

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY 27 AUGUST 1907

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TUESDAY, 27 AUGUST, 1907.

The SPEAKER (Hon. John Leahy, *Bulloo*) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

LESSEES OF GRAZING SELECTIONS
USING RAILWAY FENCES.

On the motion of Mr. JACKSON (*Kennedy*), it was formally resolved—

That there be laid upon the table of the House a return showing—

1. The names of lessees of grazing selections separated from the Great Northern Railway by a road only, who, under license from the Land Court, use the railway fence as part of the enclosing fence of their selections.

2. The amounts (if any) paid respectively by such selectors to the Railway Department for the use of the railway fence.

3. The names of lessees of grazing selections, similarly situated or immediately adjoining the railway, who use the railway fence in like manner without payment.

QUESTIONS.

SLANDERING CHILDREN OF QUEENSLAND.

Mr. MAUGHAN (*Ipswich*) asked the Chief Secretary—

1. Has his attention been drawn to a report, appearing in the *Brisbane Courier* of the 19th instant, of a meeting of ladies held at Government House, and addressed by a Mrs. Halliday, of the Mothers' Union of England, who is reported to have said, *inter alia*—

"She had been told that the young Australians lacked reverence for their elders and for religion. That might be due, she thought, to its being a new country, which had no object-lessons to arouse feelings of reverence?"

2. Will the hon. gentleman, as head of the Government of Queensland, take such steps as he thinks fit to have such grossly misleading utterances, which are calculated to create false impressions abroad as to the high moral standard acquired by the children of this State, contradicted, thus protecting our children from a repetition of such slanders?

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Kidston, *Rockhampton*) replied—

1. No.
2. It is quite unnecessary to trouble about such an incident.

FREE RAILWAY PASSES FOR NEWSPAPERS.

Mr. CRIBB (*Bundamba*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

What newspapers published outside the State have been supplied with free passes over the State railways since the 1st January last, and how many of such passes are still current, and in respect of which newspapers?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

1. Mr. H. E. Poole—the Sydney representative for Messrs. Critchley, Parker, Proprietary, Limited, for *The Australian Mining Standard and Financial Review*. Available between all stations, Queensland railways, from 16th July to 16th September, 1907.

Mr. Nakamura—Japanese journalist. All stations, Queensland railways, from 20th May to 2nd June, 1907.

Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Jose—Australian correspondent of the *London Times*. All stations, Queensland railways, from 6th June to 8th July, 1907.

2. One. Mr. H. E. Poole.

FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. T. O'Sullivan, *Warwick*), this Bill, initiated in Committee, was read a first time, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

SUPPLY.

OPENING OF COMMITTEE.

On this Order of the Day being read,

The SPEAKER read to the House so much of the Speech of His Excellency the Governor as had been addressed to the House.

The PREMIER moved—

That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the Supply to be granted to His Majesty.

HON. R. PHILP (*Townsville*): I think this is a fitting time to ask the Premier and Treasurer when he intends to deliver his Financial Statement. I understand that he delivered it last year about the 28th August.

The PREMIER: Some time soon.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I understood the leader of the Opposition to ask the Premier courteously if he would give the House some idea as to when he intended to deliver his Financial Statement, and to point out that this was done on the 28th August last year. Surely the hon. gentleman is not going to refuse that information.

The PREMIER: Surely the leader of the Opposition knows that I cannot get up and reply. However, if it is the wish of the House I have no objection to give the information.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: The Treasurer's Statement is being prepared now, or rather the Estimates are being prepared, and I think that within a fortnight, or somewhere about that, I shall be able to make the Budget Statement. It has been delayed a little this year, because there has been a great deal of work. While I am on my feet I may just say that His Excellency will be pleased to receive yourself, Mr. Speaker, and the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply, to-morrow afternoon at 3 o'clock.

Question put and passed.

WAGES BOARDS BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. T. O'Sullivan, *Warwick*): The object of this Bill is to establish wages boards in Queensland. The principle of the measure has already been approved by this Assembly on two occasions—the first time on 30th August, 1900. If hon. members will turn up *Hansard* for that year, page 572, they will find that on that date Mr. McDonnell, the then senior member for Fortitude Valley, introduced the following resolution:—

That, in the opinion of the House, it is desirable that the Factories and Shops Act of 1896 be so amended as to provide for the establishment of "Special Wages Boards," and other provisions, now in operation in Victoria under the Victorian Shops and Factories Acts, 1890-1900.

That resolution was passed by the House without division. Again, last session, the measure which is now submitted to the House was introduced by me as part of the amendment of the Factories and Shops Act of 1900, and it also was passed, I think, without division. It constituted Part II. of the Bill introduced last year. In addition to that members of this Chamber, including the leader of the Opposition, expressed during the late election their approval of the principle, so that I do not anticipate that I shall have very much difficulty in commending the principle of the Bill to the favourable consideration of the House. However, as there are some new members in the House this session, it may be just as well that I should say a few words as

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to why some legislation of this kind is necessary. First of all, a tribunal of some sort is necessary for the purpose of settling industrial disputes, and for the purpose of coping with the evils of sweating. Tribunals of some sort have been established in all the States of the Commonwealth, except Queensland and Tasmania—that is, out of all the States of Australasia Queensland and Tasmania have the unenviable notoriety of having no tribunal of this kind for dealing with industrial disputes or for coping with the evils of sweating. The principle of a measure of this kind has been in operation in New Zealand since 1894, when the first Arbitration and Conciliation Bill was introduced. That was followed by Victoria passing, in 1896, an Act incorporating wages boards, which has been in operation ever since. Since that time the principle of arbitration has been adopted in New South Wales and Western Australia, and wages boards have been established in South Australia. So that out of the five States three are in favour of arbitration and conciliation, and two are in favour of wages boards. In Victoria the measure was introduced primarily to stop the evils of sweating. Victoria is a large manufacturing State, and the evil of sweating was supposed to be worse in that State than it was in the other States, and it was considered that wages boards would have special advantages in stopping that evil, and I agree with that contention. Hon. members must remember that the principle of all this factory legislation is that the employees as a class require protection, not merely that they should get such consideration for humanitarian reasons, but that the standard of living of employees or wage-earners should be kept up to a reasonable degree of comfort. There is another reason in favour of the establishment of tribunals of this kind, and that is that all decent employers favour such a tribunal. Many employers are willing to treat their employees fairly and to pay them decent wages, but unfortunately there are a percentage of mean employers who are prepared to take advantage of their employees. So that, in the interest of decent employers, as well as in the interest of employees, a tribunal of this kind is necessary. So far as the tribunal may be necessary for Brisbane, it was a matter of dispute between hon. members on this side and hon. members on the other side of the House, when the Bill was discussed last session, as to whether the wages paid in Brisbane compared favourably with the rates of wages paid in the other States, and I quoted some figures which were compiled by Mr. McLay dealing with the rates of wages paid in the clothing and dressmaking trades in Brisbane, and comparing them with the wages paid in the other States. I have got those figures now, but have not been able to bring the Victorian figures up to date, although I have the Queensland figures up to date. The figures are for 1905, but as there have been some slight alterations in the Queensland figures of 1905 as compared with those of 1906, I have taken for the purpose of comparison the figures for 1905, and will compare them with the Victorian figures for the same period. In the clothing trade the average wage of tailoresses was 12s. 11d., whereas in Victoria the corresponding average was 17s. 1d. In Brisbane the average earnings of skilled tailoresses, including time and piece workers, was 17s. 1d. in 1905. In 1906 it was 18s., so that it has risen slightly in the last twelve months. In Victoria, where the minimum wage is £1, the average earnings were £1 2s. 5d. In New South Wales, where the minimum wage is £1, coat machinists receive £1 5s.; and in New Zealand the determination

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of the Arbitration Court varies from £1 1s. to £1 10s. Now, if you compare the wages paid to tailoresses in Brisbane with those figures you will see that they compare very unfavourably. In dressmaking the figures are just as bad, if not a little worse. In Queensland the average earnings of all females in the dressmaking trade was 9s. 4d. in 1905, and 9s. 8d. in 1906, as compared with the Victorian rate of 12s. 2d. Skilled dressmakers in Brisbane received 17s. 3d., which has risen in 1906 to 17s. 11d., and in Victoria, where the minimum wage is 16s., the average of all female employees over twenty years of age is 18s. 8d. In New Zealand the earnings of all female employees over twenty years of age are from £1 to £1 8s. Then, again, in the underclothing trade, the average wage of all female employees in Brisbane was 10s. 6d. in 1905, which has since risen to 10s. 9d., compared with 12s. 10d. in Victoria. While quoting these figures I may draw attention to an important function which wages boards have, and that is fixing the proportion of apprentices and improvers to other employees. The reason that that function is given to the wages board is that the employer may cut the average rate of wages to a very low point by employing a large number of apprentices, and one or two adults. I quoted a case last year where out of fifteen employees in a dressmaking establishment there were two receiving nil, two at 2s. 6d., one at 4s., one at 9s., the average coming to 3s. 2½d. per week. That information was furnished to me by Mr. McLay. The present director has furnished me with a couple of cases of more recent date. There is a tailoring establishment which employs eighty-four hands; fifty-three hands, or 63 per cent., average 3s. 7d. a week; two get nothing, twenty-four get 2s. 6d. a week, and the wages vary from 3s. 6d. onwards.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Where is that, Brisbane?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I would rather not give particulars which would enable the place to be identified. In another dressmaking establishment twenty-three out of thirty-five employees average 3s. 7d. a week. I think, as far as those figures go, nobody can say that some tribunal to deal with the question of wages has come too soon. Then I may say a word or two as to the respective merits of a court of arbitration and wages boards. Many hon. members believe that if a tribunal is to be established it should be in the form of an arbitration court instead of wages boards. Well, as far as the other States are concerned we cannot get very much assistance, because although three of them have started by having arbitration courts, and two wages boards, I think we can say, on the authority of the New South Wales Attorney-General, speaking for the Government of New South Wales, and on the authority of Judge Heydon, that arbitration has not been a success in New South Wales.

Mr. HARDACRE: How do you mean—not a success?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I will read what Judge Heydon, who ought to be a competent authority, says. He is reported in the *Brisbane Courier* of 2nd March to have said—

Judge Heydon, president of the Arbitration Court, in referring to the Arbitration Act to-day, said the barque of the Industrial Arbitration Act made a brave show with sails and bunting at its launching, and when directed by Judge Cohen, whose captaincy spoke for itself. But since he had taken the helm it had been riddled, shelled, and broken fore and aft, and reduced to a sinking hulk. No pilot could navigate such a craft. In the position in which industrial unions now found themselves placed he did not wonder that there

was renewed talk about strikes, or that employees when they were brought into court preferred to admit the existence of a dispute rather than go to the trouble of proving it.

That is not alone the opinion of Judge Heydon, who ought to be qualified to give an opinion, but it is also the opinion of the Attorney-General of New South Wales, the gentleman who, I fancy, brought the Act in, and has always been considered to have been very sympathetic towards the Arbitration Act.

Hon. R. PHILP: Mr. Wise introduced it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Yes; I am reminded that Mr. Wise introduced it, but Mr. Wade, I understand, has always been sympathetic towards the Arbitration Court. He is reported in the *Daily Mail* of 9th August, after making some uncomplimentary references to lawyers which I suppose will commend themselves to some hon. members—

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: To have said—

What is wanted is some tribunal composed of expert members of the trades affected. Put them into a room to themselves—no tipstiffs, no formalities, no horsehair—just a table, pens, ink, paper, and practical men.

Hon. R. PHILP: No refreshers?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Judge Heydon is also reported in the same issue of the paper to have made these further remarks—

Strikes are declared to be misdemeanours, and can only be dealt with by prosecution, first before magistrates, and afterwards before a jury. The expense and uncertainty of such proceedings render them practically useless, and the large and powerful unions to which I have referred have found this out. If strikers had been punishable by this court, or some other tribunal, by fine, and if there had been a power of committal for contempt or non-payment of the fine, the case would have been entirely different. If in such cases the strikers were really acting in defiance of their union, they would have to pay the fine or go to gaol; if the union was, in fact, though not openly, at their back, the union would be bound in honour to pay their fines, which would be a very surprising experience. As it is, in cases in which it is evident that an award will be binding on one side but not on the other, it becomes doubly important to the court to see that it does no injustice to the side which must obey.

Mr. KENNA: Because it has been unsympathetically administered.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That may be so; but it is necessary for the Government to look at the experience of the other States. Now, I just want to give hon. members a little information about how successful the Arbitration Court in New South Wales has been in stopping sweating. I refer hon. members to the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 26th July, 1907, in which there is an article headed, "Nothing a Week—Shocking Sweating Conditions." It says—

Some authenticated figures have been obtained confirming the allegations made in the course of remarks from a deputation to the Premier on Wednesday, showing that a most extraordinary description of sweating prevails in the dressmaking and millinery trades in Sydney and its suburbs. The following table reveals a condition of things of which even the labour organisations are at present unacquainted.

Then it gives some figures.

Girls employed.	Wages weekly.
233	Nil.
326	2s. 6d. and under.
88	4s. and under.
282	5s. and under.

These figures show a total of 903 girls who are paid from 5s. and under per week or nothing. Among the

320 receiving 2s. 6d. and under are some receiving as low as 1s. The figures are selected from a total of nearly 3,000 girls, whose wages have been officially ascertained. It was stated on Wednesday that the Premier had received a confidential report on the subject, and it is presumably this upon which legislation will be based.

I draw attention to this to show that the Government have considered the respective merits of the two tribunals, and that, after

[4 p.m.] having done so, they favour the wages boards in preference to an arbitration court. One of our objections to an arbitration court is the expense. When I was in Sydney some time ago I went to see the proceedings of the arbitration court, and I found great delay there. The judge who presides in the court is a very able legal man, sitting with a couple of assessors, and it takes them some days to arrive at a stage of knowledge with which experts engaged in the business would start proceedings. Then the geographical conditions of our State must be taken into consideration. If we had an arbitration court, a judge would have to be appointed, with a tipstaff and other officials, and he would have to travel all over the State, which would mean a great deal of expense. When I was in Sydney I made inquiries as to the expense of running the court, and I found that, in addition to the salary of the judge, his associate, and his tipstaff, the expense was somewhere about £4,000 a year; and, considering our geographical conditions—our very large territory, our very sparse population—I think the expense in this State would be relatively higher than theirs. Another advantage possessed by wages boards is that there is less delay. In the first place, the tribunals consist of men acquainted with the conditions of the trades, and they start with a knowledge which a tribunal consisting of men not possessing special knowledge of the particular trade would have to take evidence, perhaps for days, before they got that knowledge. Another thing about the arbitration court is that in Sydney industrial disputes are sometimes hung up for eighteen months or two years. You have simply to wait your turn; whereas, if you have a number of wages boards, like there are in Victoria—where there are over forty wages boards—a dispute in one trade does not delay settling a dispute in another trade.

Hon. R. PHILP: Is there a wages board in connection with the building trade in Victoria?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I cannot give the hon. gentleman that information just now, but I can easily find out. If you have a number of tribunals specially skilled in the particular trade with which they have to do, there is no delay in settling a dispute. I now propose to deal briefly with the provisions of the Bill. Many members will be familiar with the provisions of the Bill, but, for the information of new members, I desire to make reference to some of the clauses.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Will you point out the differences from the Bill of last year?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Yes. The interpretation clause defines apprentice, clothing or wearing apparel, furniture, and improver. Clause 3 defines the objects of special boards. Broadly speaking, a special board has to fix the wages employees are to receive and the hours they are to work, including overtime. The clause follows the Victorian statute. The clause provides that a special board shall consist of not less than four or more than ten members and a chairman. Subsection (2) deals with the matters to be considered in fixing the lowest prices or rates of wages. The provision is the same as in the Bill of last year. One-half of the

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members of the board are to be appointed by the employers and one-half by the employees. The appointments are to be for three years, and the chairman of each board is to be appointed by the members of the board, and is to be considered a member of the board. The chairman may be outside the business altogether, and the result will be that the board will always consist of an odd number of members.

Mr. GRANT: Do they get paid by fees?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: There is no provision in the Bill with reference to their payment, but, as a matter of fact, in Victoria the members of the boards receive 10s. a day and the chairman £1 a day.

Mr. KENNA: Who pays them?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The State.

Mr. PAGET: Provision is made for their payment by regulation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Yes. Clause 5 deals with the mode of appointment. After a board is initiated the Minister publishes a notification in the *Gazette*, and within a certain specified time after that the election has to take place. The employers elect their representatives and the employees elect theirs. If either party fails to elect its representatives, the Minister has power to make the appointments. That prevents the employers or the employees from stopping the starting of a board by refusing to elect their representatives.

Mr. DENHAM: If they nominate more than are required?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It does not matter how many they nominate—they must elect the required number.

Mr. WHITE: Will the Government appoint the chairman?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: No. The chairman is appointed by the members of the board, and the only circumstances under which the Governor in Council will appoint the chairman is if the members of a board fail to do it for twenty-eight days.

Mr. KENNA: The Governor in Council must approve of the chairman.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: No. It is a mere matter of form for the Governor in Council to appoint the chairman after he has been selected by the board. Clause 8 deals with vacancies. Clause 9 deals with the appointment of the chairman. Clause 10 deals with the powers of boards. Hon. members who were here last session will remember we had a good deal of discussion about this clause. It was introduced based on the Victorian clause. Subsection (a) is the same as the Victorian Act; but the following subsection, which was in the Victorian Act, is not inserted here—

The prices or wages fixed by any determination shall in no case exceed the average prices or rates as so ascertained.

That is a restriction on the power of the board as to the minimum wage, and it was not thought advisable to put that restriction on the wages board here, or to tie their hands at all.

Mr. BOWMAN: They propose to amend it in Victoria also.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Do they? Then clause 11 I might draw attention to, because it is a clause which is not taken from any other Act. It provides that the powers of the special boards are not to be restricted in any way by the Act, or any amendment, having any special provision as to rates of wages. For instance, take the case of an apprentice. The apprentices

minimum rate of wages is 2s. 6d. at present, and under the Bill which I have laid on the table this afternoon that is to be raised to 5s. But the board will have power to deal with that, notwithstanding that the rate is fixed by the Act. The next few clauses deal with the special powers of the board, and they are really matters for Committee rather than for the second reading. I might also draw attention to clause 18, by which the special board, when fixing the lowest wages or price to be paid to any person or persons or classes of persons, shall also determine the maximum number of hours per week for which such lowest wages price or rate shall be payable, according to the nature or conditions of his work; and then the concluding part of that clause continues special provisions as to the case of a male employee over the age of sixteen being required to do overtime work, to whom a special rate in excess of the rate for the ordinary time must be paid. Then clause 20 is a very important one. By that the board must determine the number, or proportionate number, of apprentices or improvers in a factory or shop, and the lowest prices or rates of pay for such apprentices or improvers. Then, the following clauses up to clause 27 all deal with apprentices and improvers. The next clause which it is important to draw the attention of the House to is clause 29, dealing with old, slow, and infirm workers. Hon. members will see that if a man, owing to age or infirmity, is unable to get employment at a minimum wage, the board may in such case grant him a license for twelve months to work at a less wage. In addition to that, the board must fix the proportion of slow workers, and that proportion must not exceed one-fifth of the whole number of persons employed in the factory. That provision will deal effectively with the case of the tailoring establishments and the dressmaking shops, the figures in connection with which I quoted at an earlier stage.

Mr. MACARTNEY: You have eliminated the appeal to the Minister from the decision of the Chief Inspector.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I do not remember that. Anything like that I will deal with in Committee. Then there are certain provisions regarding furniture, bread, and pastrycooks' boards. They are under special conditions in Victoria, where this measure is taken from, and the conditions will probably be applicable here also. There is a provision in clause 35 for suspension of determination of board. Hon. members will easily understand how some error may arise in the determination of the special board, and in an event of that kind there is a power of suspension of the award of the board for a certain time until the error is corrected. Then we come to the general provisions, which I do not think call for any special notice at this stage, but I might draw the attention of hon. members to clause 46 with reference to proceedings in a court of law. That is a provision which might be very easily misunderstood by the lay members of the House, because it might convey the idea to their minds that there is an appeal from the decision of the board as to rates of wages or hours of work, or anything particularly within their jurisdiction. The only appeal is in case of what I call illegality in an award—an award made without jurisdiction. For instance, if a board appointed to settle the wages in the furniture trade, went outside the settling of the wages in that trade, and did something which they had no jurisdiction to do, then there would be a right to go to the court and have the award set aside on that ground.

Mr. KENNA: Who would be liable to proceedings?

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The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That brings me just to what I want to point out. The real value of the clause is this: if there were no such provision as clause 46, the legal proceedings would have to be taken against all the members of the board and everybody interested in the decision, and they would all have to be served with process, but the clause provides that process can be served on the Chief Inspector. The Government can take the matter up and defend the case, or do whatever they think necessary. It is really a clause for the purpose of having simple procedure rather than introducing any new principle. Then there are two clauses—47 and 48. These clauses are new so far as Queensland is concerned. They are not in any other Act that I am aware of. Clause 47 would be a very useful clause indeed—in reference to employers and employees. Where they can agree about matters between themselves they need not have the delay and expense of getting an award. They can draw up an agreement, the Minister can ratify it, and it can be published in the *Gazette*, and it will have all the value of an award.

Mr. KENNA: Like an industrial agreement in an arbitration.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Really on the same lines. Clause 48 is a most important clause. It was originally introduced by the hon. member for Moreton, and the hon. member for Fortitude Valley moved a slight amendment.

Mr. LESINA: It made a big difference.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The effect of the clause is this: that the wages board principle can be applied to any trade or business of whatever kind, and whether carried on or in connection with a factory or shop or not. I may draw the attention of the hon. member for Toowong to the fact that there is a change in the clause so far as those words are concerned. It was doubtful whether the business had to be connected with a shop or factory, and it was considered advisable to set such doubt at rest, and now the clause is wide enough to enable wages boards to be appointed for any trade or business whether connected with a factory or shop or not. I look forward to the support both of the hon. member for Moreton and the hon. member for Fortitude Valley on this clause.

Mr. BOWMAN: It is assured, so far as I am concerned. (Laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Clause 49, which provides for a penalty, is an absolutely necessary clause. The effect of that is that if, after an award having been given, an employer pays a lower rate of wages, or is guilty of a breach of the award in any way, he is liable to a penalty for the first offence of not more than £10; for the second offence, of not less than £5 nor more than £25; and, for the third or any subsequent offence, of not less than £50 nor more than £100. The penalty is made pretty heavy because the working of the Act hinges on that. The next clause deals with regulations. I do not think at this stage it is necessary for me to say anything specially about regulations. I have gone over the clauses which I think it is important to draw the attention of the House in connection with the alterations which have been made. I need hardly say that the principle of this Bill having been admitted by all sides of the House, it is really a Committee Bill, and if there is any other information I can give to hon. members on each side I shall be very pleased to do so. I have much pleasure in moving that the Bill be now read a second time.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. R. PHILP (*Townsville*): There will be no opposition from members on this side of the House to the passing of this Bill through the second reading. Last year we said we thought wages boards were preferable to arbitration courts, and we still think so. With one or two amendments which will very likely be proposed in Committee, the Bill will get the general support of the Opposition side of the House. Of course the success of this measure entirely depends on the members appointed to these wages boards. But under a clause in this Bill a lot of men might get on to these wages boards who have no sympathy with and no knowledge of the trade in which they have to determine the rate of wages. It says in clause 4 that—

The representatives of the employers shall be or shall have been *bona fide* and actual employers in the trade concerned.

Now, some of those men might have been employers or employees twenty or thirty years ago.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: They would not be elected then.

Mr. KENNA: Limit the time back.

HON. R. PHILP: They ought to be *bona fide* employers and employees at the time of their election.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. R. PHILP: If you provided that then you would get a fair Bill. Half of the members of this House might be elected on those boards, and they would stir up strife instead of trying to settle amicably the differences between employers and employees. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley wants to stir up strife.

Mr. BOWMAN: I do not. I would not advocate this Bill if I did.

HON. R. PHILP: Why, the hon. member for Fortitude Valley the other day went to a coalmine to stir up strife between the coalminer and the mineowner. He never worked in a coalmine that I know of.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He might have sympathy with the men, though.

HON. R. PHILP: He might have worked for a week in a coalmine. I have sold coal myself, and according to this Bill I might be eligible to sit on a wages board, and yet I would know nothing of the differences between the employer and employees. The hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Ryott Maughan, has been stirring up strife amongst the coalminers lately. That would be the only qualification he would have for being on this board. I think the majority of members of this House seriously desire to try to settle the differences between the employer and employee, and if they want to do that they must have a capable board appointed. But you cannot do that under the clause which I have just quoted. The men who talk the most are generally the poorest workers.

LABOUR MEMBERS: No, no!

HON. R. PHILP: Yes, that is my experience. There are one or two designing men who want to get on to this board, and they might not have had anything to do with the trade for twenty years or more. Keep them off. Let the board consist only of those who are *bona fide* employers and employees at the time of the election of the board. If that is done, then there is some chance of this thing being a success. So far as I can understand, the wages boards in Victoria have been fairly successful. The compulsory arbitration, however, both in New South Wales and in New Zealand, has not been successful.

Mr. KENNA: That is not so—not so far as New Zealand is concerned.

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HON. R. PHILP: Why, it is only last year that we saw in the papers that the butchers in Wellington went out on strike against the award of the Arbitration Court.

Mr. KENNA: But how many strikes has it prevented?

HON. R. PHILP: How many strikes have they had in Sydney because they were dissatisfied with the award of the Arbitration Court? I take it that we all want to stop strikes. We only want to see a fair thing done as between employer and employee. The bulk of employers are fair men. There are a few employers who seek to get better terms out of their workmen, but I generally find that the poorest employers get the poorest employees, and the good employer will get the best of workers.

Mr. KENNA: A good employer will always get the best men.

HON. R. PHILP: As a matter of fact, it is a "penny-wise-and-pound-foolish" policy for an employer to offer a good man a low wage. (Hear, hear!) I think we are putting a very powerful weapon in the hands of any Government if we pass this Bill as it is now. In Victoria, where wages boards have been a great success since they have been in operation, you must get the consent of Parliament—

Mr. DENHAM: Both Houses.

HON. R. PHILP: Yes, both Houses, before you can bring any trade under the operation of this Act.

Mr. MANN: Fancy asking the Upper House to do it!

HON. R. PHILP: You have to ask the Upper House to pass this Bill. There are more employers in the Upper House than there are in this House. There are more men in the Upper House who know more about the working of this Bill than there are in this House. In Victoria at the present time there are forty-nine trades under the operation of the Act, and those trades have to go before both Houses before they are agreed to. We know the Victorian Upper House is much more democratic than our Upper House, as they are elected—

Mr. BOWMAN: On what franchise?

HON. R. PHILP: Never mind the franchise. The Upper House there passed forty-nine trades under this Act, and why should not our Upper House do the same? The Upper House has to pass this Bill. I am just as anxious as the hon. member for Fortitude Valley and the hon. member for Clermont to bring about amicable arrangements between the employers and employed. We must remember that in New Zealand, where the Compulsory Arbitration Act is the law, Mr. Seddon, although he was the workers' friend, said that the workers of New Zealand were little better off after the Arbitration Court was brought into existence than they were before.

Mr. BOWMAN: He recognised that the landlord was the trouble there.

HON. R. PHILP: In Queensland we have only alienated 17,000,000 acres of land, and we have 400,000,000 acres of land still unalienated. I am glad that the present Government, which does not believe in the sale of land, alienated 750,000 acres of land last year. They leased in agricultural farms, agricultural homesteads, and prickly pear selections, 750,000 acres of land in one year. Mr. Seddon, who did all he possibly could for the workers of New Zealand, said that notwithstanding the better wages they were getting, the price of house rent, and commodities, and everything else, had gone up, and they had to pay those increased prices.

Mr. KENNA: What did he attribute that to?

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HON. R. PHILP: You can speak when I have done, if you wish to. I am pointing out that the working man has to pay fifty-two weeks' rent in a year, and he has to get food for every day in the year, but there is no guarantee under this Bill or under any other Bill that will give him work every day in the year.

Mr. LESINA: That is the defect of all palliative legislation.

HON. R. PHILP: When a man has to pay higher rent, and when he has to pay more for his food, he is a sufferer by a Bill of this sort. I want to see the thing have a fair trial, and the better way to give it a fair trial is to see that fair boards are appointed. That is, we should appoint a board of employers and employees who are actually engaged in the trade. If that is done, then we can fairly expect to get a good result, but if we are going to appoint "have-beens"—men who have only a trifling knowledge of the trade—the Bill will be a failure. I have not much more to add. In Committee we will discuss the matter temperately; we will try to improve it if possible, and I can assure the Minister in charge of this Bill that he will not get any factious opposition from any member on this side of the House. We will try to make the Bill as good a Bill as possible. Notwithstanding the amendment which the hon. member for Moreton introduced last year, I think it opens the door very widely to a good amount of abuse. I think we should go along surely—step by step, to use a phrase of the Premier, or rather of the late Premier—and make a success of what we attempt. I understand that the greatest trouble is in the clothing trade, and the workers in the country can look after themselves very well. In the big cities there is no doubt that the competition for living is sometimes very severe. If we try to undertake too much we will break down altogether. The Minister gave some of the wages which were paid in the clothing trade. I might suggest that members of this House might assist to do away with sweating. There is no sweating much where you get your clothes made to order. It is in the ready-made clothing shops where the sweating occurs. If members will discard ready-made clothes, and go to a good tailor, they will assist to put down sweating. I [4.30 p.m.] hope the Minister for Works knows more about this Bill than he knew about the last Bill which was before the House. He did not know much about the last Bill when it was introduced. This was clearly shown before the Bill left this Chamber. A Minister should first thoroughly understand his own work and his own measures. If he does that, I am sure he will get them through the House more successfully.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Do you say that because I told you you did not understand it last time?

HON. R. PHILP: Before the Bill went through this House it was abundantly evident that the Minister did not understand it. I should like to add that in a measure of this kind there should be as little as possible left to regulations. Members should be conversant with all the terms and conditions involved in the legislation which they pass, and should not leave so much to regulations. Nearly all the measures introduced by the present Government leave a great deal to regulations. I admit that something must be left to regulations, but we should not leave more than is necessary. The Victorian Wages Boards Act is three times the size of this measure. Very likely the regulations under this Bill will be double the size of the Bill, and this House will have no say in the passing of those regulations. It would be very much better to

have the regulations embodied in the Bill, so that the House will thoroughly understand what it is passing. I hope that the Bill when passed will do all that is expected of it, and if it prevents sweating and improves the condition of the worker I shall be glad.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. W. Blair, Ipswich), who was received with "Hear, hears!" said: I desire to say a few words on the second reading of this Bill, and I do not intend to keep the House a greater length of time in saying those few words than the importance of this Bill justifies. I think that hon. members will agree that probably no more important measure has been placed before the House than the Bill which is occupying their attention at the present time, and I am sorry that the leader of the Opposition has seen fit—

Hon. R. PHILP: Don't make any apology for me.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: In some way to dampen the joy with which this measure has been received. There was an idea which prevailed in ancient times—I think it was at Egyptian feasts—of having a skeleton on the table, which prevented the guests from having too much joy, too much enthusiasm—(laughter)—and I very often think that the leader of the Opposition attempts to fill that rôle more or less successfully.

Hon. R. PHILP: You would make a poor skeleton. (Laughter.)

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I should be very sorry to make a skeleton, nor should I make a bloated capitalist. It seems to me that the idea of the hon. gentleman is to dampen our joy and to somewhat restrain our enthusiasm. However, in spite of criticism of that kind, we are going on with this measure, and we are going, if possible, to pass this measure in such a way that will undoubtedly improve and ameliorate the conditions of the workers. (Hear, hear!) Beyond all doubt, this is an interference by law with the conditions which prevail between employers and employees, but no one can deny that it is a righteous interference, and no one can deny that it has not come too soon. (Hear, hear!) When one considers that in the five States of the Commonwealth there are three in which Arbitration and Conciliation Acts are in force, and two in which measures of this kind are in operation, I say it is a lasting disgrace to Queensland that she has been behind in industrial legislation of this kind. (Hear, hear!) The principal ground, I take it, for interference by law in industrial legislation is that it will do away with what has been called the form of individual parasitism. The idea is to secure such wages to wage-earners as will enable them to keep their families in full maintenance under healthy conditions. More than that this measure does not attempt; with more than that we are not concerned. I think labour has its rights just as much as capital has its rights. (Hear, hear!) The capital of the labourer practically lies in the strength and skill and dexterity of his hands.

Mr. DENHAM: This is a capitalistic measure.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I think not. I think it is a fair measure which will have the effect of protecting and securing the rights of both employers and employees; and I venture to say that, so far from its being in favour of one side more than the other, whether the employer or the employee, the result of the working of the measure will show that it will assist both and will injure neither. (Hear, hear!) The capital of the labourer simply lies in the power to make use of his skill and dexterity—his manual skill; he carries that with him wherever he goes, and he is entitled to obtain compensation for it—he

is worthy of fair hire. (Hear, hear!) I am sorry to say that there are employers at the present day who do not pay their employees that which they should, and that there are conditions in some factories which cry aloud for amelioration. There is sweating going on in the State of Queensland, and it is time for any Government—I am sorry that the time has been extended to such a late date as this—to introduce a measure of this kind. I hope that when the Bill leaves this Chamber and goes to another place it will meet with that fate which it deserves—that it will not again be sacrificed, but will become the law of Queensland. The aim of this measure is simply to provide fairer hours of labour, fairer wages, and fairer conditions of employment. It is not a measure to put employer against employee, or *vice versa*, but it is a Bill which seeks to do away with industrial strife, and enable the conditions between employer and employee to be settled peacefully, and not to leave it to that terrible war of private settlement—(hear, hear!)—and I venture to say that if the measure passes in the form in which it has been introduced by my hon. colleague it will be a tremendous stride in industrial legislation for Queensland, and will bring about much better conditions of labour and much better conditions between employer and employee. (Hear, hear!) A body composed of employers and employees will formulate certain rules applicable to a particular trade, and when those rules are formulated both employer and employee will be bound by them. The rules will be promulgated by men who are experts in the particular trade to which the rules apply, and, as a general result, if we take the experience of other States, I am sure a very satisfactory arrangement will be arrived at. Certain criticism has been levelled at one of the clauses to the effect that the appointment of certain men will not secure that which is aimed at in the scope of the Bill. I do not hesitate to say, however, that if one looks at the constitution of these boards one will see that, having on them men representing practically the employer and the employee—although that to a certain extent brings in a thing we cannot altogether avoid, a spirit of partisanship, yet it brings to the consideration of the problems with which these boards will have to deal men who are qualified by lifelong training and experience in the difficulties and intricacies of the trade they are discussing. Those men will form the board, and will bring at once to the consideration of the problem which immediately concerns them a knowledge which could not possibly be supplied by men not specially qualified. Although much has been said against arbitration measures, I, for one, reserve my opinion as to which is the better—an Arbitration Act or Wages Boards Act. In an arbitration court there is a representative for the employers and one for the employees, and these men are specially skilled. Undoubtedly, as the Acts have been framed, experience shows that they have not been altogether successful, and their awards have not been obeyed. I believe there may be methods of amending these measures and making them as successful as Mr. Wise anticipated that his Arbitration Act would be in New South Wales. At all events, I think hon. members will agree that we are taking a large step in advance in bringing in a measure of this kind, and time alone can tell whether it will be more successful than the arbitration court. It will, at all events, have a large effect in settling disputes between employers and employees. Now, I always think that industrial legislation of this kind, although justified, is really the logical corollary of protection. When employers are compelled to pay a standard wage

they very often take care to make labour as cheap as possible. It tends to make them careful in their choice of workers; it tends to make them keep the men they employ more fully occupied, and very often induces the introduction of new processes and new machinery. In fact, it reduces trades to a condition in which competition in efficiency is the ruling factor. Measures of this kind are, to a certain extent, two edged, and it behoves us to consider how we can protect employees as fully and fairly and impartially as we ought, in order to secure to them these rights which we are endeavouring to give them. If hon. members will turn to clause 3 they will be able to follow the few remarks I have to offer as to the object of special boards. The objects are set out specifically in the clause—

In order to determine the lowest prices or rates which may be paid to any person or persons or classes of persons employed either inside or outside a factory or in, or in connection with, a shop, and in order to determine the ordinary working hours and the maximum of working hours, including overtime, etc.

Now, it seems to me that by the appointment of boards of this kind, and clothing them with the authority contained within the four corners of the measure, we are by no means compelling any employer to engage any employee, and by no means compelling any employee to work for any employer. He may strike for better wages, and refuse to give his services; but this measure prevents the employee from receiving a lesser wage than the rate fixed by the board, and it prevents the employer from giving a lesser wage than that fixed for the particular trade for which the board gives its decision. If this measure only secures that one advantage, I think its introduction will have been justified. (Hear, hear!) Protection is given to every class of employee, and I am quite certain that my colleague will accept any amendment which will make the protection even more ample. By subclause (2) of clause 3 hon. members will see that every care is taken to see that an award is not arrived at without the most careful consideration. That subclause says—

In fixing such lowest prices or rates, the special board shall take into consideration the nature, kind, and class of the work, and the mode and manner in which the work is to be done, and the age and the sex of the workers, and any matter which may from time to time be prescribed.

The leader of the Opposition made some criticism of regulations and pointed out that possibly—and in this case probably he is right—that it was wrong to legislate by means of regulations. But there are certain cases in which it is impossible for the highest wisdom to foresee and which can only be provided for by regulations. Those regulations, after being approved by the Governor in Council, have to be placed on the table of the House for the inspection of hon. members, and, if hon. members do their duty in perusing them, I fail to see that there is much danger in passing regulations.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The absence of discussion.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There may be an absence of discussion, but when they are placed on the table of the House it may be possible then to raise a discussion. I have never yet heard of a discussion upon regulations, but I venture to say there are means by which a discussion may be raised.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: No attention is ever paid to such a discussion.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Possibly no attention is paid to the regulations; but if a discussion is raised then an answer of some kind must be made. I do not propose to deal particularly with every clause in the Bill, as my colleague has pointed out that these can better

be dealt with in Committee; but I draw attention to clause 10, subclause (b), and clause 29, which provides security for aged, infirm, and slow workers—

Where it appears to be just and expedient, special wages prices or rates may be fixed for aged, infirm, or slow workers.

And that power is extended under clause 29, which says—

If it is proved to the satisfaction of any special board that any person by reason of age, slowness, or infirmity is unable to obtain employment at the minimum wage fixed by such special board, that board may in such case grant to such aged or infirm or slow worker a license for twelve months to work at a less wage (to be named in such license) than the said minimum wage, and such license may be renewed from time to time.

I had this matter very prominently before me when the Workers' Compensation Act was under consideration, and my experience having been that the clauses inserted in that Act have worked so beneficially, and have had the result that no person capable of work has been deprived of his occupation and the means of subsistence, I welcome this clause as one which will give generous aid to aged persons still capable of useful work but unable to keep pace with younger men of greater vigour. By clause 18 the special board fixes the minimum wage and also the maximum number of hours by which employer and employee alike are bound. That principle is usefully extended under clause 19, which provides—

The Governor in Council may, by Order in Council published in the *Gazette*, extend the powers of any special board so that such board may fix the lowest prices or rates for any articles or process, trade, or business, or part of any such process, trade, or business, which, in the opinion of the Governor in Council, are of the same or similar class or character as those for which such board was appointed; and such board shall, as regards the articles, process, trade, or business mentioned in the extending Order in Council, have all the powers conferred on a special board by this Act.

Allusion was made to the power of appeal, and it was pointed out that the power of appeal to the Supreme Court lay where the special board went outside its functions—that is, where it touched a trade or a business with which it was not concerned. Now, power is given, while keeping that provision in mind, for the Governor in Council to extend its powers to analogous trades or businesses; and I take it that is a very wise and useful provision. It will avoid delay, and it will tend to the speedy settlement of any disputes or matters arising under this Bill.

Mr. MACARTNEY: What about the ordinary labourer? Where does he come in?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I am sure the ordinary labourer will receive consideration under a Bill touching the ordinary labourer.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Where does he come in in connection with clause 3?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: "In any trade or business."

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Clause 3 refers to persons employed in factories or shops. It is extended by clause 48 to other trades or businesses—

When employers or employees in any trade in any district desire creation of a special board—

They can make application to the Minister in the prescribed form, and, if the Minister is satisfied that the application is the *bona fide* wish of the majority of the employers or employees, he can declare by notice in the *Gazette* that the provisions of the Act shall extend to that trade or business. I am asked various questions about various classes of employers or employees. This Bill has special reference to particular

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trades or businesses. It cannot possibly provide for every conceivable kind of employment; but it goes to this extent: that, if the employers or employees in any other kind of trade or business desire that the provisions of the Act shall be extended to them, the Minister has power, with the sanction of the Governor in Council, to extend it to such trade or business. That is a very wise provision, and one which should give satisfaction to every reasonable individual in this Chamber.

Mr. JACKSON: What about miners?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: If the employers or the employees in the mining industry make a *bonâ fide* application to the Minister, the Act, I should say, may be extended to them by notification in the *Gazette*.

Hon. R. PHILP: What about Government employees?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Reference has been made to certain disputes in my own district between employers and employees in the collieries. I merely wish to say that the employers and employees there have set a splendid example, and an example that should be hailed with satisfaction through the length and breadth of Queensland. They met together.

Hon. R. PHILP: Your colleague does not think so.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I think my colleague is in every sympathy with the settlement of disputes there. He may have different methods, and he may believe in different things to some of us, but I do not challenge his conscientious beliefs in the matter. In that district the employers and employees met together day after day. They discussed the matter temperately, and I believe, as the result of the discussion, there is a better feeling between employer and worker, and certainly better conditions. If they are not satisfied with meetings of that kind, they can make application to come under the provisions of this measure; and from what I know of the employers in that district, they would not resent an application of that kind. As far as I know, the endeavour in that district is to work in such a way as will secure the best conditions to the worker commensurate with the ordinary fair results to the employer.

Hon. R. PHILP: What about Government employees?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Under this Government they are so satisfactorily dealt with that they do not require a board of any kind. (Laughter.) At any rate, I have heard no complaints from them. Speaking of the employees in my district, I have only had congratulatory messages with reference to our introduction of an eight-hour day, with reference to our introduction of a minimum wage in Government contracts, and in connection with other action that we have taken, to which I referred on another occasion. I venture to say that so satisfied are they that they will keep us here for many years to come.

Hon. R. PHILP: Are you buying their votes?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Buying their votes! If improving their conditions generally means getting their votes, then I shall get their votes to the end of the chapter—so long as I am here.

Mr. LESINA: You will have to get more locomotives built there.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I hope to see those workshops enlarged. I hope to see them fully employed. I hope to see them building the locomotives, building all the carriages and all the machinery that the State requires. I hope to see those shops added to and improved

so that the conditions of the workers in those shops may be better than they are now. I am alluding particularly to the blacksmiths' shop.

Mr. GRANT: But not at the expense of the other locomotive shops.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I am not desiring that anything should be done at the expense of any other shops. I am desiring that the work should be done in the place where it can be done more cheaply, consistent with paying better wages, and where it can be done more effectively and economically with benefit to the State. I, for one, welcome this Bill, and I hope and believe we shall have the assistance of the Opposition in passing it.

Hon. R. PHILP: We will not go back on our principles.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I do not think the hon. gentleman will ever go back on his principles. I hope the Bill will pass in such a form that the rights of the scrupulous employer will be preserved and that the unscrupulous employer will be made to do what he should do, consistent with the rights of the worker—that is, that he shall pay fair wages and carry on his employment under fair conditions of labour, and that the result will go to procure better hours and better conditions for the workers of Queensland.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I am sorry that a measure of this kind has been delayed so long, and I do not intend to delay its passage by speaking at any greater length. I commend the measure to the very favourable consideration of this House, and, when it goes to another place, to the kindly consideration of the employers in that Chamber.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MACARTNEY (*Toowong*): I do not propose to keep the Chamber more than a few minutes on the second reading of this Bill. I was in hopes when the Attorney-General rose that he did so with the intention of reinstating, so to speak, the time-honoured practice of a Minister replying to the leader of the Opposition. I was in hopes that we were returning to a better state of things in this Chamber in that respect, but instead of that the hon. gentleman has given us one of his electioneering speeches. We had a full explanation of the provisions of the Bill from the Secretary for Works, and there was no need for a second Minister to speak unless the practice to which I refer was about to be reinstated.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I think you were outside when I commenced.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I would like to congratulate our friends of the Labour party—particularly the leader of that party, the hon. member for Fortitude Valley—who has taken so much interest in the matter dealt with in the Bill. I think it is a tribute to the hon. member's commanding position that we should have so many of the measures which he desires introduced during the current session. Evidently, the hon. gentleman is keeping the other side up to the mark. No doubt, as time goes on, the hon. member will be more successful than he has been up to the present. I do not think that either side of the House can really object

[5 p.m.] to the Bill. The principles of it are, generally speaking, humane,

but legislation of this sort, it seems to me, at all times requires serious consideration, because it savours very much of the two-edged sword. If you place on business extra expense, it follows that the products of those trades must become more expensive to the public at large, and I

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think we are apt to forget that there is a public in the State of Queensland outside employers and employees.

Mr. KENNA : What are they ?

Mr. MACARTNEY : What is the use of unduly increasing wages if at the same time the cost of livelihood will be correspondingly increased, or, possibly, to a greater degree. I remember a gentleman, who is not supposed to be imbued with the views ordinarily said to be held by members of the Opposition, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, visited Australia last year, and that gentleman, I understand, freely associated himself with hon. members on the other side of the House, and particularly with members of the Labour party. In Sydney, Melbourne, and New Zealand he associated himself with the same line of political opinion, and on his return to the old country he was very free in the opinions he expressed as to the result of Labour legislation introduced in Australia and New Zealand. He, without any compromise whatever, made the statement that that legislation had not been conducive to the advantage of the employees in any material degree. He points out that prices in New Zealand had increased to such an extent as to deprive the employees of the advantages which the legislation there introduced was intended to give them, and, at the same time, that it had placed an intolerable burden on that branch of the general public who were not actually either employers or employees. I think no hon. member in this House would deny that Mr. Ramsay Macdonald is a gentleman of considerable authority in social matters. I think, in connection with a Bill of this sort, while we may agree with the general principles of it, we ought to be as careful as possible to see that it does not hurt the employee or the general public to any greater degree than is actually necessary. The Bill is necessary, but it is a Committee Bill, and will have to be considered clause by clause. I do not propose, like the hon. gentleman who introduced the Bill, to go through the Bill clause by clause on the second reading ; but I think there is something we might consider in connection with the Bill—that is the question to whom does this Bill apply. It is brought down with a flourish of trumpets by our friends on the other side, at the command of the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, and if people are not careful to see how far it will go, they will think that this applies to every worker in the State. I venture to say that if you will look at the Bill you will find that it only applies to a limited class of workers in the State, and that it is not the great humanitarian measure in the interests of the workers which the Government or the Labour corner would lead us to believe. We have to find to whom it applies. By clause 3 we find it applies to persons engaged—

In wholly or partly preparing or manufacturing any particular articles of clothing or wearing apparel or furniture.

That provides for a very limited class of person in itself. Then the clause goes on to say, persons employed—

In any process, trade, or business usually or frequently carried on in a factory or shop.

I venture to say the large bulk of employees are not employed in factories or shops, and this measure will have no application to them whatever.

Mr. GRANT : Clause 48 amplifies that.

Mr. MACARTNEY : If the hon. gentleman who has made that clever interjection will only content himself a moment or two, I shall say a few words on clause 48. As I have stated, clause 3

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is confined to a very limited class of employee indeed. To my mind, it does not include the ordinary labourer—the man who works on the road, the man who works on the farm, or the man who works on the construction of railways or works of that sort. The ordinary labourer is left out of the Bill. From the title of the Bill, "Wages Boards Bill," you would expect it would apply to the poorest paid employees in the State. But it does not apply to the ordinary labourer, and it does not apply to Government labourers, and, as the hon. member for Kennedy interjected, it does not seem to apply to the mining employees of the State.

Mr. KENNA : Would you like it to apply to the miner ?

Mr. MACARTNEY : I am not concerned with what I like or dislike. I am dealing with the general tenor of this Bill, and I am dealing with the political capital which is being made out of it by the Government, by the Labour party, and particularly by the Attorney-General, to whom we have just listened.

Mr. BOWMAN : And by your leader.

Mr. MACARTNEY : It does not apply to clerks in banks or in business offices ; in fact, it does not apply to a great body of employees in the State to whom it might be supposed to apply. As I said before, the Government employees are not affected. The hon. gentleman stated just now that the Government had brought down the eight-hour day, and provided a minimum wage in Government contracts, but he forgot to tell the House that the Government do not pay the minimum wage themselves. I think the Bill is not of that wide scope which it is alleged to be, and I think it is only fair to make these things clear, whatever Parliament does, in order that it may be understood by the people what the Bill implies. I am certainly prepared to assist in Committee to make the Bill what it ought to be.

Mr. DENHAM (*Oxley*) : When the question is put from the Chair I shall give my voice with the "Ayes"—for the Bill. I do not think there is a dissentient voice in the whole Chamber on the Wages Boards Bill. The principle was affirmed by this Chamber last year, and whilst it is alleged by some that it was rejected in the Upper House, I think that was really not so. The reason was that it was conjoined with the Factories and Shops Bill, and so caused trouble. Some amendments in that Bill caused the Wages Boards Bill to be lost.

Mr. MANN : That was the end of the Bill.

Mr. DENHAM : That was so. I am rising just now in no wise to restrain the enthusiasm of my late colleagues, the Government, or discourage them from marching on. I am delighted to see they are marching on, as long as that marching on be in a right direction. I would like to point out, however, that this Bill does not amount to much. The average worker will benefit. I will show directly how in Victoria wages all round have improved, and the average worker will benefit, but the slow and the infirm will suffer, as I will show. Then, I am at entire variance with my friend, the Attorney-General, in saying that this is a measure for the working class. It is not ; it is distinctly a capitalistic measure. That also I can show from the latest reports of the factories inspector in Victoria.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : It will secure fair conditions for both.

Mr. DENHAM : It will secure fair conditions, but it will inflict a certain amount of harm upon the aged and weak men, but it will certainly

force the men who are financially strong to secure unto themselves the finest machinery and the best equipment.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You do not want to introduce class legislation?

Mr. DENHAM: I have no desire to assist in introducing class legislation. My desire is to assist all sections of the community, and those are the principles upon which I have acted ever since I have been in public life. I will read a letter which appeared in the *Melbourne Argus* quite recently.

Mr. BOWMAN: A very liberal paper that.

Mr. DENHAM: It is an able paper.

A LABOUR MEMBER: It is the most conservative paper in Australia,

Mr. DENHAM: I will read a letter which appeared in this paper. Of course a letter does not concern the policy of the paper. This is merely an extract from the official reports which I commend to the notice of the hon. member for Fortitude Valley.

Mr. HUNTER: The selections will be all on those lines.

Mr. DENHAM: I do not intend to read the whole of the letter. This letter, which relates to inefficient, old, and slow workers, has the following:—

In a memorandum laid before the Legislature in the year 1900 the employers stated—"The essence of the minimum wage principle is that if it is applied to an over-supplied labour market it inevitably leads to selection amongst the operatives. If the minimum be based upon the earning power of a workman of average skill and speed, it is obvious that the man below the average must lose his employment. The actual working of the minimum wage in Victoria proves that the board system has affected the distribution of wages in exactly the opposite way to that designed by the promoters of the Factories Act of 1896; and that, acting in a crowded labour market, it has sacrificed the weak for the benefit of the strong amongst the operatives, by depriving the inefficient and the slow of the right they formerly possessed of earning wages up to the measure of their ability."

The Minister of Labour has taken exception to this view of the case on more than one occasion, and he contends in his criticism on your article that—"Old, slow, and inferior workers are much better off in board trades than in trades not subject to special boards. They receive a fixed wage, they were not subject to being beaten down themselves, nor were they made the means of cutting down other men's wages by unscrupulous employers, and in the end being dismissed when more capable men came down to their own standard."

That is an extract from an official report?

Mr. HADDAGE: What official report?

Mr. DENHAM: The report laid before the Victorian Legislative Assembly in 1900 of the commission appointed to investigate into the Factories and Shops and Wages Boards Bill. Now, here is a paragraph by Dr. Victor Clark, who investigated the whole subject of wages board laws on behalf of the United States Government, and whose report was published in Washington early in 1905—

The first contention of those who criticised unfavourably the law in force until 1904 is undoubtedly true.

Prior to 1904 there was no provision in the Victorian Act for old, aged, infirm, or slow workers. Dr. Clark goes on—

"It worked a hardship upon the less competent workman, and thus created a new class of unemployed. As to the hardship worked upon the less competent employee by the minimum wage law, a large amount of direct evidence appears in the published reports of the commissions that have investigated the workings of the Act, concurring to the effect that a new evil has been produced, or at least an old evil accentuated, by this legislation. "While the inspector has been empowered to grant special permits to workers who by reason of 'age or infirmity' are not able to earn the

minimum wage, allowing those persons to accept less than the wage established by the boards, experience shows that this is not a sufficient remedy for the situation."

Mr. BOWMAN: What does he suggest? Does he suggest anything there?

Mr. DENHAM: No; there is no suggestion here. There is a suggestion made by this conservative paper, as one hon. member referred to it—that is, the *Melbourne Argus*. Commenting upon the report of the inspector, as last issued, an article appears in the *Argus* in July of this year, which states—

The subordinate inspectors bear witness, almost without exception, to the absence of serious complaints from employees regarding the determinations of wages boards. But it should never be forgotten that this pleasant and prosperous picture has always its darker side. The vigorous skilled worker finds employment at remunerative rates; but the old, the slow, the incompetent man is forced relentlessly out of the workshop, and no limited system of permits will ever redeem his position. The tendency of this legislation is what many social evolutionists believe to be the tendency of the whole democratic movement of our day—to create opportunities for the fittest among the workers, but to condemn the unfit to hopelessness in the struggle for existence. Unable to keep pace with their vigorous competitors, but forbidden by law to work for less wages than they, the slow workers must loaf their lives out in semi-starvation until the process of evolution has extinguished them. The law of the survival of the fittest destroys the weaker forms without mercy, and in the pitiful condition of the old and slow workers we see the effect of the doctrine as it is embodied in industrial legislation. The modification of the law by "permits" can only ameliorate their hardships in proportion as the effectiveness of the law is destroyed. The thoughtful man cannot lose sight of the fact that the "satisfaction" within the pale of the law may be counterbalanced by despair and distress outside it, and that, while the fittest among the workers have comfort and opportunity granted to them, the odds against the unfit may be made heavier than ever.

Now, there is certainly a remedy to that, and it seems to me to be the natural corollary to a measure of this sort—that is, an effective and sufficient old age pension scheme. (Hear, hear!) Because whereas in days past there were a number of old workers in the shops and factories of Victoria and other places, now the number of aged workers are becoming fewer and fewer. Here is a letter signed by "Observer," which appeared in the *Melbourne Argus* of the 23rd of July. I need not read the letter, but he points out that where formerly there were a lot of old men in the factories, the workers are now nearly all young and vigorous. He points out that the other States in adopting wages boards handicapped themselves in developing their various industries. To my mind, this Bill is largely one to develop the opportunities of the wealthy. This is not a poor man's Bill by any means. I will quote from the report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Shops for the year ended on the 30th of December, 1906, which I commend to the hon. member for Fortitude Valley. He says—

The smaller factories have great difficulty in making things pay, as they come into competition with the larger factories. These latter, from the fact that they turn out work in very large quantities, are naturally able to manufacture more cheaply than the man in a small way of business, and the latter is driven to use various devices in order to meet on common ground.

Mr. BOWMAN: Does not that apply here also without wages boards?

Mr. DENHAM: It certainly applies everywhere without a wages board. But it is an argument to show that it is not of necessity the poor man who gets all the benefit of the Bill as introduced. It protects the wealthy manufacturers in a greater degree. But it puts a handicap on the feeble man and the aged man. There can be no doubt about it but that wages have increased in Victoria since the introduction of the

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wages boards, and that is a good thing. (Hear, hear!) The wages of those engaged in the aerated water business have increased 2s. 1d. per week since the introduction of wages boards. There has been an average increase in the workers in the artificial manure business of 1d. per week, and the bedstead makers have received an increase of 2s. 8d. per week.

Mr. HARDACRE: What years are those?

Mr. DENHAM: Right up to date.

Mr. HARDACRE: From what date?

Mr. DENHAM: From before the inception of the wages board until after. These boards are constituted at various times. For instance, last year there were some ten boards added to the list upon a special resolution of both Houses of Parliament. The total number of boards, including those ten, in operation last year was forty-nine. The wages of bedstead-makers was improved to the extent of 2s. 8d. per week; bootmakers, 3s. 9d. per week; brassworkers, 1s. 4d.; breadmakers, 10s. 2d. per week; brewery employees, 8s. 6d. per week; brickmakers, 2s. 10d. per week; brush-makers, 5s. 8d. per week; butchers, 3s. 2d. per week; cigar-makers, 1s. 7d. per week; clothing trade, 8d. per week; confectioners, 2s. 10d. per week; coopers, 11s. 10d. per week; and dress-makers—adults—9d. per week, and so on. The whole list goes to show that wages have improved in the trades which have been brought under the operations of boards. It stands to reason that an employer prefers an expert, agile employee to an old employee, and no decent employer would hesitate to adopt this Bill, because it puts him in the position of keeping in his service those workers who are thoroughly skilled and thoroughly capable of discharging the duties imposed upon them.

Mr. BOWMAN: Don't employers keep the most skilled men now as against the duffers?

Mr. DENHAM: They do, but there is a great deal of the milk of human kindness in the hearts of employers, and they often retain old employees in their service beyond the time when they can get the best work out of them.

Mr. KENNA: Not very often.

Mr. DENHAM: That is done in a good many cases. The Bill provides that in certain cases the board may grant a license or permit to an old or slow worker to be employed in a factory, but the number of such workers is not to exceed a specified proportion.

Mr. LENNON: He can claim the permit.

Mr. DENHAM: An aged, slow, or infirm worker must get a permit from the board to be employed at a lower rate than the minimum wage, and the number of such workers is not to exceed—

One-fifth of the whole number of persons employed in such factory at the minimum wage fixed for adults or at piecework rates.

The result of such a provision will be that the average rate of wages having been raised, the slow and infirm workers will not have the same consideration extended to them as has been extended to them in the past, when they had to compete in the open market. That is shown by the experience of the Southern States, where a similar measure has been in operation. It seems to me that it would have been a good thing—possibly a big undertaking to work out—if, in a measure of this kind, there was some provision by which each employee should contribute a small percentage of his weekly wage and the employer should supplement that contribution, so as to establish a real pension scheme in each particular trade. Then, when men came to the age at which they have to be passed out, they would receive a suitable retiring allowance.

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Mr. KENNA: That comes under old age pensions.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is outside the scope of this Bill.

Mr. DENHAM: It is outside the scope of this Bill, because the Bill is a slavish copy of the Victorian Act.

Mr. BOWMAN: We are going to get the old age pension.

Mr. DENHAM: But not an adequate pension to meet the needs of a man who is a skilled artisan. It might be so arranged that when the workman came to a certain age he should pass out and get a fixed annuity, and he would have the consolation that he had contributed towards that provision for his old age, and that it did not come from the general consolidated revenue.

Mr. BOWMAN: We will claim you as a socialist directly.

Mr. DENHAM: I think I am as good a common-sense socialist as the hon. member for Fortitude Valley. I am a socialist to the extent that I should like to see the worker protected in a manly and effectual manner.

Mr. KENNA: What protection have they now?

Mr. DENHAM: They have none. This Bill will give them a measure of protection, but not sufficient protection. An old worker may get a permit for one year, and may then have to pass out, but no provision is made for him in such a case, while if they contributed to a superannuation fund they could honestly claim an annuity on retirement. Had some provision of that kind been made in this measure, I believe it would have received the endorsement of the House. I am glad to see provision made in this measure for old, infirm, and slow workers. Up to 1904 no provision was made for such workers in Victoria. Since that year they have had to make provision for workers of this character, who had up to that time been practically ticket-of-leave men, who had to obtain a permit from the inspector to work for another twelve months.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Not the inspector, the board.

Mr. DENHAM: Yes, the board; and it is just as well that it is the board. Still, I am not sure that the provision which is made in this respect is sufficient. If a sympathetic employer dares to exceed the number of such workers allowed him by the Bill, he will be guilty of a contravention of its provisions. Those provisions are rigidly laid down, so that—

Mr. BOWMAN: There shall be no hanky-panky.

Mr. DENHAM: There shall be no hanky-panky business about it at all. I am sorry that the Minister has not dealt more fully with the question of apprentices and improvers. I have read this Bill several times, and I must confess that I do not yet realise what is to be the attitude of the wages boards towards apprentices and improvers. There is a limit to the number of apprentices allowed to each employer, and the apprentices are to be paid under the conditions prescribed. Of course a man who marks time will just continue to mark time, and may go on doing so during the term of his indentures, and then on the expiration of his indentures, step into the minimum wage.

Mr. LENNON: He will be a slow worker.

Mr. DENHAM: I hope that when a man gets out of his time he will not be classified as a slow worker, because if he is he will only be entitled to the slow worker's wage, and not to the minimum wage.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: If the board accept him as a slow worker he will get less than the minimum wage.

Mr. DENHAM: There is no doubt that this is an interesting and important measure. The question of wages and cognate matters is probably one of the greatest difficulties which confront us to-day. What we want to do is to see a fair thing done to both employer and employee. I am very glad that the leader of the Opposition called attention to the fact that in Victoria before a special board is constituted it is necessary that a resolution in favour of the establishment of such a board should be passed by both Houses of Parliament. In the last report of the Victorian factories inspector he says—

MODE OF CONSTITUTING SPECIAL BOARDS AND OF APPOINTING MEMBERS.

I have been so constantly asked, as to how boards are brought into existence, the members appointed, and determinations reviewed, that I think it desirable to shortly describe the whole procedure.

It is necessary to remember that the constitution of a board, and the appointment of the members of a board, involve two distinct procedures.

Before a special board is constituted, it is necessary that a resolution in favour of such a course should be carried in both Houses of the Legislature. (Section 75 (2), Act 1975.)

It is usual for the Minister administering the Factories Act to move that such a resolution should be passed.

The Minister may be induced to adopt such a course, either by representations made by employers and employees, or by employees alone, or by the reports of the officers of the department.

The reasons alleged by employers for desiring a board are, usually, unfair competition; and those by employees, low wages, and often the employment of excessive juvenile labour. If the Minister is satisfied that a case has been made out, he will move the necessary resolution in Parliament, and when such resolution has been carried, an Order in Council is passed constituting the board.

I hope the Minister will give favourable consideration to an amendment dealing with the establishment of wages boards. Then in clause 10 it is rather a pity that the same word is [5.30 p.m.] used which has caused so much unpleasantness in Victoria. I refer to the word "reputable." I would like the Minister to give some consideration to the question whether some better term than "reputable employer" could not be used.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The objectionable part of that has been omitted.

Mr. SUMNER: "Fair employer" would do.

Mr. DENHAM: In the last report of the Victorian inspector he says on that point—

REPUTABLE EMPLOYERS.

The provisions of section 83 of the Factories and Shops Act, 1905, which requires special boards, appointed after 30th October, 1903, to have the wages fixed by the boards on the average wage paid by "reputable" employers, are, in my opinion, an embarrassment to the members of the boards, and especially to the chairman.

What is a "reputable" employer?

In the stress of competition an employer may be compelled to pay low wages. Is he then disreputable?

If it is embarrassing to the chairman to tell an employer that he considers him disreputable, what must it be to an employee sitting at the same table with his employer to have to argue, in order to secure a fair wage, that his employer, whom he may both like and respect, is a "disreputable" employer?

The intention probably was to prevent boards fixing too high a minimum rate of pay, but even if the boards cannot be trusted there is the Court of Industrial Appeals, which can review the decisions of the special boards, and I venture to hope that the section in question will be repealed by Parliament.

I hope the Minister will see his way to improve the clause so that at least the employees and the members of the board may not come up against

the unpleasant task of discussing, and having to determine who is a "reputable" employer. The functions of the board appear to be, among other things, to regulate the hours of labour, and it would appear that the hours of labour in exempted shops under the Factories and Shops Act are to come under review.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Yes; that exemption only applies to closing time.

Mr. DENHAM: And they can therefore be brought under control.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Yes, as to hours and wages, but not as to closing time.

Mr. DENHAM: So that in that respect the old Act practically disappears.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The exemption under the old Act only applies to closing time. We limit the number of hours the employees shall work.

Mr. DENHAM: The employee may not work more than a given number of hours, but the shop may remain open. I approve of that. I do not see why any man should work his employees an inordinate number of hours, and if he wants to keep his shop open he should run it in the best way he can by himself. This Bill has been referred to by some as being a democratic measure. If it is democratic it is a class of measure that meets with my endorsement.

Mr. KENNA: You said it was capitalistic.

Mr. DENHAM: Yes, because I think it favours the man of capital—the man who has the largest command of machinery, and can work out the man who is just commencing his career as a manufacturer.

Mr. KENNA: All protective legislation does that.

Mr. DENHAM: That is so. The day of the extreme individualist is past. The man who works on that principle will not do in these times; he is played out, and if he works on the extreme individualist principle he is a social pariah. I believe in fair wages and fair hours, and will do my best to assist in getting this useful measure on the statute-book; but, at the same time, I would point out that those who argue in favour of the minimum wage in other parts of the world, where they have carried collectivism or socialism to a high stage of development and perfection, recognise clearly and emphatically that a minimum wage involves a minimum product.

Mr. HARDACRE: What do you mean?

Mr. DENHAM: Where the minimum wage is paid in the bootmaking, clothing, or any like industry, there must be turned out by each individual a given quantity of stuff in order to pay that wage.

Mr. KENNA: Is that not the case in most factories in Brisbane?

Mr. DENHAM: It is the case. Any man who does not work has to pass out. So that a Bill of this sort does not confer any special advantage on the active worker.

Mr. KENNA: It gives him a better wage.

Mr. DENHAM: The man who can work well can command a good wage every time, and therefore with the minimum wage there must inevitably be a minimum product. There were those who thought otherwise in the early days, but they have found from experience that the two things must go hand in hand. In that little book on "The Social Unrest," by John Graham Brooks, who I think will be admitted as a competent writer who can make a fair diagnosis of the case, he says—

In my collectivist catechism, I pointed to the opinion that eight hours should be the maximum for all; that

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five or six would probably suffice. "Yes," he said, "we have been disappointed; we thought that we could make that rule universal, but it would not work. A great deal of our business can be managed with eight hours, and some time we shall do all of it so; but at present much of the simpler work would lose so heavily under eight hours that we could not carry it on. We shall push on towards shorter hours just as fast as conditions will allow." I asked if a compulsory eight-hour law would help. "No," he replied, "not for the kind of work in which we have found that nine and ten hours will produce more than eight."

Then he talks about the minimum wage, and says—

Closely analogous to this, are the altered conceptions about the minimum wage and piecework. It was fundamental that all workers in the collectivist régime should be paid the minimum wage—a sum below which the daily earnings should not fall. This principle still holds, but modified so ingeniously as to increase our respect for their practical intelligence. When it was found that the sewing girls in Ghent often produced so little, that the minimum wage took all the profit or even left a loss, it was decided and rigidly enforced that a minimum product should be a condition of the minimum wage—i.e., work enough should first be done before this wage principle should be applied. My first amazement at this tribute to common industrial experience gave place to admiration when the reasons appeared. "We could not," it was said, "allow a given wage in all kinds of work and with all sorts of workmen. Some will trifle; gossip, waste their own time and that of others. Some men care more for the saloon, and some girls more for flirting and prinking than for their work. We are still too imperfect to apply such a rule without modification and exceptions." Ingenuity in managing the doctrine reached its climax as he added, "Mais vous savez qu'il faut exiger un minimum de production puisqu'il y aura un minimum de besoins à satisfaire."—we must require a minimum product because they all have a minimum of wants to be satisfied.

So that, when we talk glibly of a minimum wage, it is well to recognise that everywhere where the theory has been propounded it has been accompanied of necessity with a minimum product, and such will be the effect in Australasia.

Mr. BOWMAN: Didn't you introduce a minimum wage in Government contracts when you were Secretary for Works?

Mr. DENHAM: I was very pleased to do so. I have never disagreed with the principle of a minimum wage; but we must insist on a minimum amount of work being done for that minimum wage.

Mr. HARDACRE: Every one of those things happen whether they get a minimum wage or not.

Mr. DENHAM: Of course I am not saying that a Wages Boards Bill will accentuate that. I only want to point out that the term "minimum wage" is not purely a "Mesopotamia"—that the fact of the establishment of a minimum wage does not mean that a man who does not perform a minimum amount of work will of necessity get a minimum wage whether he earns it or not. I shall support the Bill because I believe that it will be of value. I do not know that the evil is so great in factories as in connection with outside piecework. I shall support the Bill because it will tend to suppress sweating. I shall support the Bill because it will tend to make the lot of men and women brighter. I shall support the Bill because I believe it will bring industrial peace all the nearer. I shall support the Bill; but in Committee there are clauses that will require amendment. The Attorney-General—speaking, I suppose, on behalf of his colleagues—appeared to indicate that amendments would be welcomed so as to make the Bill more effective and workable.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Good amendments.

Mr. DENHAM: Nothing but good amendments will emanate from this side of the Chamber. (Laughter).

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HON. E. B. FORREST (*Brisbane North*): I intend to support this Bill. I am very glad to see that it has been brought in this session as a separate Bill. It is a very important Bill in itself, and it certainly deserves separate treatment. In forming an estimate of the work of wages boards we have been in the habit of relying very largely upon Victorian experience, because in that State wages boards have been in force longer than in any other State—about ten years, I think—and they have a greater number of boards there than in any other State. I learned this afternoon that they have forty-nine boards. I believe there is not anything like that number in any other State.

Mr. BOWMAN: There is a larger number under the Arbitration Court Act in New Zealand.

HON. E. B. FORREST: That is a different thing, and embraces many different things besides wages. A Royal Commission sat in Victoria in 1902, and it is not too much to say that the report of the commission was—I was going to say unfavourable—but it was decidedly not favourable. Since then we have had a number of opinions expressed in the Press and in reports of various kinds.

Mr. BOWMAN: There have been one or two amendments of the Act, too.

HON. E. B. FORREST: They have tried to amend the Act, and they have done good work in that direction; and it is probably due to those amendments that we are now getting a better account of the working of the Act, because there is no doubt that, although we have had a great variety of reports, the more recent of those reports have been distinctly more favourable.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: They brought in a new Bill in 1905 to consolidate the whole Act.

HON. E. B. FORREST: I think we pay too much attention in matters of this sort to comparisons of the wages paid in different trades in different places. They apply frequently to entirely different sets of circumstances, and for comparative purposes they are of very little use. As the most recent illustration of that, I might refer to the speech delivered on Thursday night by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, where he was good enough to give the House some information as to the wages paid by various gas companies. This is not the time to discuss the matter; but if the opportunity offers at the Committee stage of the Bill I shall be able to prove that the hon. member was completely wrong in the statements he put before the House.

Mr. BOWMAN: My information was obtained from the men.

HON. E. B. FORREST: The hon. member was misled. I acquit him of any share in the misstatement, because, no doubt, he stated what he was told. Since he spoke I have got the figures from headquarters in all the cases referred to by the hon. member, with one exception. Charters Towers is the only one I have not got particulars of, and that I shall have before we go into Committee on the Bill.

Mr. BOWMAN: Have you got Townsville?

HON. E. B. FORREST: I have got them all with the one exception, and they do not to any extent support the hon. member's statements. I think we had better drop altogether these references to Victoria and also these misleading comparisons of wages, because we have got an experience here which shows us the great necessity there is for some reform in this direction. There is no doubt that some control is particularly needed in connection with outside piecework. I have made a good many inquiries

of the drapery people in Brisbane, and their chief complaint is with reference to this outside work.

MR. BOWMAN: There is some complaint about some of the factory workers, too.

HON. E. B. FORREST: I have no doubt my friend will be able to give us some information about that, whether it is all gospel or not. (Laughter.) It is fair to say that wages boards within reasonable lines are not likely to meet with any great opposition. I am not speaking of this House, but of outside. That is the opinion I have formed from the conversations I have had on the subject. The trade recognise that there are wages boards in all the other States except Tasmania, and that in itself is a good reason for having similar boards here. They certainly prefer wages boards to arbitration courts. There is not the slightest doubt about that. Those are very good reasons. If we discuss that we can give some excellent reasons.

MR. MAUGHAN: We can give some very good reasons why they are not.

HON. E. B. FORREST: That is always the case, and those people are left generally as they were. That is the difficulty in these cases. I see also that it is expected that these wages boards will secure equal conditions in the trade. That is the expectation of the factory people here and the trade here, and I believe myself it will be realised. I certainly hope that it will. I think it should apply both inside and outside the factory. The hope and expectation of people engaged in businesses affected by such a Bill as this is that it will be realised. They recognise that it will protect employers who are disposed to do what we call a fair thing. There is no doubt whatever there is great injustice done to the man who has tried to do a fair thing. He is undercut; but, as far as I can understand, it is not so much in the factory as it is outside the factory.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Yes.

HON. E. B. FORREST: However, they recognise that all employers will be protected if they do a fair thing.

MR. MAUGHAN: Will the hon. gentleman explain what a fair thing is?

HON. E. B. FORREST: I will take your view. I am prepared to go that length and take your opinion of what a fair thing is. (Laughter.) This Bill makes provision for the old, slow, and infirm worker. There is no better clause in the Bill than that. (Hear, hear!) One of the defects in Acts of this kind in the past was that no provision was made for a thing of this sort, and it is right that there should be some provision. Coming now to what this Bill is going to apply to, it is a question as to whether it is to be applied to wholesale houses or not. The Bill as it stands is absolutely silent on that point. It is a question which will be asked, and we require some information on that point.

MR. CAMPBELL: Will it come in under clause 48?

HON. E. B. FORREST: No, it will not come under clause 48. The Factories and Shops Act is silent upon it. I cannot help remembering that last year this Bill came in under the amendment of the Factories and Shops Act. If you turn to the 1906 Bill to amend the Factories and Shops Act, you will find an amendment in clause 2. In the definition of "shop," after the word "retail," the words "or wholesale" were inserted. We want to know whether in the Bill that is introduced this afternoon that clause is to be the same as in the 1906 amending Bill.

MR. BOWMAN: We will put it in if you like.

HON. E. B. FORREST: I do not know whether it is. We shall not see it properly until to-morrow, but that is a question we shall want an answer about. If it is going to be extended to wholesale houses it will be a very great injustice to people employed in those houses.

MR. BOWMAN: Why should we discriminate between them?

HON. E. B. FORREST: For good reasons. Ninety per cent. of the wholesale houses petitioned the Legislative Council asking to be left out of the Bill altogether.

MR. BOWMAN: How did they get that petition?

HON. E. B. FORREST: I do not know. I did not get a single signature to the petition myself, but the fact remains that 90 per cent. of the people employed in the wholesale houses petitioned the Legislative Council asking that they might be exempted from the operations of the Bill and the wages board. That, in itself, is a significant fact. I will say this, speaking in the interests of the employer and employee who are employed in the wholesale houses: they would undoubtedly lose a great number of privileges which they at present possess if they came under an Act of this sort. They have a great many more privileges than employees in retail shops; everybody knows that, and if they come under the operations of this measure it will be a great hardship to many of them. But we will have to consider the matter when we get into Committee.

MR. BOWMAN: What harm will it do?

HON. E. B. FORREST: I do not know much about that, but they get a great many privileges. Previously they never attempted, so far as I know, to include the wholesale houses; never dreamt of it, and, as far as I know, they did not intend to include them now. Objections have been raised to the construction of the wages board. Perhaps it is not so much to the construction of the board that objection may be taken, but to the election of chairman. I think, with regard to the construction of the board, the provisions of the Bill are exceedingly good, one-half being taken from the employers and one-half from the employees. You could not better that; but a good deal depends on the chairman as to the satisfactory working of the board. A question will be raised as to whether there should be an appeal from the tribunal to the Supreme Court. I am not prepared to say that is a good thing. I do not think you want to hamper legislation of this sort with a lot of legal expense, which will be heavy if there is anything in the shape of an appeal. I should be inclined to say the decision of the wages board should be final.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: So it is.

HON. E. B. FORREST: No; there is an appeal to the Supreme Court.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Not unless the award is outside the jurisdiction.

HON. E. B. FORREST: If there is an appeal, let us leave it out. Then there will be something said about the minimum wage, whether it shall be the lowest or the average. On the Victorian Royal Commission in 1902 an immense amount of time was spent in discussing that question. It is a material question as to whether it shall be the minimum wage or the average minimum. Then, as has been pointed out by a previous speaker, the question of apprenticeship will have to be seriously discussed. There is a lot said about that on the Victorian commission in 1902.

MR. BOWMAN: A lot of it is out of date.

HON. E. B. FORREST: It is a question which will need a good deal of consideration,

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both in connection with male and female apprentices, when the Bill gets into Committee. There are the people who learn the trade, and the people who ought to learn the trade. As to improvers, the question to me is whether there ought to be any at all. I am not going to waste any more time, but when we get into Committee I shall have something else to say.

Mr. BOWMAN: What about the number of trades you would like to see come under it?

HON. E. B. FORREST: There are a good many. I intend to support the Bill.

Mr. KENNA (*Bowen*): I think it is a matter for congratulation that this measure is received with such unanimity by all sections of this House. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. BRENNAN: Only two sections.

Mr. KENNA: I think that the third section is just as much in accord with it as the other two sections.

Mr. MAXWELL: What about the fourth section?

Mr. KENNA: The fourth section can speak for itself. It is gratifying to me, as I have been a member of this Assembly for the last five or six years, to note the tone of radicalism adopted by hon. gentlemen on the opposite side of the House. In the short time that I have been in this House I have seen measures of this nature brought forward, or attempted to be brought forward, by members sitting on the Opposition side of the House at that time, when the present members of the Opposition were in power, and those measures were treated in a light-hearted way, or shelved, or deliberately kicked out of the House. Now, we cannot be radical enough for hon. members on the opposite side of the House. Most of the radical measures which we bring in are received with apparent sympathy and promises of support from those hon. gentlemen.

Mr. BARNES: It is one of the planks of our own platform.

Mr. KENNA: The Government platform, or, rather, the Speech made by the Governor, is assumed to be one of the most radical Governor's Speeches ever delivered in Queensland, or ever proposed in a Queensland Parliament; yet the hon. gentlemen sitting on the opposite side of the House have no fault whatever to find with it. I well remember when the late hon. member for Fortitude Valley attempted to bring in a measure of this kind, or proposing a motion advocating this principle, if I remember rightly, it was received with opposition by the hon. members then sitting on the Government side of the House.

Mr. BOWMAN: And also the Arbitration Act.

Mr. KENNA: Yes, and also the motion favouring a Conciliation and Arbitration Act proposed by myself in 1902, and a similar motion brought in prior to that by the present hon. member for Fortitude Valley.

Mr. BARNES: This is not an Arbitration Bill.

Mr. KENNA: The principle is pretty well the same. I take it that this assumed radicalism on the other side of the House is not as genuine as one might be led to believe.

Mr. BARNES: Are you sorry that we are going to support it?

Mr. KENNA: No; but I am of opinion that if the hon. gentleman who just interjected and a good many other hon. gentlemen on that side of the House were not assured deep down in their own inner consciences that this measure was not going to receive any more consideration than it did last year from their friends in another place, they would not be supporting it now.

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HON. R. PHILP: You are inviting it now.

Mr. KENNA: I do not think we would see the radicalism of the hon. members but for that.

HON. R. PHILP: When did you become a Radical?

Mr. KENNA: I was always a Radical.

HON. R. PHILP: You are the biggest "toff" in the House. (Laughter.)

Mr. KENNA: Biggest "toff" in the House. (Laughter.)

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. BARNES: He is a Socialist.

Mr. KENNA: Is a man less a Radical because he wears a decent suit of clothes?

Mr. MANN: The leader of the Opposition was just advocating that hon. members should wear good clothes.

Mr. KENNA: I know that I buy my clothes from people who pay a fair rate of wages. (Hear, hear!) Does the hon. gentleman do that?

HON. R. PHILP: Yes, always.

Mr. KENNA: I am very glad to hear it. But I think that this radicalism of the hon. members opposite, particularly with regard to this measure, is radicalism *pro tem*. However, it is a very gratifying thing to see that we cannot be radical enough on this side of the House to suit hon. members opposite. They are prepared to accept the measures which the Government are introducing. The humane legislation, which the Government deserve all credit for, they are prepared to accept. They are prepared to accept these most radical measures, and assure the House that they can find nothing to quibble about in whatever is brought forward.

Mr. BARNES: We do not believe in sweating any more than you do.

Mr. KENNA: What did you do to prevent it when you had the power?

Mr. BARNES: We did not do anything the other way.

Mr. KENNA: Did you ever advocate any measure to prevent sweating?

HON. R. PHILP: We passed the Factories and Shops Bill.

Mr. KENNA: You did; but you did not pass it in the excellent state it is in at the present time. You passed a limited measure, and only then when the feelings of the people forced it upon you.

HON. R. PHILP: The Labour party have been four years in office, and have not passed such a Bill.

Mr. KENNA: In the ten or twelve years that the hon. gentleman was Premier—

HON. R. PHILP: I was only Premier for four years.

Mr. KENNA: In the four years that you were Premier, what radical or humane legislation did you pass?

HON. R. PHILP: The Factories and Shops Act.

Mr. KENNA: That is the only thing.

HON. R. PHILP: Workers' Compensation Act as far as the Committee stage.

Mr. KENNA: I say that the hon. gentleman did not pass a Workers' Compensation Act. That Act was brought in and passed by the present Government.

HON. R. PHILP: We passed a similar measure to the Committee stage.

Mr. KENNA: You brought it in and talked about it, just the same as you brought in an

Adult Suffrage Bill or Women's Franchise Bill. You just trotted them out and gave them an airing.

Mr. BARNES: What about the Mining Bill which you Labour people would not allow the Government to go on with?

Mr. MANN: That is not correct.

Hon. R. PHILP: We also passed the old age allowance.

Mr. KENNA: I will say this with regard to the sincerity of the Opposition in this matter: They all express themselves in accord with this Bill, and then immediately proceed to find as many reasons as they possibly can against it. That does not seem to me to be quite the class of sympathy or the sort of assistance that the Government would be likely to receive from a party who were really in sympathy with the measure. Now, so far as the criticism of the leader of the Opposition is concerned, the only objection that he had to it was the members of the board might be ex-employers or ex-employees in the industries concerned. That is to say, an employer might have been an employer twenty years ago, and might have retired from business. That gentleman would be eligible as an employers' representative on the board.

Mr. PAGET: He ought not to be.

Mr. KENNA: Now, some men who were in a business for ten or twelve years might go into some other business.

Mr. BARNES: Or perhaps they might become out of date.

Mr. KENNA: Or they might come into this House. The leader of the Opposition said it might be possible that some would come into this House, and they would want to sit on the board, or become nominees to that board. That would be an office under the Crown, and an hon. member would lose his seat if he did so. There is very little in the objection of the hon. member when it is seen that the employers and employees themselves elect their own nominees. That will safeguard that. It seems to me that the agitators on the employers' side are just as likely to get on the board as the agitators on the employees' side.

Mr. BOWMAN: Walpole, for instance.

Mr. KENNA: Yes, and Ranson, or any of these agitators connected with the employers. The employees and employers are the people themselves who elect their nominees, and it may be safely left to them to say who shall constitute the *personnel* of the board, and it can be left to them to choose the people they wish for these positions. The employers and employees stand to gain by proper representation on the board, and it is not likely that they will elect people who do not understand the intricate phases of the industry. It has been said, or inferred, that there is not sufficient necessity for the establishment of wages boards in Queensland. It has been inferred that the rate of wages paid in Queensland is equal to the rate of wages paid in New South Wales, or possibly in Victoria. Coghlan, in the latest work he has published, dated 1904-5, gives a table comparing the rates of wages paid in New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland in what are known as secondary industries, and these secondary industries are the industries which these wages boards are designed to cover, and in which sweating prevails to the greatest extent. I shall quote some of the figures given in that table, and from those figures hon. members will see that the rates of wages paid in Queensland are in a large proportion of those industries lower than those paid in Victoria, where they have wages boards, or in New South Wales, where they have had for some time an Arbitration and

Conciliation Court. I shall quote first the figures for New South Wales, then for Victoria, and then for Queensland. The rates given opposite each industry are the rates per week.

Industry	New South Wales.	Victoria.	Queensland.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Tanneries ...	1 18 9	1 14 6	1 9 0
Soap and candles ...	1 12 4	1 10 7	1 6 11
Bricks and tiles ...	2 6 3	2 4 6	1 18 11
Pottery and earthenware	1 12 9	1 15 8	1 9 8
Cooperage ...	2 5 0	2 4 6	2 0 4
Wood-turning ...	1 16 11	...	1 14 8
Brass and copper ...	1 9 8	1 9 8	1 9 4
Galvanised iron ...	1 12 0	...	1 8 10
Stoves and ovens ...	1 12 3	1 12 8	0 17 8
Tinsmithingsheet-iron works	1 6 2	1 7 7	1 3 7
Meat preserving ...	1 14 0	2 1 8	1 17 3
Confectionery ...	1 4 11	1 11 10	1 4 4
Flourmills ...	1 17 0	2 1 7	1 14 0
Aerated water, cordials, etc.	1 10 3	1 6 8	1 4 9
Breweries ...	1 16 1	1 17 10	1 10 3
Tobacco and cigars ...	1 9 7	1 14 0	1 12 9
Boots and shoes ...	1 12 9	1 15 1	1 7 6
Slop clothing ...	2 0 3	2 0 7	1 9 3
Clothing (tailoring) ...	2 4 5	...	1 18 2
Hats and caps ...	1 15 3	1 19 2	1 2 5
Shirts, ties, and scarfs	1 14 9	1 14 3	1 0 0
Paper bags and boxes	1 3 5	1 5 6	0 18 7
Cycles ...	1 11 8	1 7 1	1 2 5
Furniture and cabinet-making	1 16 4	1 19 9	1 6 5
Picture frames ...	1 11 8	1 6 3	1 1 1
Chemicals, drugs, and medicines	1 10 10	1 7 0	1 5 2
Manufacturing jewellery	1 17 5	2 7 4	1 14 4
Electric light and power	2 2 10	1 19 0	1 11 2
French leather, portmanteaux, and bags	1 6 9	1 7 5	1 0 4
Brooms and brushware	1 11 7	1 13 4	1 0 5
Saddlery and harness	1 15 3	1 14 3	1 5 0

I do not think it necessary to quote any more. There is a long list, but I have quoted sufficient to show that there is a great disparity in the rates of wages paid in Queensland in secondary industries as compared with the rates paid in the same industries in New South Wales and Victoria.

Mr. WHITE: That information is two or three years old.

Mr. KENNA: The onus of proving that conditions are different now lies on hon. members. The volume I have quoted from is the very latest volume compiled by Mr. Coghlan. I am not going to traverse the arguments offered by hon. members on the other side of the House, but I was struck by an argument made by the hon. member for Oxley in reference to slow workers. It is an extraordinary thing that, whenever we have a measure introduced of an ameliorative character for the people at the bottom of the scale, some hon. members always raise a cry of sympathy for that class of workers. I remember that when the Factories and Shops Bill was going through the House the cry of its opponents was in regard to the forlorn one man and one woman shopkeepers. The columns of the daily Press were deluged with complaints concerning those people, and hon. members who wanted to block the Bill cunningly selected what they thought was the best ground for bluffing it—they selected the provision dealing with one man and one woman shops. According to them the one woman shopkeepers were the predominant feature in that case, and we were told that large

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numbers of those people were going to be ruined.—people with only a few sticks of lollies in a pickle-bottle.

Mr. BLOCKSIDE: So they have been.

Hon. R. PHILP: Don't speak disparagingly of the poor; you may be poor yourself some day.

Mr. KENNA: I am not speaking disparagingly of them—I am speaking sympathetically; but there is a difference between the genuinely poor and the bogus poor who are brought up by hon. members when they want to block a measure. We were told that those people were going to be ruined. But the result, according to the report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Shops, shows that there has been a large increase in the number of one-man shops. We have a similar cry raised in connection with this measure, but in this case it is the infirm workers who are going to suffer. According to those hon. members who profess to be concerned about the infirm worker, he is now living in an industrial paradise, and this Bill is going to deprive him of something. When the hon. member for Oxley was speaking I took the trouble to go into the library, and the first volume of the Victorian Factories and Shops Inspector's report I took up was for 1901. What do we find there about old and slow workers?

Mr. WHITE: That is ancient history.

Mr. KENNA: I dare say you will find that the same arguments apply to all the other years since the passing of the Wages Boards Act.

Mr. WHITE: That was 1906.

Mr. KENNA: The hon. gentleman can get the 1906 report and quote it against this. On page 13 the inspector says—

Under the provisions of subsection (2) of section 15 of the Factories and Shops Act, 1900, the Chief Inspector is given power to issue a license to any old or infirm worker to work at less than the minimum wage fixed by any board if the Chief Inspector is satisfied that the worker cannot, by reason of age or infirmity, earn the minimum determined by the board up to 31st December, 1900. I issued sixty of these licenses.

That is sixty out of 66,000 factory operatives. What proportion of old and slow workers will there be in Queensland? It will be so infinitesimal as to be scarcely worth serious consideration.

It may be a pity that such workers have to obtain a license at all, but it has been my constant endeavour to treat them all with that consideration and kindness which age and infirmity deserve. The majority always left me in the most friendly manner, and without showing in the slightest degree that they considered they had been humiliated in any way by the interview, or that they resented having to see me on the matter of their wage. In many cases very considerable additions to small wages were obtained by the operation of the board system.

That is to say, that instead of depriving these old workers of the wage that had been earned previously, very considerable additions to their wages had resulted. Let hon. gentlemen also note this—

Some of the men were sent up to get licenses by their employers at rates at which they told me plainly they would not work, and asked me to make out the license at a higher rate, which they subsequently obtained.

So that instead of its being injurious in its operation these clauses in the Victorian Act have been beneficial to the old and slow workers.

It is so often stated that the special board system is bad on the aged and infirm worker that I cannot refrain from expressing the view that it is strange that more complaints are not heard from the aged and infirm workers themselves. "I would suggest that the evidence of hardship inflicted by the Act, or of want of consideration shown by the officers of the department, should be obtained from the workers themselves, and not by mere

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hearsay statements of gentlemen who may have been imposed upon by persons unfavourably disposed either to the Act or to the officers of the department."

I think we want no more conclusive evidence than that the wail or cry of the "old and infirm worker" is a mere bogey. There is nothing in it. The old and infirm worker, judging by the experience of Victoria, instead of having anything to lose by obtaining these special licenses, has everything to gain. The number of persons who will be affected under this measure will be so small as to be hardly worth consideration. After all, it does not matter what legislation is proposed in an ameliorative way, it must injuriously affect one class or other of workers; but if it benefits the big bulk of the workers, even at the expense of a small minority, it has done good work. That is the point. The benefit of the many must not be retarded for the sake of the few, and when, also, the inconvenience they will be put to is very problematical.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: Do you propose to drop clause 18?

Mr. KENNA: I do not propose anything. I propose to accept the Bill pretty well as it is.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: You are not talking that way.

Mr. KENNA: It is a very good measure. It is time we had a lot of this class of legislation. The cry of the people at the bottom of the social ladder has fallen deafly on the ears of the members of this House too long, and it is time that Parliament extended its protection to the people least able to protect themselves. Sweating is a cancer upon every industrial community, and now this Government, instead of talking about the matter, have introduced legislation to remedy it—to prevent the treatment of people in a manner which, to say the least of it, is not humane. I do not think such legislation is likely to harm any one fair employer. It is the fair employer who will welcome it, inasmuch as it protects him in his desire to pay a fair wage to his employees, and against the unscrupulous sweater who cuts down the wages of his employees. I think, with the Attorney-General, that this measure works along the lines of the "new protection;" that is, while we protect the industry itself—while we protect the profits of the employer under the old method of protection, the new protection says that it is not sufficient to protect the employer or the industry, but that it is essential that the operatives should be protected also. If the law of "the survival of the fittest" is to be brought into operation as far as the employers are concerned, then it should operate as far as those they employ are concerned. We shall never become a nation—a free, prosperous, and happy people—upon a basis of wage serfdom, wage slavery, and sweating. I think it is the duty of this House, first of all, to accord its sympathy and protection to those least able to protect themselves, and in doing that we will be following along the lines of modern humane legislation and earning the lasting gratitude of numbers of people engaged in those industries that these wages boards are designed to protect.

Mr. BOWMAN (*Fortitude Valley*): The measure introduced this afternoon by the Secretary for Public Works is one which I am sure appeals to both sides of the House. I was very pleased when I found the Minister introducing it apart from the amendment of the Factories and Shops Act with which it was combined last year. The arguments used this afternoon go to show that wages boards tend towards the improvement of wages of those who do not consider they have been getting fair remuneration for their labour.

One thing has been largely overlooked by many members who have spoken on the Opposition side, and that is that wages boards have been introduced to prevent the recurrence of the strikes which have taken place in the past. We are anxious to effect a settlement of any dispute that may arise between employer and employees. Hence our desire to get some form

of legislation that will meet the [7.30 p.m.] requirements of those who have clamoured for it so long. I am not one of those who are wedded to wages boards as against the Arbitration Act. I have a greater faith in the arbitration court than in wages boards, for the reason that the arbitration court is more comprehensive in its dealings with the various trades and callings that may come under its operations. It has been rather amusing to listen to some of the arguments that have been used this afternoon by some of the members sitting in direct Opposition. The leader of the Opposition, for instance, stated that we should be very careful not to make the scope of the Bill too wide, whilst we found the hon. member for Toowong desirous of making it very much wider than is proposed.

The PREMIER: That is the way to make it not too wide. (Laughter.)

Mr. BOWMAN: I do not think we can make it too wide for any trade or calling. If it is good for a specified number of trades, I contend the principle should apply to any body of men or women who desire to come under it. (Hear, hear!) In New Zealand the arbitration court embraces not merely artisans, but it embraces almost every form of labour. Clerks, I believe, come under it; and I think there is great necessity in Queensland for clerks to be protected against the miserable pittance that many of them receive. As educated men, who have to keep up an appearance, I am sure it must be within the knowledge of most hon. members that their pay is not in any way commensurate with the work they do, the ability they possess, or the responsibility imposed upon them.

Mr. BOUCHARD: Don't you find the same thing in the Government service?

Mr. BOWMAN: I am not making any distinction. I do not care whether they be Government employees or the employees of a private firm. I believe the Bill should embrace all who wish to come under it. The experience we have had in Queensland in regard to arbitration and conciliation has oft-times been stated in this House. The hon. member for Bowen stated that he had done something in that direction. But long before the hon. member was in this House members of the Labour party interested themselves in the matter—particularly Mr. Charles McDonald, the late member for Flinders, who introduced a Conciliation and Arbitration Bill as far back as 1894 or 1895.

Mr. JACKSON: Mr. Powers was the first to introduce it, I think.

Mr. BOWMAN: I know that Mr. Charles McDonald introduced a Bill on two occasions. We found a great deal of hostility on the part of the Government of the day to the measure. We have advocated it, particularly on account of the bitter experience many of us have gone through in industrial disputes. It is only when you have gone through such an experience, and when you feel keenly, as one does who has gone through a prolonged strike, that you appreciate the advantages of such a measure. I have had such an experience a few times in my life. I have been in strikes. I was told this afternoon by the leader of the Opposition

that I was always ready to help to bring on a strike. I may tell the hon. gentleman that I have at all times tried to settle disputes peaceably, and the difficulty in some of the strikes that I have been connected with has been, not for the leaders to get the men to strike, but to keep them from striking.

Mr. HARDACRE: Hear, hear! (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. BOWMAN: I can see the hon. member for Brisbane North smiling.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: I should think so.

Mr. BOWMAN: The hon. member seems to think it necessary to take my statement with a grain of salt, but I can say that the difficulty in 1890, in 1891, and in 1894—in our three big strikes—was not to get the men to strike, but to prevent them striking.

LABOUR MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BOWMAN: We have had conferences, and I know from my own experience in the trade I was connected with from the time I was a lad until ten or eleven years ago that we could not get the employers to confer with us. I hope this Bill will not only pass this Chamber but that it will be passed in another place, because I believe it is going to do a great amount of good and be a great relief, particularly to certain classes who have been mentioned during the course of the debate, who are, I believe, more deserving of our assistance than the male portion of the community. We are anxious that the Bill should become law, so that we may regulate wages. The hon. member for Oxley played very strongly upon the aged and infirm workers. One of the arguments used by our opponents in regard to conciliation and arbitration was, that we had no sympathy with the aged and infirm, as the fact of passing such a Bill as that would put those people out of court. In New Zealand, New South Wales, and Victoria provision has been made for the old and also for the slow workers. It would be unjust on the part of this or any other Chamber to pass a law that would preclude those people from earning a livelihood. It is very much better to give them an opportunity of earning a living than to have them applicants for old age pensions or for an indigent allowance. (Hear, hear!) An argument that has been put forward this afternoon—particularly by the hon. member for Oxley—is, that since arbitration courts and wages boards have come into existence they have hampered such people in finding employment. I claim that is not so. In any case, they are no worse off than they were before the law came into operation, or than they are in Queensland to-day. We were told by the hon. member for Oxley that there is a tendency for the most skilled workers to displace the slow or the incompetent worker. Is that not so in the majority of trades now? I know there are some firms which display a kindly consideration for men who have been valuable servants for many years, but I think I am right in saying that such instances are very rare. If the bulk of men who have to do hard toil happen to have a bent back, or are unable to keep up with the stalwart young man, the competitive system under which we live often compels an employer to employ the man whom he can get most work out of, and allow the slow man or the old man to "go to the wall." (Hear, hear.) I might say that I was rather surprised at the speech delivered by the leader of the Opposition this afternoon, or a portion of it, when he hoped that clause 48 would be modified in reference

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to the widening of the scope of the measure. I thought that was one of the best things done last session. (Hear, hear!) It was an amendment moved by myself. I do not say it was one of the best things because I did it, but it was an opportune time for widening the scope. When the wages boards were introduced we complained that the provisions were much too limited altogether, and we were desirous of seeing any trade or calling—I suppose I could say there are scores of trades in various industries in which the employees were waiting for this particular measure to be passed, so that they could come within its provisions. I know butchers, bootmakers, bakers, and furniture trades, clothing factory hands, and many other trades were waiting to come under its provisions, so that they could get what they consider a modicum of justice, which they cannot get by present methods. If we strike, our experience has been that there is sometimes a difficulty in getting recognition, and we want to avoid it. If it is right for four or five trades to come within the provisions of the Bill, surely it is right to include any class of labour. The hon. member for Toowong said the general labourer or the clerk would not be included. I take it that if we are to have men who are prepared to combine together—and I think this board will be ineffective, as I said last Thursday night, unless we have a combination of the men and the employers—that is going to be the most efficacious way of dealing with this wages board. I would like to see another matter included in the Bill—I do not know whether the Minister for Works or the Minister for Railways will include it—but today it is the law in connection with our Federal Arbitration Act. I will read the paragraph for the benefit of those who have been somewhat interested in strikes.

Mr. CAMPBELL: Do you say you moved clause 48?

Mr. BOWMAN: No; although I moved the omission of the word "and." It was an amendment I moved in connection with the hon. member's amendment. I do not desire to take the credit from the hon. gentleman in moving that. (Laughter.) I think the amendment on his amendment was a most important one, and much more important than the clause itself, because it would have remained inoperative had it remained as the hon. member introduced it in its amended form.

Mr. CAMPBELL: It is more likely to lead to strikes now than it was before.

Mr. BOWMAN: I cannot understand the hon. member for Moreton. He talks about it being more likely to lead to strikes. I will tell you what it will do. It will give an opportunity for a body of men who have a grievance to ask permission to come under the protection of that board, whereas, if the amendment moved by the hon. member had passed, it would want the assent of the employers as well as the employees before the employees could have the right to come. Today a body of employees can come under that provision because they have a grievance. In New Zealand, under their arbitration law, when there is a dispute and they are unable to deal with it in the Conciliation Court, and it is submitted to the Arbitration Court, if the employers or employees fail to come before that tribunal and defend their case, the case is gone on with by either side which is desirous of having it decided by the tribunal, and it does not matter whether it is the employers or employees who refuse to come up and give evidence, they are bound by the award of the

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court. So that we are only following the very good precedent which has been set in New Zealand. Before the interjection of the hon. member for Moreton I was speaking about a clause I would like to see inserted so as to secure the same beneficial results to men and women who have struck in the past, and who may yet strike in the future. In my experience as a trade unionist, and a bit of an agitator—

Mr. CAMPBELL and OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Ah, ah!

Mr. BOWMAN: I have had a pretty rough time from time to time from employers. Not that I was not capable of doing my work, but I happened to be fortunate or unfortunate in being the spokesman in many cases on behalf of my fellow-shopmates, which I never grudged to give, as far as I was able. But I know because of that stand, and because of my leadership in a strike in 1895, my name was posted up in almost all the factories in Brisbane—that I was not to be allowed to get any job in Brisbane because of my advocacy. I contend that that is unfair, it is unjust. I want now to read a paragraph in connection with the Federal Arbitration Court, dealing with employers who seek to penalise not only myself but many other men throughout Queensland. There are Western representatives here to-night. Even the Minister for Railways will bear me out in this: that many a man in the West has had to change his name merely to get a shed, because of his notoriety as a unionist standing up for the principles of the Labour party. Clause 9 of the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act states—

No employer shall dismiss any employee from his employment by reason merely of the fact that the employee is an officer or member of an organisation or is entitled to the benefit of an industrial agreement or award.

And if an employer does do that he is liable to a penalty of £20. I do not know whether I can induce the Minister to insert a paragraph like that, but I can promise him I will very warmly support it, and every member of the Labour party will support it; because we have men to-day who are on strike, both in the Brisbane and the Maryborough districts, who are penalised because they have stood up for their rights as men. We have had men who were penalised from time to time because they were members of an organisation, and happened to be chosen to act as spokesmen for their associates. I think that is unfair on the part of any employer. In the Brisbane Gas Company's strike, which the hon. member for Brisbane North referred to this afternoon, the company took exception to a man acting as secretary of the union who was outside their own works. That secretary, Mr. Peter Henderson, is well known in Brisbane. He is the secretary of the Seamen's Union and of the Trades and Labour Council, and bears a high reputation, which I do not think anyone can say anything against.

Mr. CAMPBELL: No; but the very fact of that man being a paid secretary.

Mr. BOWMAN: He did it so that he might protect the men in the union in the gas-works, and so that no individual would be singled out because he happened to be the secretary of the union. I know that is one of the reasons why he accepted the secretaryship. We have oftentimes been told that because we have our paid secretaries we are simply agitators, and it has been said more than once by the leader of the Opposition that there is a fear that many members of this House might become members of the board

unless something very specific is laid down that will prevent it. I believe that what you want on that board is practical men from both sides. (Hear, hear!) Men who have the intimate knowledge and an up-to-date knowledge of their various industries will be elected by the organisations when making an appeal to settle a difference that exists between them.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: This Bill provides for that.

Mr. BOWMAN: It provides for more than that. It provides that a man who is an employer or employee, and also a man who has been either an employer or employee, so long as they are *boni fide* tradesmen, they are eligible. I think the leader of the Opposition took some exception to the "has beens" being appointed, and what he wanted was men who are at present employers or employees in that trade. I know that there are men who have been brought up to a trade who might be asked to act under this Act as arbitrator or as a member of the board, who could, perhaps, give much more useful information about a certain trade than some tradesmen who might be chosen to go there and speak on behalf of their trade. I can give one instance, and I do it merely to show what I mean. We will say that there is a dispute in the printing trade, and they are going to select a certain number of employees and a certain number of employers to settle it. I have in my mind's eye a member of the Upper Chamber, the Hon. A. Hinchcliffe, who has been connected with the printing trade since he was a boy. I suppose that there are very few men who have a better practical knowledge of the printing trade than he has. Supposing that the Typographical Association desired that he should be one of their representatives, although he is not in the printing trade to-day, and is not a compositor, yet that man has a more intimate and up-to-date knowledge of the printing trade than probably any other representative who might be asked to sit on that board. That has been fully recognised, and it was recognised by the late commission which was appointed to inquire into the Government Printing Office, where he was selected as one of the representatives from the men on that particular commission.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: He might not be an employee.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: He is one of the "has beens."

Mr. BOWMAN: The leader of the Opposition does not want any "has beens" appointed to the board. I think that the special wages boards for "has beens," in Victoria particularly, has brought out very good results indeed. When you compare the wages of many trades—and some were quoted by other hon. members to-night from "Coghlan"—when you compare these wages as they were compared last session with the wages paid here and the wages paid in Melbourne, I think that any hon. gentleman who desires to see a change in the affairs of Queensland regarding wages and putting down the sweating that exists, ought to heartily endorse this Bill and widen its scope as far as it is possible. I am informed by certain employees in different trades that they are anxiously looking forward to the passage of this Bill. Many of them would have favoured an arbitration court, the same as myself, but they are prepared to take what they can get. With the amendments we got last session we have widened the scope of the Bill, and a good deal of the objection that took place last session can be overlooked this session. The penalties that are to be

imposed for a violation of this law are, I think, very necessary. Some hon. gentleman this afternoon seemed to think the enforcement of these penalties would be too stringent, but I do not think so, as any award given by these bodies should be carried out.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: By both parties.

Mr. BOWMAN: Yes; by both parties. No party should be allowed to violate the award which has been come to after due deliberation and decided on for a specified time. It would be unfair to both employers and employees if that award were not carried out until the time lapsed according to the agreement made by the board. In one of his arguments against the arbitration court this afternoon, the leader of the Opposition told us that the late Right Hon. Richard Seddon, before he died, made a statement to the effect that although wages had gone up and hours were reduced, the workmen were no better off because of the increased cost of living and high rents which they had to pay. That, I believe, is true, but I do not believe the hon. gentleman completed the statement that was made by the late Premier of New Zealand. I think he knew exactly the reason why that statement was made. He knew that the basic reason for that increased cost of living was the extortion of the landlord in that particular place. They put up rents, and many of the commercial men increased the price of commodities.

Hon. R. PHILP: The Government built workmen's cottages.

Mr. HARDACRE: They tried to meet the difficulty that way.

Mr. BOWMAN: I rather admire the Premier of New Zealand for trying to meet the employers and employees of New Zealand. He did build workmen's cottages, but that is not the only place that built workmen's cottages. They were also built by the London County Council.

Hon. R. PHILP: That did not meet the trouble.

Mr. BOWMAN: There were very few of them built. We know the increased cost of land in New Zealand. That is the reason that we have so many people coming to Queensland to-day, not only from New Zealand but also from the other States, and it is because they cannot get the land in their respective States that they are coming to Queensland, where there is a greater abundance of it. We know the competition that has taken place in New Zealand for land. It has been so keen there that there have been hundreds of applicants for land disappointed. That has been one of the great troubles. I, for one, do not look upon an Arbitration Act or a wages board as the panacea for all evils. I do not say that it is going to be the be all and end all of the wage-earners' conditions, but I do know that it is a means towards an end. I believe that they are helpful. I believe we are doing a greater service to the wage-earners of Queensland to-day by giving them an opportunity of settling their differences with their employees instead of allowing the old system of strikes to go on perpetually, as has been our unfortunate experience in the past. Mr. Mills, manager of the Union Steamship Company, in the course of a speech at a dinner at Otago, said that one of the best Acts passed in New Zealand was the Conciliation and Arbitration Act for the settlement of disputes. He recognised what that 1890 strike meant. The hon. gentleman and others interested in shipping also recognised what that 1890 strike

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meant. It meant paralysis of trade pretty well all over Australia, and if it had been carried, perhaps as far as some of them wanted it to go, then the whole commerce of Australia would have been paralysed. I contend that if we can do anything by way of legislation to avert what took place in 1890, when thousands of men and women throughout Australia were reduced to suffering, through no fault of their own, simply because there was a conflict between the two parties, we will do a good thing. That is what has happened in the past, and I think such an experience as that should guide us in the future, so that we may take such

action as will prevent a repetition [8 p.m.] of those experiences. We have been

told in previous debates, either on the question of establishing an arbitration court or wages boards, that strikes are not very frequent in Australia. But we find that there have been a number of strikes lately, and we are anxious to avert troubles of that nature. What happened during the past few weeks? An award was given affecting one of the largest unions in Australia—the Australian Workers' Union, comprising shearers and labourers, and numbering about 30,000 members in the different States. Had it not been for that Federal Arbitration Court, I do not think we should have had that matter settled so satisfactorily. It has not been satisfactory to many of the men in the union, but still there is the award, and it has averted what would probably have been as big a strike as that which took place in 1891. Who forgets the strike of 1891?

Mr. PAYNE: I don't.

Mr. BOWMAN: I do not think the hon. member for Mitchell is likely to forget it, or that the hon. member for Gregory is likely to forget it. Why? Because the hon. member for Gregory had to suffer three years in St. Helena, along with others, in connection with that strike. I do not mention this fact because I consider it was a disgrace to the hon. member for Gregory. I think it was an honour. Sir Horace Tozer, the late Home Secretary, told him that if he asked he could be released, but the hon. member for Gregory stood by the men who were with him, and said, "They are as innocent as I am, and I am going to stop here unless you release them." We know what that strike cost the country. We know the bitterness of feeling which it engendered, and which still exists among many station-owners and some of the men. The Minister for Railways knows all about this, because he was interested in the matter. The result of that strike has been that there have been black lists from the Pastoralists' Association read out in this Chamber, giving the names and characters of certain men, and intimating that they should not be given employment because they were unionists, and had been on strike fighting for their cause. I read such a list in this House during the last Parliament. These are the things that we want to avoid, and I think that the time has arrived, and that it is generally admitted that the time has arrived, when we should pass such a measure as that now before the House. The friendly spirit in which this debate has been carried on shows that there is a strong tendency to regulate the conditions which prevail between employers and employees, and that something should be substituted for the old-time strike, which is barbarous in its methods and cruel to those who have to take part in its operations. I can speak as feelingly on that subject as perhaps any man in this House, because in one strike I went for fourteen

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weeks almost starving and nearly barefooted. We struck against what we considered an injustice on the part of our employers, who reduced the rates on piecework by from 5 to 15 per cent. We fought for fourteen weeks, and then had to give in, because the employers were able to bring men from Sydney and Melbourne to take our places. We do not want a repetition of that kind of thing, and the workers do not want a repetition of it. Members of the boot trade, butchers, saddlers, and others have asked me whether there was any hope of this measure going through. I have every hope that it is going through, and I trust that when it passes this House it will be more humanely considered in another place than it was last session. Now that this measure is detached from the Factories and Shops Bill it should have a better chance of passing, and I hope that we shall soon see it the law in Queensland. Those who are anxious to see the conditions of the workers improved will act wisely in assisting to pass this measure as it is, with amendments which will improve it. I trust that the Secretary for Public Works will accept the suggestion which I have made, and include a provision similar to that in the Federal Arbitration Court Act, which is to the effect that an employer shall be penalised if he "sacks" a man or a woman because he or she belongs to a union. I do not claim that unionism is simply good for the employee. I am quite satisfied that it is a protection to the good employer as against the unscrupulous employer.

Mr. CAMPBELL: As long as they do not use their power politically.

Mr. BOWMAN: The employers' organisations have been used politically. At the various conferences of the employers there is a political trend right through their discussions, and the chief object they have had in view has been to down the Labour party politically. It has not been industrialism at all that has concerned them. As a Labour man, I contend that the political and industrial movements are inseparable movements. I recognise as well as any man in this House the position we are in to-day as a Labour party, and that had we dwelt in our advocacy of the claims of labour only on what politics have done for us we should never have been where we are at the present time. We owe our position to our industrial organisations, to their organisers, and to the propaganda work done by the little *Worker*, which has done more of that kind of work than any other paper in Queensland. I hope the present editor will long live to carry on that work. It is the organisations which have made the Labour party, and yet the hon. member for Moreton says they should not interfere politically. Has the hon. member ever read the objects of a trade union? If so, he will have found that, while no doubt their first object is to improve the conditions of the members, probably by increasing their wages or lessening the hours of labour, yet there are included many political reforms which are advocated and embodied in their rules. You cannot separate the political and the industrial. Probably a deputation from trade unions will shortly wait upon the Premier to ask for a measure giving an eight-hour day. A measure of that kind was first introduced in Queensland in 1888 by the present Federal Chief Justice, Sir Samuel Griffith, but it was not passed. The trade unions want the eight-hour day made a legal period for work. That is why we have our annual demonstrations and sport in celebration of Eight Hours Day.

Will the hon. member say that we can accomplish that without the aid of political machinery?

Hon. R. PHILP: That can be gained without legislation.

Mr. BOWMAN: It is not gained, unfortunately. There are only certain trades in which the eight-hour day prevails. The hon. gentleman now agrees with legislation which is going to regulate hours and wages and apprentices, which unionists have been asking for, and which he has refused them in the past. And yet he asks us to leave the political aspect alone. No; our labour movement is an industrial and political movement, and we are going to use all the political power we can in order to further the interests of the industrial unions. It is because we have suffered in the past by too little political action; it is because we have asked the hon. gentleman to give us legislation of this character which he has refused, that we take our present action. The leader of the Opposition, in reply to the hon. member for Bowen, said he gave us the Shops and Factories Act. He did, but he should have added that there was an agitation for years by the assistants for it.

Hon. R. PHILP: All legislation is preceded by agitation.

Mr. BOWMAN: That is why I am proud to be an agitator. I think the greatest credit in connection with that measure is due to my late colleague, a member of another Chamber, Mr. McDonnell, and when the shop assistants were holding a celebration at Eschenhagen's in regard to that measure, Mr. Foxton declared that Mr. Frank McDonnell was the father of the Act. The hon. gentleman's Government were pressed from behind to give us that legislation, but we have asked very frequently for other legislation of a similar character and it has been denied to us. I am thankful that even at this eleventh hour we find members sitting on the Opposition side and the Government cross benches who are in favour of a measure of this kind. I hope we shall not have the hon. member for Moreton desiring that we should throw away our political power as trades unionists. What he wants us to do I am perfectly certain he would never advise the members of his association to do. They have a power—a greater power than we have—the power of money and the Press. At any rate, we also have a power—the loyalty of many of our people to the principles we advocate. We depend upon that loyalty, and it is our desire to give them something in return for the loyalty they have shown. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. CAMPBELL (*Moreton*): The hon. member has paid this side a back-handed compliment by saying that even at the eleventh hour we are desirous of doing something.

Mr. BOWMAN: At the eighth hour you would not do it—a few years ago.

Mr. CAMPBELL: I am not aware that this measure ever came before the House previous to last year.

Mr. BOWMAN: Other measures of a similar character came forward, and you always voted against them.

Mr. CAMPBELL: I want to make this point clear. The hon. member is never tired of abusing this side for their conservative principles, but it was left to this side to propose the amendment last year which would have extended the operation of this measure, and that amendment was accepted in a mutilated form.

Mr. BOWMAN: Which, if passed, would have been inoperative.

Mr. CAMPBELL: I contend that it would have been operative. I have no objection to unions. I think they are excellent organisations, but I object to the political power sought to be used by the agitator—the man who stirs up strife between the employer and employee. I asked that the two parties should be allowed to come together in friendly conference, as was done at Bundamba recently. That is a case in point, and the hon. member says: "No, our vocations would be gone. We must get in between and keep these things going. We have no chance of getting into Parliament unless we have a row on outside." I submit that the Bill does not go far enough. I contended on the second reading last year that it did not go far enough, and I said that if the Government were sincere, why did they not make it apply to everyone? I say so to-night. Why should the Government exempt themselves? The hon. member has carefully left that point alone.

Mr. BOWMAN: I said I would include the Government as well as a private firm.

Mr. CAMPBELL: The hon. member has it in his power to compel it. Will he do that?

Mr. BOWMAN: Wait, my friend; wait.

Mr. CAMPBELL: If he is a friend of the working man outside, why not stand up like a man?

Mr. BOWMAN: I have never been ashamed to stand up.

Mr. CAMPBELL: The hon. member has the power to do this. Why does he not answer my question directly? The hon. member has tried to belittle some of the arguments used by the leader of the Opposition in regard to the operation of a like measure in New Zealand, and he says one of the reasons why the working men are not better off there than they were before is that land is so dear. Well, land is cheap here, and the reason that men are coming here is that they may make money. By and by land will get just as dear by reason of the increased population. People are not coming here for the reason the hon. member is making out, but because they want to put more money into their pockets. Employers are twitted with the fact that they are always trying how much they can make. I contend that there is no fairer body in the community than the employers.

LABOUR MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

Mr. CAMPBELL: Yes, as a body. There are black sheep in every fold, just as there are in the Labour party. But "one swallow does not make a summer." I rose more particularly to refer to what fell from the leader of the Labour party when he referred to the application of a measure of this nature. I contended for an extension of the principle last year, and he would not support me. The hon. gentleman contended that the men connected with these boards should be up to date, and that was what I contended last year.

Mr. BOWMAN: I gave you an instance of a man not working at his trade who was up to date—the Hon. Albert Hinchcliffe.

Mr. CAMPBELL: I did not hear the hon. member.

Mr. BOWMAN: You should have stopped in and listened. You would not exclude him, would you?

Mr. CAMPBELL: No; but he is away from the trade altogether. I say the wording of the clause is misleading.

Mr. BOWMAN: Does it not stand to reason that the employers or employees will pick the

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best representative men to sit on the board? They will not pick a man who is out of time with them.

Mr. CAMPBELL: But the Minister may have to make a choice, and there is no knowing whom he will select. He may choose a man who has been out of touch with a trade for twenty-five years. Last session the hon. member refused point blank to support an amendment to overcome that difficulty, but I hope an amendment will be made in this Bill in that direction to make the tribunal effective and satisfactory to all concerned. I intend to give the Bill my hearty support, and I shall do all I can, as I did on the last occasion, to have one or two amendments made to further improve the measure.

Mr. HARDACRE (*Leichhardt*): I wish first of all to give the Government credit for introducing the Bill. At the same time I must say that I view it very much in the mood of a phrase that I saw used in connection with an American comic picture—not that I think this Bill comic. I saw an illustration of a pianist in a western town in America, and the motto was, "Don't shoot the pianist, he is doing his best." Whilst I admit that the Government are doing their best in this matter, that best does not seem to amount to very much, though in a case like this I am going to give them my support.

Mr. MAXWELL: Are you going to vote against the Bill?

Mr. HARDACRE: No. I voted for the Bill last session, and I will do the same now. I gave the Minister a good deal of support last session, both by not saying much and also by speaking in favour of the Bill whenever I did speak. I said during the Address in Reply debate that I did not view the Government programme as one that would set the Thames on fire. This is one of the best measures promised in that programme; but, viewing it as a member of the Labour party, and as one who believes that these kind of measures really substantially effect very little, I cannot get very enthusiastic over it. It has been proved during the course of the debate that these measures do not do very much good. We have had the illustration of New Zealand, where legislation of this nature has been in force for some thirteen years, under one of the best Premiers New Zealand has ever had—the late Sir Richard Seddon. Mr. Seddon himself admitted that, in spite of all this humanitarian legislation, practically the workers were no better off. Wages boards of this kind have been in existence in Victoria for some time, and I would like to ask how much better off the workers there are than they were before wages boards were established? The hon. member for Brisbane North quoted figures to show that wages had increased in some cases by 2s. 11d., 2s. 7d., 2s. 1d., and so on; but I would point out that the comparison is made between a time when the State of Victoria was suffering from a very severe depression, when wages were lower than perhaps at any other period in the history of the State, and the present time, when, outside the scope of the wages boards altogether, wages have risen generally. I believe that wages boards will not lift wages largely. I believe that they can only regulate the relation that one class of wages bears to another. What will regulate wages will be the competition outside the sphere of operations of wages boards altogether. A measure of this kind may lift the worst wages in some little degree. On the Address in Reply debate

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I pointed out that, in spite of all the social and industrial legislation that is taking place, in spite of the development of our public estate, in spite of all the progress we have made during the 100 years of Australian history, wages are lower to-day than they have been almost from the commencement of our history. At any rate, they are lower than they were fifty years ago. Coghlan, in his work "A Statistical Account of Australia and New Zealand," for the year 1903-4, says—

From the point of view of wages and cost of living, the greater part of this period—that is, from 1871 to 1885—was an extremely prosperous one, improving year by year from 1872 onwards. At no period, except in the five golden years—1853-7—were wages so high, and at no previous period was the purchasing price of money so great. The tide of improvement reached its highest level just before 1885, and in 1886 the signs of a reaction were visible.

The fact that it has been considered necessary to introduce wages boards in Queensland at this late hour in our history points a moral to the effect that, after all, we are not really coping effectively with the difficulty, and shows that we ought to turn our attention to a more radical reform than is proposed in the Government programme or in the Opposition programme.

Mr. JACKSON: Does not this Bill form a part of the Labour programme?

Mr. HARDACRE: I do not want to detract from the merit of what the Government are doing, because the Bill is a good one so far as it goes. I give the Government every credit for introducing it. At the same time, I hold that the Labour party's programme goes much further than this Bill, and I believe the Government themselves desire, as well as others in this House, to go deeper to the root of the question and find out where the real difficulty lies. It was pointed out that the reason why after all the social legislation passed did not really lift the condition of the workers was because of two things—the increase [8.30 p.m.] in the price of commodities, and, more important still, the increase in the land which the landlord obtained on account of the increased value of land. I would like to point out this to the members of the Chamber, and particularly to members of my own party: that there is a limit to the increased price which commodities can reach, because they are limited, roughly speaking, by the cost of production; and, therefore, whilst there will be increase there cannot be any substantially great increase, and, therefore, it is not in the increase of commodities that our great difficulty lies. But there is no limitation to the increased price which land may attain, and the increased price of land has to be paid, as Premier Seddon said, not merely by the workers, but by the employers themselves. It is the extra cost which is thrown upon production, and, having to pay that price out of the production, neither the workers themselves nor the employers get any benefit from the increased progress which takes place. On the other hand, though they are less troubled by competition to a certain extent, they have fewer markets to themselves, and can scarcely pay the bare living wage. Now, if we allow that thing to go on in Queensland, which the hon. member for Moreton said would happen—the increased price of the land to go on, and to lift, and lift, and lift, then it means after all this legislation and other legislation, that in ten or twenty years from now, we shall still be struggling as we are to-day, with bad times—not bad to-day, perhaps, they are better than they have been—but depressions will come again. All which will have resulted from the

meritorious endeavour to benefit the condition of the worker will be that it will all have escaped out of the worker's pocket into the increased price of land.

Mr. CAMPBELL: Economical laws will prevail.

Mr. HARDACRE: It is for us to try and prevent that economical law prevailing, and in our platform there is a method of preventing it, and that is by taxation of public land values. However, I do not wish to say anything more about that, except to say once more that there is a moral to it. It is fifty years now since Hood sang "The Song of the Shirt," and Mrs. Browning sang that still more plaintive "Cry of the Children." After fifty years of progress in the old world and in this country, here we are face to face once again with the song of the shirt and the cry of the children in this new land of ours, and I say it behoves us to go deeper into the cause of the trouble and try and meet the difficulty, even than this proposed measure of appointing wages boards. I believe it is a good Bill, and that the Government deserve credit for introducing it. I know the leader of the Labour party and a great many members in this State are anxious to have it passed. But at the same time I will not conceal my desire to see something better done to meet the difficulty which has brought about the evil conditions which we are now under.

Mr. SUMNER (*Vundah*): As one who has taken a great interest in conciliation and arbitration, I should like to say a word or two before this Bill goes through the second reading. I may say that I welcome this Bill, though it is only one step in the right direction. I welcome it because it dissipates for once the old idea of the political economists of the old school that supply and demand, and supply and demand alone, is to regulate the price paid for labour. The day has come—it has come in other States, and I am very glad to welcome it in Queensland—when the employee shall have some say as to the rate of pay which he shall get for his labour. I am glad, too, that the old idea is being dissipated that we used to hear a great deal about some years ago—the old freedom of contract. I think people are beginning to recognise that that old freedom of contract which used to frighten us, and which men used to preach so much about, was only a one-sided contract. It was something like that part of the story of Monte Christo, where that dignitary of the church gets away with the church's money, and gets captured by the brigands. It is many years since I read the book. Anyhow, it struck me he was captured by the brigands, and he wanted his breakfast.

Mr. LESINA: He got into the hands of the capitalists. (Laughter.)

Mr. SUMNER: You put that in. At any rate, he fell into the hands of the brigands, and they did not want to rob him of this money. So when they thought he was hungry and wanted his breakfast, they said, "Do you want anything to eat; here is the bill of fare," representing so many thousand dollars. "Nonsense," he said. Dinner time came and went, but at supper time he was called to pay the price and get his supper. I think anyone who has had anything to do with working for wages in industrial life will admit that that represents the position of the worker. It is take it or starve. Where that is the position, it can only be a one-sided contract, and I am very glad, even for that reason, that the old idea of freedom of contract is to be put aside and that the workers in Queensland, for once, are to have a say in the rate of

wages they are to receive. (Hear, hear!) I welcome this Bill because it protects a class that needs our protection, and that needs the protection of every healthy-minded man in the community—it protects the women and children, and the weak and the helpless. I know that all trade unionists in the world are not agreed upon these wages boards, or upon conciliation and arbitration. There are a good many trade unionists in the world who would not give a snap of the finger for all the Arbitration Bills which were ever brought forward. They believe the best power in the hands of the worker is the power to "down tools" at any time, and perhaps with strong unions like they have in Great Britain and some other parts of the world that is the very best weapon, because we know from our experience of the arbitration courts in New Zealand and New South Wales that they have failed in certain instances. It has not been because of the Act, but because it has been almost an impossibility to get a right constitution of the court—to get it conducted rightly. We know that has been the cause of the failure in New South Wales; the lawyer element entering into it, and making it cumbersome and unwieldy, has been one of the great causes of its failure. But this Bill protects a class that cannot help themselves. Another thing why I welcome this Bill is, that I think it will be a great benefit to employers in Queensland. (Hear, hear!) The hon. member for Oxley alluded to the reputable employer. I think when once this Bill is passed it will be impossible for the disreputable employer to "set the pace," as he does in Queensland to-day. It is the disreputable employer who sets the pace. This Bill will remedy that, and it will be the reputable employer who is willing and ready to pay good wages who will set the standard and the pace, and I believe in that wise he will do some good. Some reference was made by the leader of the Opposition to the constitution of this board. I think it can be well left to the employers and the employees as to the men who shall represent them. There may be employees who are up to date in their trade, but we know there are many men who thoroughly understand the trade, who, if they had to go before a board and set out the technicalities with regard to that trade, perhaps their education and training would not allow them to do it, and I think it only fair for the employees to select the very best men to represent them. I find I have not got rid of the influenza, so I shall have to drop it, but I want to say a word about the old and the weak workers. One has only to read something about American industry to find out something in regard to old and weak men. It is said that a man over forty in America has no chance of getting a job in many industries, and there are very few wages boards and arbitration courts there. The tendency of modern industrial life is to push out and wedge out at every point the weak and slow worker, and also the aged. I say that this is not confined to places where there is a wages board, but I think that by the advent of wages boards we shall be able to protect these workers and help them. The longer the present system continues then the more need is there for a system of old age pensions.

Mr. SOMERSET (*Stanley*): I have no intention of speaking at length on this measure. I rise to say that I intend to support the Bill. (Hear, hear!) With regard to what has been said about the slow and aged workers, I think that the Workers' Compensation Act has had

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a disadvantageous effect upon them. It has probably nothing to do with this particular Bill, except that I hope that some amendment might be made in that Workers' Compensation Act to assist that class of worker. If I had not intended to support this Bill, I think that the able, at times eloquent, and, I may add, conciliatory speech of the leader of the Labour party, the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, would have induced me to do so.

Mr. JONES (*Burnett*): I am not going to detain the House at any great length, except to say that I will support this Bill, although I fully realise, with the leader of our party, that it will not remedy the evils that prevail in our industrial life. Still we may congratulate the Minister on the introduction of this Bill, and the Government also, because in spite of boasted prosperity and boasted democracy there is a very great necessity for measures of this kind.

Mr. MANN: It is only a palliative.

Mr. JONES: I quite recognise that. Our present prosperity, as has been pointed out by members who spoke on the Address in Reply, is due chiefly to a kindly Providence by way of good seasons. (Hear, hear!) I am only sorry to have to say that that prosperity is shared by too few, and not by the greatest number. This is a measure which will assist us to get a fuller share of that prosperity. It will help us to get nearer to the Labour party's objective, which is, as everyone knows, the securing for the wealth-producers the full result of their labour. If we cannot get the full result of their labour given to the wealth-producers, most men will agree that they are entitled to be better treated than they are at the present time.

Mr. CAMPBELL: What is their full share?

Mr. PAULL: What is their full share in bad seasons?

Mr. JONES: I am not going to deal with the Labour party's objective here. I shall have an opportunity of doing that on the Financial Statement.

The PREMIER: The wages boards will settle what is their full share.

Mr. JONES: The labourers who are the wealth-producers of this State are not getting the full result of their labour at present. I would like to quote from a report of the British Board of Trade, which shows the amount paid to the wage-earner for each £100 of value produced. Although these figures apply to Great Britain, I think the amount the wage-earner receives in Queensland is lower still. In the mining trade in Great Britain the wages paid per £100 worth produced is £55; shipbuilding, £37; tramways, £31; railways, £30; agriculture, £29; cotton, £29; iron, £23; steel, £23; brewing, £7. That is a very small share for the wage-earner to get.

Mr. WHITE: That does not explain anything.

Mr. JONES: It explains that the wage-earners who are engaged in these industries are not receiving 50 per cent. of the wealth they produce. In the beer trade, the wage-earner only receives £7 for every £100 of wealth produced.

Mr. COWAP: Do you call that wealth? That is a poor illustration.

Mr. JONES: It is value, and some get rich by its manufacture. I know it is of no value to a great many.

Mr. BOWMAN: It makes many people valueless.

Mr. JONES: The object of this Bill is to appoint special boards to fix the maximum

[*Mr. Somerset.*

number of hours and the minimum wage. There is one clause of the Bill which I would like to deal with. That is clause 10, which reads—

The board shall ascertain as a question of fact the average prices or rates of payment (whether piecework prices or rates or wages prices or rates) paid by reputable employers to employees of average capacity.

The wages should not be fixed by so-called reputable employers. The same clause deals with slow workers. I do not think that the Minister in charge of this Bill, or any other speaker, has properly defined the meaning of "slow worker." I do not know whether the term is used in the Factories and Shops Act of Victoria.

Mr. BOWMAN: It is used in connection with many trades in New Zealand.

Mr. JONES: I want to know is a slow worker synonymous with infirm worker?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The board will have to decide that.

Mr. JONES: I should say that if a man is not doing sufficient for the wages he receives he will be deemed a slow worker. All men are not born equal—(hear, hear!)—and in every occupation you will see some men a little better than others. I would very much like to know if a man is not able to earn as much as his fellow-employee is he deemed a slow worker? I know it is provided that such slow workers shall not number more than one-fifth of the proportion of the whole number of persons engaged in such factory. I think that is a loophole to enable a certain number of employees to be engaged at a less rate of wages than the minimum prescribed in the Act.

Mr. COWAP: These slow workers have to get a certificate.

Mr. JONES: I should like to see that clause refer to aged and infirm only. I have been used to a trade—the mining trade—where I have seen such men get their 8s. 4d., or the standard rate of miners' wages for the shift, and there are always some men better than others. If a man is too slow in any particular calling, he should tackle something else he is better adapted for.

Mr. BOWMAN: He may not be adapted for any other trade after he has spent a lifetime at one.

Mr. JONES: However, I should like to see the operation of that clause confined to aged and infirm workers. There is one other thing that we should try to do in this Bill, and that is to do away with overtime and piecework. Overtime has a tendency to reduce wages. I contend that in this enlightened age a worker should be able to earn sufficient to insure a good living by working a certain number of hours only. There is too much overtime worked in most of our industries.

Mr. BOWMAN: Very often it is not paid for.

Mr. JONES: It is because a person cannot earn sufficient in eight hours that he is willing to tackle overtime. Paying low wages is an incentive to men to work overtime in order to supplement their scanty income. Piecework also has a tendency to reduce wages, and I should like to see it abolished, or reduced to very narrow limits.

Mr. CAMPBELL: You want a levelling down.

Mr. JONES: I want to see a better distribution of wealth than we have at the present time. I am pleased to see the provision in clause 48, whereby the operation of this measure may be extended to other trades and businesses. I think the scope of the Bill is

too narrow, unless clause 48 is retained. I understand from a reply made by the Minister to an interjection that miners will have an opportunity of coming under the provisions of the Bill. I very much regret to say that in the mining industry in Queensland there is a tendency to reduce wages. I read a statement in a newspaper the other day to the effect that in Gympie there are men working on the face for £2 4s. a week, whereas the standard wage in Queensland for that class of work is £2 10s. per week in the South, and in the North £3 per week.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Do not you let any tenders in the mines you are in?

Mr. JONES: No.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Think.

Mr. JONES: I do not control any mine.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Are you not a shareholder in some mines?

Mr. JONES: I own the 196th part of one mine. I do not think I have very much control over the working of that mine.

Mr. BARNES: Why, you are becoming a bloated capitalist!

Mr. JONES: I had to work very hard for it before I came into this Chamber, and the fact of my coming here has reduced my interest considerably. I never let any tender in my life.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You are preaching one thing and practising another.

Mr. JONES: I beg the hon. gentleman's pardon; I have never let any contract, or had the control of any work in any mine in this State or in any other State. However, I am very pleased that the provision in clause 48 is contained in the Bill. By not paying workers a sufficient wage the employers are taking away that which rightly belongs to the workers, and we cannot describe that action by any other word than theft. It matters not if the worker is hungry, or there are many workers and not enough work to go round, the theft is still perpetrated. Our hospitals are maintained in the name of charity, and we have our asylums and prisons. The cost of those institutions is great, and they are established principally because wages are very low and because sweating prevails. If the money which is spent in private benevolence and in the establishment and maintenance of our asylums and prisons were added to the wages of the workers, the number of inmates in those institutions would be minimised to a very great extent. That is one of the reasons why I give my hearty support to a measure of this kind. While I recognise that it would be better to have arbitration and conciliation courts, I consider that this Bill is a step in the right direction, a step which will do more for the wage-earning section of the community than any other measure that has been introduced into this Chamber. Therefore, I shall give it my hearty support.

Mr. LESINA (*Clermont*): There is a story told of a Neapolitan agitator who on various occasions mounted a public rostrum and set forth in glowing language the evils of modern society. He had a long list of grievances against society, each one more serious than its predecessors, but suddenly someone made him a present of a new pair of boots, and then his public grievances were all satisfied. That story of the Neapolitan agitator may be said to be applicable to the proceedings of this evening, because we have been offered a new pair of boots. But even if we accept the new pair of boots, it does not necessarily follow that all popular grievances have been satisfied.

This Wages Boards Bill is only one concession out of the 900 measures that we want. It is a small concession; nevertheless, it is a good one, though small, and all I rise for is to state that while thanking the Government for the introduction of this measure, I do not think any fundamental change is going to take place in modern economical conditions by passing a measure of this description. In Victoria they have had such a measure on the statute-book for nearly eleven years; it has been amended fourteen distinct times, and yet it does not give satisfaction. Anyone who doubts that statement need only look at a copy of "The Lone Hand," published in July of this year, in which there is a leading article entitled "The Sweater and Society—Robert Harper and His Starch Works," in the city of Melbourne. This article is published for the public good, and gives the facts as they were detailed before a representative industrial body. It sets forth the grievances of workers employed in a factory in Melbourne, and makes quotations from the evidence as published in the *Argus* and the *Age*. That evidence must convince any fair-minded man that sweating is as rife and as cruel and as far-reaching in its fell effects in Victoria today as it is in Queensland without any legislation of this description. Still, that measure has done good in half a dozen different directions, as the leader of the Labour party has pointed out to-night. The good it has done stands to the eternal credit of those who passed the measure, but we are, nevertheless, face to face with the undeniable fact that legislation of this kind is merely of a palliative character, which never touches the root of the matter, never gets to bedrock, never touches the social system which is responsible for all these evils. Our whole time is spent in groping blindly after a remedy, which is, after all, only of a palliative character. We want to inquire into first principles. Why does one man sweat another? Why does one body of men in the form of a corporation sweat another? Why does Bill

[9 p.m.] Smith sweat John Brown? Why does society permit the existence of sweating? Why do men sweat their neighbours? Why should sweating be practically recognised by legislation? Webster's dictionary defines a sweater as a man who gets something for nothing—who takes something that does not belong to him. It is embezzlement, theft, robbery. It may be called "thrift" by some persons who do not like to use harsh terms, but at bedrock we know, and our knowledge of economics teaches us, that legislation of this kind does not get at the root of the evil. It can only be temporary, and it does not stop exactly at that point where we want it to stop. That is why it is not wise to grow enthusiastic, for by that means we raise false hopes in the minds and hearts of people outside, who are not perhaps well read in economic questions, and who think the passage of this Bill will transform society. It will do nothing of the kind. The mere fact of the leader of the Opposition, representing all that is retrogressive, reactionary, and Tory, supporting this measure is enough to make me suspicious, for evidently he does not anticipate any serious harm to the class or party to which he belongs by the passage of this Bill.

Mr. BOWMAN: But there was an election recently.

Mr. LESINA: It may be because the electors spoke so strenuously that may have something to do with his attitude; or it may be that he and his party anticipate that this

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measure will be dealt with harshly in another branch of the Legislature, I am quite content to believe that the hon. gentleman is sincere in his desire to improve the present conditions of society, only his methods and our methods are different. But because we differ, I will not quarrel with him, or impute wrong motives to him. It is simply a difference in our point of view. Those who have read economic questions closely are the more convinced as time passes, and we have an opportunity of studying the conditions as they exist in New Zealand and other States where they have passed similar legislation, that nothing is to be gained by the passage of palliative legislation. Every little benefit is of a temporary character, and that is borne out by an interview published in the *Trinity Times*, which is edited by a late member of this House, Mr. Burrows. The other day a gentleman from New Zealand dropped in to see Mr. Burrows. He was a Mr. Seymour, and he carried a letter of introduction from a New Zealand editor. Mr. Seymour was for some time a member of the Parliamentary Labour League and secretary of the Fellmongers' Union, and as he is interested in the labour movement he knew exactly what he was talking about. Here is what Mr. Seymour said to Mr. Burrows—

Mr. J. Seymour, late of New Zealand, visited this office last week, with introduction from Mr. E. F. Way, a journalist at one time connected with the *Street*, later editing the *Eagle*, Charters Towers, and now editing the *Worker* in Auckland.

Mr. Seymour has taken an active part in political matters in New Zealand for many years past, and at the time of his departure was a member of the Parliamentary Labour League there and secretary of the Fellmongers' Union.

Notwithstanding the passing of a large number of democratic measures in New Zealand, Mr. Seymour states that conditions continue unsatisfactory, as in nearly every instance the gains in wages have been taken away practically by increased cost of living and in higher rents, etc., and he evidently thinks New Zealand is a good place to get away from.

The Labour party are still battling away there to secure necessary reforms, and he said that the Labour party had nominated twelve candidates for the Municipal Council of Auckland, but only one—Dr. Stopford—was returned. He had been able to establish a depot for sterilised milk, the infant mortality—owing to bad milk—having been very high.

A Bill for workmen's homes, introduced by Mr. Myers, the mayor (a brewer), had been shelved for six months.

The members of the Labour League in Christchurch, Wellington, and Auckland were each contributing £50 to defray the expenses of an organiser, with the view to forming a strong Labour party, to be a check on the Conservatives and Liberals.

Mr. Macdonald, an English Labour member (familiarily known as "Boot?"), had recently visited New Zealand.

The workmen had secured a rise of 5 per cent. in wages, but the cost of living had gone up 33 per cent. Bread had gone up from 3d. to 3½d., milk the same; blucher boots from 4s. 11d. to 5s. 6d. and 6s.

The party were trying to get a Fair Profits Bill, also a Fair Rents Bill, under which rents would be fixed by a board. The workmen's homes would be owned by the State and let on a sixty-six years' lease.

That is the result of a number of years of advanced legislation in New Zealand. They have had from time to time in the Parliament of New Zealand, not a Labour party, but a number of advanced Liberals—Ballance, Seddon, Ward—and a following of men of the same type, who believed in benefiting society by the passage of reform legislation, and they have placed on the statute-book over forty democratic measures which to-day are only talked about here. Some of them are ten years old, and the result is, according to the opinion of

[*Mr. Lesina.*

advanced men who are in touch with unionism, that all the advantage has gone to the landlord, or in bigger profits to those engaged in trade. The worker has got nothing. He has obtained an advance in wages, but there has been a 33 per cent. rise in the cost of living. The hon. member for Burke, who went to New Zealand some time ago, could, if he liked, speak of his own experiences. The experience of New Zealand inclines me to the belief that the members of the Labour party are on the wrong track in placing so much faith in the passage of palliative legislation. I say again, that the wise thing to do, seeing that we have the experience of other countries to guide us to the conclusion that palliative legislation is of no avail, is to strike out a new line of conduct. And that brings me to the conclusion which I think ought above all things and at all times to constitute the real reason for the existence of the Labour party. This tinkering with social evils will do no permanent good. This party will have to get back to fundamental principles, and must concern itself with the ownership and use of the soil on which we live—that one thing which enters into every avocation in which we are engaged, and which affects most closely the question of rent and wages and profits. We will have to get back to the land. Everywhere that is the cry. It is raised in England as well as in the States of Australia. Let us settle that important question first, and I believe that all the evils which spring out of our present short-sighted policy will disappear. If they do not disappear by the settlement of that problem, we will then be able, in the light gained by the settlement of that problem, to introduce reforms of a different and more far-reaching character. The discovery of a social sore like sweating, and the plastering upon it of a little ointment in the shape of wages boards or arbitration and conciliation, is not going to remedy the evil. The evil is inherent in the present condition of society, and the revolutionary Labour party, which does not know that the proper and complete reform worth striving for entails a complete upheaval of the condition of society, its transformation, and the establishment of another, is simply wasting its time. Perhaps it is better to get this little measure than to get nothing at all. It is just as well not to impress upon workers outside that we are too wise—that we know too much of the Labour movement to believe for ten minutes that this is not going to settle the labour question, that it is not going to settle the unemployed question, and that it is not going to settle the sweating question. If that is so, how is it that Robert Harper and Co. are paying such wages in Victoria—wages that they would not pay in Queensland even without a wages board? Look at the wages paid to men who have been years in their service, and in a city like Melbourne, where the wages are fixed by the standard paid by reputable employers. Let us glance at the evidence of one or two of these men—

David Simmons, employed at Robert Harper and Co.'s No. 1 Factory, said: I have been with the firm for four years, and am in receipt of £1 10s. per week of fifty-four hours. I do general starch work and repairing. I started when I was twenty-one years of age, at £1 5s. per week. I am a married man, with one child. It takes more than £1 10s. per week to live, but I always make some overtime, and occasionally I get £2 in a week. I pay weekly 7s. for rent, 6s. for groceries, 2s. for baby's food, 1s. 3d. lodge fees, 2s. 6d. for firewood, 1s. 3d. for milk, 1s. 6d. for bread, 2s. 6d. on time-payment sewing-machine, and 4s. to 5s. for meat. For clothes we generally have to go on the time-payment system, at 2s. 6d. per week, or 1s. for small articles. I get a pair of boots when I can. If I wear a good pair of boots to work they are gone in four weeks. We are

paid time and a quarter for overtime. As a rule, I make £1 12s. a week by going to work for three hours on Sunday morning.

To Mr. BRYANT: He would be a smart man who could learn sheet-laying in a fortnight. It took me four or five weeks. I call that skilled labour. I am speaking from memory as to my weekly expenses. I left out vegetables, which cost about 1s. 3d. I neither smoke nor drink.

The hon. member for Bulimba interjected just now that many of these men were in this condition because of drink. Well, this man neither smokes nor drinks.

Mr. BARNES: Drink is a terrible factor.

Mr. LESINA: I think it is Bernard Shaw who defines beer as the chloroform of the working classes, as it enables them to carry on the painful operation of living. Well, this man does not take chloroform in the form of beer nor nicotine in the shape of tobacco. He says—

I would have no objection to wearing wooden clogs, if they were supplied to me. The floor is often wet. We get paid for New Year's Day, Boxing Day, Christmas Day, Good Friday, Easter Saturday and Monday, King's Birthday, Cup Day, A.N.A. Day, and Eight Hours Day. Except on Easter Saturday, three-quarters of an hour is docked on every holiday. I never got any pay while I was off with a poisoned foot. The liquid on the floors makes my feet sore at times.

William Henry Rawlings, starchworker, employed at Robert Harper and Co.'s No. 2 Factory, said: I started three years ago at £1 10s. per week of fifty-four hours. I am now thirty-two years of age, and I receive £1 13s. per week. I was there two years before I could spread sheets as I can now. I am a married man with three children, the eldest of whom is a girl nine years of age. My weekly expenses are: Rent, 7s.; baker, 3s. 6d.; meat, 3s. 6d.; potatoes and vegetables, 1s. 6d.; groceries, 12s. 6d.; and wood, 2s. 6d.; leaving 2s. per week for medical attention, boots, clothes, and school requisites. I have run considerably into debt for living expenses. If I were not in the militia I would have no money for clothes. The militia pay for full attendance is £6 8s. per year. I work two hours every Sunday morning, and receive 1s. 6d. extra.

I shall only quote two witnesses, though I might quote a dozen, all running on similar lines. The problem for the ordinary man is how it is possible for these men to work year after year and save even 5s. per annum. A poisoned foot, an accident, sickness, an epidemic like the influenza, which is now raging in this city, incapacitating them for two or three weeks, and it takes them months and months to overcome the indebtedness caused thereby, as they are not paid during illness. These are facts as they exist in a city like Melbourne, which, although behind us in some respects—as electoral reform, for instance—is yet ahead of us in industrial reforms, such as wages boards. Dealing with the question of reputable employers, here is what "The Lone Hand" has to say—

Victoria has a palliative to industrial misery—a "wages board" system. A board so selected as to be nearly as possible impartial may be summoned to declare the rate of wages in any industry. The board has to accept as its standard the rate of wages paid by a "reputable employer." In the starch trade a board was summoned, and does not seem to have been able to find a "reputable employer." It practically decided that there was in the business no reputable employer whose wages-rate it might set as a standard. This was, in effect, a scathing indictment of all the starchmakers. The board exercised its reserve power, and referred to Mr. Justice Hood, sitting as an Industrial Appeal Court the matter of fixing a fair rate of wages in the industry.

The evidence I have quoted was given before Mr. Justice Hood. These facts ought to be sufficient to convince any impartial mind that in dealing with legislation of this kind we can only deal with it from the point of view of men who are in this position: The present condition of Queensland is bad enough—it might be

worse—while it might be very much better. This Bill will do something to remove the grosser evils. It will pare off some of the more glaring evils of the wages system, and to that extent we can support it. We cannot fail to do that. We have pledged ourselves to the country, and, rightly or wrongly, we all take up the position that the working men and women of Queensland believe that a great amount of good will result from wages board legislation. Perhaps they are right. Many of them do not see so far, perhaps, as those of us who have studied closely the social, economic, and historical aspects of the labour question, and for that reason they may be inclined to place greater faith in this kind of legislation than we do. All we want to say to them is: "We take this legislation cheerfully, and will do all we can to make it a little better than the present Bill; but do not blame us if it does not revolutionise society." Nobody on the Opposition side of the House would permit its passage if he thought it was revolutionary in its character. Historically we have good grounds for believing that legislation of this kind can only be of local benefit, and can only, after all, take within its purview and within its all-encompassing arms, a certain number of employees. Thorold Rogers, in his "Six Centuries of Work and Wages"—a work which every Labour man, I think, has dipped into, and which every member of Parliament should read—has shed a very bright light upon legislation of this kind. He gives a long list of such legislation passed over many centuries, dealing with the question of wages, hours of labour, conditions of labour, guilds, unions, and a whole history of things of that description, which nowadays we hardly ever dream of legislating upon. In fact, legislation of that character had gone so far three or four centuries ago that it was even provided by legislation, in order to encourage the woollen industry, that corpses should be buried in woollen shrouds. The idea, of course, was to encourage the consumption of the local production, which employed English labour and English capital. They regulated in some cases, by legislation, the cutting of men's beards, and in other cases against beards being worn at all, and even the cutting of a man's hair. They even arranged his creed by legislation, and if he had no work he was arrested. If he was brought up a second time he was branded and cast out, branded as a loafer—a big V on each cheek. They legislated in respect of fire—a man's glim should be dowsed at a certain hour; all lights out when the curfew bell rung. They legislated all around. From the moment he was born to the day he died, a man was followed by sumptuary and industrial legislation with regard to hours of labour, the price for his labour, and the conditions under which he laboured, the price of commodities and stock, and everything. It is said that that was the golden age of English labour, but I am much inclined to doubt it. You could buy a goose for 2d. in those days, and a dozen eggs for 1d.; you could get drunk for 1d., and blind drunk for 2d.—(laughter)—and for 3d. a bed of clean straw, in addition, to lie upon. (Continued laughter.) That is of no particular consequence to a matter of this kind, but it shows how we move in a circle. The passage of years perhaps touches us lightly.

Mr. WHITE: And that is the "Gang forward" policy.

Mr. LESINA: I do not know but perhaps the forward movement is, after all, a circular movement; it is rather spiral. Sometimes we

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cross our own tracks, and we repeat the errors of past generations and past legislation. Herbert Spencer, in his "Sins of Legislatures"—one of his best essays—gives a long list of legislation passed by the House of Commons extending over a long period of time. Whilst the intent of the Legislature was obvious, the desire was that the result of that legislation would stop at a certain point; but in nearly every instance new conditions were brought into existence, and he gives a long list which necessitated the passage of further legislation. So, I say, the Wages Boards Acts and Arbitration and Conciliation Acts which have been passed in New South Wales have merely been palliative, and it is just as well we should not forget the fact. Dealing with social evils in a limited kind of way must in turn produce other results, which will require further legislation later on. My own fancy would be in twenty-four hours, if I could do it, to bring about as radical an alteration in economical conditions as would commence things over again. But that being impossible without an appeal to a rough-and-ready revolution, which would pull down existing institutions and probably create greater evils than at present exist, I am compelled, although I recognise the futility of palliative legislation—I am compelled because of practical facts in a limited sense to support legislation of this description. I hope, however, we may have a better experience in Queensland than in Victoria.

Mr. BOWMAN: Administration has a great deal to do with it.

Mr. LESINA: As the hon. member points out, if administration be honest and fair, and, above all things, impartial, we shall not complain about it. If it prevents one man or one woman being sweated, it is worth making some little sacrifices. I believe it will prevent more than one, it will prevent hundreds of them. In reference to sweating alone, I know from personal interviews, with women particularly, interested in the manufacture of slop clothing, that this is one aspect of industrialism where this Bill would do much good. I would rather get back to a condition of things where no man would try to sweat his neighbour at all; but, as I cannot get back to that, I am compelled to accept this legislation, which will go in the direction of preventing at least one section of the community being sweated. And if the sweating going on in the clothing trade can be prevented by the passage of this measure, and the fixing of a standard rate of wages like that paid by reputable employers, it is going to do a great deal of good. I have no desire to give details now; perhaps in Committee it may be possible, by giving facts and figures, to convince members and beat down any opposition. I am sure the Labour party will be prepared to give these facts, and stand by them, too. I know they exist in this State.

Mr. BOWMAN: They send up material from the South because we have sweating here.

Mr. LESINA: That is another aspect to which I would like to refer. If these wages boards will prevent people from sending goods up here for manufacture—sweated products—as has been done for some time, it will do some good. This State gets no credit in the Southern States, because sometimes a big manufacturer will get a contract for supply of goods, and the reason is that we have lower rates of wages here than they have down there. I know some manufacturers who send orders to be made up here, as they escape the prices fixed in New South Wales. They are really

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sweating Queensland womanhood and manhood in order to supply Southern consumers with a lot of cheap products.

Mr. KENNA: Local clothing factories export to people down there.

Mr. LESINA: Yes; one of the men mentioned in the "Lone Hand" was asked by the judge what he paid for dungaree trousers, and he said he paid 5s. or 6s.

Mr. BOWMAN: And the unfortunate woman here gets 2½d.

Mr. LESINA: That party can sell them down there and then make an enormous profit. Why should we permit our daughters and sisters to be sweated for the benefit of Southern rag merchants? If this Bill is going to prevent that kind of thing—although I regard it only as a palliative—still it is worth doing. This thing is going on year after year. Certainly these women do not stay at the trade all their lifetime; some are from ten to fourteen years at it, and then they leave, get married, and have a family. Some, after they are married, continue the business by taking the work home, and it is said they are the worst competitors the girls in factories have to contend with. Girls in factories could get this work on the machines if the women at home would not work so cheaply. If this Bill will stop this evil, I am sure that we shall all congratulate ourselves at the end of the session on having passed such a humanitarian piece of legislation.

Mr. BARNES (*Bulimba*): I had not intended saying anything on this Bill till the hon. member for Bowen spoke this afternoon. The hon. member implied that members on the Government side of the House, and I presume gentlemen representing the Labour section of the House, were the only ones who were sympathetic towards this measure.

Mr. KENNA: No, not at all.

Mr. BARNES: Certainly the inference was very clear that those of us who are on this side of the House were prepared to support a measure of this kind, but we were not in any way in sympathy with that particular kind of labour.

Now someone in the country may [9'30 p.m.] be foolish enough to believe the hon. member. It is surprising to me that there are so many members who apparently imagine that the gentlemen who sit on this side of the House are not aware of some of the difficulties under which certain people labour to-day. And I just want to say here and now that there are men who sit on this side of the House who know just as much about some of the terrible labour conditions that exist to-day in the city of Brisbane and suburbs as any other hon. gentleman in this House. I will say more than that. There are men on this side of the House who are just as sincere in their desire to relieve some of these disabilities as any other hon. member in the House who has spoken to-night, or who has not spoken on this measure. To me it seems it is a credit to members generally that, whatever their party politics are, they rise with the view of trying to remove those evils. I take it that any man who gets up in this Chamber and who for a moment would attempt to justify some of the sweating that goes on, would be utterly unworthy of holding a position in this Parliament.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

A LABOUR MEMBER: Of any other Parliament, either.

Mr. BOWMAN: Plenty have denied it.

Mr. BARNES: I am responsible only for my own acts. Speaking as a representative of a very

important constituency, and as a representative who has carefully kept this particular phase of public matters before his constituents when he stood for election, I may say that I am just as deeply anxious to see these measures become law, that will have for their object the altering of some of the present conditions, as any hon. member in the House, whatever his politics may be. The hon. member for Bowen made reference to the fact that this Bill was a kind of new protection. While we will all have to agree that the good time which the hon. representative for the Valley and the hon. member for Clermont referred to as coming, we will also have to agree that, looking at it fairly and squarely, there are difficulties in facing a subject so serious and important as is provided for in this Bill. You might easily deal with matters in connection with manufactures in the city. I speak as an employer of labour, and say, without fear of contradiction, that I believe the ordinary run of employer would prefer to have a given rate of wages than any "cut" rate of wages, and I will tell you why. If John Brown is able to get his men or women at a less rate than John Jones, the chances are, as we know, that John Jones cannot compete. If the wages are fixed at a given rate, then every man has his chance, and it is in the interests of the community generally. I might illustrate what I mean. Some members of the Labour section will say that this rather justifies some of their actions. A little while ago—or rather, I should say, a few years ago—it was possible, in connection with shipping rates, to make your own terms practically with the shipping companies with regard to bringing produce from the South. What was the effect? It worked out that some people had an advantage over others in selling those commodities in Brisbane or elsewhere.

Mr. PACET: The big men strangle the little men.

Mr. BARNES: Yes; the big men strangle the little men. To-day there is the same rate per ton for every man who comes along. Everybody is placed on a footing, which is satisfactory; and I venture to say that it is very much in the interests of trade. I believe that the men who employ labour—some of these men who have been referred to—would feel that it would be a distinct advantage to know that they are paying exactly what the other man is paying in connection with their employees.

Mr. BOWMAN: It would also be an advantage so far as production is concerned.

Mr. BARNES: Whilst it applies to city life and some manufactures here, there are other things produced in this State which, if clause 48 is made use of largely, will have the effect of closing up some of our industries.

Mr. BOWMAN: Is that the farmer?

Mr. BARNES: I think the farmer is well represented in this House, and is capable of taking care of himself. In answer to the hon. gentleman, I will say that we have to depend on many lines in connection with the export trade—that, if wages become too high in a certain direction, it will simply mean that we will have to cater more for the local supply than anything else. I merely point out these things to-night, because I think it is valuable so to do. Now, what have we found? A remark was made that sometimes Queensland workers do certain things which go in the direction of benefiting the South.

Mr. BOWMAN: That is so.

Mr. BARNES: I believe it is so. But I put another phase of it before this House. What is the position here? I speak as a man of business here. Take the boot trade: I venture to say—

and the hon. member for the Valley will correct me if I make a mistake—that there are many people engaged in the retail boot trade in Brisbane who can go to Melbourne and buy Melbourne made boots for importation into Queensland at a less rate than they can be bought for in Victoria.

Mr. BOWMAN: Yet the bootmakers in Victoria are paid higher wages than they are in Brisbane.

Mr. BARNES: It means that Brisbane is made the dumping ground for the surplus products of the South.

Mr. LESINA: But the wages do not depend on the prices.

Mr. BARNES: But prices very often largely depend on the wages.

Mr. LESINA: Not alone.

Mr. BARNES: I admit that: The question is a complex one. It is a many-sided question, and looking at it to-night, we must look at it from the point of view of what is best to be done in the interests of the community as a whole. Reference has been made to-night to people who get married and take their work home. I do not think there are many who do that, although I believe there are some.

Mr. LESINA: The inspector's report says so.

Mr. BARNES: One does not want to go behind the Factory Inspector's report. But I want to put it before this House that there are many women who take work home because they are trying to provide for the children they have. I say, small blame to any mother who is trying to do her very best for her offspring.

Mr. PACET: They must work at home, or not at all.

Mr. BARNES: Yes, they must work at home, or not at all, because some of them have children depending on them.

Mr. BOWMAN: Some people who have no need to take it home do so for the pin money they get.

Mr. BARNES: It is likely that some women do that, but I am speaking about something I know, and in my own electorate there are people who are bound to take home this work to keep body and soul together.

Mr. BOWMAN: There is a lot of sweating done that way.

Mr. BARNES: I am not in favour of sweating people at their homes or in their workshops; but we must see that we do not do any section of the community an injury by any act of ours. During the last Parliament the hon. member for Clermont made reference to the one-man shopkeepers, and, speaking of the realisation of the Labour party's ideals, he said that the sooner these one-man shopkeepers, who kept a few fly-blown bottles of ginger-beer, were snuffed out the better. (Laughter.) I do not feel that way. I say it is our business to look after the interests of the community as a whole, and as far as possible to do justice to all, without snuffing out anybody. I did not intend to speak on this measure, because I am thoroughly in sympathy with it, and will give it my utmost support, though it comes from the other side. It is a plank in our own platform.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Since when?

Mr. BARNES: The Minister for Works is evidently not a reader, because if he had been he would have known that it has been part of our policy for a considerable period. But, whether it be part of our policy or not, there are times when a man must follow his conscience. (Laughter.) It might happen that the party with which a member is associated advocated

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something which was opposed to his conscience, and then it would be his duty to act according to his conscience. I am going to support this measure because I believe in it, and because I believe it is going to be of immense benefit to many workers in Queensland.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed.

The committal of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

The House adjourned at sixteen minutes to 10 o'clock.