**WHEAT HARVEST SCHEME (BARRING OF CLAIMS) BILL. 1926**

**Legislative Assembly, 25 November 1926, page 1870**

Second reading

Consideration of Council’s amendment.

**The ATTORNEY-GENERAL**—The effect of this amendment is to preclude the operations of the Act in so far as any petition, suit, or action instituted before February 28 next is concerned. That will, of course, interfere with the effectiveness of the Bill to some extent, but it is felt that if any person has a bona-fide claim there is no reason why he should not proceed with it. The Government will contest every case very strongly but if litigants prefer to take the opportunity of contesting, all we say is that we will not debar them provided they start before February 28 next. We accept the amendment.

Mr. BUTLER—I do not think we should accept the amendment. These people have had six to eight years to make claims, and as they have not done so it is their own fault. I understand the Wheat Committee have given up any idea of proceeding with their case. A few scrip holders in Victoria have been talking for many years regarding claims against the Government. for certain wheat, but I do not know what the position is. Perhaps many of these speculative scrip holders have lost heavily but so did many farmers lose heavily when they sold. In numbers of cases they lost 3s a bushel when they sold their scrip to speculators who in turn made large amounts. I hope the Committee will not agree to the amendment.

Mr. McINTOSH—When speaking on this measure I raised the point that it was absolutely unjust to legislate men out of any rights they had up to that period, but the Council’s amendment removes that objection. We should be very chary about bringing in legislation which will prevent persons who have legitimate claims from prosecuting them. Whether we get this measure or not it will not help us, because with the exception of one pool, the claims against which are pending, the pools are not in credit. There is litigation pending with regard to the 1917 pool, but that pool has nothing to its credit. These pools should have been kept separate, but now we find that the money to the credit of one pool has been held up as a counterblast to other pools. As the pools are separate entities, we are not helping the farmers very much by prohibiting the institution of claims against the 1916-17 pool. Therefore, I intend to support the Attorney-General in his request that we should accept the amendment.

Mr. CROSBY—I hope the Attorney-General will resist the amendment. The claimants have had a number of years in which to consider lodging claims, and we should not extend the time until next February.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL—This amendment is not sufficiently important to resist at this stage. So long as prospective litigants know that any claims lodged will be as strongly resisted in the future as in the past this time limit will give them no encouragement to lodge claims. My impression is that no claims will be lodged when they know that.

Amendment agreed to.