sections 319 and 328. The decision will have serious consequences for the finance of councils. The Government, of course, does not dispute the correctness of the Supreme Court's judgment. There is, however, no doubt that Parliament never intended that the power to raise loans and the power to levy road moieties should be alternatives. It was never intended that the Act should be construed in this way, and the Local Government Advisory Committee has recommended that the Act be amended to authorize the practice followed before the decision. The Government has accepted this recommendation and accordingly is introducing this Bill which amends sections 319 and 328 to give effect to that recommendation.

The decision also creates grave difficulties in connection with what has been done in the past, and the Bill deals with this aspect also. The first difficulty is that where the moieties for any work are at the moment partially collected, those who have not paid cannot now be called upon to pay. Leaving aside for the moment the question of whether the councils can be legally compelled to make refunds to those who have paid moieties, are they morally obliged to refund the money of those who have paid if the remainder cannot be made to pay? If they are so obliged, what is to be done about moieties on earlier road works?

The second difficulty is that councils are faced with the possibility of actions against them for the return of moieties paid in the past. Whether such actions would succeed is most difficult to say, since the questions of law involved are difficult, but the possibility is there. So also is the possibility that some ratepayers would have good claims and others not, so that many anomalies might arise. The Government is informed that metropolitan

councils over the past three years have expended loan moneys to the amount of approximately £70,000 on road works. The councils have recovered in respect of the work so financed about £23,000 by way of road moieties and an amount of £6,400 is still outstanding from the owners of the land abutting the roads in question. The Government has the choice of doing nothing, or attempting to legislate to deal with the question. In all the circumstances, the Government feels that, while no completely satisfactory solution can be found by legislation, the balance of convenience is in favour of settling these problems by legislation. The Government has given the question careful consideration and has decided to ask Parliament to validate all payments made in the past, and to declare that moieties outstanding in respect of ratable property abutting roads and footpaths paid for out of a loan raised in the past shall be payable, subject to the exception that Mrs. Johnston, the defendant in the Campbelltown case, shall be allowed the benefit of the judgment given in her favour.

A further point raised in the judgment was to the effect that the section at present does not prescribe a time within which the council should demand payment of road moieties from the persons liable. In order to meet this point, it is provided by the Bill that, where the council desires to recover payments under section 319 or section 328, it must, within six months of the completion of the work, give notice to the owner of the land in question specifying the amount payable and requiring its payment. The amendments of the law so far discussed are the result of the Full Court decision. In addition, the Bill proposes other amendments to sections 319 and 328 which have been recommended by the Local Government Advisory Committee. As has been mentioned before, section 319 provides that a council may require contributions towards the cost of roadways from adjoining owners and the maximum amount which may be recovered is 7s. per foot of the ratable property. Thus, a council can, by recovering contributions from owners on each side of the street, recover 14s. a running foot. However, the cost of forming, metalling and sealing an ordinary suburban street is from 25s. to 30s. a foot and this does not include the cost of water tables and kerbing. The committee has suggested that the amount of 7s. provided by section 319 is now inadequate and, following the recommendation of the committee, it is proposed by clause 3 to increase this amount to 10s. a foot.

Section 328, which deals with the construction of footways, provides that the council may recover up to 1s. 6d. a foot from the adjoining owners. No alteration to this amount is proposed. Both sections 319 and 328 provide that, where notice is given to an owner requiring payment under the section, interest at 6 per cent is to be chargeable on any amount outstanding three months after the giving of the notice. It is proposed to alter the rate of interest to 5 per cent and to provide that interest is not to run until after the expiration of six months from giving the notice. No provision is now made whereby this interest may be remitted and the Bill provides that, where the council is satisfied that the payment of the interest would inflict grave hardship, it may remit the interest either wholly or in part. Thus, while it is proposed to increase the road moiety from 7s. to 10s. a foot, it is also proposed to give some concessions with regard to its payment. Other provisions of the Act provide that a council may give extended time to pay amounts owing to the council.

A further amendment is proposed to section 319. It sometimes occurs that a council makes a roadway which is not constructed to the full width and subsequently the roadway is widened. It is provided that where this is done, the cost of the widening may be charged to adjoining owners as provided by the section. It should, perhaps, be made plain that sections 319 and 328 only apply where the making of the road, footpath, etc., is new construction. The sections do not apply to maintenance or the reconstruction of a road or footpath. The sections only apply where the work in question has not been previously carried out. It is possible for the council to carry out the work in stages. It may form and pave the roadway and, at a later stage, construct the water tables and kerbs. The council may recover the charges under the sections at each stage of the work but the total amount recoverable from the adjoining owners is limited to the amounts provided by the sections. I feel that honourable members will appreciate the urgent need for this legislation.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—How does this affect the Housing Trust?

The Hon. N. L. JUDE—The honourable member will be able to bring that point out in due course. Because many of our municipal councils have been prevented from carrying on road works since the judgment, it is desirable

that the matter should be clarified by Parliament at the earliest possible moment, therefore I commend the Bill to members.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON secured the adjournment of the debate.

MARKETING OF EGGS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

The Hon. N. L. JUDE (Minister of Local Government)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time. Its object is to extend the operation of the Act for a further three years. The principal Act was originally passed in 1941. The peace-time system of marketing eggs had then broken down and it was necessary for Parliament to create a marketing scheme by statute. The operation of the Act has been extended from time to time, the last time being in 1949. If its operation is not extended again, it will expire on September 30. The Egg Board asked for an extension of the Act and the Government agreed to propose its extension to Parliament. The marketing scheme created by the Act has become an integral part of the poultry industry. Indeed, it would probably cause great difficulties in the industry now if the scheme were allowed to lapse. It is part of a Commonwealth wide arrangement for the marketing of eggs. It is anticipated that difficulties will be met in future in the marketing of Australian eggs overseas. These would be aggravated if the South Australian marketing scheme came to an end. The scheme is accepted as beneficial to producers and to the community as a whole. Its continuation is generally desired. Statistics are available showing the result of the operations of the board. They were fully dealt with in another place, and I do not propose to deal with them here.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON (Leader of the Opposition)—As the Minister stated, the Act will expire on September 30 and therefore I am taking the opportunity this afternoon of trying to assist the Government in securing a speedy passage of the measure. This is yet another instance where the South Australian consumer is called upon to make up deficiencies due to losses on export trade. We have helped all kinds of producers over many years—the wheat producer, the butter producer, the egg producer and many others. Now an approach has been made to the Commonwealth Government for a subsidy to help the poultry industry further and the Minister of Agriculture has stated that he hopes it will be given a subsidy.

We are asked this afternoon to extend the life of the Egg Board for three years, but it is about time that consideration was given to a certain manufacturing industry on behalf of which I have made representations time and time again.

The Hon. L. H. Densley—Would the honourable member do away with any of the tariffs on cotton goods?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I am not concerned about tariffs at the moment. I feel somewhat sympathetic to the poultry producer; he has to pay £19 16s. a ton for bran and pollard because we have agreed to a price of 14s. a bushel for wheat for home consumption—and I supported it. The Commonwealth Minister for Agriculture and Commerce (Rt. Hon. John McEwen), in a statement in Adelaide on Monday night, said that the rural industries have never been so prosperous. Notwithstanding this we are continually asked to support them.

The Hon. L. H. Densley—Do you think he made a mistake?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I am simply repeating what appeared in the press, and I think that one of the best informed men in Australia today is the Federal Minister for Commerce and Agriculture. Even the old age pensioner pays 1½d. on a pound loaf in order to make up the 14s. for wheat, but on the other hand he is not allowed to purchase a pound of margarine though it is much cheaper than butter. I propose to point out what assistance to this industry has meant to the consumer, for it is the consumer who has to pay the cost of all these boards. However, when it is a question of doing something for an industry that has been very hard hit, this Council does nothing.

The Hon. W. W. Robinson—The consumers have had to pay only the concessional price for wheat for many years.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I admit that, but they have paid hundreds of thousands of pounds in the shape of flour tax in order to help the farmer.

The Hon. W. W. Robinson—And they have got it back five-fold.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—In order to help the egg industry for another three years the consumer will have to pay a higher price for eggs, but there are manufacturers who have played a very prominent part in the economy of Australia and if the egg producer is entitled to assistance why should not the manufacturer be given some help?

The Hon. F. T. Perry—You are advocating a general application of subsidies?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—If it is fair and reasonable to give assistance to primary industries why is not the manufacturer entitled to the same consideration?

The Hon. E. Anthoney—Did not the Premier take up the question of the milling industry?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Its position is worse today than it was a month ago.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—Does the honourable member think that the egg industry is asking for this Bill?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—It would not be here otherwise.

The Hon. C. R. Cudmore—What does the consumer say?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—He has no say. On another occasion when I urged that the consumer should be allowed to buy a certain article because it was cheaper he was not allowed to do so because it did not suit some members here.

The Hon. L. H. Densley—That could be extended in many directions.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Then let us extend it in the direction I desire, for I am sick and tired of supporting one section of the community while assistance is refused to another. The Egg Board operates under the Marketing of Eggs Act, 1941-1949, and controls the marketing of eggs in South Australia. The board's operations for the year ended June 30, 1953, resulted in a surplus of over £27,000 compared with a deficit of £20,166 for the previous year. I intend to show what the board has cost consumers. The poultry producer is merely asking for what other people have had, yet we are told by the Federal Minister for Commerce and Agriculture that the rural industries have never been so prosperous. If these people who are so prosperous have a right to come along for assistance why should not others be considered? The board determines the prices at which it purchases eggs from the producer and those eggs are disposed of as far as possible on the local market at wholesale prices fixed by the board. The surplus is disposed of by export at prices negotiated by the Australian Egg Board with the British Ministry of Food. Export prices, although more favourable than in 1952, were still lower than the prices ruling on the local market—and again, let me point out, the consumer makes up the deficiency. If he did not where would the poultry industry be?

During 1952-53 eggs exported in the shell or as pulp represented 51 per cent of the total production as against 21 per cent the previous year.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—Is not the United Kingdom holding a big surplus of egg pulp?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—It may be, but our long-term agreement with the United Kingdom expired on May 31 this year and now the Australian producer is called upon to compete in world markets. I am afraid this is not the only industry which will suffer because of such competition. I have taken the following information from the annual report of the Auditor-General for the year ended June 30, 1953:—Eggs in the shell exported from South Australia in 1950-51 amounted to 1,543,560 dozen, the loss being £33,301, or about 5½d. per dozen. Egg pulp exported that year amounted to 2,580,933 dozen and the total loss was £11,276 or approximately 1d. a dozen. Egg powder exported totalled 823,061 dozen and the loss was £19,774 or 5½d. a dozen. South Australian consumers had to make up the difference in each case. The total exports for that year amounted to 4,947,554 dozen, the loss being £64,351 or 3½d. a dozen. In 1951-52 exports fell by more than one half the previous year's total and the loss increased to £80,436 or 8½d. a dozen. In the following year exports totalled 5,791,252 dozen and the loss amounted to £40,538 or 1½d. a dozen, showing that the position had improved compared with the previous year. We have to consider the future as our agreement with the British Ministry of Food has expired. As a result of its operations for 1952-53 the Egg Board's position improved from an overdraft of £107,200 as at June 30, 1952, to a bank credit of £67,000 as at June 30, 1953. That improvement had been achieved mainly because of the decrease in the amount of funds tied up in stocks and sundry debtors, together with a surplus of £27,000 on the year's operations. The earnings of the pool last year amounted to £2,276,535 and added to that are commitments amounting to £72,728, making a grand total of £2,349,263, showing that this is a very important industry. The board of management's expenses for the year amounted to £25,913. Operating expenses, including the cost of eggs purchased and stocks on hand at the beginning of the year, amounted to £2,165,588, manufacturing charges (including materials and storage costs) totalled £196,346 and the payroll tax for child endowment was £67, making a grand total of £2,362,001. The year's surplus was £27,070.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—How can the honourable member support a measure which will perpetuate that?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Because it is my policy to do so. If the honourable member is in favour of a wheat marketing scheme, he must also support this measure. He cannot hunt with the hounds and run with the hares. Poultry producers are entitled to assistance. It is only logical that this industry should be supported seeing that support is given to an industry which is in a far better position. When I see that an industry is suffering, irrespective of who is running it, and it is in the interests of Australia, I will give it my full support. Irrespective of whether we agree with the Bill or not, at least we should make a general review of the position. Australia today is in a position that she has not been in in the last 14 or 15 years. Due to a war and its after effects we have been able to sell our products and meet world competition at satisfactory prices, but that time has now passed. Everyone will have to realize the position because of the different set if circumstances which has arisen.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—Don't you think that after all this time the poultry industry should be able to stand on its own feet?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—If a poultryman is fortunate enough to get it, he has to pay £19 16s. a ton for bran and pollard and 14s. a bushel for wheat. This is a load on the industry.

The Hon. W. W. Robinson—That would be the home consumption price.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—It is nothing of the sort. Wheat is being sold overseas at 1s. 3d. a bushel less than it can be bought in South Australia. I have the greatest respect for the Australian Wheat Board, which has played a wonderful part in the Australian economy. Because of the position that the industry is in today it wants a continuation of the legislation for another three years, therefore I support the second reading.

The Hon. W. W. ROBINSON (Northern)—The Bill does not break new ground in any way but merely provides for an extension of the Act that has operated since 1941. This legislation was introduced as a national security regulation during the war and carried on in that way until 1949 when, owing to the lapsing of national security powers, a Bill was introduced in this State to provide for an extension of the South Australian Egg Board. When the Act was

passed in 1941 setting up a South Australian Egg Board, a board of six members was appointed, three representing producers, one of whom had to live over 20 miles from the General Post Office, one retail traders' representative, a representative of receiving agents and as chairman a competent person not engaged in the business of producing or selling eggs. Consumers are safeguarded, because the chairman, who is a representative of the Government and of the people and is not associated with the industry, has a casting as well as a deliberative vote.

The Hon. F. T. Perry—But he is very interested in it.

The Hon. W. W. ROBINSON—The present chairman is the Chief Poultry Adviser, who is not a producer or purchaser of eggs.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—Would you say he is completely unbiased?

The Hon. W. W. ROBINSON—He is in favour of seeing the industry developed. Before the introduction of orderly marketing of eggs, on Eyre Peninsula during a flush period producers could obtain only 2½d. a dozen and 4d. and 5d. a dozen on the mainland. At times they considered the price was not sufficient to encourage them even to collect the eggs, and in some cases they selected the freshest for their own use and left the others to decompose. This occurred during the period of excess production. Although I do not say that orderly marketing has been responsible for the whole of the increase in quantity, since its introduction there has been a gradual growth and improvement in the industry. The following table shows the quantities exported and the average price paid to producers from 1942 to 1954:—

Year.	Quantity exported. Dozens.	Average price paid to producers per dozen.	
		s.	d.
1942-43	8,304,000	0	11.75
1943-44	9,663,000	1	4.99
1944-45	11,126,000	1	5.49
1945-46	12,446,000	1	4.64
1946-47	14,448,000	1	4.84
1947-48	14,693,000	1	6.35
1948-49	14,181,000	1	9.34
1949-50	13,089,000	2	5.09
1950-51	11,663,000	2	6.63
1951-52	10,741,000	3	4.91
1952-53	11,359,000	3	9.92
1953-54	10,816,273	3	11.13

It will be seen that the main improvement has been in returns to producers and the rise in price corresponds with increases in the basic wage and every other avenue. This increase in price has not all been brought about by an

increase to the consumer but by better marketing methods. To become thoroughly acquainted with egg marketing I visited the grading floor to see the processes through which eggs pass before being placed on home and overseas markets and was pleased to note the very great improvement in quality. It is on quality that price is based. From one case being tested I had to wait a considerable time before a second-rate egg was found. It was perfectly fresh. It had the required amount of air space, which is about the size of sixpence, but had a small speck of mud on it so it had to be classed as second grade because the wiping of eggs is not permitted.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—Is that not an over-refinement?

The Hon. W. W. ROBINSON—It is not permitted because wiping eggs affects their keeping qualities. Eggs are marketed today in much better condition than when they were sold by all and sundry.

The Hon. C. R. Cudmore—Do you think all that would go if we did not continue the board?

The Hon. W. W. ROBINSON—We would need some control so that all marketing would go through that source. Under the Act the Auditor-General must report within six months of the end of the financial year on the operations of the board. In relation to the point I made about an improvement in the quality of eggs the Auditor-General said:—

The average net price to producers quoted is calculated on all eggs purchased by the board but the average net price per dozen received by an efficient producer would be much higher, as the higher the percentage of first quality eggs the better the average return per dozen.

When discussing this legislation in the House of Assembly Mr. Dunks' said:—

The consumers wanted to get back to free enterprise when they were able to purchase from whom they liked, where they liked, and when they liked and have the opportunity, in the lean part of the year, to purchase eggs and store them for future use and sell any surplus.

In fact, take advantage of the producer when prices are low and store requirements for the whole of the year. Under this legislation the producer or his agent performs this service, and the eggs are gathered in the flush period of the year, stored for three or four months and sold when they are less plentiful.

The Hon. C. R. Cudmore—At whose cost?

The Hon. W. W. ROBINSON—It is a charge against the producer, as I will show later.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Are not the charges passed on to the consumer?

The Hon. W. W. ROBINSON—I will deal with these charges directly. In another speech in the Assembly in 1949 Mr. Stephens of Port Adelaide—and I take it he was representing the consumer of eggs—said:—

I think all members will agree that since the establishment of the board we have had more reliable eggs. One no longer sits down to breakfast wondering whether he will have an egg or a chicken. Consumers may have to pay a little more but they are receiving a much better product.

And that was no mere figure of speech for under the old methods, when eggs were packed

in chaff, chickens at times were found in the cases, but the consumer today is getting a much better article. For purposes of comparison I will quote the wholesale prices in South Australia and those in other States as at August 30, 1954. There has been a reduction of 2d. a dozen in South Australia since then, but as I have not been able to get figures for the other States I thought it fairer to quote the previous prices. They were:—

For first quality, wholesale—South Australia, 3s. 11d.; Victoria, 4s.; Queensland, 3s. 9d.; Tasmania, 4s. 6d.; Western Australia, 4s.; New South Wales, 4s. 5d.

Handling charges in the respective States were:—

	Pool deduc- tions. d.	Handling and selling Dock- charges. d.	age. d.	Adver- tising levy. d.	Industry levy. d.	Board charges. d.	Building fund. d.	Board adminis- tration. d.	Total. s. d.
South Australia	1½	4½	—	—	—	—	—	—	6
Victoria	6	3½	½	—	—	—	—	—	10½
Queensland	5	3½	—	1	½	—	—	—	10
Tasmania	6	3	—	—	—	4	—	—	1 1
Western Australia . . .	4	3½	—	—	—	—	½	½	8
New South Wales . . .	6	3½	—	—	—	—	—	—	9½

It will be seen that without exception South Australian pool deductions and handling charges compared very favourably indeed with those of other States. The Auditor-General in his report for the year 1952-53, said:—

A comparison of the total deductions made in each State shows that the cost per dozen for administration, grading, treatment and marketing in South Australia is as low as in any other State. In view of that fact it must be considered that the board was economical in its expenditure on those functions It is considered that the board's financial position is satisfactory and that it has adequate capital resources for its normal requirements.

I contend that the marketing of eggs under the South Australian Egg Board has given a better quality product to the consumer and a better return to the producer and I therefore have much pleasure in supporting an extension of its existence.

The Hon. Sir WALLACE SANDFORD (Central No. 2)—As other speakers have stated, the principal Act was passed in 1941, which means that the Egg Board has been in existence for nearly 13 years. When introducing the measure the Minister of Agriculture, who was then a member of this Chamber, said that it was designed to help the producers in the marketing of eggs during the war. Probably Mr. Cudmore will even yet remember his own words on November 13, 1941, when he said:—

We had a definite assurance that this Bill was a war measure and would only be con-

tinued for the war and six months there-after, but we have had the wool pulled over our eyes.

Those of us who were then members of this Chamber—and there are not many left—will recall the discussion that went on into the very small hours on this subject, and during that debate we were again reminded that it was a war measure with a time limit. The war has been over for nearly 10 years, but its aftermath is still with us and the markets for many, if not all, commodities have been affected. I do not think it necessary to go through the figures of the board's administration as that ground has been covered well indeed by Mr. Condon and Mr. Robinson. What I would like members to recollect is that the effects of the war are still to be seen and the markets for nearly all commodities have been affected. We see today all the uncertainties that beset both the producer and the consumer and an increasing degree of insecurity. Most markets are upset, to say the least, and as so many adjustments are required I consider that it behoves us to proceed with caution in this matter.

The Hon. C. R. Cudmore—What effect has the attitude of the British Ministry of Food had on this?

The Hon. Sir WALLACE SANDFORD—Eggs are being bought very largely from the Continent because it can now get supplies across to England. Only in recent times has

the import of eggs into England from those countries which served her before the war become possible, but this period of readjustment has not been reached in Australia.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—Does not Britain buy most of her eggs from Ireland?

The Hon. Sir WALLACE SANDFORD—Most of them come from the Continent—the Lowlands—and ships arrive every hour of the day and every day of the week. Section 35 of the principal Act provided that the Egg Board should remain in operation until the expiration of six months after the Governor-General of the Commonwealth issued a proclamation declaring that the war with Germany had ceased, but in 1949 the operation of the Act was extended and the expiry date will be reached on the 30th day of this month. Under the Australian Egg Board's operations the Government of Australia had been selling eggs to the Government of the United Kingdom, but with the cessation of those operations a readjustment in marketing is necessary and further channels of distribution must be established. The system in vogue when the pool was introduced in 1941 was like all similar

activities and was liable to stresses, strains and adjustments. Possibly there were certain weaknesses. Under clause 3 the board's operations are to be extended to September 30, 1957. It would seem that discretion suggests and justifies some extension of the Act.

The Hon. C. R. Cudmore—Would it not be a good idea to extend it for a year only to see the effect?

The Hon. Sir WALLACE SANDFORD—I am inclined to think that a period of two years would be adequate, but I will not jeopardize the Bill by voting against the provision for an extension of three years. I support the second reading.

The Hon. L. H. DENSLEY secured the adjournment of the debate.

BELAIR PRIMARY SCHOOL.

The PRESIDENT laid on the table the report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works on Belair primary school, together with minutes of evidence.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 3.34 p.m. the Council adjourned until Tuesday, September 21, at 2 p.m.