

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 25 MARCH 1908

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

WEDNESDAY, 25 MARCH, 1908.

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

QUESTIONS.

SANITARY ARRANGEMENTS AT MULGRAVE MILL.

Mr. MANN (*Cairns*) asked the Secretary for Public Works—

1. Has his attention been drawn to a statement in the Cairns Press, that the sanitary arrangements at the Mulgrave Mill are not adequate for the number of men who are employed there?
2. Will he call for a report from the inspector under the Shearers and Sugar Workers Act in Cairns, as to the truth or otherwise of the statement?
3. If the statement is true, will he ask the inspector why he did not perform his duty and proceed against the Mulgrave Mill for a breach of the Act?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. G. Kerr, *Burcoo*) replied—

This question ought to have been put to the Minister for Agriculture. The answer is—

1. No.
2. A report will be obtained by the Under Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Stock.
3. See No. 2.

EIGHT-HOUR SYSTEM ON CAIRNS RAILWAY.

Mr. MANN asked the Secretary for Railways—

Will he cause inquiry to be made into the working of the eight-hour system on the Cairns Railway, and find out if the employees have been increased in number owing to the inauguration of that system; and, if so, if all the employees are able to get in full time since that system was adopted?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. G. Kerr, *Burcoo*) replied—

Inquiry will be made.

CAMPING RESERVES IN ST. GEORGE AND CUNNAMULLA DISTRICTS.

Mr. LAND (*Balonne*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

1. Has he received any applications for any of the camping reserves in the Cunnamulla or St. George land agents' districts other than the one already granted?
2. If so, who are the applicants, and what action does he intend to take?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. J. T. Bell, *Dalby*) replied—

1. Similar applications have been received in respect of the reserve of 915 acres on Yowah Creek, adjoin-

ing portions 1 and 2, parish of Ballyalla, and (b) the reserve of 6 square miles on the Warrego River, adjoining portions 19v, 31v, and 43v, parish of Hariman.

2. (a) The application in respect of the reserve in the parish of Ballyalla was made by William Oliver Francis Evans, and has been granted.

(b) The application in respect of the reserve in the parish of Hariman was made by Mr. R. F. A. Sachse on behalf of John Lawson Campbell, and has been referred to the land commissioner for report.

RAILWAY REGULATION *re* DELEGATES TO FRIENDLY SOCIETIES.

Mr. McLACHLAN (*Fortitude Valley*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

1. Is he aware that the regulation under which delegates, in parties of not less than six, travelling by rail to attend meetings of friendly societies, between stations not less than 24 miles apart, obtained return tickets at half return rates has been cancelled, and a new regulation, under which the concession is considerably minimised, substituted therefor?

2. What was the reason for such alteration?

3. Will he recommend that the old regulation be reverted to?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

1. Yes.

2. To bring the regulation into line with the other States.

3. No.

LAND SURVEYORS BILL.

INITIATION.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. J. T. Bell, *Dalby*), it was formally resolved—

That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to provide for the registration of land surveyors; to control the practice of such surveyors; and for other purposes incidental thereto.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the PREMIER (Hon. W. Kidston, *Rockhampton*), it was formally resolved—

That the Standing Orders Committee for the present session consist of the following members:—Mr. Speaker, the Chairman of Committees, Mr. Hardacre, Mr. Grant, Mr. Forrest, Mr. Kenna, and the mover, with leave to sit during any adjournment, and authority to confer upon subjects of mutual concernment with any committee appointed for similar purposes by the Legislative Council.

PRINTING COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the PREMIER, it was formally resolved—

1. That, in compliance with Standing Order No. 304, a Select Committee be appointed to assist Mr. Speaker in all matters which relate to the printing to be executed by order of the House; and for the purpose of selecting, and arranging for printing, returns and papers presented in pursuance of motions made by members.

2. That such committee consist of the following members:—Mr. Speaker, the Chairman of Committees, Mr. Douglas, Mr. Paget, Mr. Lennon, Mr. Kenna, Mr. Cribb, Mr. Jenkinson, and the mover.

ELECTIONS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

On the motion of the HOME SECRETARY (Hon. A. G. C. Hawthorn, *Enoggera*), this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council, by message in the usual form.

WAGES BOARDS BILL.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

On clause 48—"Extension of Act to other trades and businesses?"—

Mr. ARMSTRONG (*Lockyer*): This was the clause of the Bill to which great exception had been taken, at any rate in certain farming constituencies, and to a very large extent in the one which he represented. He quite understood that sufficient debate had been given to this question both on the second reading and Committee stages in a previous session, and it was not his intention to labour it that afternoon, but he was there to safeguard the interests of those who sent him there. It had been stated by certain members sitting on the Government benches that if the farmers were included in this clause it would have no effect on them. He pointed out to those hon. members that the employees were always more numerous than the employers, and under the provisions of this clause they could meet together and force conditions upon the farmers which they considered would be entirely inimical to their best interests. He had given notice that he would move an amendment exempting all those engaged in primary industries.

Mr. COWAP: Miners and all?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Did they call mining a primary industry?

Mr. COWAP: Certainly it is.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Yes, yes!

Mr. ARMSTRONG questioned very much whether mining was a primary industry. The difference between the mining industry and an agricultural industry was that the miner won what was already in the soil, but those engaged in the agricultural industry produced from the soil what their intelligence and their industry helped them to produce. The miner had a natural product to win, and was paid so much wages for winning that product. The miner was more or less—

Several members interjecting,

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope hon. members will preserve order, and refrain from unnecessary and irrelevant interjections. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. ARMSTRONG: The farmer was dependent upon the rainfall and upon the agencies of Nature to a far greater extent than the miner, so that it could not be contended for a moment that the two industries could be placed upon the same plane and called primary industries. The amendment of which he had given notice he would amend in form, though not in sense, and he would submit it to the Committee in this form—

Provided that the provisions of this Act shall not extend to any employer engaged in any primary industry or to his employees engaged in such industry.

If the clause was passed as it stood, farmers would be called upon to pay a specific wage for a certain number of hours' work. The results in the farming industry had never been so certain that they could say that if they did a certain amount of work they would get a certain return.

Mr. COWAP: Neither can you say that in mining.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: The product the miner secured had a basic value all over the world, but the farmer who produced maize and other kinds of agricultural produce was dependent for the prices he secured upon the prices prevailing in the open market. The price of gold was an entirely different thing.

Mr. COWAP: What about copper and other minerals?

Mr. Armstrong.]

Mr. ARMSTRONG: The baser metals all possessed a certain value, but that could not be said of agricultural produce. Six months ago the Chairman of Committees said that he and other members of the Labour party would go through the farming electorates and get the employees banded together for the purpose of securing to them the full advantages which might accrue to them from this Wages Boards Bill. This meant that the employees when banded together would dictate to the farmers how they should conduct their business. The farmers had worked amicably with their employees up to the present time. He had not heard that the employees in the Lockyer electorate, or in any other farming districts, had objected to the conditions of labour which were imposed upon them by their employers. Why, then, should this measure be forced upon the industry? The only electorate which had returned a member in favour of the clause before the Committee was the electorate of Cambooya.

The HOME SECRETARY: What about Dalby?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Dalby was in an embryo state. He believed there was a great deal in front of Dalby and the far Western districts from Dalby right up to Springsure and Emerald, in the near future, when the people came to understand the cultivation of wheat in large areas. When they did that, their district would be one of the great granaries of the world, but they had not arrived at that stage. What the Committee had to do was to legislate for conditions which prevailed at the present moment, and he asked members on the front Treasury bench, and members of the Labour party, whether there had been any demand for this measure, or whether the employees had claimed that there was any necessity for it? If his amendment was not accepted, then the Government and their supporters must take the responsibility of dealing the heaviest blow that had ever been dealt at the agricultural industry in Queensland. He moved his amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The hon. member for Lockyer prefaced his remarks by saying that, the matter having been discussed in this Chamber before, and having also been discussed in the country at the last general election, he did not desire to have an extended debate on the amendment. The hon. member had circulated one amendment, and then at the very last moment proposed a different amendment altogether to the Committee.

Mr. PAGET: Only slightly differently worded.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The hon. member could have had his amendment printed and circulated.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: No, not after I decided to move it in its present form.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He supposed that at a caucus meeting it was considered that if the hon. member moved the amendment in the form in which he originally gave notice of it, it would not be accepted. In the original amendment the term "mixed farming" occurred. Anyone who knew anything about farming, knew that it was all mixed. The canegrower grew maize and sweet potatoes, and the dairy farmer grew wheat, lucerne, and other products; and yet the hon. member, who posed as an agricultural expert, proposed that this clause should not apply to "mixed farming." His reply to the hon. member's proposal was given by the hon. member himself when he stated that the matter had already been fully discussed in that Chamber, that it had been discussed at the general election, and that the country had given their verdict upon it. He could not accept the amendment.

[Mr. Armstrong.]

Mr. ARMSTRONG: You must take the responsibility of passing the clause, then.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He took the responsibility.

* Mr. SWAYNE (*Mackay*): With regard to the statement that the country had given its verdict on this matter, he would point out that the purely agricultural electorates—those best able to decide whether the industry should be included in the Bill—were unanimously against it.

Mr. MULCAHY: No, not at all! What about Cambooya? What about Roma?

Mr. SWAYNE: Every purely agricultural electorate in the State had declared against including farmers in the Bill. In that term he did not include electorates where agriculture was subordinate to other industries. For instance, Cairns could not be described as a purely agricultural electorate, nor could Herberton, though there were farmers in both those places. But Mackay was an agricultural district, and it was opposed to the inclusion of farmers in this Wages Boards Bill. The same could be said of the electorates of Musgrave, Wide Bay, Moreton, Rosewood, Lockyer, Fassifern, Logan, and Albert; and, going across the Range, of Aubigny, Cunningham, Warwick, and Stanley. He did not recognise Dalby as a purely agricultural electorate, because there were large pastoral interests in that constituency. So he thought he was well within the mark when

he said that the great majority of the farming community of Queensland were against farmers being included within the scope of the Bill. He would point out also that in the farming electorates it was not only farmers who had votes. It had been pointed out by hon. members that for every one employer there were two or three employees; so they might take it that a very large number of the farming employees were against being included in the Bill. Speaking as a farmer, and as one of the representatives of one of the largest farming districts in Queensland, he entered his emphatic protest against the way in which the verdict of the electors had been gained in regard to that matter, and in doing so he should like to refer to some statements made both inside and outside the House. For instance, they found that during the campaign the reasons given in favour of farmers being included within the scope of the Bill had no bearing whatever of the advisability or not of so including them, but there was an appeal to prejudice and sentiment throughout the whole State. At South Brisbane one of the candidates in the Labour interest said—

If an industry could not pay its hands for eight hours, let it be ruined.

Again, the leader of the Labour party, at Charleville, was reported to have said—

Even the children of farmers required a measure of that kind to protect them from being sweated by their own parents.

That was the *Courier* wire. The *Daily Mail* put it in this way—

That the farmers shamefully overworked their children.

Now, considering that the Bill expressly excluded farmers' children, he failed to see what that had to do with the advisability or not of including farmers in the Bill. If what the leader of the Labour party said was correct, let him introduce legislation to prevent that kind of thing. What had it to with the Wages Boards Bill? It was certainly no reason to give for including farmers when the Bill expressly excluded farmers' children. He had known that hon. gentleman in years past, and had known him to partake of the hospitality of farmers; and he did not think

those men would have credited the hon. gentleman with making such statements. Then, they found in the Wollongabba electorate one of the candidates spoke about the children being shamefully overworked, and said—

Some of the children had to get up at 5 o'clock in the morning and milk cows.

Again, he (Mr. Swayne) would ask what that had to do with the Bill? If wrong was done in that way, then introduce legislation to put an end to it. The real question whether it was advisable to include or exclude farmers from the operation of the measure was never touched upon. So far as getting up early in the morning was concerned, he was one of those who had had to get up every morning at 5 o'clock and he was none the worse for it. It was a good thing for the country that someone saw the necessity for getting up early in the morning, and it would be a poor state of affairs for the country if the farming community did not turn to until 8 o'clock. (Hear, hear!) He did not know what would happen if that rule was applied rigidly to the wheat, sugar, and dairying industries. He should now like to allude to some statements which had been made in the House in connection with the same matter. They found that the hon. member for Warrego was reported to have said—

The members who sit behind the Kidston Government well, I take it, vote in favour of the Wages Boards Bill, which the Premier indicated at Allora would apply to every industry as far as he was concerned. The hon. member for Albert and the hon. member for Warwick said they did not mind applying the Wages Boards Bill to the secondary industries. I think that it is a case of applying it to the other fellow. If it is poison, try it on the dog—try it on the other fellow.

Mr. MANN: Is this in order?

Mr. MULCAHY: What has this got to do with the question?

Mr. SWAYNE: No question had been raised by the representatives of the secondary industries as to the measure being applied to their industries, and, such being the case, farming representatives simply spoke on behalf of their own industry. If the representatives of the secondary industries had contended that the Bill would do them an injury, no doubt they and the farmers' representatives would have sat shoulder to shoulder in resisting the application of the measure. But they contended that it did not injure them, so there was no reason why the farmers' representatives should object to the application of the measure to them. He contended that the farmers' representatives were perfectly justified in the stand they had taken up, and he could not too strongly emphasise the fact that the verdict of the people which had been so triumphantly pointed to had not been gained by legitimate means.

Mr. MANN: This is no argument against including the farmers.

Mr. SWAYNE: He was traversing the arguments of others who would apply the Bill to the farming community, and he contended that the question at issue was whether it is wise to apply the Bill to the farming industry—whether the condition of the farming industry was such as to render it wise to put such an infliction upon it. The advocates of the application of the measure to farmers had simply indulged in a lot of nonsensical statements about the overwork of children and that sort of thing. Again, he found that the following statement was made in the House:—

Now, a Wages Boards Bill, I understand, is for the purpose of bringing all the industries that are provided to be brought under it into line in the matter of paying good wages, and it is only those who are paying bad wages, or what is ordinarily termed sweating wages, who have to fear a Wages Boards Bill.

He was not in the habit of sweating his employees, and he could give very good reasons why, in his opinion, farmers should not be included within the scope of the Bill. During the five months preceding Christmas he was paying his employees from £13 to £17 a month. Who would call those sweating wages?

Mr. BOWMAN: You should not be afraid of the Bill then.

Mr. SWAYNE: Many of his neighbours were paying still more, and joined with him in their strong objection to be included within the scope of the Bill.

Mr. KENNA: Those are not wages. It is contract work.

Mr. MANN: This Bill does not apply to contract work.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would ask hon. members to refrain from interjections. The hon. member does not often speak, and I think it is only fair to listen to him. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. SWAYNE: He might say for the information of those who raised that quibble, that the agreements under which those men worked were made under the Masters and Servants Act, which provided that the earnings in such cases came under the designation of wages. He would like to further quote from the remarks of one of the hon. members for Charters Towers, in giving reasons why farmers should be included in the Bill. He said—

The pastoralists are now affected by the Federal law. Why should the farmer be exempt from this law? Who in this State is more comfortable than the farmer?

He wished the hon. member had seen some of them in the bad seasons. He might have altered his mind. He went on to say—

Who is more socialistic than the farmer when he wants assistance from the State? In every conceivable way the farmer has been spooned, time and again.

Nothing is given to them as a class. It is simply given to them because it would be of benefit to the general community. These statements were all flim. There were no arguments in them at all. He said further—

Why, £21,000 per annum is now being paid in subsidies to a line of steamers to call here and take away the farmers' produce to the best markets in the world.

* * * * *

Some £25,000,000, roughly speaking, have been spent in railway construction to assist the farming industry.

He should like to point out that except in the Southern portion of the State there was really no farming done more than 50 miles from the coast, and even in the South there was very little done 150 miles from the coast. There were railway lines which reached out to Cunnamulla, Longreach, and Cloncurry. Were those lines built for the special benefit of the farmers? Again, they had been told that when a farm employee became possessed of a farm on his own account it was not by means of the wages he had saved. In the district he came from, where there were a thousand farmers, three-fourths of them had risen from the wage-earning class, and very few of them were on Crown land. Those men in nearly every case had got a start by means of their own savings. He called to mind a case which came under his notice a few weeks ago. A young man who came to the State seven or eight years ago, unable to speak a word of English, decided to go in for farming. He had given notice of his intention to withdraw his savings from the Savings Bank, and, not being able to come into town, he had asked him (Mr. Swayne) to draw it and pay it into a bank. He found that as a result of that man's seven or eight years' work he had accumulated £165.

Mr. MULCAHY: He must have been a very careful man.

Mr. Swayne.]

Mr. SWAYNE: There were many men in a similar position, although they were, according to some hon. members, paid such miserable wages. That man had been earning 12s. and 15s. a day. What the farmers complained of chiefly was that the question of their inclusion in this Wages Boards Bill or otherwise had not been decided on its merits, but that the prejudices and sentiments of the people had been appealed to. Then, when it seemed to them that the case was too strong, they resorted to utterances that he had heard in the House, to the effect that if farmers could not do what was required of them, let farming go. He wondered if the men who said let the farmer be wiped out realised the loss to the community if such a thing happened. Did they know that half a million pounds' worth of butter was exported last year? If the farmer was wiped out the community would be a lot poorer. Last year something like £2,000,000 worth of sugar was produced. Even in the wheat industry, in 1903 we produced over £400,000 worth of wheat; and yet some men said if they could not comply with these conditions, let them go. He would like to briefly traverse some of the clauses as bearing on the amendment, and to show how unwise it would be to apply the provisions of the Act to agriculture.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would just like to draw the attention of the hon. member to the fact that he would be out of order in referring to clauses already passed, otherwise than in a casual way, and not quoting their numbers.

Mr. SWAYNE: That was what he intended.

The CHAIRMAN: The question before the Committee at the present time is that clause 48 be amended by the addition of certain words moved by the hon. member for Lockyer.

Mr. SWAYNE: He did not wish to refer to them except in a general way, simply as bearing on the amendment, and to endeavour to show that a Bill of this description, however applicable to other industries, was not suitable to farming. For instance, at the beginning of the Bill it specifically applied to factories and shops, and nothing else, which seemed to him to show that the originators of it never intended for one moment that it should apply to agriculture.

Mr. PAGET: The senior member for Gympie desired to apply it to agriculture.

Mr. MULCAHY: The hon. member for Moreton did.

Mr. KEOGH: No; you did. (Laughter.)

Mr. SWAYNE: Again, further on, it provided that within one month the employees in a district should elect their representatives on the board. As far as the employees in towns were concerned, there might be no hardship in that, but in a large farming district there would be. In the farming district he was in, he supposed there were fully, at one time of the year, from 1,200 to 1,500 employees on the farms, and it would be impossible for these men within four weeks to decide as to those who were qualified to represent them. One of their objections to the Bill was that they were afraid that the class of men who represented the farm labourers in New Zealand would be called upon to represent the employees under the provisions of this Bill. He would show what occurred in New Zealand when a similar measure was applied to the agricultural industry.

Mr. KENNA: There is no wages board in New Zealand.

Mr. SWAYNE: This was an extract from a New Zealand paper, which showed how legislation of this kind affected the farmers there—

New Zealand just now furnishes an object lesson as to what is likely to happen to the farmer in a country

in which Conciliation and Wages Boards obtain. At the hearing of the farm labourers' dispute before the Conciliation Court at Ashburton the other day, Mr. James Thorn, the secretary of the Farm Labourers' Union, was called upon to give evidence. According to the *New Zealand Weekly Press* he said he had been apprenticed to the moulding trade, and did not know much about agricultural work. After numerous questions had been asked, witness stated that, if he had his way, he would not allow private people to let work by contract. The State should do everything. Would that not undermine industry and thrift?—Oh! no. It hasn't done so yet. If all were thrifty, there would be a terrible lot out of work. Supposing the farmer is unable to pay the wages demanded by the union, what is there to do?—That's his funeral. It simply comes to this, then—that if he has to pay the wages, whether he makes the money or not, and if the whole farming community goes bankrupt, it is their affair entirely.—It is their affair entirely, replied Mr. Thorn.

It seemed to him that if this Bill applied to farming, that was the class of men who would represent the labourer on the boards. The hon. member further said: What had the farmer to fear, as he was represented by the same number of men as the employee? But they found that in the event of the two parties to the dispute not being able to agree as to the chairman, the Minister who was in power appointed him. They knew that in this community and in this House there was a very large section who considered the private employer and owner as an evil execrable, and that he should be swept off the face of the earth. In this connection he would like to quote a statement which was made by a member of the Socialistic party in the House last session, as bearing upon this very question.

Mr. KERR: This seems like a second reading speech.

Mr. SWAYNE: The senior member for Maryborough said—

These palliatives were perfectly well understood by the Labour party. They are the outcome of our influence, they are the material from which we are to build a bridge that is to take us over from the competitive system to the co-operative or collective system.

Mr. KENNA: Call it socialism.

Mr. MITCHELL: Well, socialism. That is exactly what we are doing, and when we get to the other side it is our intention, speaking metaphorically, to build the edifice, which will be a credit not only to the Labour party, but also to the country which first establishes the true principles of socialism on a broad and comprehensive basis. These palliatives are the scaffolding required in constructing that great building which we are seeking to erect, and once the building is erected, we shall find that the palliatives are of no use, and they will be put aside, and we shall stand on the established principles we have been fighting for during many years past.

That was all right from the aspect of those who believed in universal State control, but it seemed to him that it was asking those who did not believe in anything of the kind to aid in arriving at that objective. It might be said that this would apply all round to the other industries included in the scope of the Bill, but he thought the agricultural industry was particularly open to injury in this respect. He would ask hon. members what would be the position if a socialistic Cabinet was in power—and that was quite possible—

Mr. COYNE: And probable.

Mr. SWAYNE: If, for instance, the hon. member for Fortitude Valley was Premier—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I must ask the hon. member to confine himself to the clause.

Mr. SWAYNE: He was showing what possibilities there were for the unfortunate farmer under certain contingencies. He was going to fill up the Cabinet if allowed. (Laughter.) It seemed to him that, holding those opinions, they could not honestly appoint a chairman to preside over the board who did not believe in an eight-hour day. If the farmers said that an eight-

[Mr. Swayne.]

hour day would be their ruin, the Labour party would simply say that it was a step towards their objective. They would argue that if the State ran the farms an eight-hour day would be possible, and they would use the appointment of the chairman as a means of attaining their ends—the nationalisation of all farming in the State. The clause also provided that they should strike an average rate of wages, but under the local conditions in his district that was impossible. In connection with cane-cutting, there was sometimes a variation in the crops, and sometimes a variation in the physical characteristics of the land, and so on. At one time, when the cane was cut at 3s. a ton, it might be a very fair rate; but, in other cases, nothing less than 5s. 6d. a ton would pay the cutters; and, in the latter case, it would be distinctly unfair to the grower to strike an average between the two. It was not the same with the industries carried on under cover, and where the conditions were uniform. Again, the powers of the board were unlimited. They had the right to define the hours of work and rate of wages, and so on, in other directions. It was quite possible that it would be interpreted that they had the right to interfere in the case of youthful labour on the farms. In the dairying industry they knew that youthful labour was requisite, and it seemed to him that, under the composition of the board, great difficulties might arise in the dairying industry. The board had also power to prohibit piecework altogether. The hon. member for Fitzroy, when speaking last session, had said that most unions objected to piecework. In view of the fact that he (Mr. Swayne) did not think that the best working men in the Mackay district would be represented on the board—the majority of the best workers in the sugar industry preferred piecework, and would not work under any other system if they could help it—there was a great danger of the good labourers even being coerced under such a law as this by such men as constituted the board in New Zealand, as he had already mentioned. Then, again, regarding the power to fix a maximum number of hours per week that were to be worked, that was impossible in many districts so far as farming was concerned. He knew

[4.30 p.m.] at the present moment of a farm in the North where they were ready for planting, but the floods came and threw them back. At this particular farm they would have to work very long hours for the next two or three weeks to make up for the time they had lost through the floods.

Mr. BARBER: There is nothing in this Bill to prevent that being done.

Mr. SWAYNE: Yes; it was provided in clause 18, which said: "Every special board—"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS rose to a point of order. Was the hon. member for Mackay in order in referring to clauses, and especially reading them out, after they had already been passed? The Chairman had already ruled that members could not refer to clauses which had already been passed.

The CHAIRMAN: I understood that the hon. member was just referring generally to the clauses of the Bill. I think the Minister will recognise, and every hon. member present will recognise, that clause 48, and the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Lockyer to insert certain words, are really the crux of the whole Bill. (Hear, hear!) The hon. member will, I think, realise that it is very difficult to adjudicate on a question of this character. I desire to be perfectly fair and perfectly impartial. So far, I think that the hon. member for Mackay has been in order, and I hope he will keep to it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He was reading one of the clauses.

The CHAIRMAN: I did not hear him quote any particular clause by number.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He was reading clause 18.

The CHAIRMAN: If he was reading clause 18, he was out of order, and I would have ruled him out of order if I had heard him read it.

Mr. SWAYNE: He was simply reading the clause in reply to an interjection. However, there was a clause in the Bill—he would not say which one—which would bear out his statements. This clause gave the board power to determine the maximum number of hours a week to be worked. That clause alone rendered the Bill undesirable to be applied to farming work. Apart from the question of delay by floods, which was the special case he had in mind, he knew where it had been necessary for himself to get up early in the morning and work for three or four hours before the heat of the day came on, then stop, and go on again in the evening.

Mr. SUMNER: You can do that under this Bill.

Mr. KENNA: How many hours do you work your kanakas?

Mr. SWAYNE: That had nothing to do with it. He never worked any of his employees, black or white—and he had a lot of white men working for him—exorbitant hours. Hon. members on the other side did not want to hear both sides of the case. In another part of the Bill there was a provision which said that, in the event of an employer contravening any of the regulations referring to piecework, the onus of disproof was thrown on to the employer. The employer had to disprove the charge brought against him. That might not prove to be much of a hardship in the case of a man who lived in a town, as he could get into a tramcar and go to the court in a few minutes. But what about the farmer who had to take off a crop of wheat or sugar-cane, and who lived 30 or 40 miles from a town? Someone might have a spite against him, and, in order to put him to a lot of trouble, might make a charge against him. It would then be necessary for the farmer to leave his work in the middle of harvest in order to meet this charge. He might have to go to a court some miles distant, and after wasting about a week over it it might turn out to be a frivolous charge, or even a fictitious one. That was another argument to show that it was unsuitable to apply the Bill to farmers. Then there was another clause which stated that only one-fifth of the outside workers were to be represented on the board when both inside and outside workers were concerned. In sugar-growing, the greater proportion were field workers, and that would reduce their representation to one-fifth. That was an injustice to them. That showed that it was not the intention of the person who originally drafted the Bill to include agriculture in its provisions.

Mr. COYNE: That was a defect in the Bill at that time.

Mr. SWAYNE: The great point was that their primary industries were dependent on the world's markets, and were on quite a different footing to the secondary industries, where they could get relief through the tariff and other ways which did not apply to the primary producer. With regard to dairying, when times were good a good rate of wages would be fixed; but by and

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by came a fall on the London market, and the producer was put to considerable expense in keeping up his production and having to keep up the big wages just the same. The conditions might have become quite altered from what they were a few months previously, and if he tried to get the rate lowered he would have to wait some time for a decision of the board. That was a very strong argument against the application of the measure to the farming industries. In Victoria there had been a similar Bill in force for eleven years. When it was first introduced it only included six secondary industries—such as clothing and so on—and it had been enlarged in its scope until it now included forty-nine trades. But, although it had been enlarged, and although Victoria had 4,000,000 acres under cultivation, as compared with 600,000 acres in Queensland, they left the farmers out of the Bill altogether in Victoria. Although agriculture was such a big factor in Victoria, the farmer was left out of it, and he thought they should also exclude the farmer from its provisions in Queensland—at any rate, until they saw how it affected the other industries.

* Mr. SUMNER (*Nundah*): If anything tended to injure the primary industries of Queensland it was the pessimistic attitude taken up by the members of the Opposition. (Hear, hear!) When they were told that a clause like that, which was only a permissive clause—

Hon. R. PHILP: It is a compulsory clause.

Mr. SUMNER: Under which men who were dissatisfied with their conditions could petition the Government and have a board formed to fix their wages—a board with equal numbers on each side, employers and employees, to lay down the conditions of work and the rates of pay. The decision which the farmers gave at the recent election was a decision given because of the scare they received owing to the position having been misrepresented to them.

Mr. PACET: Not by us.

Mr. SUMNER: The farmers got a wrong idea and a misconception as to the scope of the Bill, and they got scared when they were told that their industry was going to be injured. It was an advertisement that they were giving to the world that the agricultural industry of Queensland was hanging on so slender a thread that they could not afford to do justice to the employees engaged in that industry. (Hear, hear!) In Victoria, after the Wages Boards Bill was introduced, wages increased from 30 to 50 per cent. in the secondary industries, and those engaged in the agricultural industry began to cry out and ask what were they going to do for labour; and they had to improve the conditions in the agricultural industry in order to get men to work for them. What was the cry in Queensland to-day? The cry was not about good wages, as these men all told them that they were paying good wages to their employees, but the cry was that they could not get a suitable class of labour in Queensland. Why was that? Because labour would go where they could get the best remuneration for their labour, just as capital would go where it could get the best investment. If they refused to give the farming industry fair conditions, how could they go to the old world and advertise the resources of Queensland, and induce agricultural labourers to come out here, when they refused to do anything for them? The farmers had nothing to fear from the clause. It would do the employer good, it would do the employee good, and it would do the industry good.

Mr. MACKINTOSH: Are you a farmer yourself?

[*Mr. Swayne.*]

Mr. COYNE: He does not represent himself here.

Mr. SUMNER: He represented many farmers. This was what Schoenhof, the American economist, said—

The greater the share of the national dividend which is divided in wages and salaries, the more will industry prosper, because the great demand which constitutes the world's markets is promoted by the wants of the earners of wages and salaries.

All the wealth of production, he thought, they might call the national dividend. Now, what did they find here? They found that when the Wages Boards Bill came into law as applied generally to the secondary industries it would make wages go up. He did not say that the worker was going to get such a great benefit from it. He believed that in New Zealand, where this system was applied and they had arbitration courts and everything else, rents and the cost of living had gone up more than the increase of wages. He believed that wages went up 10 per cent., but the cost of living went up 30 per cent. What would be the result if wages did go up 10 or 15 per cent. here? The greater demand would come in there. It was the workmen who spent their earnings, and the farmers would benefit in that direction. Yet the farmers wanted them to come to that Chamber and vote to put conditions on people which would benefit the farming industry, and yet they themselves were unwilling to submit to a small clause like that. They were told that certain members of the Labour party would go round organising, and why should not they? There was no better weapon than the strike weapon—for a man to have the power to lay down tools. It was far better for them than all the wages boards and arbitration courts in the world from their standpoint.

LABOUR MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. SUMNER: What was to stop them from organising now? They knew how they had organised years ago in England under Joseph Arch, and there was nothing to stop them from organising now. And when they did organise, not only in Queensland but throughout Australia, they would have the Federal Arbitration Act to fall back upon. It was for the benefit of the community at large that industrial disputes should be prevented, as they injured both the employer and employee, and the community generally; and nothing could be fairer than for master and man to meet in conference and fix the hours and conditions of labour. Owing to the attitude of the Labour party in the House of Commons, more attention was now being paid to these matters in the old country, and there was at present a Wages Boards Bill before the House of Commons—a Wages Boards Bill which applied to farmers as well as to those engaged in all other industries, though the farmers there had to compete with foreign produce which was admitted duty free. That Bill was more stringent than the one before the Committee, as it provided that any six men engaged in any industry whatever could compel the Home Secretary to establish a wages board for the industry and district concerned, and that such board should be composed of an equal number of employers and employees with an impartial chairman, the board to have the power to fix the standard of wages, and when so fixed that standard was to have the force of law. Lord Milner, speaking on that Bill, said it had his approval and sympathy, and that the only motive which influenced him in approving of it was the supreme interest of the community in the efficiency and welfare of its members. It would probably surprise hon. members to hear that ever since 1896 there had been on the

statute-book of Great Britain an Act called "An Act to Make Better Provision for the Prevention and Settlement of Trade Disputes."

HON. R. PHILP: It is not compulsory, you know.

MR. SUMNER: That Act provided that—

Where a difference exists or is apprehended between an employer, or any class of employers, and workmen, or between different classes of workmen, the Board of Trade may, if they think fit, exercise all or any of the following powers, namely:—

- (a) Inquire into the causes and circumstances of the difference;
- (b) Take such steps as to the board may seem expedient for the purpose of enabling the parties to the difference to meet together, by themselves or their representatives, under the presidency of a chairman mutually agreed upon or nominated by the board of trade or by some other person or body, with a view to the amicable settlement of the difference;
- (c) On the application of employers or workmen interested, and after taking into consideration the existence and adequacy of means available for conciliation in the district or trade and the circumstances of the case, appoint a person or persons to act as conciliator or as a board of conciliation;
- (d) On the application of both parties to the difference, appointing an arbitrator.

The Act went on to say that when this was done the decision of the conciliator or board of conciliation was binding. The Wages Boards Bill at present before the House of Commons applied to all industries, and he believed that, if the clause hon. members were now discussing were passed, it might be on the statute-book for twenty years without any farmer in Queensland knowing it was there. At present farm labourers could strike, and they were striking. Scarcely a day passed but that some farm labourer, or some member of the farming community, came into town to see if he could get a job at tram driving or something else. Why was that? Because the conditions of farming were not good enough. It was no use hon. members shutting their eyes to the fact that the great trouble farmers had to contend against was that they could scarcely find men suited for agricultural work, and could get only the traveller who worked a day and played a week. His opinion was that if it was shown that farmers were willing to meet their workmen in conference, and fix the hours and conditions of labour, the industry would benefit in many ways. At the last election farmers were told that all sorts of things would happen to them if they were brought under the provision of this Bill. This reminded him of a story which he told during the campaign. A man who was very fond of going to the auction-room and buying anything he thought cheap went home one day with a large signboard on which was painted, "F. Jones, Dentist." His wife said, "What have you brought that rubbish here for? It is no use to us." He replied, "My dear, we have four daughters, and some day one of them may marry a dentist named F. Jones, and then it will come in very handy." The arguments of some hon. members at the late election were after that character. He would support the clause as it stood.

HON. R. PHILP: The hon. member for Nundah did not understand this provision, for he said it was permissive, whereas it was compulsory. If the farm servants or employees went to the Home Secretary and asked for the appointment of a wages board, such a board would be appointed.

MR. LENNON: There must be a majority of the farm labourers.

HON. R. PHILP: There might be seven men working on one farm, and if four of those men applied for a board, a board must be formed,

and the actions of that board were mandatory. However, he did not propose to discuss the matter at length, for no amount of talk would alter the division. (Hear, hear!) What he had contended all along was that they should not put the farmers of Queensland at a disadvantage as compared with the farmers of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Western Australia, as they would do if they brought the agricultural industry under the provisions of this Bill, because in none of the other States mentioned were farmers subject to a Wages Boards Act. In proportion to our population agriculture in Queensland was more backward than it was in any of the other States of Australia, and it would be still more backward if farmers were brought under the Wages Boards Bill. The hon. member for Nundah had stated that in England, if a farmer had a difference with his employees, the difference could be submitted to arbitration. That was so, and we had in Queensland an Act passed by Sir Samuel Griffith under which a difference between parties could be submitted to the arbitration of a justice of the peace.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: But there is no method of enforcing the award.

HON. R. PHILP: That was so, and the same remark applied to the award given under the English Act. If the two parties to a difference intimated that they were willing to submit the matter to arbitration, and would accept the award as final, then the award was final. In the same way an award was final under Sir Samuel Griffith's Act where the parties mutually agreed to submit a dispute to the arbitration of a conciliation justice. Members of the Opposition were willing to apply the Wages Boards Bill to all industries to which the Victorian Act applied, but held that it would be a positive injustice to the farming industry to bring it under the Bill. If we wanted to make Queensland a prosperous country, the only way to do it was by increasing the population, and we could not expect to do that unless we increased the area of land under cultivation. Queensland had only 600,000 acres of land under cultivation, while Victoria had 3,000,000 acres. There was no reason why we should not have 10,000,000 acres under cultivation; but, if farmers were brought under this Bill, the farmers were now receiving from the other States would stop coming. Nearly every industry in Queensland was dependent on the work of the farmer. Brisbane would be a mere village were it not for the settling of farmers west, south, and north. Bundaberg, Maryborough, Mackay, the Herbert River, and the Johnstone River had very little population before farmers went to those districts. The most prosperous towns in Queensland were those which were surrounded by the farming industry; it was the most permanent industry we had in Queensland, and nothing should be done which would tend to injure it.

THE TREASURER (Hon. P. Airey, Brisbane South) wished to correct one or two remarks made by the leader of the Opposition. In the first place, he accused the hon. member for Nundah of saying that the Bill was a purely permissive Bill. The hon. member for Nundah did not say any such thing.

HON. R. PHILP: He did say so.

THE TREASURER: What he actually said was that the clause was in its nature a permissive clause, and anyone who read it would find that that statement was strictly correct. It gave the Minister power to do certain things if the employer and the employee

[5 p.m.] desired that those things should be done. That in its very essence was a clause of a permissive nature. He did not

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know whether the hon. member who introduced the amendment intended it, but the amendment went a great deal further than most hon. members realised. It was provided that—

the provisions of this Act shall not extend to any employer engaged in any primary industry or to his employees engaged in such industry.

If he were to judge by the speeches of hon. members of the Opposition, it was their desire to advocate the exclusion of farmers from the Bill, but the hon. member's amendment went infinitely further. He cut out the pastoralists and the miners also, and those three industries together were recognised as the great primary industries of the State. If, therefore, the amendment were carried, the Bill would not be worth the paper it was written upon. The chief point made by the mover of the amendment was that it would enable the employees to dictate to the employers as to the terms of their engagements. Well, if the hon. member objected to that, the only thing he could legitimately do was to object to the Bill altogether. In its essence the Bill was of a conciliatory nature, and when hon. members stood up and said they believed in the Bill for nine-tenths of the industries and not for one-tenth, they simply asserted that they believed in peace on earth and good will towards men for nine-tenths of the population and chaos for the rest.

MR. PAGER: The conditions are different.

THE TREASURER: The member for Mackay spoke about the outcry from the farmers. Well, from certain farmers he admitted that there had been an outcry, but he contended it was the outcome of pure ignorance and misrepresentation. Wherever he had met farmers, and had asked for their objections to the Bill, he had been told that they did not want an eight-hour day and eight "bob" a day. That was the only thing they clearly gripped about the Bill—that it put a limitation on the day's work, and fixed the wages. Why, as a matter of fact, the exemption of the farmer was a gross anomaly. Would anyone contend for a moment that the Bill should apply to the comparatively well-paid shearer and miner and that it should not apply to the farm labourer? The farm labourer, in most cases, was the most poorly paid man in the community, and was there any reason or justice in excluding him? The arguments used constituted the purest special pleading. They were told that the farming industry was subject to hardships, that it was precarious, that it was an inferior industry, and, for those reasons, should be exempt. Everyone knew that, though there was some truth in those statements, they applied just as forcibly to quite a number of other industries. Look at the pastoral industry for instance. Where was there an industry more subject to fluctuation—changes of weather and fluctuations of foreign markets? And yet hon. members who spoke on the other side did not propose to cut out the pastoral industry.

MR. G. P. BARNES: There is not the same amount of labour in that.

THE TREASURER: The principle on which hon. members opposite were going was not the amount of labour employed. They were going on the application of the Bill to a certain industry. As a matter of fact, if, as the hon. member for Mackay intimated, the farmers were perfectly satisfied and the farm labourers were perfectly satisfied, the Bill could not do any harm, because they would not attempt to come under it. Now, what would be the result of that exclusion? The hon. member for Nundah put the case in a nutshell. The result would be that in other industries they would have all the better class of labour drafted away from the farming industry, and the man engaged in

the farming industry would be looked upon as the lowest class in the labour market; and if that state of affairs came about it would be a bad thing for the employee, a bad thing for the employer, and a bad thing for the community generally. An hon. member on the other side made a remark about the formation of unions. He would say that there was one thing which was inevitable and indisputable in connection with the labour question. Whether they put the Bill into operation or not, they would have unions formed in connection with the farming industry. (Hear, hear!) If this Wages Boards Bill was passed, unions would be formed for the purpose of applying it to the farming industry; and if it was not passed, unions would be formed for the purpose of improving the condition of the employees—possibly at the point of the pistol. That was the plain position. He could never see why the farm labourer should be the disinherited child of the labouring community. The principle was absolutely bad and unsound, and could not be maintained. He heard a prominent member of the Upper House say that, in his opinion, the time was not far distant when every class of labour would have to come under the operation of a Bill of that kind. The demand to bring in the farming industry after all was eminently sound and reasonable. The demand was simply that employer and employee, in place of fighting a dispute, should come together in concave, reason together, and try to come to a decent understanding without injuring the peace of the community. Hon. members opposite only a few years ago would have scouted with scorn the introduction of a Bill of that kind; to-day they maintained that the Bill was perfectly just in principle with regard to nine-tenths of the community, but that it was unjust in regard to one-tenth, and he would say that it was only a question of a day or two when they would consider it perfectly just and reasonable altogether. (Hear, hear!)

MR. HAMILTON: Although he was of the same opinion as the leader of the Opposition, that no amount of argument would alter the result of the division, he should like to say a few words. One thing about the debate to which he took exception was that members of the Opposition seemed to claim the sole right of championing the primary industries. There were a good many members, both on the Government side and on the Labour benches, who represented constituencies in which the primary industries occupied first place. The mining and pastoral industries were well represented by both those sides, and although he represented a constituency in which the pastoral industry, which was one of the primary industries, played a very large part, yet he had heard not one word of complaint about the Wages Boards Bill. The amendment was a drag-net one. It took in the whole of the primary industries. He thought it was a very good thing for the farmers that they should get a measure of that sort, because there was nothing that had helped to make agricultural labour so scarce as the fact that the conditions which prevailed were not good enough. In the pastoral and mining industries the conditions and rates of pay were far better than in the agricultural industry. They could bring as many agricultural labourers as they liked into the country, and it would be only a month or two before they found they could get better conditions and better pay in other industries, and they would desert the farming districts. If they wanted agricultural labourers to stop in the farming districts, it was necessary to make the conditions better for them. As matters stood now, even the Police Force was largely recruited from the agricultural districts, and men were glad to go anywhere away from

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the farming districts because the rates of pay and general conditions were so poor. There were a great many reasons why the provisions of the Bill should be extended to agriculturists. He had in his hand a copy of the *New South Wales Worker*. In that State there was evidently a movement in the direction of extending the provisions of the Wages Boards Act to the agricultural industries. Of course, there was an outcry there, as there was here, but he would read the article which supplied a few reasons why wages boards should be extended to the primary industries. It said—

INCONSISTENCIES OF A CONSISTENT GRUMBLER.

The day of the "rough and ready" farmer passed with the advent of the State-conducted Agricultural College. Nowadays, the farmer must adopt scientific methods or be under the heel of the mortgagee all his life. There is no necessity for any farmer to be in this humiliating position. Farmers receive more help from the Government than any other class of primary producer. They get it because they grumble most. The farmer does not hide his light under a bushel. He sends the bushel to the market, and holds the light to his grievance. But the more he gets the more he wants. Well, he deserves it, to some extent. He works harder than most, and his work is of first importance to the State. He labours under disadvantages climatically, educationally, and recreationally that would dishearten men in any other walks of life. But there is this one thing against the average farmer—though he grumbles, he fails to see by what right his hired help should grumble; though he works hard—and grumbles thereat—he does not think the farm labourer should object to it; though he appeals to the State to assist him in his misfortune, he does not include his employees in his appeal; and get whatever concessions, remittances, or grants he may—free seed wheat, cheap freights, and re-appraisements, or what not—he passes none of the advantages, nor part of any, on to his employees. The farmer's grumble is a selfish grumble. You never hear of a farmer going bankrupt because of his high wages bill! Still, in the list of the world's useful men, the farmer stands number one, but though he looks after himself he does not look far enough. He does not study the cause of his failures; he knows only that he has failed, and he looks to the State to help him through. He will fail from the same cause again and again, and still look to the State. This is where the State comes in. Science provides the reason and the remedy for the farmer's failures, and the State provides the educational medium. That our agricultural colleges are slowly revolutionising Australian farming conditions is acknowledged by our farmers, who seldom acknowledge anything that was not due to themselves—excepting the dry state of the weather. He is acknowledged a great man who has made two plants grow where but one grew before, and have out our State-owned agricultural colleges done this? The results of the wheat experiments—wherein it is admitted we lead the world—are sufficient. Millers are at the present time offering from 2d. to 6d. per bushel more for certain varieties of wheat which have been invented solely in the State experimental farms. There are other matters in which the colleges have helped and are striving to further help the farmer—silos, irrigation, best varieties of produce for different localities, manures—to say nothing of the breeding of animals—down to the best method of swinging a gate. But the State, recognising the farmer's importance in the making of the country, now does things for the agriculturist without waiting for him to grumble. The latest New South Wales scheme is the establishment of the Hurststone Agricultural School at Ashfield. The institution was created with the object of establishing a link between the public schools and the Hawkesbury College. Candidates for admission must be over fourteen years of age, and must furnish satisfactory evidence of having completed the primary course in a public school, or an equivalent. A system of scholarships and bursaries has been provided, and three additional bursaries, tenable for two years at the Hawkesbury Training College, are open to pupils of the continuation school, who have completed their two years' course thereat. The syllabus includes English, geography, history, and mathematics, in addition to the science and agriculture sections. The science section is essentially a practical one, and the agricultural section includes the theory and practice of agriculture, manual training and farm carpentry, farm blacksmithing, and farm plumbing. Those things the State has done for the farmer. Isn't it time the farmer did something for his men?

That was written to the farmers of New South Wales, and the same remarks applied to the farmers of Queensland. We had got State agricultural farms, where there were stud bulls, horses, and pigs, and other things for the benefit of the farmer. They had been helped with seed wheat; in times of drought they had been given an extension of the period in which to pay rent, and steamship companies had been subsidised in order to carry their butter to the old world, where they got 1s. a lb. in place of 6d. which they used to get before. Every working man in the State had to contribute towards that assistance. He agreed with the article that it was only right for the State to assist the farmer, but the farm labourer was entitled to some consideration, which they were trying to give him under the Wages Boards Bill. The farmers would find out that it was one of the best things which had happened, because when there were fair conditions and fair rates of pay they would be able to get and to keep agricultural labourers. At present, what accommodation was there for the men on many of the farms? What recreation or educational facilities were there? Nothing but to work hard from morning till night at a very low rate of wages. When we bettered the condition of farm labourers, there would not be such difficulty in obtaining and keeping them. He was in entire sympathy with the Bill, and it would be a great mistake to omit the agricultural industry from its provisions. What he objected to was to come in with such a drag-net proposal to omit all the primary industries. He should certainly vote against the amendment.

Mr. WHITE (*Musgrave*): He was surprised that the hon. member, who thought that the farmer had had so much consideration, did not embrace the opportunity and become a farmer at once, instead of wasting his time. The original object of wages boards was to prevent "sweating" in factories and shops, and also in the homes of the people of the larger cities of the world. It was not the intention to apply it to farmers—they never heard of "sweating" on the farm.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: To prevent "sweating" wherever it is done.

Mr. WHITE: The object in Victoria was to prevent "sweating" in factories and shops. From the way the second reading went through the House he thought that employees—and more especially "sweated" employees—were just as sympathetically treated by members on this side of the House as any other hon. members. Some hon. members seemed to think that the Government had only to pass this measure, and then, presto! "sweating" was abolished. He had heard that the Labour members said—and honestly so, he believed—that none of these palliatives were going to be of any use, and that not until we arrived at a purely socialistic stage would we get any benefit. He believed there was only one way to improve the condition of the worker, and that was to pass such legislation as would make the country prosperous, and give such evidence to those who have money to invest in our primary, secondary, and every other industry as would enable work to go on harmoniously. If that was done the worker would get the best wages. Would the wages boards be able to regulate the wages in any industry? The Act had been in force in Victoria for ten or twelve years, and the wages of the workers had not increased to any material extent during that period.

Mr. COWAP: The conditions may have improved.

Mr. WHITE: Neither the conditions nor wages had been improved to any material extent. There had been a little improvement, but

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he thought that would have taken place irrespective of the Wages Boards Act. Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, who was out here some time ago, and looked into the conditions of the Victorian Act, and also into the condition of the workers throughout Australia, was reported in the *London Times* of 8th November, 1907, speaking of wages boards, to have said—

His definition of sweating was such pay received for work as was inadequate to keep the receiver in a proper state of physical, mental, and moral efficiency. He asked them to try as purchasers to help honest labour and honest employers. If they were careless, the honest employer went to the wall and the honest workman found it hard to live. The co-operative movement gave them some guarantee against sweating, and he hoped that every one who was a member of a society would take care that no form of the evil appeared there. If they were going to deal effectively with the question, reason and sympathy would have to go together. The great trouble as to the sweated woman was that she was paid for hand work at the rate paid for work by machinery. If the pay of the matchbox worker was raised, the work would be done by machinery, and she would not have any work to do. The sweated workers were not fighting against each other, but against machinery. It was suggested they should meet the difficulty by wages boards. In Victoria there were boards in connection with clothing, dressmaking, and shirtmaking, and the results were a lesson in moral economics. The clothing board was established in 1897, and in ten years wages had been increased by 1s. 6d. per week, which was not a large result. The dressmaking board was established in 1901, and it had increased wages by 2s. 8d. per week; but one result of the increase was that the number of adults employed had declined and the total of juveniles had gone up, so that the average rate worked out at an increase of 9d. per week. The shirtmaking board, set up in 1896, had increased wages by 11d. per week—not much worth doing. He had one or two practical suggestions to make. First, let them see that they did not buy goods made under bad conditions. A good many women had to work because their husbands were living intemperate lives. The awful sacrifice of family life that was going on now was appalling. They had to raise the ideal of family responsibility. Again, a large number of the sweated women had to work because they were widows with children. In Australia, when a widow was left with children she could not look after herself, they were boarded out. He thought that by careful administration something of the kind might be done in England. Eventually they got down to the unemployed man, and he held that the way to relieve the family in those cases was not by assisting the women and children, but by helping the husband so that he might do his duty. One of the first things they ought to do was to compel people who were working at home to report themselves to the sanitary inspector, so that, instead of the inspector hunting for the sweated, the sweated should go to him. It was not good for the workers of the State that work should be done by hand at machine prices, and to deal effectually with the evil they would have to find the causes and tackle them.

He quoted that because Mr. Macdonald had been out here studying the conditions.

Mr. GRANT: How long has he studied the conditions?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Do you adopt his view?

Mr. WHITE: He did not believe that any wages board could fix the rate of wages unless they could fix the price of the product of a particular work. As far as the secondary industries are concerned, he believed that if they applied this new protection they could, to some extent, regulate production and wages; but in the primary industries, where the men who were producing wheat and butter had to compete with the markets of the world, and with low price labour in Siberia and other parts, they could not regulate the rate of wages. The new protection attempted to do it, but he did not believe it would succeed; because, while they might say what a manufacturer should sell an article at, how were they going to fix what the consumer had to pay for it? Unless they could follow it up from one point to another it was impossible to regulate wages by Act of Parliament. The

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pastoral industry was on a different footing, for the reason that it did not employ labour to the same extent.

Mr. BOWMAN: Its conditions are regulated by the Arbitration Act.

Mr. WHITE: There was one estate in his electorate where in the days gone by, about twenty-six years ago, there was one blackboy, one white man, and the employer, but to-day there were 600 men employed there, and last year £54,000 was paid in wages.

Mr. MULCAHY: Thanks to the Labour party.

Mr. WHITE: If the Labour party had had to do with it the industry would have been wiped out long ago. Mr. Ramsay Macdonald had said that wages boards would be of no advantage in England, and he (Mr. White) did not believe they would be of much advantage here. He hoped the Ministry would consider the advisability of withdrawing this 48th clause altogether, and the whole Bill would be passed without any trouble.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: We will leave it to the House.

Mr. WHITE: He was quite willing to leave it to the House, but he knew what the result would be, with the combination which they saw here. What was the combination after all?

Mr. COWAP: A good one.

Mr. WHITE: At least half the members on that side should belong to this side, and the other half were renegades from the Labour party. No industry could pay a higher rate of wages than that industry could afford.

Mr. HARDACRE: What wage can it afford to pay?

Mr. COYNE: The wages board will fix that.

Mr. WHITE: If the country was prosperous, he was prepared, and he knew other farmers were prepared, to give the highest [5.30 p.m.] wages they could to their employees.

There was no country in the world where the farm labourer was better off than he was in Queensland. Had there been any cry throughout the length and breadth of Queensland from the agricultural employees to come under the provisions of the Wages Boards Bill?

Mr. PAGET: No.

Mr. WHITE: The agricultural labourers had not asked for it at all.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Yes.

Mr. WHITE: No. How was it possible to fix a uniform rate of wages as was proposed under this measure? There were many people who left the towns, for good reasons perhaps, and went into the country districts. Some could not stand the temptation for drink in the towns, and preferred to work on a farm and take a reasonable price for their labour. There were also old men engaged in the dairying industry. What was to become of these people when the uniform rate was introduced?

Mr. BOWMAN: There is a provision for old workers.

Mr. WHITE: No one knew better than the leader of the Labour party that very few men would admit that they were slow and infirm workers. They would never admit it.

Mr. D. HUNTER: That is not the experience in New Zealand. Many of them asked for it.

Mr. THORN: I will tell you about New Zealand directly. (Hear, hear! and laughter.)

Mr. WHITE: He was just as anxious and just as sympathetic as members opposite—in

fact, all members on the Opposition were just as anxious as those opposite—to see men get fair wages, but they could not have a uniform rate of wages in the agricultural industry. There were any number of old men now in employment, and if they were dismissed by their employers because of this measure, they were hardly fit for anything else, and they would have to get the old age pension or else go to Dunwich. He knew many men in that position. He sincerely hoped that those men who were engaged in other industries would consider the farmer, because there had been no outcry for this Act to apply to the agricultural industry at all. It was put in as a side wind, and it was never intended to apply the Bill to the agricultural industry.

A LABOUR MEMBER: It was put in by the hon. member for Moreton.

Mr. WHITE: It was put in by Mr. Campbell, and the senior member for Gympie wanted to make it apply to the agricultural industry.

Mr. PAGER: It was put in by the senior member for Gympie.

Mr. WHITE: Even when the senior member for Gympie put in that amendment he did not know that it was going to apply to farming, but the senior member for the Valley wanted to make sure that it would apply to the agricultural industry by his amendment. The leader of the Labour party would find that he would not succeed in organising the farm employees, because he could not get their 10s. from them. He had seen men coming round trying to organise them. They were all willing to join a union, but the trouble was to get their 10s. from them. He did not know of any bill that he would prefer to have himself than that one. It was a very easy one, and not much to do. He would vote for the amendment, but he would like to amend it by adding, after the word "primary," the words "or farming industries," so that it would be absolutely clear. It was no use talking, because the forces were against them. At any rate, he would enter his emphatic protest against it.

Mr. LENNON (*Herbert*): The hon. gentleman who had just resumed his seat, in his good-humoured manner argued about the generosity of members in allowing so many clauses to pass so rapidly, and thought that this clause should be left out. This clause was like the postscript of a lady's letter—it was really the most important part of the whole thing. Clause 48 extended the provisions of the Bill to all primary industries, and that was why hon. gentlemen on the Opposition benches were so strongly opposed to it. The hon. gentleman said that no Wages Boards Bill could be a success, as unless you could increase the price of commodities you could not fix the increase in wages. Seeing that the wages boards were in existence in Victoria, he did not suppose that the hon. gentleman would argue that the wages boards fixed the price of hats or boots. Clause 48 was the most important clause of the whole Bill, and he would like it to go further than it did. He would like to know if sugar-mills would be included in the operation of the Bill. During last session he was told by the Minister in charge of the measure that possibly "factory" would include sugar-mills. It was quite likely that that was the case, but it would be more satisfactory, to him, at all events, if the Minister in charge would state definitely whether sugar-mills would be brought within the scope of the measure or not. In the Northern district, where they had a large number of men—farmers and employees also—nomads, who were so much despised by members of the Opposition, who came along from time to time, no doubt anxious

to earn good wages. They got good wages for a very brief term, but because they earned £3 or £4 a week for a few weeks there was a howl throughout the North that these men were overpaid. "Look at the wages they are paid," they were told. But these men had to stand by for a large portion of the year and earn nothing at all.

Mr. WHITE: They do not need to do it.

Mr. LENNON: The Wages Boards Act, after it had been in operation for a year or two, instead of being regarded with aversion, as it was by the politicians representing farmers, would be hailed as one of the best measures ever introduced.

Mr. BOWMAN: A blessing in disguise.

Mr. LENNON: As the hon. member said, "A blessing in disguise." In the North, when harvest time was on, men came along on the off-chance of getting employment. If they had this Bill in operation, they would be able to fix the hours of work, the rate of wages, and what not; and men at a distance would know, before starting on their journey, what conditions they would meet at the end of it. In that way the industry would offer sufficient inducements to steady, hardworking young men. It would be better for the men and better for the farmers. It was quite a common occurrence in his electorate for men to come along seeking work, and, directly they knew what the conditions were, or, after making a short experiment, they relinquished the work, causing great inconvenience to the farmers, and bringing neither profit nor credit to themselves. The Bill would really be an advantage to the farmers a year or two after it came into operation. The leader of the Opposition tried at first to make out that two or three dissatisfied workers could force the Act to be brought into operation in connection with their industry. He (Mr. Lennon) challenged the statement, and then the hon. gentleman stated that the Act would have to be brought into operation if four out of seven employees demanded it. What sort of an industry would it be where four labourers, for instance, could disturb the conditions prevailing in the industry? The intention of the Bill was that a majority of farm labourers in a district would have exactly the same right of bringing the Act into operation as a majority of the farmers in that district. The latter part of the clause made that quite clear. It would not be possible for half a dozen dissatisfied persons—agitators, some of their friends of the Opposition would call them—to cause a disruption in an industry. It must be a majority. He could not speak with the same authority regarding the farmers on the Downs; but in regard to the Northern sugar-fields the farmers would have a greater certainty of getting reliable labour than they had under the present unsuitable conditions; and once they had had a fair experience of the working of the wages boards, the farmers would put up a strong fight against the repeal of the clause they were now discussing. In fact, if the farmers had been left to themselves, without any underground political engineering, got up in this Chamber for the purpose of discrediting the Bill, he was satisfied there would have been no opposition to it. In some districts farmers' associations had passed resolutions supporting the Bill. The Press was most to blame. The hon. member for Musgrave was almost the *fidus Achates* of the hon. member for Lockyer; and, instead of asking the Government to withdraw the clause, the hon. member should pour his request into the pink ear of the hon. member for Lockyer, asking the hon. member to withdraw his amendment. He would be obliged if the Minister would give him an assurance that the operations of the clause would be extended to the people in sugar-mills and meatworks.

Mr. Lennon.]

Mr. MITCHELL (*Maryborough*) was opposed to the amendment, and was in favour of the clause as it stood, but for different reasons to those which had been expressed by most hon. members. A great deal had been said about the injury the Bill would do to the farming industry, but his impression was that it would be one of the greatest blessings ever conferred upon that industry. Hitherto farmers had worked as individuals, each man doing his own work, and sending his produce to market, where it competed with the produce of his neighbours. The clause would compel farmers to form a union, which would be able to reason with the middlemen, and control the prices of produce. No farmer could produce maize at a profit, in the best possible season, for less than 2s. a bushel; and yet farmers had been compelled to sell maize for 10d. a bushel, all the profit going to the middleman. Several times farmers had attempted to form a union, but their efforts had always fallen through, owing to the selfishness of some who could not resist the temptation of getting a penny or so more than others whose crops were a day or two later.

Mr. WHITE: You would do the same.

Mr. MITCHELL: What was wanted was to prevent the hon. member doing the same thing. They wanted to enable every man to sell his produce on the same basis. Instead of the Bill being a drawback to farmers, it would prove a great benefit to them.

Mr. WHITE: "Socialism in our time."

Mr. MITCHELL: That was what it was tending to. Every union that was formed operated in the direction of socialism. The junior member for Mackay said that the leader of the Labour party had made certain statements in that Chamber respecting the condition of the farmers' children.

Mr. SWAYNE: Not in this Chamber—in his election speeches.

Mr. MITCHELL: The leader of the Labour party had referred to the reports of school inspectors in that Chamber, and he thought it was to that the hon. member was alluding. The hon. member said that special legislation should be brought in for that purpose. What need was there for special legislation for a particular incident of that character when the necessary legislation was embodied in this Bill? The hon. member practically argued in favour of long hours for workmen, as he said that he himself had to get up at 4 o'clock in the morning to go to work, and that he was none the worse for it. No man could work twelve or thirteen hours a day without being injuriously affected by it. The hon. member also stated that one individual with whom he was acquainted had been able to bank so much out of his "miserable wage," and by interjection said that farmers did not pay low wages. He (Mr. Mitchell) admitted that some farmers did not pay low wages, and he contended that this measure would put the man who paid good wages on an equal footing with the man who paid low wages. He hoped the clause would go through without the amendment, as he was sure it would be an advantage to both the farmer and his employee.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: The hon. member for Maryborough said that those who supported the clause wanted to protect those employees who were receiving miserable wages. Was there any reason why a person receiving miserable wages should not leave his employment and get other work? The wages that some farm labourers received might be miserable wages as compared with the wages paid to miners, but the men who received those wages were content to accept

[*Mr. Mitchell.*]

them. In this labour-ridden country there was no necessity for any man to work for miserable wages, and he contended that there was no employer in the primary industry in Queensland who paid people miserable wages.

Mr. GRANT: What do you consider good wages?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Wages were the amount a man received as remuneration for his work. When a man arrived at the age of fifty, sixty, or seventy years he could not expect to receive as high a wage as he was paid in his vigorous years.

Mr. GRANT: What are the wages generally paid by farmers?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: They paid whatever wage they had to pay for the time being to get the work they have in hand done, and if an artificial value was to be put on wages, then they would have to fix an artificial value for produce, and that they could not do. Why should they pass an Act of Parliament compelling a man to pay a higher price for labour than that for which it was procurable?

Mr. MURPHY: Why not?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Why not compel him to pay a fair wage?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: His answer to that question was that neither the employers nor the employees in the farming industry had asked for this clause.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is no answer, surely.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: When absolutely good feeling existed between the employers and the employees, why should Parliament interfere?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: This proposal is to deal fairly between employer and employee.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Who asked for it?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It does not matter if it was never asked for, if it occurred that it was a proper thing to do.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: By this provision they were placing upon farmers the stigma that they did not do a fair thing towards their employees. It had not occurred to the employees that they were not receiving fair wages for their labour, and that they should ask for a wages board; and why should it occur to the mind of a legal gentleman like the Attorney-General?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Because the board will never be appointed unless the farmers ask for it.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: This provision placed upon farmers the stigma that they had not paid their employees a sufficient wage.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Are you serious?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: He was as serious as he had ever been in anything in his life. The hon. member for Maryborough also said that something should be done which would lead to the establishment of a union of farmers in order to control the values of produce. How could they control the value of perishable produce? The thing was utter foolishness. Where did those hon. members who talked so much about a fair wage buy their commodities—in the shop which paid fair wages to its employees, or in the shop where they could get them the cheapest? They bought them in the shop where the goods were sold the cheapest.

At 7 o'clock,

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported progress, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again at a later hour of the day.

WRIT OF ELECTION—ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF CARPENTARIA,

The SPEAKER: I have to announce to the House that His Excellency the Governor has communicated to me a message, which I now direct the Clerk to read.

The CLERK then read the following letter:—

Private Secretary's Office,
Brisbane, 25th March, 1908.

Sir,—With reference to my letter of the 26th ultimo, I have the honour, by direction of His Excellency the Governor, to forward herewith the Writ of Election for the electoral district of Carpentaria, as telegraphed under the Telegraph Messages Act of 1872, with the name of Mr. Thomas Nevitt endorsed thereon, as having been duly elected a member of the Legislative Assembly for the said district, together with a copy of the *Government Gazette* issued to-day, containing proclamation validating the election of the abovesaid gentleman.

I have, etc.,

F. G. NEWTON, Capt.,
Private Secretary.

The Clerk, the Legislative Assembly of Queensland,
Brisbane.

MEMBER SWORN.

MR. T. NEVITT.

Mr. THOMAS NEVITT, having taken the oath and subscribed the roll, took his seat as member for the electoral district of Carpentaria.

WAGES BOARDS BILL.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

On Mr. Armstrong's amendment on clause 48—

Mr. ARMSTRONG, continuing, said he wished to reply to the contention of the hon. member for Maryborough that it would be the best thing that could possibly happen to the farmers that the Bill should be passed, because they would then form unions, and would be able to control prices. He wished to show that it was impossible to control the prices obtained for perishable products. Those who were really most instrumental in cutting the prices received by the farmers were the persons represented by men like the hon. member for Maryborough. If they could buy a pound, a hundredweight, or a ton of potatoes cheaper at one place than another, they did so. They bought their farm products at the lowest possible price, and therefore were instrumental in sweating the farmers. There was no possible hope of farmers being able to form unions for the purpose of controlling the price of perishable products. The products commanded the prices ruling at the time, and on account of their perishable nature could not be held for any length of time. As he had said earlier in the afternoon, those who voted against the amendment must take the responsibility. The Premier at one time told them that he did not believe the Bill would have any effect on the farmers, but it was necessary to go to New Zealand, the country in which the measure had its origin, to discover its effect. Such a measure in New Zealand had resulted in bringing about chaos as between the farmers and their employees, who tried to dictate to them the terms upon which they should carry on their business. When the measure was first proposed in the old days the same result was forecast as was now forecast by hon. members. Organisations of farmers' employees grew, and it was the farm labourers who attempted to manage the businesses of their employers. In the last issue of the *Australasian* there was some New Zealand political news, and it would there be seen that the organisations of the farmers' employees had become so strong

that they were doing exactly what was apprehended in Queensland. This was the report of the Conciliation Court which had been sitting—

The inquiry by the Conciliation Board into the farm labourers' dispute still goes on. In fact, like Tennyson's "Brook," it threatens to go on for ever. Seven thousand farmers have been cited, and a very large proportion of them are insisting on their right to be heard. The length of the hearing is embarrassing to the union, whose funds must be getting exhausted, and still more embarrassing to the board, who are conscious that the proceedings are being strung out to an interminable length, and yet cannot help admitting, as a matter of fairness, the right of the farmers to be heard. The bulk of the evidence continues to show that on the whole farm labourers in New Zealand have a very good time of it. Occasionally an amusing episode takes place. The other day a small farmer, owning 300 sheep, who helped to make ends meet by working for wages for larger farmers, was called by the union to express his opinion that the demands of the union were reasonable. He was emphatic in the view that wages ought to be increased. It evidently came as an unpleasant surprise to him, however, when in cross-examination it was borne in upon him that if the union got its way he, as a farmer, would not be allowed to join it, and that if the preference clause were allowed, not only would he probably be shut out from working for wages, but he would not even be allowed to help a neighbouring farmer in return for help furnished by the latter; furthermore, that he would not be able to employ his own boys on the farm unless under union conditions. One effect which the inquiry will probably have, that was not foreseen when it was instituted, is that it will tend to harden up the votes of the farmers against the Government responsible for our Labour legislation.

That was exactly what they had forecasted, and what they believed they foresaw. They foresaw that this difficulty would arise here of the board having to listen at interminable length to these inquiries in the matter of wages. It would be very costly to the farmer, who would have to be kept waiting to give his evidence, and there would be others to follow him. He believed that they would be delivering the hardest blow ever given to the farming industry of Queensland if they accepted the clause without the amendment—a great blow against the men who had been the mainstay of Queensland—and they would retard the good feeling and raise a barrier between people who had always been able to agree.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That was an all right election appeal.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Did the hon. gentleman think that he wanted to make an election appeal?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. W. Blair, Ipswich) had no desire to occupy the time of the Committee at any length, but he desired to dispute one or two statements made, particularly by the hon. member who had just resumed his seat. He took it that the idea of clause 48 was to secure that a fair wage be paid by employers to employees. He did not for a moment subscribe to the principle that we should wait till people asked us for legislation if we had knowledge that certain legislation, if passed, would be beneficial to those people who might not have knowledge of the particular set of circumstances that had been brought under our ken.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Where did you get your information from?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: If that was so, it would be an argument against all progress. No progress would be made if we waited for people who did not know of beneficial measures to ask for them. It was our duty, when we saw an evil, to endeavour to pass legislation. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. ARMSTRONG: May it not be retrogression?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It might be; but if the consensus of opinion was that it was

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progression—and he thought that the opinion in the House and outside was on his side—then it was their duty to pass the measure.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Not from those directly interested in the industry.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It was contended that because farmers had not asked for the measure it should not be passed. He did not admit that farmers had not asked for the measure.

Mr. JENKINSON: It is because they object.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He believed they had asked for the measure.

LABOUR MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: And he believed that some of them were sincerely desirous of seeing it on the statute-book.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Who are they?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He had had the opportunity of going through Queensland at the last election, and found many farmers desirous to obtain the measure, and who approved of it.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Where.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: And it was only because in certain places, and under a certain set of circumstances, they did not fully understand the idea of the Bill that there was any opposition at all. Half the trouble against this Bill was due to engineering for political purposes.

LABOUR MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. JENKINSON: You have no right to impute motives.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL was sorry if he imputed motives, but he believed that half the trouble had arisen from that reason.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: No!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There seemed to be an idea prevalent that it was brought in to put down sweating in every individual place, so he took it that if sweating existed in any industry, even in the farming industry—and he did not say that it did—

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Do not you sweat the farmers?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: If he did he was doing what was wrong, and it should be prevented, and they should endeavour to prevent others from so acting. (Hear, hear!) Wherever sweating existed—he did not say for one moment that it existed on farms, but if it did we ought to put it down, and this measure would go a long way towards putting it down. Wherein was there any fairness in the proposition that a measure of this kind should extend to all industries save farming?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Is not farming a primary industry?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He cared not whether they were primary or secondary industries.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: Nonsense!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: If the measure was so unmistakable in its essence, and would do good in those districts, it should be passed.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It was necessary, in justice to those who voted for the clause, to show why they did so. A board could not be established unless the people in a district asked for it.

Mr. LENNON: A majority.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He thanked the hon. member for the interjection. Some

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people might say a man might have seven employees, and they might ask for a special board, and it might severely handicap him; but that was drawing a red herring across the track. It was only people in a district which was defined by the principal Act—the Factories and Shops Act with which this was read and construed—it was only a majority in that district which could apply for the special board, and only then if the Minister—The Governor in Council—saw fit was the board appointed. So that in reality, as the hon. member for Nundah said, this is purely a permissive measure. The request must come from a majority of the people in the district who were conversant with the peculiar incidents connected with that industry, who had a peculiar, intimate, and relevant knowledge concerning it, and they were the proper people to ask for it, if they were dissatisfied with the conditions which attached to that industry. When they preferred the request founded on the special knowledge they had, it was then considered, and a board was appointed or not as the Governor in Council decided. If a determination were arrived at against which something might be said, or some objection raised, there were other powers, so carefully was this measure framed. In clause 35—he was now briefly alluding to the clause in passing to show the power that existed for suspending the determination of a board—it stated that if any objection were raised to the determination of any board that the Governor in Council might suspend the determination, and when it was suspended it would be the duty of the special board to forthwith hear, receive, and examine evidence as to such determination. They might then adhere to their former determination, or they might reverse it or modify it by making some amendment which to them seemed proper. If they reversed it the Governor in Council could revoke the suspension and the determination would stand. Where was there anything unfair in allowing an equal number of employees to sit with an equal number of employers in a district, both having knowledge of the conditions of the district, to sit together and decide what determination should be arrived at in the interests of the industry?

Mr. ARMSTRONG: There would be nothing unfair if there was an equal number of employers and employees.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There were equal numbers, and he referred the hon. gentleman to clause 4 of the Bill. It might be said that there were not an equal number of employers and employees in the district, but, before the special board would be appointed, at all events, the numbers on both sides would approximate each other, and absolute fairness was secured in clause 4 by allowing an equal number of employees to sit with an equal number of employers. There was nothing new in that principle. Napoleon was the first man who introduced a measure of that kind, years and years ago, and the fairness of it had been demonstrated through all ages. Personally, he should be inclined to go further, and favour compulsory arbitration. (Hear, hear!) But he took this as the essence and nucleus of a measure of that kind. The trouble with ordinary conciliation measures was that there was no sanction for enforcing them. The reason conciliation tribunals broke down was that the sanction was not adequate to make them effective. If the proper sanction were imported into a measure he felt certain that it would work satisfactorily, and reasonable fairness would result to both employer and employee. Instead of this Bill creating trouble or disputes it would prevent them. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. ARMSTRONG : There are no disputes now.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : They could not shut their eyes to the fact that in the near future unions might be formed and disputes might arise. Surely his friend, the hon. member for Lockyer, would agree that that was a reasonable way to settle a dispute rather than to have strikes.

Mr. ARMSTRONG : Certainly, but why anticipate evil?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : It was better to prevent than to have to cure. The safest way to provide against war was to take precautions in peace. They were taking reasonable precautions now. So far from creating trouble or disputes it would tend largely to prevent anything of the sort. (Hear, hear !)

Mr. ARMSTRONG : Has that been the experience in New Zealand?

Mr. JENKINSON : No.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : That had been the experience where wages boards were in existence.

Mr. JENKINSON : Exactly the opposite.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : He expected to get a denial from the hon. member for Fassifern, but the general trend of experience went to show that wages boards were effectual in securing the objects for which they were introduced, and that was, in preventing disputes. With regard to the old, infirm, and slow workers, it was contended that it was casting a stigma—some reflection—on the people included in these terms. A more humane provision could not be introduced into any Bill. (Hear, hear !) It existed in the Workers' Compensation Act, and, as it was a provision that worked very well there, he was satisfied that it would work well here. Men grew old in performing their avocations in going through life, and it would be unfair in introducing this measure if they did not make provision for these men. (Hear, hear !) There was a clause which gave them protection. They would get protection if they became old or infirm or were slow in their work. So far from it being a reflection on the Government for introducing that clause, he would say that every intelligent man here would give the Government credit for framing and inserting it. It was said that the Bill reflected on those men who paid good wages in farming districts. That was not so. If employees were working for good wages and were satisfied, then they would never ask for a special board. If they were working for wages with which they were not satisfied, then they would get the same right under the Bill that every employee in every other industry would get. The members of the Opposition objected to the measure principally because it extended to farming.

Mr. ARMSTRONG : That is so.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : The amendment extended that to other industries. The amendment sought to exclude the pastoral, and, to his mind, the mining industry also. They had gone to such an extent that he would almost claim the support of some hon. members opposite that the amendment ought to be kept down to the original position they took up to have the farming industry excluded.

Hon. R. PHILP : Will you support it?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : He would say nothing about that. When an amendment in that form was introduced it would be considered. The present amendment went further than the position taken up in the country. It was to point that out that he rose that night so that people outside who were following the debate would understand on what they based their votes. (Hear, hear !)

Mr. JENKINSON (*Fassifern*) : Mr. Maughan—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : Let us divide and get on with business.

Mr. JENKINSON : He had to consider his constituents, and he was going to take the opportunity of expressing his opinion on this clause. He felt very much constrained to rise after the absurd remarks of the hon. the Attorney-General. It showed absolutely that the hon. gentleman knew absolutely nothing about the farming industry, he knew absolutely nothing about the dairying industry, and he knew absolutely nothing about what was taking place in New Zealand under the provisions of the Act which this Act was copied from.

Mr. SUMNER : No, no !

Mr. JENKINSON : He had fortified himself with information which he proposed to give to the Committee. It would probably make his speech longer than he originally intended, but he wanted to appeal to the reasonable men in the Chamber not to penalise a class who had done more to raise Queensland to its present position than any other class of the community.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS : This should have been raised on the second reading.

Mr. JENKINSON : No one was more desirous than he of keeping to the rules of the House. He would keep within the four corners of the Standing Orders, and if he digressed the Chairman could pull him up. The Attorney-General said that this principle was in existence in New Zealand, and there had been no disaffection shown towards it whatever. As a matter of fact, there was no disaffection at the time the principle was incorporated in the New Zealand Act, and it was only since that time that the same principle which animated members of the Labour party, no matter what part of the world they were in, to foment strife and create disturbances, that there was any dissatisfaction expressed at all amongst the farm labourers in New Zealand.

Mr. WOODS : That is not so.

Mr. JENKINSON : It was an absolute fact, as he would prove from the sworn evidence given in connection with the farm labourers' dispute in New Zealand. The Attorney-General had something to say with [7.30 p.m.] regard to grievances that existed, although the hon. gentleman did not commit himself definitely to the statement that grievances did exist in connection with the agrarian industry at all. He (Mr. Jenkinson) was satisfied in connection with every industry that, if people felt themselves oppressed, they would find some method of making their grievances known. That had not been the case in connection with the farming industry or any of the industries which it was proposed to bring under the operations of that clause, and which it was proposed by the hon. member for Lockyer's amendment to exclude from the operations of the Bill. The farm labourers' dispute had been running for over sixteen weeks in New Zealand. So far, several hundreds of farmers had given evidence, and no less than 7,000 additional farmers had applied to be allowed to give evidence before the Conciliation Board. He would quote from the *Canterbury Times*, which was published in New Zealand, and he would prove a little later that it was absolutely biased in favour of the farm labourers, as, fortunately, there was a letter stating that the paper was biased in favour of the farm labourers and not of the employers.

Mr. SUMNER : There is no comparison between the two measures.

Mr. Jenkinson.]

Mr. JENKINSON: There might not be a comparison so far as the wording was concerned, but the principle was exactly the same—the fixing of hours and wages—and that was the particular point on which the whole of the evidence had been given. The *Canterbury Times* of 18th December, 1907, contained the evidence taken at Timaru. A farmer named Twentyman stated that up to that time there had been no disaffection, and that it would be impracticable to make any award that would suit both farmers and workers. That was the very thing the hon. member for Lockyer and others had pointed out: that it was impracticable to fix the rate of wages that would be applicable to all classes of labourers and all parts of a district. Districts were not all alike. There was evidence showing that men ploughing wet land were subject to attacks of rheumatism, and consequently it would be unfair to fix the rate of pay for ploughing wet land at the same rate as was paid for ploughing on dry land. He found that there was no disaffection in New Zealand until the agitators got among the men—as the hon. member for Fortitude Valley had again threatened to do as soon as the Bill became law. The hon. member had stated that he and others would make it their business to go on to the Darling Downs and foment an agitation. The hon. member would be working at his trade to-day but for the fact that he was successful as an agitator, and that he was able to draw a very good salary. A Mr. Talbot, giving evidence on 10th December, said that there was no disaffection among the workers, and that wages had risen of late years. The wages paid in New Zealand were a little higher than those paid in Queensland in some instances, but the cost of living in New Zealand was infinitely greater than it was in this State. If they attempted to tamper with wages, as surely as the night followed the day the price of commodities went up to a greater extent than the increase in wages. One of the demands made by the union in New Zealand was that there should be a half-holiday. He presumed that would be one of the demands that the hon. member for Fortitude Valley would make, taking his cue from New Zealand, as he did in so many things.

Mr. BOWMAN: You go to New Zealand yourself to get precedents when it suits you.

Mr. JENKINSON: He believed in searching all over the world for precedents, if necessary. Several small farmers gave evidence, and one of them stated that unionist principles would be injurious to farm labourers as well as to farmers, and he gave his reasons. On 27th December evidence was given by a Mr. Grigg, who apparently had a good deal of sympathy with the demands of the Labour people, judging by his evidence. He stated that one of the objections was that the unionist organisers and prominent members of the union had told the good workers to slow down so that the contrast would not be so great between themselves and those who were not able to perform the same amount of work. That was an injustice to those who were endeavouring to raise themselves above their present condition. The same gentleman stated that he thought that, if the awards of the court were carried out, the mortgagee would, in some cases, get in his claim before the labourer. He believed that was the law at the present time. If the law worked in such a way that a man was not able to carry on farming operations, it was quite possible that he would get disgusted and throw up his land.

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and the mortgagee would step in and practically do the labourer out of his wages. Another thing he stated was that—there was no relaxation in the award.

That was the unfortunate part of these awards, whether they were awards of wages boards or of an arbitration court. The award was fixed for a certain length of time, and in the primary industries conditions might change entirely during the continuance of an award. An award might be satisfactory in good seasons, but might be very disastrous in bad seasons as far as primary industries were concerned, and the seasons sometimes changed very suddenly in Australia. Yet the award was as unalterable as the laws of the Medes and Persians. Mr. Grigg also stated that he objected to—

a preference clause—

which appeared to be one of the demands of the union—

because it meant the keeping of an employment book.

Under the provision in this Bill it would be absolutely necessary for each man employing labour to keep a time-book in connection with his employees, otherwise there would be a great deal of dissatisfaction on both sides. How many farmers were in a position to keep time-books? The Premier knew the difficulty there had been in collecting the income tax from farmers, because so many of them were not able to keep books themselves. Well, under this provision they would have to keep a time employment book, showing when each employee went to work and when he stopped for ten minutes owing to a shower of rain, or for any other cause. Where was all this going to end?

The PREMIER: That is what we are all wondering—where it is all going to end.

Mr. JENKINSON: He was not going to be drawn off the track, but intended to complete his argument. The farmer was now subject to one set of inspectors, and under this clause it would be almost imperative to have an inspector every few miles in order to see that the employer and the employee were carrying out the award of the board. If things went on like this, we should have more inspectors than we had taxpayers. The number of inspectors in connection with the various legislation passed during the last five or six years was something appalling. Then, Mr. Grigg stated that—

the system he wanted would have the effect of bringing all men into the union.

Which showed that he was practically voicing the views of the union. Another witness, Mr. Hough, of Geraldine Downs, stated that—

in the early days he went out to New Zealand, and worked as a farm labourer, and received considerably less wages than were paid at the present time, and was enabled by industry and thrift to become a landowner himself and employ other labourers.

He further stated that—

if the demands of the union were in existence at the time he went to New Zealand—

and he was only one of a score who gave similar evidence—

it would have been utterly impossible for a farm labourer ever to become an employer himself.

Mr. LESINA: It would be a good thing to lessen the number of employers.

Mr. JENKINSON: They were not in the habit of taking the hon. member for Clermont seriously on all occasions.

Mr. LESINA: We want to bring the wage system to an end.

Mr. JENKINSON: Efforts had been made down all time to abolish the wage system, but they had been a disastrous failure. He could quite understand the hon. member for Clermont and other people advocating that system, because they had nothing to lose. He (Mr. Jenkinson) believed that a man was entitled to what he could earn, and that, if he happened to be more thrifty than other members of the community, he was perfectly entitled to retain what he had saved. It was not his intention to detain the Committee; he was not speaking out of pure "cussedness." (Laughter.)

The PREMIER: Thank you for the assurance.

Mr. JENKINSON: A station manager, giving evidence on the 25th of December, said—

he had studied carefully the conditions submitted by the union, and was of opinion that they were unworkable; indeed, any set of conditions were unworkable, because the weather could not be guaranteed. There should be give and take between masters and men; that method was preferable to working under an award. He had never had a growl from any man, and he had been managing a station for sixteen years.

He further stated that it would be hard to work under an award, and that, in the interest of man and master, it would be undesirable to fix a minimum wage, because there were men not able to work to the fullest capacity whom it might be permissible to employ at a little lower rate of wages than the other men were getting. He said dissatisfaction would ensue if they were allowed to work. Mr. Campbell said he—knew of no dissatisfaction in the district among the agricultural labourers.

He was quoting that evidence to show that the Attorney-General did not, as he usually did, speak by the book. Mr. Maslin, another farmer, said—

It would be better to have a give-and-take system of regulating hours of work and wages than to attempt to make any hard-and-fast rules. The variability of the weather precluded the practicability of a court of award. He claimed to have a good general knowledge of the workers' opinions in his district, and he stated emphatically that there was no general dissatisfaction among them.

All that evidence was absolutely uncontradicted. Where evidence was given that there was no dissatisfaction, and subsequently a witness stated that there was, he had cast that on one side because there was a difference of opinion. Mr. Maslin went on to say—

We had employed an old man of sixty-nine years of age to work a three-furrow plough, and the man had done the work well, though he was a bit slow at harnessing up, paying him £1 5s. a week. Otherwise he paid that man 17s. a week. He was not worth more, and would not be employed if he had to pay any more. The union demands would preclude the employment of such men. Considering that the capacity of men varied so much he thought it impossible to fix their wages definitely. If things were left alone in the agricultural community, there would be peace and quietness; but regulation by the intervention of the Agricultural Labourers' Union meant nothing but strife.

That was the dangerous part of it, and had been the experience of men all over the world. Mr. Melville—

considered the union demands quite unworkable. He could not carry on his farm under those conditions. Unless it was possible to regulate the prices for wool, wheat, and other products, the wages could not be definitely fixed by an award.

It would be noticed that in all the evidence given it was pointed out that those engaged in the primary industries did not control the prices received for their products. They were governed by the ruling market price, and therefore the farmer could not pass anything on to the consumer.

Mr. HARDACRE: The consumer has a good deal passed on to him.

Mr. JENKINSON: The hon. member knew that that was not so in the case of farm products. The hon. member merely made an interjection to relieve the monotony. He referred probably to the few vegetables grown by the Chinaman. He was not dealing with Chinamen, but he could quite understand the hon. member speaking on their behalf, because the greatest patrons of that class of men were the members of the Labour party themselves. Mr. Barnett stated—

that he was a farmer at Morven. He disapproved of the union demands. He considered it quite impossible to work a farm on hard-and-fast rules as to hours and wages. He considered preference to unionists was wrong in principle. It would tend to break up families. He considered that if an award was made the produce of the land of the dominion would be lessened.

That was a factor that was lost sight of by some hon. members—that the mere fact of interfering with industry would lessen the produce of the land—drive men out of the industry, and bring down the price of the land.

Mr. LESINA: A good thing.

Mr. JENKINSON: He was glad to get that interjection. It only showed that the hon. member for Clermont and, possibly, the hon. member for Leichhardt were carrying out the principle they had advocated for so long of doing away with private property altogether.

Mr. HARDACRE: No.

Mr. JENKINSON: Of course, the hon. member for Leichhardt had got a little selection of his own, and he now held a different view to that which he held when he had no land whatever. Then the same witness went on to say—

Farmers would do less cropping, especially of wheat, and hence the price of food to dwellers in the towns would increase.

That was a point he dwelt upon on the second reading. If there was less production there would be an increased price which would fall on the shoulders of the workers in the towns and cities, most of whom supported the Labour party who were now advocating that clause.

Mr. LESINA: We will pass a Bill fixing the prices later on.

Mr. JENKINSON: That was too ridiculous.

Mr. LESINA: They are doing it in New Zealand. They are going to fix rents and prices.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: This is a very stirring address.

Mr. JENKINSON: He was not speaking to the gallery, but was just giving facts which the Attorney-General denied had any existence, and he had assured them that that particular clause had been found to be a success. He had been quoting from the sworn evidence of people who found the circumstances to be exactly opposite. Why hon. members would persist in defeating the amendment when the evidence was absolutely opposed to them was more than he could fathom. He did not want to detain the Committee any longer, but he would ask hon. members to pause and consider whether it was not imperative to accept the amendment, thus not imposing further harassing conditions on those engaged in the primary industries.

Question—That the words proposed to be added (*Mr. Armstrong's amendment*) be so added—put and negatived.

Mr. MACKINTOSH moved the addition of the following proviso at the end of the clause:—

Provided that the provisions of this Act shall not extend to any employer engaged in any primary industry, or to his employees engaged in such industry, in any case where—(1) The employees so engaged consist exclusively of children or other relatives of the employer *bona fide* resident with such employer; or (2) The number of employees so engaged at any one time,

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inclusive of any such children or relatives, does not exceed ten. For the purposes of this section, the term "primary industry" shall be construed so as to include the businesses of farming, stock-raising, and fruit-growing; the business of dairying where the dairy produce manufactured is exclusively the product of cows usually depastured on premises of which the employer is the *bona fide* occupier; and also any other trade, business, or industry carried on for the production from the soil in an unmanufactured condition of material for use in other trades or industries: Provided further, that nothing in this section shall exempt from the provisions of this Act any joint stock company or any firm or partnership, consisting of two or more persons, incorporated or formed for the purpose of carrying on the business of dairying in a factory.

He might explain why he mentioned the children in the amendment, so that it would not be thought that it conflicted with clause 32, under which children of an employer were exempted. The amendment was

[3 p.m.] framed on the lines of the Shearers and Sugar Workers' Accommodation Act, where an exemption was made in the case of any person employing ten or a lesser number of employees. In order that this amendment would be more reasonable he had included the children, so that the number to be exempted would be ten including the children of the employer. There might be eight children and only two employees, but then they would come under the Bill. As far as the shearers and sugar workers' accommodation was concerned, he heard no complaint about it.

Mr. COYNE: Don't you? You will hear a lot.

Mr. MACKINTOSH: It did not matter what remuneration they got, they were paid on the regular scale for shearers. He had listened to many expressions of opinion in connection with this Bill, and as to what was good for the farmers, but he had not heard as to what was injurious to them, and most of all from members on this side who were favourable to the measure, and it was a bit marvellous to him. The amendment was one which he thought the Minister for Agriculture or the Minister for Lands should introduce, because both of them had something to do with the industry which most of the farmers were employed in. He was sure if they had had the practical knowledge or experience of the departments over which they had control they would be in a position to introduce the Wages Boards Bill in a manner that no farmer could find fault with. But the Minister for Works knew just as little as the Minister for Lands about the details of the general work of the people engaged in farming. He did not intend anything personal by these remarks, but he was of opinion that in any of the State departments the Minister should have real practical experimental knowledge of the details of his department, because he would then be in a position, in dealing with measures of this description, to give an opinion upon it that no one could dispute. The Attorney-General in matters of law was able to give an opinion that no one could dispute. He mentioned this in order to make his point clear. When Ministers gave an opinion as to what would happen to farmers under this Bill, it convinced him that it was just the blind leading the blind in connection with it. There was no one who had spoken on it who could have said from their own personal knowledge that this measure was desirable to the farmers. The electorate of Cambooya was a large area of about 50 miles by 50 miles, and practical farmers were spread all over it, and he trusted that before long they would be more closely settled on it than they are now, as there were large tracts still

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void. He did not come across a single one of them who approved of this measure, but anticipated that it would be disastrous to the industry they were engaged in. He also met a great many from the other States, and even from New Zealand; they abused him in a friendly way, so as to find out the state of the matter, and they were quite satisfied when he explained to them his objection to the measure. He must confess that the general run of farmers were against it. A great many farmers would have been against him but for the reason that they had confidence that he would see that justice would be done to the industry in which he was extensively engaged himself. He was not a bird of passage, and he had a large interest in the country. He held a fair extent of land, which he farmed, and had a large family on it, and it was to his benefit to look after the interests of the farmers, because a man who was honest to himself was honest to everybody else. He paid a lot of wages and employed a lot of men. He had nothing to say against his men. He paid good wages and got good men. It would be a difficult matter for a wages board to fix the wages for men engaged in farming work, because all men were not alike. Some men must be better than others wherever they went. Some men were very good and others were hardly worth their grub, and he paid them exactly according to their merits. As he was a practical farmer, he knew what he talked about, although he found a difficulty in expressing it to his own liking. The representatives of the towns were in duty bound to support the farming industry when they understood from practical men what was wanted. The town of Ipswich was dependent on the farming industry, so was Dalby, Toowoomba, and Warwick, and the representatives of those towns were in duty bound to see that nothing was done that would injure the farming community. Not even the farming employees were looking for this Bill. They were told during the elections that the Wages Boards Bill was not the question at all. They were told distinctly that it would not interfere with the farmers. Some went so far as to say that if they could be shown where the remuneration was to be so-and-so and the duration of hours was to be so-and-so they would pay £100 to the hospital. Of course, nothing of the sort was in the Bill, but the machinery was there to make provision for the remuneration and for the duration of hours in an industry they knew nothing about. He hoped the Bill would not be foisted on any portion of the community unless they asked for it. Unfortunately, one section of the community had power to ask for it under the Bill. If it were made that the employers and employees could combine and mutually agree, and then ask for it, they would be justified in having a board of that description so that they could make the wages and duration of hours matters that they could decide between themselves. The dairying industry was causing a good deal of prosperity in Queensland, particularly within the rainy area of the coast, and yet there were measures introduced in the House that would obstruct that industry or embarrass it. He told the electors that this Government, when they were returned to power, as he knew they would be, would not do anything to obstruct or embarrass the farming industry in any way, and he was sure they would not do it intentionally. It was easy to do a wrong, but it was most difficult to undo it. He found that several of his Southern friends talked of giving up the dairying industry, and he

knew of several in his own neighbourhood who had already done so. If it was going to be so injurious to the industry as some were inclined to anticipate then he would give it up himself. He did not blame people for not liking dairy work. When a man had to get up at 5 a.m. and milk cows and go on till 5 p.m., and perhaps till 7 p.m., it was not pleasant work. Although they might not actually work more than six or seven hours altogether, still it was disagreeable work. In order to do away with that he got milking machines at a cost of £350, but, if his industry was further interfered with, he would give it all up and go in for sheep and leave the dairying industry alone altogether.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: Will you start another cheese factory?

Mr. MACKINTOSH: Very likely he would. He was one of the oldest cheesemakers and dairymen in Queensland, having made cheese and butter in Queensland forty years ago.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: And did well, too.

Mr. MACKINTOSH: He remembered on one occasion he swam over a flooded creek with two kegs of butter, and got to the railway station in time to send the butter to market, and it realised the handsome sum of 1s. 5½d. per lb. (Hear, hear!) He would not like to see anything done that would be detrimental to the farming industry. The more the primary industries were interfered with by legislation the more they would be injured, and legislation of this particular kind would make everybody—employees and employers alike—dissatisfied. Things were going on all right at present, and it was always wise to leave well alone. Men who were employees to-day would be employers in a very short time. He was aware that the clause was permissive, but either party could make application for a special board. It would not be so bad if both parties were to unite in making the application; there would then be a guarantee that all would be right. With regard to the amendment, he had asked nobody to vote for it; he submitted it to the Committee on its merits. If they adopted it he should be pleased; if they rejected it he should be sorry, and they would all be sorry by and by. No one could deny that he knew a great deal about the farming and the dairying industry, and it was because of that knowledge that he brought forward his amendment, which he would now leave in the hands of the Committee.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It was not his intention to go very lengthily into the matter, because a good deal that had been said on the amendment of the hon. member for Lockyer was equally applicable, or even more so, to the amendment of the hon. member for Cambooya. The first part of the amendment dealt with the employment of children. The Bill did not apply to employees who were the children of the farmer; clause 32 would show that they were exempt. Then it went on to the exclusion of relatives. That was a very vague term. The hon. member had not defined it, and there was no definition of it either in the principal Act or in the Bill before the Committee. Therefore, he did not think that portion of the amendment could be accepted. It must be remembered that they were dealing with special boards, and that the creation of special boards rested with the Minister. The Minister would take all the circumstances into consideration, and would not appoint a special board haphazard. He would first look at all the circumstances sur-

rounding the application. Then, the exemptions asked for by the hon. member opened the door to evasions.

[8.30 p.m.] The object of the measure was to provide wages boards where they were considered necessary by the employers and employees engaged in any industry. One of his objections to the exemptions was that they would affect him personally, by exempting the industry in which he was engaged, and he had no wish to be exempted. He believed it would be much better for all trades and industries to be brought under the Act. He could not accept the amendment, and trusted that the Committee would come to a decision quickly.

Mr. PAGET had very much sympathy with the hon. member for Cambooya, because, like the hon. member, he had been a great part of his life on the land, and was still working on the land. He did not consider that the farmers of the State desired to come under the operations of the Bill. While in sympathy with the hon. member, he was not in favour of the amendment as worded, and he moved the omission of the following words:—

In any case where— (1) The employees so engaged consist exclusively of children or other relatives of the employer *bona fide* resident with such employer; or (2) The number of employees so engaged at any one time, inclusive of such children or relatives, does not exceed ten.

Clause 32 covered the case of children, and, in common with the Minister, he thought that the word "relatives" was too wide, and would open the door to numerous evasions of the Act. With respect to the proposed exemption of cases in which the number of employees did not exceed ten, that would exclude nearly all cane-growers. The number "ten" was the minimum fixed in the Shearers and Sugar Workers Accommodation Act, that number being fixed upon in consequence of arguments brought forward by himself and others when the Bill was going through with respect to the number of men engaged by certain cane-growers during the crushing season and not at other times of the year. A great number of those engaged in mixed farming and dairying in the Southern part of the State never employed more than ten persons; but a cane-grower was in a very small way of business who did not employ that number at some time during the year. The sugar industry was the largest agricultural industry in the State. The crop was worth £2,000,000 last year, and this year's crop would probably be worth as much. If there was to be any benefit conferred on farmers by the amendment, he desired to know why nine-tenths of the cane-growers were to be excluded from that benefit. The cane-grower had as much right to be benefited as the man who was engaged in wheat-growing, dairying, or mixed farming.

Mr. RANKIN (*Burrum*): It was regrettable that the amendment should be treated in such a light, supercilious manner by some hon. members on the other side. He did not think they had any mandate from the people to incorporate the farmer within the four corners of the Bill.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. RANKIN: He believed that if the measure had been brought before the House in the form in which it was originally introduced as an auxiliary of the Factories and Shops Bill, no exception would have been taken to it. Whether it was the fault of the hon. member for Moreton or of the senior member for Gympie that the primary industries were dragged into the measure, it was not for him

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to say, but he did say that those people who were engaged in the primary industries were not clamouring for it, and that they did not want it. He defended the Bill during the recent election, but he always felt that he was defending something which was not called for, and which was not wanted. They had only to look at what had transpired in a Southern State during the last week to see how far measures of this nature had been a failure elsewhere. They might insist upon the farmer doing his part, but what power had they to insist upon the employee doing his part? The Federal Government had dictated to the sugar-growers that they must pay their employees 6s. a day, but they could not compel the employees to take that sum and work for it. (Hear, hear!) He did not think this measure would help our industries ahead.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Do you want a Conciliation and Arbitration Act?

MR. RANKIN: Conciliation and arbitration courts had proved a failure elsewhere. He was not aware of any country in which they had been a success, and he did not believe such an institution would share any better fate in Queensland. Surely it was within the scope of the ability of hon. members to devise a scheme under which employees as well as employers would be compelled to submit to the award of a wages board. A wages board was to be constituted by representatives of the employers and employees, with an adjudicator appointed by both. Presumably, in the operation of the measure this adjudicator would be appointed by the Minister in charge of the department having the administration of the Bill. The board would hear the pros and cons, discuss the situation, and arrive at a certain decision by which they would fix the hours of labour and the rates of pay. Their decision might be a good and sound one, but how were they going to enforce it? If the verdict went against an employer, public opinion could be brought to bear upon him in order to make him submit, but if it went against the employee he could put his wag on his back and march elsewhere. This legislation was dealing with matters the most fateful of any dealt with by any legislation passed in Queensland. It seemed passing strange that in passing an important matter of this kind only twenty members out of a House of seventy-two should be present to take part in the debate. The most important departures in the Bill were introduced by members who were not interested in the primary industries. The most important departure was introduced by the hon. member for Moreton, and the second most important departure was introduced by the senior member for Gympie. Neither of those members was associated with the primary industries of the State. He could not imagine that the Wages Boards Bill was going to benefit the farmer. All some hon. members could say in support of it was that it would not do any harm. They were not there as a negation. The amendment applying the provisions of the Bill to the farming industry was brought in by the representative of a mining constituency, which would not be affected by the Bill. The conditions under which the goldminer worked were laid down, and the hours of labour and rates of pay were fixed. The value of gold did not fluctuate to any great extent. The conditions of the farming industry were quite different. Speaking as a sugar-planter, he did not cavil very much with the Bill, because the sugar-planters would have to face in the very near future a union of the sugar-workers, and

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perhaps it might be a wise and sound thing to have a wages board to fix the rates of pay for harvesting. He said that merely because at present the Federal Government fixed the rates of pay and conditions of labour. But to make the Bill applicable to the ordinary farmer, to dairymen, fruitgrowers, and orange-growers, was really not doing a good thing for the State of Queensland. He thought it would be a very wise thing to put the Bill in the condition in which it was when it was first introduced, and apply it to factories and shops, leaving the primary industries out of it. He did not think any good purpose would be served by including the primary industries in the Bill. It might be said that it would be a dead letter as far as farmers were concerned. But they did not want a dead letter. If that was all there was to recommend the provision, surely it would be much better to leave it out of the Bill. The question not only affected local industries, but it affected those who were coming here.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Why should it not?

MR. RANKIN: They were only a population of half a million people, and they wanted to attract people to Australia.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You want to sweat the sugar-workers.

MR. RANKIN: What was the use of the Secretary for Public Works telling him that he wanted to sweat the sugar-workers.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: He knows nothing about it.

MR. RANKIN: The Minister knew that he (Mr. Rankin), as a sugar-grower, could not employ a man on his sugar plantation unless he paid him 6s. a day.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Perhaps you would not do it if you were not compelled.

MR. RANKIN: It was difficult sometimes to diagnose some people's minds. The Minister's interjection might be accurate, but quite outside of that it was necessary to attract people to these shores, which they would not succeed in doing if they threw obstacles in the way. Hon. members knew as well as he did what had been done by other countries to attract immigrants, and it appeared to him that Queensland was placing obstacles in the way of the advancement of the State. They had only to read Mr. Deakin's speech on the question of defence to be convinced as to the importance of bringing people here. Perhaps the Secretary for Public Works thought, as he had a right to think, that the people at present here were a most important class of people.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I can do my own thinking.

MR. RANKIN: And there was no reason why other members of the party should not do their own thinking. The more obstacles they placed in the way of bringing people here the more they were marking time and trying to press back the waves of advancement. He did not believe the Minister was at all sincere in his advocacy of clause 48. No one who had studied the conditions of the country could find any possible justification for the inclusion of such a clause in the Bill, and, while the measure might be an important one in itself as applied to shops and factories, he did not consider that it was wise to apply it to the primary industries.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He could assure the hon. member for Burrum

that he was quite sincere in pressing the clause. If he were not, he would not support it. What could constitute a better advertisement for inducing people to come here than the knowledge that they would get a good rate of wages, and would be protected from being sweated by the employers?

Mr. RANKIN: It is a question of supply and demand.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It was not a question of supply and demand. If good conditions prevailed, it would be an encouragement to people to come here. To hear the hon. member talk, one would think that he was the only one who would suffer through the passage of the Bill. He talked as if it would be ruinous to him. At the same time, the hon. gentleman contended that he was paying a good rate of wages. Now, if people were paying good wages, in God's name what were they afraid of? The hon. member for Cunningham, in speaking last session, referred to the fact that the farm labourers on the Darling Downs did not work more than eight hours a day on an average. Then what were the representatives of the farmers afraid of? He did not believe for a moment that the Bill was going to have the dire effects that the proposers of the amendments had asserted. He was perfectly sincere in pressing the clause, and did not believe it would have the ill-effects that had been predicted.

Mr. ADAMSON: While he had not taken any part in the discussion on the Bill, he had been trying all the time to understand it. Whatever the hon. member for Burrum might say, some of them who had not seen fit to occupy the time of the House had looked into the matter critically. They knew what some of the farmers had said concerning the Bill, and, while there were some hon. members who asserted that the farmers as a whole opposed the Bill, he contended that a very large number of them were in favour of it.

Hon. D. F. DENHAM: Where are they?

Mr. ADAMSON: The farmers of Dallarnil had signed Alf. Jones's nomination-paper, and the Maranoa farmers had said they were in favour of the Bill. All over the State numbers of intelligent farmers favoured the Bill, and he contended that some of the misrepresentations of hon. members were mere red herrings drawn across the trail. He claimed that although some members had not spoken as often as the hon. members for Fassifern and Lockyer, it was not because they had not got the brains, or because they were not able to read and understand the Bill, but because they wanted to get to business. They wanted to see that and other Bills got through as quickly as possible and become law, believing that they would benefit the employees and the employers as well. For people to say that conciliation boards had done no good in the past was, in his opinion, to misread the whole of industrial history. The Bill was only a conciliation Bill. The leader of the Opposition might say that it was compulsory.

Hon. R. PHILP: So it is.

Mr. ADAMSON: It was, in a way; but it was desirable that it should be. Just a while ago a certain event took place in a district not a hundred miles from Brisbane. The employees wanted to meet the employer; the employer refused to meet the employees, and a disastrous strike took place.

Mr. RANKIN: Where was that?

Mr. ADAMSON: This Bill was meant to meet cases of that kind, and if an employer was so unreasonable as not to be [9 p.m.] willing to meet employees when they requested a discussion upon the business they were engaged in, he thought there ought to be some machinery which would compel him to meet the employees and discuss in a fair and reasonable way the matters in dispute.

Mr. PAGET: Will the employee abide by the decision?

Mr. ADAMSON: This Bill provided for an appeal to reason, and the time was coming when the farm labourers would be united in unions and demand that this thing should be discussed in a fair way. If, as had been said, the farmers were paying a fair wage, and everything was right, there was no need for them to be afraid of having these boards appointed. They were simply conciliation boards, providing for reason to take the place of brute force, and they were in the interests of both employers and employees. He was going to vote for the Bill, as he did last session, and as introduced now, and he hoped it would pass. He thought it would pass, in spite of the delay caused by a lot of unnecessary speeches during this debate.

Mr. RANKIN: It would be interesting, after the rhetoric of the junior member for Maryborough, to hear how, after the passing of this measure, we are going to overcome these industrial troubles. He was not aware that it was going to assist us to any great extent. As he had said a few minutes before, while they could compel the employer to abide by the decision of the wages board, he did not see that in this Bill they had any machinery to make the employees abide by the decision of the board.

Mr. ADAMSON: There is no power to make the employer abide by it.

Mr. RANKIN: Surely, if it was going to overcome the evil spoken of by the junior member for Maryborough, it must apply equally to the employee as to the employer.

Mr. ADAMSON: And it does.

Mr. RANKIN: He could not find it in any clause under the Bill.

Mr. COYNE: Yes; clause 15.

Mr. RANKIN: Nor was there any precedent to show where measures of this kind had had the effect of compelling employees to abide by the decision of a wages board. It showed how futile were our efforts, in passing industrial measures of this kind, unless we could make it apply with equal force to the two parties. They could always compel the employer to abide by the decision of the court.

Mr. ADAMSON: You cannot compel him.

Mr. RANKIN: They knew perfectly well that they could always get at the employer, but they could not always get at the employee. If the decision of a wages board was contrary to the wishes of an employee, he could pick up his swag and trot off to some other place. Not only that, but our efforts were futile because they gave to some extent a feeling of security which did not exist. Our object in a measure of this kind was to safeguard not only employees but also employers. It was a fair deal, and let them both have the same right. At the present time they seemed to be arguing from one point of view. They should not think that the only people in Queensland were the employees, or that the only makers of wealth in this country were the workers. The brainy men—the employers—

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were not unfrequently the greater avenues of money making and wealth production; the employee himself was entirely dependent on the man who provided employment.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: The employer is dependent on the employee.

Mr. RANKIN: It was just as important that we should safeguard the interests of the employer as the interests of the employee.

Mr. COYNE: This Bill does.

Mr. RANKIN: He approached the Bill in that light, and he ventured to say that it did not.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted (*Mr. Paget's amendment*) stand part of the proposed amendment—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 41.	
Mr. Adamson	Mr. Kidston
" Airey	" Land
" Barber	" Lennon
" Barton	" Lesina
" Bell	" Mackintosh
" Blair	" Mann
" Bowman	" Maxwell
" Brennan	" May
" Cottell	" Mitchell
" Cowap	" Mulcahy
" Coyne	" Mullan
" Douglas	" Murphy
" Hamilton	" Nevitt
" Hardacre	" Payne
" Hawthorn	" Redwood
" Hunter, D.	" Roberts
" Hunter, J. M.	" Ryland
" Huxham	" Sumner
" Jackson	" Winstanley
" Kenna	" Woods
" Kerr	

Tellers: Mr. Mann and Mr. Nevitt.

NOES, 18.	
Mr. Appel	Mr. Paget
" Barnes, G. P.	" Petrie
" Campbell	" Philp
" Denham	" Rankin
" Forrest	" Stodart
" Grayson	" Swayne
" Hanran	" Thorn
" Jenkinson	" Walker
" Keogh	" White

Tellers: Mr. Rankin and Mr. White.

PAIRS.

Ayes—Mr. Grant, Mr. Jones, and Mr. McLachlan.
Noes—Mr. Somerset, Mr. W. H. Barnes, and Mr. Cribb.
Resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted (*Mr. Mackintosh's amendment*)—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 3.	
Mr. Jenkinson	Mr. Thorn
" Mackintosh	

Tellers: Mr. Mackintosh and Mr. Thorn.

NOES, 40.	
Mr. Adamson	Mr. Kerr
" Airey	" Kidston
" Barber	" Land
" Barton	" Lennon
" Bell	" Lesina
" Blair	" Mann
" Bowman	" Maxwell
" Brennan	" May
" Cottell	" Mitchell
" Cowap	" Mulcahy
" Coyne	" Mullan
" Douglas	" Murphy
" Hamilton	" Nevitt
" Hardacre	" Payne
" Hawthorn	" Redwood
" Hunter, D.	" Roberts
" Hunter, J. M.	" Ryland
" Huxham	" Sumner
" Jackson	" Winstanley
" Kenna	" Woods

Tellers: Mr. Cowap and Mr. Lennon.

[*Mr. Rankin.*]

PAIRS.

Ayes—Mr. Somerset, Mr. W. H. Barnes, and Mr. Cribb.
Noes—Mr. Grant, Mr. Jones, and Mr. McLachlan.
Resolved in the negative.

Question—That clause 48 stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 40	
Mr. Adamson	Mr. Kerr
" Airey	" Kidston
" Barber	" Land
" Barton	" Lennon
" Bell	" Lesina
" Blair	" Mann
" Bowman	" Maxwell
" Brennan	" May
" Cottell	" Mitchell
" Cowap	" Mulcahy
" Coyne	" Mullan
" Douglas	" Murphy
" Hamilton	" Nevitt
" Hardacre	" Payne
" Hawthorn	" Redwood
" Hunter, D.	" Roberts
" Hunter, J. M.	" Ryland
" Huxham	" Sumner
" Jackson	" Winstanley
" Kenna	" Woods

Tellers: Mr. Murphy and Mr. Ryland.

NOES, 19.	
Mr. Appel	Mr. Paget
" Armstrong	" Petrie
" Barnes, G. P.	" Philp
" Campbell	" Rankin
" Denham	" Stodart
" Forrest	" Swayne
" Grayson	" Thorn
" Hanran	" Walker
" Jenkinson	" White
" Keogh	

Tellers: Mr. Appel and Mr. Keogh.

PAIRS.

Ayes—Mr. Grant, Mr. Jones, and Mr. McLachlan.
Noes—Mr. Somerset, Mr. W. H. Barnes, and Mr. Cribb.
Resolved in the affirmative.

The CHAIRMAN, reading from the tellers' list, called "Ayes, 40; Noes, 18."

Mr. JENKINSON said that, although he had voted with the "Noes," he understood his name had not been marked off on the division list. He was sitting at the table at the time.

The CHAIRMAN asked the tellers to go through their lists. On their being satisfied that Mr. Jenkinson voted with the "Noes," they made the amendment accordingly, and the numbers were called, "Ayes 40;" "Noes, 19;" the CHAIRMAN remarking that he thought it very undesirable that, during a division, members should sit at the table, and hoped it would be discontinued.

Clauses 49, 50, and 51 put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill without amendment.

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

FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1 and 2 put and passed.

On clause 3—"Amendment of section 8"—

HON. E. B. FORREST said that last year he had endeavoured to get an amendment inserted in the Bill exempting one-man shops from the early-closing provisions [9.30 p.m.] of the Act, and he now desired to ascertain whether the Government favoured such an amendment. If they did, he

was prepared to move it. It was stated last session that in every other State in the Commonwealth except Tasmania they granted an exemption to one-man shops. At that time there was a Bill before the Victorian Parliament, and now that that Bill was passed they found that it contained a similar provision allowing one-man shops to remain open until 8 p.m. Under the circumstances, he hoped the Government would do something for the small shopkeepers, many of whom were very deserving people. If the Government gave no encouragement, he would not move an amendment, as the result last session was by no means encouraging, the amendment being rejected by about two to one. The Government, so far, had shown no consideration for the one-man shopkeepers, and he would be pleased to hear on the present occasion that they had come to the sensible resolve to exempt them from the early-closing provisions.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The Government had no intention of accepting the amendment the hon. member mentioned. The Government intended to pass the Bill and send it to the Upper House just as it left the Assembly last session.

LABOUR MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. R. PHILP was astonished at the hon. gentleman's statement. The hon. gentleman was a capitalist now himself. He represented a capitalistic Government.

HON. E. B. FORREST: Boodlers! (Laughter.)

HON. R. PHILP: In every other State they were coming back to the exemption of one-man shops.

MR. BARBER: That is not so. South Australia has not exempted them.

HON. R. PHILP: South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, and even New Zealand had exempted them. This Government were only legislating for the big shopkeepers, and not for the poor man at all. Every man had to make a start in life, and nearly all the big shopkeepers in Brisbane had commenced as shop assistants and one-man shopkeepers. Plenty of the small shops were kept by widows or by men who could not do hard manual work. They only sold after the big shops closed. He understood that the law was not being properly observed now, and that these small shops were keeping open illegally. Would it not be better to legalise the selling of goods by them for two hours, from 6 till 8 o'clock, as they were selling during those hours now, he understood? They would rather have it legalised.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Are they breaking the law now?

HON. R. PHILP understood they were.

MR. JENKINSON: And the closing authorities are winking at it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: No; they are not.

HON. E. B. FORREST: I never hesitate to tell a man to break the law if I think it is unjust or absurd.

HON. R. PHILP: The man who was hardest on the poor man was always the man who had once been poor himself. The present Secretary for Public Works had not always been a rich man.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I am not a rich man now. (Laughter.)

HON. R. PHILP: The hon. gentleman was a prosperous squatter, who shore enormous flocks and herds. He had got on in the world, but at one time he was a one-man shopkeeper himself—he kept a blacksmith's shop.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That was not a one-man shop.

HON. R. PHILP: Of course it was. Now, because the hon. gentleman had got beyond that, he wanted to kick down the ladder by which he had climbed, and he would give no countenance to the poor man. He was not going to move an amendment, but he wanted to point out to the poor struggling men of Queensland who were their friends. Not the Government—they were a capitalistic Government—every member of the Government was an enormously rich man. (Government laughter.) Now, because his party were trying to defend the poor man, the Government would have none of him. They would have the Bill and nothing but the Bill, whether it was just or unjust. Since the Bill had been discussed last session, the Victorian Parliament had passed a Bill exempting one-man shops, and the Committee should do the same. It would come some day, and he hoped that next session an amending Bill would be introduced exempting one-man shopkeepers from the early-closing provisions of the Act.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 4 to 15, inclusive, put and passed.

On clause 16—"Amendment of section 51"—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS moved that the following amendment be inserted at the commencement of the clause:—

In the first paragraph of section fifty-one of the principal Act the word "ten" is repealed, and the word "nine" inserted in lieu thereof.

Section 51 of the principal Act provided that if a shop kept open on Friday evening it should keep open till 10 o'clock, but that if it was open on a Saturday evening it should close at 9 o'clock. The amendment made the time uniform in both cases.

HON. E. B. FORREST: This amendment showed the farce of the Bill being rushed through in this fashion. Within the last ten minutes the Committee were told by the Minister that no amendment would be permitted in the Bill, as the Government wanted to send it to the Upper House in the exact phraseology in which it went there last Parliament. If that reason applied to an amendment moved by an hon. member on one side of the House, it should apply to an amendment moved by an hon. member on the other side. The whole thing was an absolute burlesque. What were the Government; who were they that they should do this sort of thing? It was not a question of the merits of an amendment, but simply humbug. He protested against the action of the Government, and had half a mind to call for a division on the amendment. He was ashamed of the Government, to think that they would lower themselves to such farcical proceedings.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: With regard to the statement of the hon. member for Brisbane North, that the Bill was being rushed through Committee, he would point out that it had been twice discussed, and twice sent in its present form to the Upper House; but the hon. member, with his stage thunder, wanted to make the Committee believe that he was looking after the interests of the State.

HON. E. B. FORREST: He never said a word about the Bill being rushed through Committee. What he complained about was that one side of the House was permitted to do a certain thing, and that the other side

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were not even listened to. It was not a question of stage thunder, but a question of humbug.

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

Clause 17—"Amendment of section 52"—put and passed.

On clause 18—"Amendment of section 53; alteration of late night where holiday kept"—

Mr. LENNON suggested that section 53 should be so amended that when employees were granted a holiday they should not have to make up for it by working on another day, as was done at the present time. Some business men, when they gave their employees a holiday, made them work an extra half-day in the week to make up for it, and he thought that kind of thing should be altered.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS said it was not the intention of the Government to alter the Bill in the manner indicated by the hon. member for Herbert.

Hon. R. PHILP: Why not?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Because they had a reason for not altering it. (Laughter.) He moved the omission on line 43 of the word "ten," with a view of inserting the word "nine."

Question—That the word proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause—put and negatived.

Hon. R. PHILP pointed out that if the unfortunate retail employee got a holiday he had to make up for it the previous day. It did not affect the wholesale employee in the same way. There was no deduction from his holiday. He did not think that penalty should be inflicted on the retail employee.

Mr. SUMNER: The clause was really inoperative except at Christmas and New Year. It was not taken advantage of by the retail employers except at those times.

Mr. BOWMAN: The amendment moved by the Minister was simply to bring the clause into line with a previous amendment which had been carried. He did not think there was any objection to it.

Hon. R. PHILP: If a man got a holiday he had to make up for it the night before. That was what it meant.

Mr. BOWMAN: Three hours.

Hon. R. PHILP: Why should he work three hours extra? If the wholesale houses closed, and did not compel their men to work an extra three hours, why should the retailers be allowed to do it? Wholesale houses were much more liberal in the matter of holidays than retail houses.

Mr. BOWMAN: You agreed to this last session.

Hon. R. PHILP: So did the Minister agree to something else last session, but more light had been shed on the question. He did not know at the time that retail employees were penalised in this way. He was astonished that the hon. member for Fortitude Valley did not fight for the retail employees.

Mr. BOWMAN: He remembered when the question of the wholesale houses came up in 1906, and there was no stronger opponent of the inclusion of the wholesale employees than the hon. gentleman.

Hon. R. PHILP: Quite wrong.

Mr. BOWMAN: The majority of the Opposition were very strong on the question, and particularly the member for North Brisbane. A petition was presented asking that they

should be treated differently to the retail employees, and after the information received from a deputation which waited on the Minister it was recognised that Parliament would be increasing the hours of the wholesale employees by including them in the Bill. The House generally agreed that that was not desirable. From 1900 up to the present time it had been generally admitted that the retail houses should be allowed to keep open on Friday night up to a specified time—namely, 10 o'clock. It was proposed now to reduce that by one hour. The Committee agreed to that a few moments ago, and now the hon. gentleman wanted to make cut that they were treating the retail employees badly, and he wanted to bring the closing time down to 6 o'clock.

Hon. R. PHILP: He might tell the hon. member for Fortitude Valley that when the first Factories and Shops Bill was brought into the House the wholesale houses were included.

Mr. BOWMAN: And your supporters in the Upper House threw it out.

Hon. R. PHILP: He had no supporters in the Upper House—(Labour laughter)—but the Upper House did throw it out. Last session he said he was quite indifferent whether wholesale houses were included or not, but if they were included the employees would be worse off. He said so now. If the hon. member moved the inclusion of the wholesale houses, he would not oppose it; but he contended that it was very hard that retail employees had to work for their holiday the night before.

Question—That the word proposed to be inserted be so inserted—put and passed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS moved the omission of the word "ten" on line 44, with a view of inserting the word "nine."

Question—That the word proposed to be omitted stand part of the question—put and negatived.

Mr. JENKINSON moved the insertion of the word "six" in substitution of the word "nine." He was quite in accord with the proposal of the hon. members for Herbert, Fortitude Valley, and Townsville. It seemed to him most unfair to give with one hand and take away with the other. If the employees were to get a holiday, then let it be a holiday, and not a pretence. Do not let them have to work for it on another occasion, or else it was no holiday at all. It was a mere subterfuge to say that it was so.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS pointed out that the word "nine" had been inserted in line 43, and if "six" was inserted in line 44, it would make the clause inoperative.

Mr. JENKINSON: The Minister certainly did not understand the Bill if he said that, because line 44 had absolutely no connection with the amendment on line 43.

[10 p.m.] What they had done was this: The

principal Act now provided that shopkeepers should keep open one night in the week until 10 o'clock. The Committee had accepted an amendment to the effect that they now keep open until 9 o'clock. The purpose of this clause was that where the holiday fell on the day on which the shopkeeper was allowed to keep open till 9 o'clock, he should be able to keep his shop open on the preceding night till 9 o'clock, as the Minister said. His (Mr. Jenkinson's) amendment was that he should be allowed to keep open on the preceding night till 6 o'clock only, and that would not penalise the employee who got the holiday.

Question—That the word proposed to be inserted (*Mr. Kerr's amendment*) be so inserted—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 39.

Mr. Adamson	Mr. Lennon
„ Aiper	„ Lesina
„ Barber	„ Mackintosh
„ Bell	„ Maxwell
„ Blair	„ May
„ Bowman	„ McLachlan
„ Brennan	„ Mitchell
„ C. ttell	„ Mucahy
„ Cowap	„ Mullan
„ Coyne	„ Murphy
„ Douglas	„ Nevitt
„ Hamilton	„ Payne
„ Hawthorn	„ Rankin
„ Hunter, D.	„ Redwood
„ Hunter, J. M.	„ Roberts
„ Huxham	„ Ryland
„ Jackson	„ Sumner
„ Kerr	„ Winstanley
„ Kidston	„ Woods
„ Land	

Tellers: Mr. Douglas and Mr. Maxwell.

NOES, 15.

Mr. Armstrong	Mr. Paget
„ Appel	„ Petrie
„ Barnes, G. P.	„ Philp
„ Campbell	„ Stodart
„ Denham	„ Swayne
„ Hanran	„ Walker
„ Jenkinson	„ White
„ Keogh	

Tellers: Mr. Jenkinson and Mr. Walker.

PAIRS.

Ayes—Mr. Grant and Mr. Jones.

Noes—Mr. Somerset and Mr. W. H. Barnes.

Resolved in the affirmative.

On clause 19—“Duration of employment and overtime work”—

Mr. McLAACHLAN: Would it not be necessary for the Minister also to bring line 56 into agreement with the amendment already made?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: No; it is provided for by the words “as the case may be.”

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 20 to 24, inclusive, put and passed.

On clause 25—“Hawking, etc., after shop closing hours, prohibited”—

* Mr. SWAYNE moved the insertion of the following words after line 23:—

It shall not be lawful for the occupier of any shop or factory to require any employee in the course of his employment to carry any bag containing sugar, wheat, or other grain or produce or any goods or package containing goods of a weight greater than two hundred pounds.

He would like the Minister to accept the amendment, as anyone watching the men working on the wharves would see that if that class of work was carried on for any length of time with bags of the present weights, it must injure their health. The Federal Government had already got this matter in hand, but he understood their regulation on the subject would have to stand a test case before the High Court of Australia. However, he learned from the Waterside Workers' Union in Mackay that the regulation laid down by the Federal Minister providing that sacks should not exceed certain dimensions would not prevent more than 200 lb. being put into a sack of sugar, and 200 lb. was enough for any man to carry. He spoke from experience on this matter.

Mr. MURPHY: Make it less.

The CHAIRMAN: I am inclined to think that this amendment is outside the scope of the Bill.

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The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It was ruled out of order last session.

The CHAIRMAN: As it is out of order, I cannot put it to the Committee.

Mr. BOWMAN, speaking to the clause, said that a deputation waited on the Home Secretary with reference to minimising the weight of bags. There was nothing more important than a reform of that nature. (Hear, hear!) Anyone who had experience of the men working on the wharves or the carriers would get sufficient evidence to see that the weights were too heavy to carry. In fact, a number of them were maimed through having to carry excessive weights. It was suggested by one of the members of the deputation that the matter could be minimised very largely if the Minister for Railways would put a limit on the bags that were sent along the railways. (Hear, hear!) The difficulty would then be overcome.

Mr. SWAYNE: What about bags that are not carried on the railways?

Mr. BOWMAN regretted that the amendment was outside the scope of the Bill, because it would have been an important reform to include in it. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. LENNON asked the Government to take steps to see that the Act was administered better. The first part of the clause read—

It shall not be lawful in any district for any person to pursue the calling of the hawking or itinerant vending of any goods of the class or description usually sold in shops in the same district at any time later than half an hour after the time when such shops are required to be closed under this act.

In some of the country districts of the State it was quite common for commercial travellers to visit small country towns, open up their samples in a sample-room, and carry on business at any hours of the night, and even on Sundays. That was a prevailing practice in the Northern towns of Queensland. The shop-keeper who had to pay rent and insurance and pay wages to employees, and whose money circulated in the district and helped to make that district prosperous, had to compete with these commercial travellers, and it was unfair competition. It was due to laxity of administration. He would fortify it further by quoting from a letter which he had received, as follows:—

I have now taken the opportunity of asking you to do what you can to have this matter ventilated. I will be as brief as possible. The facts are: That barber shops and tobacconists, and also a pawnbroker, keep their respective establishments open every night till 9 or 10; and in most cases they sell jewellery, fancy goods, gramophones, records, and almost anything that the Act compels legitimate traders to close their places at the tick of the clock, 6 p.m. I may state also that these unscrupulous traders also take watch and jewellery repairs in at any hour, and, consequently, my business and others suffer. Several letters have appeared in the Press, calling the attention of both the inspector of shops and factories and the inspector of police, but it has no effect; and these people seem to override the Act in spite of the police being continually passing their premises. Some of these places are also betting shops, and it is not an uncommon fact that youths are tempted by this class of trader to become contaminated by gambling. In fact, it is so palpable that it is a wonder the police do not notice it night after night. On the Towers there is only hotels and shops that sell perishable goods open on their half-holiday. And until the state of things are altered here, I am, among others, the sufferers to a great extent.

The way the Act was administered in the North was a standing disgrace. Last session he suggested that the police should be called into requisition, particularly at Townsville, where the Act had been scandalously worked.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The hon. member would see from the clause

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that an effort had been made to meet the case of the commercial traveller and the hawker. With regard to inspectors, within the last fortnight the Government had appointed three inspectors under the Act—one at Townsville, one at Charters Towers, and one at Rockhampton; and, from what he knew of those men, he could assure the hon. member that the Act would be carried out in its entirety.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 26 and 27 put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with amendments.

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

The House adjourned at twenty-six minutes past 10 o'clock.
