

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.**

Tuesday, September 21, 1954.

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

**ASSENT TO ACTS.**

His Excellency the Governor intimated by message his assent to the Business Agents Act Amendment, Gas Act Amendment, Medical Practitioners Act Amendment, Public Finance Act Amendment, Wheat Price Stabilization Scheme Ballot Act Amendment and Wild Dogs Act Amendment Acts.

**QUESTIONS.****MARGARINE INDUSTRY.**

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I ask leave to read a letter and make a short statement prior to asking a question.

Leave granted.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—On August 18, on a motion for the adjournment of the Council, I referred to the closing down of margarine factories and pointed out that the South Australian market would be flooded by margarine from other States. What I prophesied has come true and I have in my hand half a pound of margarine imported from New South Wales.

The PRESIDENT—Order! No exhibits are allowed in the Council.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Margarine is being imported from other States and our markets flooded, and it is being sold at a higher price than is allowed in South Australia. I hold a receipt showing a charge of 3s. a lb. at Waikerie and it is also being sold at Barmera, Berri and other places at this price, compared with the South Australian price of 2s. 7½d. a lb. The letter, a copy of which I desire to read, was addressed to the Minister of Agriculture by one of the South Australian companies and was as follows:—

Our company ceased production and sale of table margarine on August 10, 1954. Our staff were dismissed and the factory closed, after unsuccessfully applying to the Department of Agriculture for an increase in the present annual quota to enable us to meet the demand for our product within this State. At the time of making the application we pointed out the danger of this market being flooded by interstate companies operating without regard to licences or quota. This has occurred in the towns as per the attached list. We are confident that this is only the thin end of the wedge. Our company feels that we should at least be in a position to defend ourselves against dumping in South Australia by interstate companies that are more or less

a law unto themselves. In conclusion have the requirements of the Margarine Act of South Australia been complied with in every respect as regards the manufacture and sale of table margarine by the company concerned.

The names of firms selling this imported margarine are—Eudunda Farmers, Renmark, Berri and Barmera; Clark's Serv-Wel, Renmark; W. Fisher & Son, Berri; H. S. Coombe & Son, Berri; and Waikerie Serv-Wel. In view of the circumstances I have outlined does the Government intend to take any action to protect the South Australian Industry?

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN—I understand from the Minister of Agriculture that an officer has been sent to investigate the position in relation to the sale of margarine from another State and when his report is furnished further action will be considered. As regards the legal aspect, I understand that litigation is being conducted in another State which has legislation similar to our own, but it is not possible for this State to intervene in that case until it has developed further. The position is being watched and upon the results of the investigation further action will be determined.

**SUPERANNUATION ACT.**

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—On August 17 I asked the Chief Secretary whether it was the intention of the Government to review pensions of retired civil servants under the Superannuation Act. Has he any further information to give the Council today?

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN—Not at present.

**SUBSIDIES ON PRIVATE SCHOOL BUILDING COSTS.**

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—On August 25 I asked the Chief Secretary whether the Government would consider the advisability of providing a subsidy on a pound for pound basis on the capital cost of private school buildings and the Minister stated that he would take up the matter with the Minister of Education. Has he a reply today?

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN—I am afraid I have no further information for the honourable member.

**TAILEM BEND RAILWAY CROSSING.**

The Hon. L. H. DENSLEY—Can the Minister of Railways say whether any decision has been reached about placing a more efficient warning device at the site of the recent fatality at Tailem Bend?

The Hon. N. L. JUDE—Yes. As a matter of fact, it was thought, when the new deviation of the road was made south of Tailem Bend, that as there was clear visibility on both sides of the line, the possibility of accidents would be greatly reduced, but representations have been made that it is a new crossing and action is being taken to install moving flashing lights at the earliest opportunity.

#### FLOUR MILLING INDUSTRY.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—An Australian delegation will attend a meeting of the International Wheat Council in London on October 11. The flour milling industry is in the worst position it has been in since the last drought. Metropolitan and country mills which have been working on two-thirds time are now giving employees a week's notice. The position is seriously affecting the dairy, poultry and pig industries. Can the Chief Secretary say whether the Government will again bring this matter under the notice of the Federal Government with a view to ascertaining whether anything can be done to relieve this serious position?

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN—I understand that the matter was discussed at a conference of agricultural Ministers, but I will bring the question under the notice of the Minister of Agriculture.

#### ELECTRICITY TRUST.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH (on notice)—

1. What was the total amount of interest paid to debenture holders in the Electricity Trust of South Australia up to and including June 30, 1954?

2. What is the total amount of (a) private funds and (b) Government funds invested in the Trust?

3. What is the total expenditure on buildings and equipment since acquisition?

4. What is the total number of (a) staff employees and (b) daily-paid employees?

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN—The replies are:—

1. £6,243,912.

2. (a) £16,961,000; (b) £26,321,757.

3. £30,643,116.

4. (a) 1,269; (b) 2,873.

#### COUNTRY SEWERAGE SCHEMES.

The Hon. L. H. DENSLEY (on notice)—In view of the desperate position in several country towns, can the Minister indicate when sewerage works for country towns will be commenced?

The Hon. N. L. JUDE—The State's development has been so rapid in relation to the resources of finance, men and materials available for public works that essentials must take precedence over amenities, and consequently water supply works have been accorded first priority. The Public Works Department is now engaged upon four large water supply undertakings, i.e., the Mannum-Adelaide pipeline, Yorke Peninsula, Uley-Wanilla, and Jamestown-Caltowie. The last two will be completed this financial year and resources should then be available to proceed with country sewerage, first dealing with the towns where the need is greatest. Owing to increased costs of works, the financial aspect of all country sewerage schemes has so altered since the enabling Act was passed in 1946 that it is intended to introduce legislation this session to place the proposals upon a more realistic basis.

#### STATE BANK REPORT.

The PRESIDENT laid on the Table the annual report and accounts of the State Bank for 1953-54.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE: HON. R. J. RUDALL.

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN (Chief Secretary) moved—

That one month's leave of absence be granted to the Hon. R. J. Rudall on account of ill health.

Motion carried.

#### PRISONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 8. Page 608.)

The Hon. F. J. CONDON (Leader of the Opposition)—The object of this Bill is to afford every encouragement to prisoners to rehabilitate themselves and, therefore, is deserving of favourable consideration. It proposes to provide prisoners with an incentive to secure good conduct marks and so lessen their terms of imprisonment which, in turn, will relieve the State of considerable expenditure. Many prisoners who have made mistakes have paid dearly for them by being confined in gaol but on release have become respectable citizens. This measure will afford every encouragement for prisoners to lessen their gaol terms and enable them the sooner to take their places alongside other citizens. In respect of the class of prisoner who neglects to qualify for remissions and does not accept what is offered, the Bill may be somewhat over-stretched. Whilst discipline is necessary, the temperament of a

person must be considered. We should not make prison life too easy but we should not make it too hard and every case should be dealt with on its merits.

The proposed legislation will provide encouragement, particularly to the young man, who will realize that there is a possibility, even in extreme cases, of his obtaining earlier release. That is a step in the right direction in regard to prison reform. There are many men in the community occupying responsible positions who made mistakes in their young days. As Christians we should endeavour to help the poor unfortunate who is prepared to make good. Section 14 of the Act is amended by providing for the crediting and payment of earnings and gratuities to prisoners. Because of this provision a prisoner's earnings can be increased and on discharge he will probably have something to help him along in life. Section 14 is also amended to enable regulations to be made for prescribing the duties, liabilities, privileges, and conditions of detention in prison. Although consideration is given to persons who are prepared to lead an honest life, other penalties may be considered to be severe. Criminals must be dealt with according to temperament. It is all very well to say that the authorities should be harsh with them, but often leniency does more good. Clause 4 removes an obsolete reference in the Act to committal for trial under the Coroners Act. Clause 5 provides that the Governor may at any time, on the recommendation of the Comptroller, release on licence a person serving a term of imprisonment for life subject to compliance with such conditions, if any, as the Governor may from time to time determine. Under the present system a recommendation has to be made to the Governor and to Executive Council and a decision may be made to release a prisoner serving sentence for a serious crime, but the amendment provides for an easier procedure. Clause 4 (2) provides that the Governor may at any time by order recall to prison a person released on licence under this section, but without prejudice to his power to release him on licence again; and when any person is so recalled, his licence shall cease to have effect and he shall, if at large, be deemed to be unlawfully at large. If a person is released on parole or on other conditions and commits an offence he can be returned to prison. Clause 6 amends section 46 and deals with offences of prisoners. At present a prisoner is not responsible for damage he commits while in prison, but if he misbehaves he can be dealt with under the proposed legislation. Clause 6

amends section 46 by adding the following offences punishable by the Comptroller or visiting Justice:—

Uses any indecent, profane, abusive, insolent, threatening, provoking or other improper language; or

Behaves in an indecent manner; or

Commits any assault.

Wilfully and without lawful authority destroys, disfigures or damages any real or personal property of any kind whether owned by Her Majesty, or any public or local authority, or by any other person.

If a prisoner assaults another inmate and damages any property this measure provides power to deduct marks or earnings from him. Clause 6 also provides that any prisoner who attempts to commit any such offence, or aids, abets, counsels, or procures the commission of any such offence shall be guilty of an offence.

Section 47 of the Act deals with punishment of prisoners for offences. This Bill will provide for more serious punishment in some respects, although no doubt a prisoner knows what he can expect if he commits an offence. I do not think that the Comptroller of Prisons should have the power he will have under this measure. The responsibility of imposing penalties should be on a Justice of the Peace as it is today. Although I have every confidence in the present Comptroller I feel that we should not give him powers that are perhaps not reasonable. I commend the Government for introducing this legislation in an endeavour to help the poor unfortunates in prison. Any assistance that can be given to them to assist them to rehabilitate themselves and lead a good life should have our hearty support. I support the second reading.

The Hon. C. D. ROWE (Midland)—We should all be very thankful that we have a very detailed explanation of every Bill that comes before us in the second reading speech, which leaves us in no doubt about what is intended. Another matter for which we should be equally thankful, and which sometimes we are prone to overlook, is the excellent speech made on every subject by the Leader of the Opposition. He always puts in a great deal of work on his speeches and from his long experience and application to the job he is able to come to the point so that frequently the speaker who follows him finds the matter he intended to speak on has been dealt with much more efficiently by the Leader. This applies particularly to the present Bill; much of what I intended to deal with was covered by Mr. Condon. The principal Act was passed in 1936 and apparently this is the first time

that it has been amended. Regulations were made in 1936 and published on page 809 of the *Government Gazette* of that year and apparently have not been amended until now, so it appears to be logical that we should now bring the legislation up to date in the way suggested. One of the principal clauses provides that the validity of regulations which have been made for the payment to prisoners of money for credit marks, bonuses and gratuities shall be put beyond doubt. Until I examined the Act for this present purpose I did not realize what the position of prisoners was, but apparently regulation No. 345 covers the question of bonuses, and is as follows:—

A prisoner employed as cook in a camp shall be eligible to earn a bonus up to 1s. 3d. per day in addition to the amount payable for credit marks earned as provided by the prison regulations. Prisoners employed in the general work at a camp, who are well-behaved and industrious, will be eligible to earn a bonus up to 6d. per day for the first three months, for three to six months 1s. per day, over six months 1s. 3d. per day. In all cases it shall be necessary for the overseer to report favourably on the conduct and industry of a prisoner before the amount of bonus will be credited to him. Prisoners may, subject to good conduct and industry, be permitted by the officer in charge to spend one-half of their weekly earnings in the purchase of indulgences, such as fruit, butter, cheese, jam, tobacco, cigarette papers, and other such commodities as shall be approved by the Comptroller. Any prisoner so permitted, who fails to earn full credit marks during any week through misconduct or idleness, shall forfeit the privilege of buying indulgences for that week.

It also appears that it is doubtful whether these provisions apply to sexual offenders and children who are kept in prison, but this Bill clears up that point also. I support Mr. Condon's remarks regarding the release of prisoners on probation and am also inclined to support him on the question of a visiting justice dealing with prisoners for improper conduct while in prison instead of the Comptroller as at present. There may be circumstances where, unconsciously, the Comptroller is not in a position to give an entirely unbiassed judgment, and I am inclined to think that we would not be doing anything wrong or inflicting any hardship on any officer concerned if we insisted that offending prisoners should be dealt with by visiting justices. I would like the Government to consider that aspect before the Bill reaches its final stages. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY (Central No. 2)  
—I regard this measure as a small contribution

towards prison reform for which many people are clamouring. There are two schools of thought; one is that offenders should be sent to prison with some idea of reforming them; that is, their incarceration should not be entirely punitive. When I came into Parliament a good many years ago I was an ardent supporter of prison reform and I took a fair bit of time off to visit some of these institutions. I went through Yatala Gaol, for instance, and it was a grim experience. I spent the whole day there with the Comptroller, during the course of which I went into the solitary confinement cell. It was a dreadful experience and it seemed to me a most inhuman thing to put anybody, whatever offence he had committed, into a place like that. If a man were bordering upon lunacy I should think that it would send him completely mad. It seemed to me that in these modern days of enlightenment some of our practices were a long way from being humane.

I also visited Pentridge Gaol in Victoria and my experiences there were considerably more painful; I have never visited such a dreadful place. I also visited what is known as the Reform Farm on French Island where prisoners on probation are sent, and there the outlook was entirely different. Of course, it was the better class of prisoner that was sent there, but I was told that very few of them ever came back to gaol. The thing that impressed me most as an educationist was the half day I spent at Pentridge going through some of the prison records with the Comptroller. What struck me forcibly was that the habitual criminal in almost every case was a mentally retarded person; none of them had ever got beyond the fourth standard, and I formed the impression that the first step towards prison reform was to catch the malefactor before he became a hardened criminal. I think that we have done a good deal in that direction in South Australia. We have tackled it through our educational system by instituting classes for sub-normal children where the stress is laid more upon the physical than upon the mental side of life. Thereby, I think the State is saving a considerable amount of time and money, and that probably we are keeping from these penal institutions many people who otherwise would go there. This Bill provides for a certain degree of reform. For instance, men who are in prison may be paid certain sums so that they can accumulate a little money to tide them over the period immediately following their discharge and give them some chance of getting back on

the straight and narrow path. I hold that people who are habitual sexual offenders should be kept in detention at the pleasure of the Crown; they should not be given a sentence and then, having served it, loosed on society again to commit further acts of depravity. The sexual pervert should be kept under lock and key until such time as he shows reasonable signs of reformation. Whether we will get that far I do not know, but it seems to be very necessary that that type of person should be entirely segregated from the community. I have always felt that persons who commit larceny and breaking and entering should be not only sentenced to a term of imprisonment but that they should be made to work until they had restored the value of the property they have taken from the public. It is nothing to some of these offenders to be sent to do a stretch in gaol; they come out and do the job again and decent people suffer. Certainly people can insure against theft, but I have always felt that it would be a far greater deterrent if the offender were made to restore the value of the stolen property, and it would certainly give much more satisfaction to the unfortunate person who was robbed. Another good feature of this Bill is that the offender who has been committed for life may be released under licence with the obligation of reporting periodically to the Comptroller. We all know that many serious crimes have been committed under great strain and provocation and if it were possible to liberate persons who had committed crimes in this category after they had served a considerable period of their sentence, while still keeping them under control so that if there were any further breaking away from moral rectitude they could be brought back again, it would be an incentive to them to improve their conduct. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

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

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 8. Page 610.)

The Hon. F. J. CONDON (Leader of the Opposition)—I do not know of any Act of Parliament which contains so many sections. No-one seems able to tell me exactly how many there are but there seem to be about 920 and today we are asked to amend several of them. Anyone who knows the full contents of the Act

and all the interpretations thereunder is worthy of very high praise. I was associated with the Port Adelaide City Council for 12 years and much of the council's time was taken up in dealing with questions of moiety, mainly of a private character. In those days people were prepared to go where they could buy cheap land, where there were no roads or footpaths, and erect homes. They were developing the town and places which were on the outskirts of the Port Adelaide district are now in the heart of the municipality. Those people have been responsible for building up the town and have rendered a valuable service to the district.

I have recently had cases brought to my notice of New Australians who have purchased land and when they have commenced building on it have been informed that they are encroaching 8ft. on to the street. I examined their complaints and approached the land agent from whom they purchased the land but obtained no satisfaction. I took the matter up with the council concerned with the same result and when I approached the Highways Department it blamed the surveyor. In effect, these people were fleeced of the value of strips of land 8ft. wide for a frontage of 75ft. I have done everything possible to assist them but have failed.

The Hon. E. H. Edmonds—Wouldn't they have access to the plans of the locality?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—They were in the hands of the land agents. The Woodville Council tried to help but could do nothing. In dealing with this legislation which grants powers to councils these matters should be considered.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Have you been to the new Minister?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I have approached him with regard to the payment of rates at Port Adelaide but have not got anywhere.

The Hon. N. L. Jude—You are doing all right.

The PRESIDENT—Order! I think I should draw the honourable member's attention to the fact that although this Bill amends the Local Government Act it does not open up the whole Act for debate. As pointed out, there are over 900 sections in the Act and if every member attempts to refer to one or two of them we will not proceed far with this Bill.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I am attempting to point out that councils have suffered great losses and today they are called upon to undertake work they are not financially capable of doing. Ratepayers are indebted to members

of the councils for what they are doing in the interests of the State. Councils are entitled to consideration, but that does not necessarily mean that I will support this measure in its entirety. There was a decrease of £500,000 in 1953 in grants to councils due partly to the fact that prior to that year grants allocated but unexpended at the end of the financial year were included in expenditure. In 1953 the expenditure by corporations and district councils on the construction of roads and bridges was approximately £1,895,000, an increase of approximately £492,000 over the previous year.

This Bill was introduced because of a court judgment which held that if a council raised money by debentures under section 424 of the Local Government Act for the purpose of constructing a road, it could not recover any part of the cost of the work under section 319. Councils for a number of years have been charging certain amounts for undertaking constructional works and that was challenged. The second difficulty with which councils are faced is the possibility of actions against them for the return of moieties already paid. If that eventuates there could be serious inroads into the finances of the Port Adelaide City Council.

The Hon. W. W. Robinson—And other councils.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Members should realize that this is retrospective legislation. The Government is asking Parliament to validate all payments made in the past and 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. There is one exception, and that relates to the person who appealed to the local court. The Bill proposes to enable municipal and district councils to recover road moieties from owners of abutting ratable property. Section 319 of the Act, which has been amended on several occasions, 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 lineal frontage. Section 319 (2) states:—

Where any one or more of the following works, namely forming, levelling or paving any roadway in any public street or road within a municipality or within or adjoining a township within a district or draining any such public street or road or forming or constructing watertables in any such public street or road, or constructing kerbs in any such public street or road, have not previously been carried out, the council may carry out either separately or together all or any of the said works not

previously so carried out, and recover from the owners at the time of the completion of the work of ratable property abutting on the said street or road the cost of such work or such portion thereof as the council thinks fit ratably according to the frontages of the said property abutting on the street or road: Provided that the total of all amounts payable under this section in respect of any ratable property shall not exceed the sum of 7s. per lineal foot of frontage thereof.

When the Minister introduced this Bill I inquired "How does this affect the Housing Trust?" and he replied that I would be able to bring that point out in due course. I am doing that now and repeating my question—how does this affect the Housing Trust? The Bill is a clarification of present legislation. The Government is seeking, firstly to assist councils and secondly, to make this legislation retrospective. Councils are rendering good service to the State and are worthy of consideration and whilst this legislation may represent a hardship to some people I am prepared to listen to the comments of other honourable members before deciding whether or not to support it.

The Hon. F. T. PERRY (Central No. 2)—As instanced by the Leader of the Opposition, this Bill has been introduced as a result of a court action and it seems to me that it shows signs of hasty legislation. The Local Government Act, with its 928 sections, deals with loans to councils and sets out to safeguard the ratepayers against a council which may have extravagant ideas. The provisions relating to councils obtaining loans are fairly well circumscribed and a council cannot easily obtain loans; a poll of ratepayers must first be taken. The point that puzzles me in regard to this Bill is in relation to a loan raised for the purpose of constructing a road. The road would presumably be completed in one year and the council would have a right to charge 20s. a foot for it to adjoining landowners who are expected to make immediate payment. However, if payment is not made within six months they can be charged five per cent interest. It seems to me that the question of a loan to finance transactions of that nature is entirely misplaced. It is a case of providing for the cost by bank overdraft or from current income. Councils are apparently out of funds to the extent of the difference between the 20s. a foot they can levy from property owners and the 25s. or 30s. a foot that it costs to construct roadways. If they raise a loan for the whole of the work and the money is repaid to them by ratepayers within six months

or perhaps 12 months, it seems to me that is not a loan as we understand it. I presume that a debenture is a loan of long standing on security. This whole transaction is settled to my mind within six to 12 months of carrying out the work, so this seems to me to have all the signs of hasty legislation. The original promoters of the Act intended to safeguard ratepayers from loans that may have been unrealistically raised by councils, and this intention has been supported ever since. As pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition, road moieties have increased in the last few years from 5s. to 10s. a foot. I do not think that is wrong from the point of view of the councils and ratepayers because owners of new land should not benefit at the expense of people who have owned land in the area for many years and have not had roads constructed in that time. Spending money on new areas is not fair to old ratepayers. I do not object to the increase from 7s. a foot to 10s. because I think that is quite reasonable.

The Hon. N. L. Jude—If the new ratepayers do not pay the old ones will have to.

The Hon. F. T. PERRY—That is so, and it is not right. New ratepayers should pay 10s. a foot although it is a heavy charge. However, some consideration should be given to the desirability of levying this charge on the original owners of the land. Although this may sound unfair it seems to me to be the proper course to adopt. When purchasing land the buyer obtains it with unmade roads and in many cases young people not knowing their liabilities build their homes and then have this moiety of 10s. a foot thrust upon them, which they have to find in cash. Some arrangement should be made with the people who subdivide land so that the purchaser is not liable for road charges. The question of widening roads is not quite clear to me. After years have elapsed councils can claim an amount for widening. Presumably the width referred to is the original 25 feet, and not the narrow strip in the centre of many suburban roads that we have now.

The Hon. N. L. Jude—Councils cannot get more than a total moiety of 10s. from each occupier.

The Hon. F. T. PERRY—That clears up my point. Much widening work is being carried out now and I wondered whether the clause covered something that was hidden away or that I did not fully grasp. I support the Bill up to a point. I oppose the provision with regard to loans because I think it is hasty legislation and runs against the idea of loans

and repayments. I need not point out that if a loan is taken for five years and repaid in 12 months the councils have the use of the money until they finally have to repay the debentures, and this was not the idea for the granting of loans. I do not like the retrospectivity clause and I feel it would not embarrass many councils if it were not carried. Not much of this is ever done.

The Hon. L. H. Densley—Very much of it is done.

The Hon. F. T. PERRY—Is it recovered under moiety?

The Hon. L. H. Densley—In many cases it is in the country.

The Hon. F. T. PERRY—I was talking about the usual practice in suburban areas. It is my present intention not to support the loan provision, but to support the increase in moieties, because I think they are necessary due to the increased cost of road construction. However, I desire to see the time when the original road cost is part of the original purchase of land and is paid at the source before the land is sold. I support the Bill in part.

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

#### MARKETING OF EGGS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 8. Page 615.)

The Hon. L. H. DENSLEY (Southern)—There seems to be a growing determination among primary producers not to be satisfied with the mere production of their goods and to take a hand in marketing, but I am not sure it is to their benefit to do so. I have been interested to hear the debate on this measure. Mr. Condon, who I think one can say represents consumers, expressed himself 100 per cent in favour of this Bill in spite of the fact that the consumers in this State have to pay as much as 5d. a dozen more than people in Victoria pay for our eggs, and 8½d. a dozen more than people overseas pay for them. If consumers are satisfied, primary producers have nothing to complain about in the action of the board. Some members who have spoken are interested in firms that market eggs and they expressed themselves in favour of a continuation of the marketing scheme. There is definite evidence of some shortcomings in the operation of the board. In 1947-48 we reached a peak egg production of over

14,500,000 dozen which fell in 1951-52 to 10,750,000 dozen. The operation of the Red Comb Egg Co-operative Society Ltd., which is a commercial poultry undertaking, is cutting the farmers out of a sideline, although they are the best suited for egg production. The greater the diversity in farm holdings the better it is for the stability of the country. The Egg Board has marketed a large quantity of eggs fairly effectively. The average price disclosed in the last Auditor-General's report is 2s. 11½d. a dozen, which is perhaps a fair price over the year. Although I cannot make a general statement for the whole of the State, I know that many farmers in my district are finding difficulty in marketing eggs today. Storekeepers who were once only too anxious to take all their eggs and dispose of them through merchants in the city are not interested in collecting them as agents for the Egg Board now. The board might give some cognizance to this and decide whether its relations with country collectors are on a proper basis, because it is desirable that farmers should continue to produce eggs. Commercial poultry producers in the city have a better opportunity of paying a commission to the board and selling their eggs to the public because there is a greater inquiry for eggs in the city. There are a number of places in the metropolitan area from which

eggs can be brought, and the producers receive a little more than they would from the Egg Board, which gets a commission for the sale. This, however, affects the overall price paid to the primary producer. I think that is a matter which could be looked into by the board. I think, too, that the board might have gone further in encouraging greater efficiency in the production and marketing of eggs. For instance, I think it is not well known amongst primary producers that merchants are prepared to accept lots of as little as six dozen. Obviously, the freight would be a little heavier, but the higher price which would have been obtainable for guaranteed fresh eggs would, I think, more than justify the sending down of smaller quantities.

As many producers are anxious to continue with this legislation I see no reason why the term of the board should not be extended, but in view of the Auditor-General's comments and the matters I have mentioned, I think there is some necessity for a tightening up of the board's activities and greater publicity being given to this Act.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

At 3.18 p.m. the Council adjourned until Wednesday, September 22, at 2 p.m.