

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**THURSDAY, 13 JULY 1911**

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## QUESTIONS.

## REPORT ON PORT DOUGLAS-MOUNT MOLLOY RAILWAY.

Mr. THEODORE (*Woothakata*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"Will he lay upon the table of the House Engineer Parkinson's report on the Port Douglas-Mount Molloy proposed railway route?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. W. T. Paget, *Mackay*) replied—

"It is not the practice for officers' confidential reports to be published, but if the hon. member desires to peruse the report it is at his disposal at my office."

## ALLEGED DUMMYING.

Mr. ALLEN (*Bulloo*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"1. Is he aware that certain applicants for grazing farms in the vicinity of Thargomindah are alleged to be dummies acting on behalf of Sydney Kidman?"

"2. Does his department propose to take any action towards making these men prove their bona fides?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. E. H. Macartney, *Brisbane North*) replied—

"1. It has been so alleged by a correspondent.

"2. Inquiry is being made."

## EUMORAH HOLDING.

Mr. MULLAN (*Charters Towers*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"1. Has he or his immediate predecessor, in accordance with a promise given by the Minister last session, inquired into the suspicious circumstances under which the present lessees of Eumorah holding acquired that lease?"

"2. If so, what was the result of that inquiry?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS replied—

"1. The matter appears from *Hansard* to have been fully discussed last session, but such a promise does not appear to have been given.

"2. See answer No. 1."

## FEES TO MEMBERS OF PRINTING WAGES BOARD.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Charters Towers*) asked the Secretary for Public Works—

"1. What amount is paid per sitting to members of wages board connected with the printing trade?"

"2. What amount is allowed for travelling expenses in connection with same sitting in Townsville?"

The PREMIER (Hon. D. F. Denham, *Oxley*) replied—

"1. Ten shillings for each meeting extending over the morning and afternoon of any day, and 10s. for a meeting of not less than four hours commenced during the afternoon of any day and continued after 7 p.m. For a meeting either during only the forenoon or afternoon of any day each member is paid 5s.

"2. No travelling expenses are paid, but members of boards are granted second class railway or steamer fares to the town in which the board sits."

## FEES FOR EXAMINATION OF ENGINE-DRIVERS.

Mr. MULLAN, on behalf of Mr. May (*Flinders*), asked the Secretary for Mines—

"1. Are engine-drivers (who have to be examined by a doctor), compelled to pay the doctor's fee for examination?"

"2. If such is the case, should not the doctor's fee be paid by the employer?"

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. J. G. Appel, *Albert*) replied—

"1 and 2. The periodical examination of engine-driver in charge of winding engines required by section 34 of the Mines Regulation Act will be carried out by the medical officers of the various districts without payment of any fee by the person examined."

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

THURSDAY, 13 JULY, 1911.

The SPEAKER (Hon. W. D. Armstrong, *Lockyer*) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

## ELECTIONS TRIBUNAL ACT.

## PANEL OF ASSESSORS.

The SPEAKER: Pursuant to the requirements of the Elections Tribunal Act of 1886, I now lay on the table my warrant nominating the panel of assessors for the trial of election petitions during the present session. The panel is: George Phillips Barber, George Powell Barnes, Charles Joseph Booker, Thomas Bridges, Richard John Cottell, Henry Alexander Cecil Douglas, Donald Gunn, John McEwan Hunter, Peter Alfred McLachlan, John Mullan, Thomas Nevitt, and Edward Bowdick Swayne.

## PAPERS.

The following papers, laid on the table, were ordered to be printed:—

First annual report of the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board.

Regulations under the Margarine Act of 1910.

Proclamation declaring a new schedule under the Diseases in Plants Act of 1896.

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## WAGES FOR STATE CHILDREN.

Mr. ALLEN asked the Home Secretary—  
 “Has it been decided yet whether those State children who are hired out under the old agreement are to receive the benefit of the new scale of wages?”

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. G. Appel, *Albert*) replied—

“Employers of orphan children were notified in March, 1911, that all children hired out under the old agreement would receive the benefit of the new scale of wages from 1st July, 1911.”

## DELAY IN TAKING OVER ETHERIDGE RAILWAY.

Mr. COLLINS (*Burke*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

“1. On what date will the Commissioner for Railways take over the Etheridge Railway?”

“2. What has been the cause of the delay?”

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

“The delay was primarily caused by the regrettable death of the late Commissioner; the present Commissioner is now in the North inquiring into the matter.”

## ALLEGED EVASION OF SHOPS AND FACTORIES ACT.

Mr. ALLEN asked the Secretary for Public Works—

“1. Is it a fact that several firms doing business in Brisbane, selling by retail as well as wholesale, are classed as wholesale firms, thereby evading the Shops and Factories Act and the wages board decision in their dealings with their employees?”

“2. Does the Minister consider this fair to those firms' employees, or to competing firms that are classed as retail, and, if not, will he instruct his inspectors to take action to have the injustice remedied?”

The PREMIER replied—

“1. No. Places where wholesale and retail business is done are subject to the provisions of the Factories and Shops Acts as far as the retail business is concerned.

“2. The determinations of special boards under the Wages Boards Act apply to all persons affected whether in wholesale or retail.”

## NOTICES OF MOTION.

On the SPEAKER calling the first notice of motion, Mr. RYLAND, in a low tone of voice, called “Not formal.”

Mr. MANN: Speak up.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Did you call “Not formal”?

Mr. RYLAND: Yes.

The SPEAKER: I would ask hon. members, as I did when I occupied the chair last session, that when a question is called, if they wish to call “Not formal,” to do so in a loud tone of voice so that it can be heard from the chair.

## STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.

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

“That the Standing Orders Committee for the present session consist of the following members:—The Speaker, the Chairman of Committees, Mr. Hardacre, Mr. Swayne, Mr. Maughan, Mr. Bouchard, Mr. Lesina, Mr. Murphy, and the mover, with leave to sit during any adjournment of the House, 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. McLachlan, Mr. Cribb, Mr. Hamilton, Mr. D. Hunter, Mr. Winstanley, Mr. Grayson, and the mover.”

## JOINT COMMITTEES.

## MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Council, intimating that—

“The President, Mr. Norton, and Mr. Smith be appointed members of the joint committee for the management of the Parliamentary Library; the President, Mr. Murphy, and Mr. Fahey be appointed members of the joint committee for the management of the Parliamentary Refreshment-rooms; and the President, Mr. Cowlishaw, and Mr. Hall be appointed members of the joint committee for the management and superintendence of the Parliamentary Buildings; and requesting that the Assembly nominate a like number of members, with a view to give effect to the 8th Joint Standing Order.”

## TROUBLE IN THE SUGAR DISTRICTS.

## MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

The SPEAKER said: I have to announce that I have received a notice from the hon. member for Herbert, Mr. Lennon, in writing, stating that he intended to move the adjournment of the House to call attention to a definite matter of urgent public importance, —namely, “The industrial trouble in the sugar districts.” Is the motion seconded?

More than five members having risen in their places,

Mr. LENNON (*Herbert*): I desire to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of focussing public attention on the grave industrial trouble at present existing in most of the sugar districts of the State. I believe there are a few exceptions, but the trouble exists in the greater part of the North, at all events. I would like to inform the House what steps have been taken by the representatives of the workers in order that some definite arrangement might be amicably come to between employers and employees; and in order that members may understand what trouble was taken to effect so desirable an end—that the matter might be temperately and freely discussed—I will read the correspondence on the subject. The matter was taken up calmly and deliberately with the sole desire to settle the dispute in a way that would be satisfactory all round. The first communication on the subject, dated 1st February, emanates from the secretary of the Australian Workers' Association, and is addressed to J. H. Paddle, general manager of central mills, and it reads—

“1st February, 1911.

“Dear Sir,—The various industrial unions which have been operating among the sugar workers of Queensland have amalgamated under the Amalgamated Workers' Association of Queensland, and I have been instructed by the executive of that association to approach you with a view to arranging a conference between the millers and producers on the one part and the employees through the Amalgamated Workers' Association on the other, for the purpose of discussing and arranging the rates of pay, hours of labour, and conditions of employment as applied to the sugar industry in Queensland.

“The Cane Growers' Union, Australian Sugar Producers' Association, Colonial Sugar Refining Company, and the various other millers

and producers have also been approached on the matter, and we would be pleased if you would give the matter your consideration. Thanking you for a reply.

"Yours faithfully,  
" W. McCORMACK,  
" General Secretary, A.W.A.

" J. R. Paddle, Esq.,  
" General Manager, Government Central Mills, Brisbane."

Here is the reply to that letter—

" Bureau of Central Sugar Mills,  
" The Treasury,  
" Brisbane, 22nd February, 1911.

" Sir,—I have the honour to acknowledge your letter of the 1st February, in connection with a proposed conference between millers and producers on the one part, and the employees through the Amalgamated Workers' Association on the other, for the purpose of discussing and arranging the rates of pay, hours of labour, and conditions of employment as applied to the sugar industry in Queensland.

" I regret the delay which has occurred in acknowledging your letter, due to my being with the Sugar Commission in the North.

" Your communication will receive full consideration, and you will be advised later in connection therewith.

" I have, etc.,

" JOHN R. PADDLE, General Manager.

" Mr. W. McCormack,  
" General Secretary, Amalgamated Workers' Association of Queensland, Chillagoe, N.Q."

I will now read a letter sent to the manager of the Mulgrave Central Mill. It is dated 1st February, 1911, and is as follows:—

" 1st February, 1911.

" Dear Sir,—The various industrial unions which were previously operating among the sugar workers in Queensland have amalgamated under the Amalgamated Workers' Association of Queensland, and I have been instructed by the executive of that association to approach your company with a view to arranging a conference for the purpose of discussing and arranging the various rates and conditions of employment as applied to the sugar industry in your district.

" All the millers and growers throughout Queensland have been approached in the above matter, and the Amalgamated Workers' Association is prepared to meet the employers in conference through their various associations—the Australian Sugar Producers' Association and the Cane Growers' Union—or singly, in their respective districts.

" I would be pleased if you place this matter before your directorate as early as possible; and thanking you for a favourable reply.

"Yours faithfully,  
" W. McCORMACK,  
" General Secretary, A.W.A. of Queensland.  
" The Manager,  
" Mulgrave Central Milling Company,  
" Nelson."

A similar letter was sent to the Sugar Producers' Association, and the following reply was received:—

" Australian Sugar Producers' Association,  
" Central Buildings, Edward street,  
" Brisbane, 17th February, 1911.

" Dear Sir,—I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated the 1st instant, and in reply to say that my executive do not see that any good purpose would be served by a conference between our associations, for the reason that the question of wages and conditions of employment must be regarded as a "district one," on account of each district having its own peculiarities, and, in consequence, disparity of remuneration, particularly, for instance, in the price paid for the cutting of cane. We have been accustomed to allow matters of this sort

to be settled by our district associations with the men whom they employ, and no good reasons have been advanced to depart from this course.

" Furthermore, it is the policy of our associations to encourage the creation of special wages boards in the various districts, and this appears to us to be the logical development of the attitude we have adopted in the past. Moreover, pending the result of the referendum, it would seem premature to discuss the subject-matter of your letter.

"Yours faithfully,

" E. H. PRITCHARD, Secretary.  
" W. McCormack, Esq.,  
" General Secretary, Amalgamated Workers' Association of Queensland, Chillagoe."

In reply to a similar communication, the following letter was also received by the secretary of the Australian Workers' Association:—

" Colonial Sugar Refining Company,  
" O'Connell Street, Sydney,  
" 13th February, 1911.

" Dear Sir,—In reply to your letter of the 1st instant, I have to say that we have never discussed with anyone not in our service the terms and conditions under which the men employed by us are engaged, and we are, therefore, unable to entertain the proposal you have made for a conference on the subject with the officers of your association. Moreover, we have no reason for believing that any of our permanent employees, or even those who work for us season by season, are members of your organisation.

"Yours truly,

" EDW. W. KNOX, General Manager.  
" W. McCormack, Esq.,  
" General Secretary, Amalgamated Workers' Association, Chillagoe."

And a further reply to a similar communication was received from Mr. Hindmarsh—

" Sir,—I have the honour, by direction, to state, in reply to your letter to the general manager relating to wages, etc., at this mill, that the general manager has decided that, in view of the wages paid, together with time and a-quarter for overtime, and a 10 per cent. bonus at the end of the season, he regrets such request entails too large an expenditure, and the price received for sugar does not justify any alteration from past practices.

" I have, etc.,

" J. HINDMARSH, Manager.  
" The Secretary,  
" Amalgamated Workers' Association,  
" Proserpine."

Then there is a letter from the secretary of the Mount Bauple branch of the Australian Workers' Association, as follows:—

" Mount Bauple, 6th May, 1911.

" Dear Sir,—We had a deputation wait on Mr. Paddle, general manager of the Government sugar-mills; we asked him to consider the following proposals, viz.:—

" An eight-hour day in the mill and a minimum wage of 7½d. per hour (or £1 10s. per week) and keep.

" He received the proposal with the best of grace, but his reply was to the effect that this mill was not in a paying way to grant us any concession in wages or hours, and that he would be only too willing to assist us if he possibly could. He also said there was a wages board coming along and that they would have to abide by its determination.

" We are going to interview the growers here and see what they have to say. They (the growers) interviewed Mr. Paddle for a higher price for their cane, but were unsuccessful.

"Yours faithfully,

" J. BROWN,  
" Secretary Mount Bauple Branch Amalgamated Workers' Association.  
" To W. McCormack, Esq.,  
" General Secretary, Amalgamated Workers."

All this goes to show that every care was

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taken to avoid any of the friction or trouble with which we are now faced. A fair, temperate proposal was made that the matter should be discussed calmly and deliberately by the parties interested; and you see they refuse all along the line. The Press of Queensland has taken this matter up; but the Press, I grieve to say, has not given sufficient, or even fair, prominence to the fact that such a conference was asked for by the Australian Workers' Association. I would like to say that the Press by its misrepresentation, not only in this matter but in every other matter, as far as my knowledge goes, affecting the people of Queensland, particularly in the recent past, have pursued a policy of deliberate misrepresentation. I charge the Press, particularly the metropolitan Press, in this matter, with deliberately misrepresenting the facts of the case.

Mr. COYNE: And suppressing.

Mr. LENNON: Of course there has been a suppression of facts also. I say also that the Press does that because the Press is working practically hand in glove with the present Ministry. The Press exercises considerable influence, if not domination, over the present Ministry; and I would like to relate a fact that came within my own knowledge a few months ago when I was waiting to see the Chief Secretary on a matter of business in connection with my electorate. After waiting for twenty-five minutes, I found he was in close conference with the manager of the *Brisbane Courier*, probably arranging the personnel of the present Government. I merely mention that fact to show the enormous influence that gentleman exercises over this Government. The Colonial Sugar Refining Company, of course, is interested in this industrial trouble. The Colonial Sugar Refining Company I may describe as the big boss of the sugar industry in Queensland.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: In Australia.

Mr. LENNON: It uses every possible means to gain its ends, and it has right close to its hand a protégé of its own in the shape of the Australian Sugar Producers' Association, known as the A.S.P.A. The statement was made in the Press in New South Wales, and was repeated here by myself last session, that the Australian Sugar Producers' Association is probably paid by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company to the extent of £700 per annum for loyal service to the big boss of the sugar industry. The Government permits itself to be influenced and yields to these malign influences—the Press, the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, and the Australian Sugar Producers' Association. All these are capitalistic concerns, and they appear to me to have great influence over the present Ministry, particularly over the Chief Secretary.

Mr. WHITE: Nonsense!

Mr. LENNON: It is all very well to say "Nonsense!" Anyone can say that. I want to show that this party has taken a very keen interest in this matter. Early last month we formed a deputation that waited on the Treasurer. I regret that he is not present to-day—I understand that he is ill—because if he were here he would possibly be able to throw some light on the question. But a deputation, consisting of myself, Mr. Theodore, Mr. Ferricks, and Mr. Mann, waited on the Treasurer on the 9th instant, urging that the Government should set an

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example to the employers in this matter, and grant an eight-hour day in the mills which are owned and controlled by the Government, pointing out at the time that the principle of an eight-hour day has been generally recognised. At all events, it has been recognised by the Government in regard to the Railway Department, and in every other large manufacturing industry in Australia.

The PREMIER: It is so in the mills.

Mr. LENNON: The eight-hour principle has not been recognised in the mills.

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. LENNON: I would like to cite a brief reply that we got from the Treasurer on the occasion to which I have alluded. The Treasurer replied, stating that the true method of dealing with matters pertaining to the sugar industry was to make use of the law of the State provided for the purpose—namely, wages boards. The Minister then went on to state that there was no intention on the part of the Government to pay more for cane. Mr. Barnes was asked by Mr. Theodore, "Will you give me an answer with regard to the three-shift question?" Mr. Barnes replied that he could not do so then, that it was one of those matters which required time. He would call for reports from the mill managers, and would make up his mind when he got the reports.

Mr. THEODORE: He has given us no answer yet.

Mr. LENNON: I may say that I personally interviewed the Treasurer a week or two ago, and he informed me that he had received some replies, but he had not received all the replies he expected to receive in answer to his inquiries. Of course, I conclude when he does receive all his replies he expects, he will furnish us with a reply, but I want to state deliberately that up to the present time we have received no official reply to the request of the deputation in regard to the adoption of the eight-hour system in the mill, beyond what I say Mr. Barnes told me a fortnight ago—that he had received two replies, and which I believe were unsatisfactory. I would like to say that in addition to the malign influences which I have mentioned, it seems to me that the Commissioner of Police, too, is very much on the alert, and has been informed that the men are out on strike here and there and elsewhere. I claim for this particular strike, no matter what may have happened at any previous strike, that the men have been so well conducted and orderly that they have been a pattern, not only to strikers but to the employers, for orderliness, for sobriety, and for good behaviour, and there was absolutely no necessity whatever to inform the Commissioner of Police in this way. But the Press does not even stop at that, because we see by recent statements in the paper that at Ayr, for example, they say that some hundreds of tons of cane have been destroyed, have been burnt, and they say that it looks suspicious, that it is probably incendiarism. It is very easy to make these reckless charges, but those who have any knowledge of the work that is carried on in the sugar districts know that where they have a large tramline service they almost entirely use wood for fuel; very little coal is used, and the consequence is that sparks fly about, and that fires in dry weather, such as we have had lately, are very frequent.

Mr. FERRICKS: Every season.

Mr. LENNON: There is great recklessness and bitterness in the statement that it is due to incendiarism, and the statement is one that will have no weight with any fair-minded man. I do not think by the way the strike has been conducted that there can be any grounds whatever for such a suspicion as I have mentioned. I would like to call attention to the fact also that not only was there this particular deputation which waited on Mr. Barnes—and which I at once acknowledge was treated with every courtesy—but a second deputation waited on that gentleman, and I believe they were treated in a somewhat different manner; but not having been personally present on the second deputation, it would be prudent on my part to make no further reference to it. I will let those speak for themselves who were present on the second deputation. I would like also to say that the demands of the men are so very moderate that they are well worthy of calm and dispassionate consideration on the part of the employers. Here are the demands of the men set forth so long ago as the date I named when starting my remarks. No. 1 asks for an eight-hour day in mill and field; No. 2 for modification of agreements and abolition of the retention clauses relating to bonuses. Everyone knows that a modification agreement is absolutely necessary in common decency. (Hear, hear!) The present agreements that are being used by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company and by many other millers are altogether one-sided; there is nothing fair or square about them, and a modification of them is very urgently necessary.

Mr. THEODORE: They are not agreements.

Mr. LENNON: They are not agreements at all. Then the third demand was that mill hands should receive a minimum wage of £1 10s. per week and keep, or £2 2s. per week without keep. Field hands a minimum wage of £1 10s. per week and keep, or £2 2s. per week without keep—canecutters excepted—provided that in districts where prevailing rates paid are higher than the minimum stated, no reductions shall be made. Canecutters—a working day of eight hours at 10s. per day without keep; or 8s. per day and keep. I ask any reasonable-minded person, anyone who understands what it is to the people doing the hard work in canecutting or work in connection with sugar-mills, whether eight hours a day is not a sufficient time for these men to work. I myself have no personal knowledge of how severe the labour may be in cutting cane, or of the work in the mills, beyond the fact of having visited the mills frequently, and I know that in some situations the men are subjected to very great heat indeed by reason of the proximity to the boilers and pans, and the steam which permeates the whole of the premises renders the work very enervating and excessively trying, and I think eight hours are quite enough for any man engaged in such work. Now if the work itself be hard, and some moderation of the conditions of running it are necessary, I would like also to ask if £1 10s. a week is not a fair wage for such hard work, and if it is a fair thing then the men should get their keep as well. Not only do they complain of the hard work and the small pay they get for it, but they complain—and on excellent grounds too—we have proof of that—of the kind of food supplied to them—food in many instances,

so the men say, not fit for human consumption. The men want these things inquired into, want to have some supervision over them, and want to have a square deal with the employers in all these matters. With regard to the accommodation, too, we know that we have a statute in Queensland making very good provision—the Shearers and Sugar Workers Accommodation Act—but I am sorry to say that as far as the sugar workers' accommodation is concerned they ignore the law, and do not provide the accommodation that is imposed upon them under the Act, and that is largely due to one provision. One great defect is the fact that if a man does not employ more than nine men he is exempted from the operation of the Act.

Mr. COYNE: Less than nine men.

Mr. LENNON: Less than nine men. We have ample proof from the men, speaking from their own experience, that the accommodation is anything but decent, anything but comfortable, and does not deserve to have Government approbation under the law's protection. If we have an Act of that sort, it should be enforced, and it is the duty of the Government to see that proper accommodation is provided. I am not referring to anyone outside the sugar workers; I do not know whether they make proper provision for shearers or not, but I am assured on reliable authority that proper accommodation is not provided for men engaged in many of the sugar districts of Queensland. We have heard in the past, to show that it is hard work, the parrot cry of the same people who are fighting this battle against the workers—it used to be their battle cry that white men could not do the work—that it was not a white man's work, and that he could not do it. That was prated all over Queensland, and put into the newspapers and taken as gospel. What do we see now? We are told that ladies can do the work, and they are getting ladies to work in the canefields and show their prowess. That is a remarkable commentary on the statements of those people in the past, when they said that white men could not do the work, and now they have allowed women to go and do the work. I mention that fact to show how very little credence can be paid to the assertions made by these reckless people. Of course, it has been said by these people, and repeated with the parrot-like cry which I have described—why should the farmers be dictated to by a band of people situated at Chillagoe, which is a mining district, and which can have no possible interest in sugarcane-growing, or know nothing about the requirements or conditions of the farmers? But, after all, Chillagoe is in reasonable proximity to some of the sugar districts, and it does not matter at all where the headquarters of the workers' organisation may be. The workers do not care a whit where the headquarters of the employers' federation is, whether it be in Brisbane or Timbuctoo. The mere location of the headquarters of any workers' organisation has no bearing on the question at all. I am reminded by my friend, the hon. member for Ipswich, that the Brisbane Tramways Company is governed from London, and that will be a sufficient reply to the statement that because the workers' affairs are managed from Chillagoe they should not be paid any attention to. I would like to quote from a publication known as the *Australian Sugar*

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*Journal.* I want to point out in regard to this matter that the sugar farmers and their engineering association, the Australian Sugar Producers' Association, have throughout the piece met the demands of the men in a spirit of aggression. They would not listen to the men at all, they came to the foregone conclusion that the men had no case, and that consequently, whatever demands they made should be resisted. I am quoting from the July issue of the *Australian Sugar Journal*, a paragraph dealing with a "Society of Free Workers." This Australian Sugar Producers' Association wants to have free workers—whatever they may mean—I suppose free to work for less wages than another body of men would accept—that is what it really means. The article states—

"The troubles in connection with the labour required for the harvesting and manufacture of the present season's sugar crop are forcing into prominence the move recently started in Melbourne for the formation of what is known as the Society of Free Workers. The inaugural meeting was held in Melbourne about the middle of June, and Mr. J. T. Packer, who has been appointed organiser for one division of the society, is now on a visit to Queensland. The main objects in view are to regulate the relations between workmen and employers, and workmen and workmen, to maintain the position of its members as free and independent workmen, and to provide for the defence of the interests of its members against combinations of workmen, seeking by strikes, picketing, and other methods, to impose restrictive conditions on the carrying on of their callings, to secure material support and co-operation in dealing with demands made by such combinations; also to assist its members when unemployed, to establish scholarships for the benefit of its members. These objects, as set forth in the rules of the agricultural implements and machinery division of the society, are but means to the end in view—namely, that of placing commerce and industry in this country on a more stable footing.

"It is certain that there are many wage-earners who have come to the conclusion that unionism, as at present conducted, is calculated to inflict lasting injury on the interests it professes to help. In no instance can this be more clearly shown than in the position of the sugar industry to-day. Whilst it has been affording for years past a splendid opening for wage-earners, attracting men from all over the Commonwealth, agitators and demagogues are now howling for a set of impossible conditions, and making no secret of the determination, so far as they are concerned, to ruin the industry rather than yield a single point. What is more, they have openly stated that the concession, even of their present claims, would be but the signal and encouragement for still more exorbitant demands in the near future. This is the spirit of those who to-day are intimidating willing workers from earning good wages in field and mill, stigmatising them as "scabs," and making life a misery to them. Surely it is time honest men united in self-defence against the agitators and loafers who are doing so much to bring mischief into the industrial life of the community!"

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

Mr. LENNON: Now, I have another small quotation.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have to remind the hon. gentleman that his time is nearly up.

Mr. LENNON (resuming his seat): Very well; if my time is up I cannot give it.

The SPEAKER: The hon. gentleman's time is not quite up, and I just reminded him so that he could finish his sentence.

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Mr. LENNON: I should like to read another quotation.

The SPEAKER: I am afraid that the hon. member will not be able to do that unless with the leave of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the hon. member be allowed to continue his speech?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Hon. R. PHILP: Make your peroration.

Mr. LENNON: There is no peroration about me. I am giving absolute facts. I would like just to give one other quotation before I conclude, and I have to thank the House for giving me permission to do so. A resolution carried at the last conference of the Australian Sugar Producers' Association reads thus—

"On the motion of the president, seconded by Mr. Whitcomb, it was resolved—

"That this council denies the imputation that the proposed engagement of labour from over-seas, for employment in the sugar industry, was for the purpose of defeating a strike; and asserts that there is a genuine shortage throughout the Queensland sugar districts, which can only be met by indenting labour from the United Kingdom.

"The president remarked, in connection with the alleged refusal to confer, that on the Mossman they had declined to meet the Amalgamated Workers' Association; but were always prepared to meet the men of the district. This was also endorsed by representatives of several other districts."

You will note the president's remark about the "alleged" refusal to confer. I say that the men have taken every pains and every reasonable means in order that this thing might be calmly and dispassionately discussed, and they were met by the Australian Sugar Producers' Association—and the journal that that association supports—by slander. They compare these workers who are asking for fair wages per day—they call them loafers and agitators, and I heard an hon. gentleman, I believe on the front Treasury bench, say "Hear, hear!" to that slander.

The PREMIER: No, no!

Mr. LENNON: The men were referred to as loafers, and someone said, "Hear, hear!"

The PREMIER: No, no! I said, "Hear, hear" to the "honest men" referred to.

Mr. LENNON: I consider that these men proceeded in a commendable manner to bring about a settlement, but the Government, backed up by the capitalistic Press, do not do anything to terminate the trouble. By their indifference and supineness the Government have shown that their sympathies are entirely with the employer, with the capitalist, and entirely against the men. I therefore move the adjournment of the House to call attention to it.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: Just before coming to the Chamber this afternoon, the leader of the Opposition told me of his intention to move this motion. I quite exonerate him from any intention of being discourteous, as he meant to have informed me yesterday, but forgot to do so. At any rate, he failed to do so. The indictment which has been made is largely against the Brisbane Press and largely against the Government for giving instructions to the Commissioner of Police.

Mr. LESINA: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: So far as the Brisbane Press is concerned, it can take care of itself. The Brisbane Press has never sought to dominate this Government, or any Government that I know of. An expression of opinion is one of the functions of the Press, but as there are other urgent matters to be dealt with this afternoon, I do not propose to pursue this phase. In case I forget it, I say now that the Commissioner of Police has received no instructions from myself; and, since the hon. member for Herbert made the assertion, I have communicated with the Commissioner to know if he had received any instructions at all from the Home Secretary. His reply was "No." He merely, as Commissioner of Police, knowing that a strike exists, is doing his duty as Commissioner to protect property—(hear, hear!)—and to protect life. (Hear, hear!) I say that he has acted as in duty bound in public interests.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS interjecting.

The PREMIER: I think you will allow that but for one slight "Hear, hear!" I never interjected at all while the leader of the Opposition was speaking, and I think that during the twenty minutes at my disposal it would be only fair to allow me to proceed without interruption. (Hear, hear!) This is an important matter and a serious matter. First of all, I say that the Commissioner of Police has received no instructions at all from the Government. He knows his duty, and does not have to await special instructions. I saw the matter mentioned in a Press communication, and I at once inquired, "How is it that a communication of this sort appears in the Press and I am not informed of it," because I consider that when a strike is on—an industrial strike—and the Commissioner of Police is informed of it, the Chief Secretary should have his finger on every movement.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: I sent for the Commissioner and asked him in future to acquaint me immediately with every communication he received from the North. I know now what he is doing, and I say unhesitatingly that he is doing quite the right thing. And if this House says that the Commissioner of Police should, through inertness, make possible incendiarism and destruction of property or molestation of men who are seeking labour, then surely, Sir, we have reached a bad pass. I say that it is the duty of the Commissioner—it is emphatically the duty of the Government to protect all its subjects—to protect all its interests.

Mr. COYNE: And leave the labour strikers out.

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman said he moved this motion so that he might focalise public attention on the question. I think that public attention has been focalised on it for some time, and that it is a cause of great anxiety. What is the position? There are 5,000 growers of cane at the present time anxious to reap their harvest, and there swoops down from beyond the "feather-bed range" where he is domiciled down to the coast a person who endeavours to set aside not merely the provisions of the Commonwealth law but also the provisions of the State law.

Mr. COYNE: Who is that?

The PREMIER: There is no industry—there is no occupation in Queensland—that is so protected and safeguarded on all hands as this particular industry. Regulations have

been issued by the Commonwealth in reference to the field operations, and we have on our statute-books effective means of dealing with the wages to be paid and hours of labour in the mill, and efforts were made to establish wages boards to control the same. In one of the chief centres of the sugar industry—in Mackay—efforts were made to establish wages boards, but how was it met? It was met by an advertisement appearing in the public Press setting the law at defiance. The hon. gentleman who has just spoken referred to the action of the men as seeking to bring about conciliation and also to provide for wages boards. Well, when a wages board was established at Mackay, the Mackay branch of the Australian Workers' Association carried a resolution, and on the 11th of March it inserted an advertisement in the newspaper stating that the Mackay branch of the Australian Workers' Association was not to recognise the wages board. Here we have them setting at defiance the machinery of the law that was created to obviate difficulties of this nature. And then I would like to know how it is that the hon. gentleman does not exercise his influence. The hon. gentleman should exercise his influence, as I would like him to exercise it, with the Commonwealth authorities, as I assume that he has some influence there. We remember quite well that a previous Commonwealth Administration sought to bring into existence a Royal Commission to inquire into every phase of the sugar industry, and that commission would have been constituted and carried out its functions and investigations calmly and deliberately, and would have brought up a report which must have influenced this Government, as also the Commonwealth Government. But what do we find? We find that the present Administration—the Labour Government of the Commonwealth—declined to carry out that commission. What are they afraid of? Are they afraid of the investigation? The growers of cane would welcome an investigation which would not merely go into the question of hours of labour, and not merely go into the question of wages payments, but would go into the question of accommodation and the question of food as well. That commission might have completed their task long since.

Mr. RYAN: That is not in the province of the Commonwealth.

The PREMIER: The previous Commonwealth Administration considered that it was, and appointed the members of the commission. If that commission had gone on with its inquiries, it must have brought up a report that would have had an influence on any Administration. We are not concerned today with the question of wages or hours of labour.

Mr. FERRICKS: Yes, we are; very much.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: Very much so.

The PREMIER: Because there is already ample power to deal with those particular phases. Under the regulations of the Commonwealth they have a control over the operations of the sugar-workers in the field in a way that they have over no other industry, and under the Wages Boards Act we can establish boards who will say what are proper hours to work, and what are proper rates of pay. It is not correct to say that the men working in the Government mills do not get the benefit of any time worked over eight hours. An eight-hour day does

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not prevail, but for every hour worked over the eight hours the employees get time and a-quarter.

Mr. THEODORE: What does the total amount to?

Mr. LESINA: Don't you think it is a moderate demand?

The PREMIER: I am not prepared for the moment to discuss whether it is a moderate demand or not. I have my own opinion on that. We are told that hon. members opposite wish to focalise public attention upon the strike. This is a strike that was contemplated and designed. The leader of the Opposition read a series of letters showing one phase, but he did not read another letter which was sent out to all the organisations to strike the blow at the crucial moment.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: After it was refused.

The PREMIER: An article appearing in the *Sydney Worker* shows the spirit of the organiser; it was to strike at the psychological moment, to bring the cane-farmers to their knees. The article read—

"It is very vital that the harvesting should be got under way by the end of June at the latest, or the wet season might come on before the harvesting is completed, and stand-over cane sometimes means a great loss. It is very important, too, for many farmers to get their cane cut as early as possible, on account of next year's growth. It would mean absolute financial ruination to most of the growers if they could not get their crop cut at all; while many of the central mills need to operate on every ton of cane in their areas in order to meet their obligations. Consequently the situation is pretty tragic."

It is pretty tragic for the men who, for the last twelve months, have been [4.30 p.m.] working in the hope of securing a harvest in order that they may pay their debts. Now, is it the duty of the Commissioner of Police to tacitly stand by, knowing that men are congregating and aggregating, and knowing that there are men going into that locality to work, and knowing, as on former occasions, that there has been an effort made to stop and intimidate men going to work—and might I tell the hon. member that only yesterday there were deeds of violence done. In the Cairns district there were stones thrown at men, and the cab that took out some workers was stopped in its progress, and but for the police the cab would not have been able to go on. I quite believe in good wages, and I quite believe in good hours. All the provisions for such are provided under the Wages Boards Act, and it would be improper for the Government to take any attitude at the present time as to be a partisan at all.

Mr. FERRICKS: You did take partisan action.

Mr. BARBER: Your Government did a very partisan action, and the Labour Bureau sent up blacklegs.

The PREMIER: I would like to know what are the functions of the Director of Labour and the labour agents? The function of the Director of Labour is to bring employer and employees together, and to enable the men to reach their destination by providing railway fares, steamer fares, and coach fares, and the regulations which have been in force for a long time have only been observed. Those regulations have not been infringed. Regulation 9, which controls the Department of Labour, sets out the condi-

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tions under which men may get assistance to go to any sphere of occupation. All that the Department of Labour has done is to enable the seeker for work and the man who desires to employ him to be brought into contact.

Mr. BARBER: You allowed the labour agents to represent the employers.

The PREMIER: Not at all.

Mr. BARBER: They used the bureau as a meeting place.

The PREMIER: Why not? What more natural place to meet and engage men? Or what place would you find more convenient for the men than at the Department of Labour?

Mr. MULLAN: Not the Tourist Bureau.

The PREMIER: The director of the Sydney Tourist Bureau has only carried out its functions.

Mr. BARBER: It did a little more besides.

The PREMIER: It has not.

Mr. BARBER: It has.

The PREMIER: It has not. During the last three months the Director of the Tourist Bureau in Sydney interviewed no less than 5,000 people from various parts of the world, and, as in former years, a number of men from Victoria and Tasmania who were seeking to come to Queensland to cut cane—under the contract system.

Mr. THEODORE: Not at all.

The PREMIER: As long as the contract system prevails they see difficulty in the field in getting control of the labour. There is not that same difficulty in the mills, and it seems to me arrangements might be made satisfactorily in the mills without contract, but there are strong men, who, in years gone by, have been able, in the canefields, to secure for themselves very good cheques during the period for cane-cutting, and those men are not going to subject themselves to the ordinary hours of labour—they will work as long as they can in order to secure good cheques.

Mr. BARBER: They work sixteen hours a day.

The PREMIER: The function of the officer in Sydney is the same as the functions of the officer in Brisbane—to bring into contact those who are seeking for work and those who are seeking their services.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Scabs.

The PREMIER: It is a great pity that word should be used. My impression to-day is that but for that distasteful word a large number of men would be working in the canefields. The amount of intimidation that goes on is simply deplorable. It is not the function of the Government; it is not the function of the State, to join issues at all. We have acted perfectly impartially.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: No, no!

The PREMIER: Then I will be only too glad to be told wherein we have not done so.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: We will tell you.

The SPEAKER: Order! I hope the Premier, in discussing this subject, will be allowed to make his remarks without interruption. The leader of the Opposition was not interrupted, and hon. members who have not spoken will have ample time to reply to the statements made by the Premier.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: I saw a report—it was sent to me—in the Sydney *Worker* that the Government were taking steps to defeat the strikers—"Partisan action on the part of the Government"—and I then asked Mr. Meston, the bureau agent down there, to advise me of the position, and he says the *Worker* article contains an entirely erroneous expression. He continues—

"Last year I sent about 130 men to Bingera, Fairymead, Invicta, and Windemere, and to many I gave notes to Mr. Townshend, of the Labour Bureau, so as to secure reduced fares, though they did not leave here under any specific engagement.

"This year I had already sent a number to Bingera, Fairymead, and Windemere, when Mr. Young, of Fairymead, called to see me, and I arranged with him to send his representative to the bureau whenever I telephoned for him, so he could come here and make fixed agreements with the men, and I could advise the Brisbane Labour Bureau that they were going direct to work."

Mr. THEODORE: That was defeating the strike.

The PREMIER: Not at all, Mr. Meston goes on—

"The advertisement in the *Herald* was inserted by Young Brothers' representative (Mr. McGowan), and had no authority from me.

"So far I have not even seen it.

"The men would have come here just the same had there been no advertisement, and the only difference between this year and the last is that McGowan came here and took charge of all the work that otherwise would have had to be done by myself.

"I had no knowledge of any strike except at Ayr, and to rumours of strikes I paid no attention whatever.

"My purpose here is to induce as many desirable men as possible to go to Queensland in any useful capacity as selectors, tradesmen, or general workmen."

Mr. THEODORE: Most undesirable.

The PREMIER: The letter continues—

"The men who came here to go on the plantations are not children to be coaxed or coerced. They sign their agreements only after a full and clear explanation."

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Ah, ah!

The PREMIER: I am sorry some who have gone up have been intimidated. Mr. Meston continues—

"To obtain their concession ticket at the Brisbane Labour Bureau they have to go there and be engaged, and merely take my note as a guarantee of their bona fides.

"The *Worker's* accusation that I am "engaging scabs to replace the strikers" is a manifest absurdity.

"The men would go North in any case; but they naturally prefer to start from here with a fixed agreement.

"They even tried to turn the Tasmanians who went up by the "Bombala."

"They stopped a very small number of those who came to the bureau; but the great majority would have nothing to say to them."

If time had permitted I would have gone more fully into the question raised by the hon. member concerning my colleague's attitude, and also the attitude of the bureau here.

Mr. COYNE: We will give you an extension of time.

The PREMIER: I do not want to be the first to break the Standing Orders.

Mr. COYNE: The Speaker will allow you to continue.

The SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the hon. member be further heard?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: As far as the Sydney office is concerned, the duties there are properly carried out. People have visited there, and they have been advised what work is available. As far as the Brisbane office is concerned, I inquired, "Did the advertisement appear," and the answer is "Yes." "(2) Obtain a copy of the advertisement." "Copy herewith."

Mr. HARDACRE: What are you quoting now?

The PREMIER: The Director of the Labour Bureau. The advertisement is this—

CONTRACT CANECUTTERS.

"WANTED contract canecutters, in gangs from five men upwards. Work found till mill starts. Government Labour Office, Edward street."

Mr. THEODORE: Was the advertisement put in by the Director of Labour?

The PREMIER: It was not. I will proceed—

"3. Who inserted it?

"Mr. Nelthorpe, acting as agent for Messrs. A. H. and E. Young, Fairymead, near Bundaberg. Mr. Nelthorpe asked my permission to insert the advertisement before doing so, and Messrs. A. H. and E. Young had lodged an application for labour at this office before the advertisement was inserted.

"4. Did the bureau act at any time in obtaining labour other than as a medium of exchange?

"No. An application for labour was received from the employers, and employees available were informed when they called at the office in the ordinary way."

Mr. COYNE: What is the date of that?

The PREMIER: It is only this afternoon—

"5. Is it usual for employers to attend at the bureau and interview men seeking employment?

"It is not usual, because in the majority of cases employers are not resident in Brisbane, and they only rely upon suitable men being selected by the officers of the department; but frequently either the employers or their representatives attend at the office and select the labour they require"—

That was done in this instance—

"and this was done in the case of Messrs. A. H. and E. Young through their representative, Mr. Nelthorpe, who came to Brisbane from Bundaberg especially for the purpose of selecting the labour required.

"6. Have railway passes been issued under conditions other than ordinary?

"No. The regulations regarding the supply of labour have been strictly adhered to.

"7. What are the normal conditions?

"Persons applying for work and obtaining same through the department are forwarded to their destination on railway passes at half the ordinary rate, subject to their entering into an undertaking to repay such half fare out of their earnings.

"Persons who have obtained employment otherwise than through the medium of the department, and who produce satisfactory evidence that they have been engaged for work, are given railway passes to their destination at the ordinary full rate on their entering into an undertaking to repay the cost of same out of their wages."

Now, Sir, do we understand that when men go out on strike that the Labour Bureau is absolutely to refuse to give information at all? Is the door to be locked? And if that be so, would it not be equally reasonable

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that the Commissioner for Railways should be forbidden to allow men to travel on the railway to such work? I say that I am rather surprised that the hon. member who represents a sugar district should raise this question with the view, not of focalising public attention, because public attention is already focalised, but with trying to make the Government a partisan. (Opposition dissent.) We have acted in this matter with perfect integrity, not taking one side or the other, being desirous that this trouble should be brought to a speedy termination. If there is anything I can do—if I were invited to take any action in the matter—I would do anything in my power to bring about a reconciliation.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ALLEN: You are doing all you can to add to the scare.

The PREMIER: That is absolutely incorrect. I am not adding to the scare. I have merely ascertained that the officers are doing their duty and only their duty. As to the Commissioner, he has not been interfered with. Now, what is the position? Five thousand men, with their wives and families dependent on them, see their crop in jeopardy. Why? Because there is an effort made to prevent free men going to take contracts to cut the cane.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: No, no!

The PREMIER: The question of the mills, I have no doubt, could be very readily settled in regard to the eight hours a day. The principle is tacitly admitted by the fact of the Treasurer paying time and a quarter for more than eight hours' work.

Mr. BARBER: It is only a farce.

The PREMIER: It is not a farce; it is stern reality. There is a sufficient supply of labour available to cut that crop, but there is a determination on the part of some agitators to prevent that crop being cut. Why? Because they want to gain their way. Not, mark you, the workers, but just some of the men who are leading the trouble. (Opposition dissent.) It is perfectly true that there are scores of men, yea, hundreds, who would gladly go in the field to cut that cane but they are restrained—

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: No, no!

The PREMIER: And in many cases I regret to say they are intimidated. There are men willing and anxious to cut the cane, and men who are able to cut cane can get excellent wages under the contract system; and no doubt, if field work were going forward regularly, arrangements could be made with regard to the hours of labour in the mills. This is a matter of public urgency, but if the workers were allowed to take their own course—

Mr. FERRICKS: And if the planters were allowed to take theirs!

The PREMIER: There is protection for those in the field by the regulations of the Commonwealth Government; and for those in the mills provision can be made under the Wages Boards Act. It has been said that a number of men have been indentured from the old country to work in the field; but I do not think one of them has been landed to go to the sugar fields.

Mr. FERRICKS: Yes, they have.

The PREMIER: The Commonwealth has given permission for 461 men to come out—has approved of the wages under which

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they contract. I hope they are on their way to-day, but to the best of my knowledge and belief not one of them has been landed under contract, though some men may have been induced to go on strike. We find that there are emissaries from the different organisations at Sunnyside and elsewhere calling attention to the strike; not only so, but members of this House have been there drawing attention to the strike and issuing circulars in reference to the sugar industry. It is clear that the workers know what the situation is. As Chief Secretary I know nothing as to wages or hours, but I repudiate the allegation that we have been partisan in any degree. The officers of the Labour Bureau have simply fulfilled their functions; and the Commissioner of Police has simply acted as the Commissioner of Police should act; and it is apparent from what transpired yesterday that there was need. A large number of the strikers stand around and try to intimidate the men by calling them opprobrious names. I say it is regrettable that at a time like this, when there is a big crop to be taken off, men should not be allowed to work under contract and should not be allowed to come under the law which would give them a wages board that would settle the matter entirely. I should like to have dealt much more fully with the matter, but I again repudiate the statement that the Government have taken any hand. Certainly, if any matter arose affecting life or property I should not hesitate to give instructions for action to be taken.

Mr. THEODORE: What do the Government mills pay?

The PREMIER: The Government mills pay 25 per cent. for hours in excess of eight; but that is not the point. Hon gentlemen are getting away from the point; they know quite well that the Australian Sugar Producers' Association and those associated with them—

Mr. FERRICKS: The Colonial Sugar Refining Company.

The PREMIER: The Colonial Sugar Refining Company, if you like—I know nothing about them. Those people asked the Commonwealth Government to exclude every shade of colour from the industry; but they would not do so. I say that the growers of cane and the millowners are desirous of working under the State law as well as conforming to the Commonwealth regulations; and the men now making this fuss are the men who decline to comply with the law. The hon. gentleman referred to the destruction of 800 or 900 tons of cane, and said it might have been caused by a spark from an engine; but I, unfortunately, have other knowledge, and know quite well that it was not caused by a spark from a train. I say this industry is a big thing, and there is no other means of protecting that part of our coast. It is the most productive field operation we have, and we want to see that part of Queensland developed. I am desirous that there should be the best conditions both in the field and in the mills and in the dwellings; and if these men will allow the work to go on under normal conditions, they can avail themselves of the ordinary machinery to obtain what they deem to be their rights. I thank the House for the extra time they have allowed me, and I shall be only too glad, through a colleague, to give a refutation to any other charge that may be made.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: You have not shown the slightest sympathy.

The PREMIER: My sympathy goes to the canegrowers who will be waiting twelve long months for their harvest. My sympathy goes to the women who have been sneered at this afternoon—women who came to the assistance of their husbands.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Who sneered at them?

The PREMIER: The Opposition side. One does not care to see women at that work, but it shows their pluck in their desire to help their husbands. The Government has been absolutely impartial; no word or action of ours has been said or construed to be such as to incite the men; what we want to see is peace and harmony, so that this splendid harvest can be gathered; and I hope nothing will be uttered during the debate that will in any way aggravate the trouble.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. THEODORE (*Woothakata*): I am glad that an opportunity has been afforded to criticise the Government for taking up the attitude of partisanship in the present strike—a partisanship which can easily be shown. It is most regrettable that the Treasurer, Mr. Barnes, is not in his place, because I believe that by his action he has, as much as any other employer, encouraged the position which now prevails. I refer to the action of the Government in connection with the recruiting of scabs. I am sorry that such an opprobrious term must be used, but there is no other term of sufficient strength to apply to those soulless creatures who are prepared to take the places of men endeavouring to better their condition. I contend that the action of the Government in recruiting scabs, and their action in connection with sending police, and in permitting magistrates to go out of their way to condemn strikers—these are admirable manifestations of their partiality in this trouble. For years the men have been dissatisfied, and there have been strikes in different cane-growing areas every season. Last year the Sugar Workers' Union consolidated their forces; they had a conference in December, deciding on a policy for the coming year. In February this year, the Amalgamated Workers' Association, which embraces the sugar-workers, submitted to each employer certain demands which have been set forth by the leader of the Opposition. There was the demand for an eight-hour day in field and in mill, and a demand for a modification of the contract agreements and for the establishment of a minimum wage of £1 10s. per week. Surely no one who is acquainted with the sugar industry will say that these demands are extortionate! The Premier did not indicate that he considered them unfair; he merely shuffled the point.

The PREMIER: I did not deal with that question.

Mr. THEODORE: The hon. gentleman misled the House into believing that there is an eight-hour day in the Government mills; but most of us know that they are working continuously from Monday morning till Saturday night, and that the work is carried on with two twelve-hour shifts.

The PREMIER: They are paid extra, and they like it better.

Mr. THEODORE: Payment is based on the hour-unit system, and time and a-quarter is allowed for all time over ninety-six hours a fortnight; and whether they like it or not, they must work more than ninety-six hours a fortnight. The Premier and the Treasurer know that, yet they will try to mislead us to believe that the eight-hour system is recognised in the Government mills. It is not the eight-hour system; it is a bogus system. But the Government mills are not the worst as far as conditions are concerned. The Proserpine Mill pays as good wages as any mill in Queensland, and the accommodation is good enough. The Government mill paying the lowest wages is the Nerang Mill. The minimum in the Government mills is £1 19s. a week, without board, with twelve-hour shifts. I maintain that the workers are pursuing a policy that cannot be cavilled at by any fair-minded man, and a large number of the growers are prepared to admit that the workers' claims are fair and reasonable.

The PREMIER: Why not take it to the wages board?

Mr. THEODORE: I will tell you why they object to a wages board. The Government themselves, or the department controlling the matter, have on one occasion refused to grant a wages board [5 p.m.] to this industry on the application of the employees, and the workers have never had an opportunity of having a wages board established for the purpose of controlling the whole industry. The workers at Mackay quite rightly objected to have a locally constituted board, where they would probably have a partisan chairman. The workers are prepared to have some tribunal set up so long as it will control the whole of the conditions of the industry, and so long as they are likely to get an opportunity of having a chairman who is impartial; but the Mackay workers concluded that they had no hope of getting an impartial man as chairman, and quite rightly objected to it, but in the face of their objection the Government went on with the wages board, and appointed to the board employees' representatives who had nothing in common with the employees, and had no qualification entitling them to recognition as representatives of the employees. As a matter of fact, one of the representatives on the wages board has now scabbed on his mates in the industry. To show that some of the growers are prepared to admit that the demands of the Australian Workers' Association in this case are quite reasonable and fair, I quote from a report published in the *Proserpine Guardian*, of 17th June, of a meeting of growers in that district. A debate took place as to whether they should send a delegate to the Australian Sugar Producers' Association conference to be held in Townsville. The report stated—

"Mr. Cutten proposed, and Mr. Duval seconded, that no delegate be sent.

"Mr. Debney moved an amendment that a delegate be appointed, which was seconded by Mr. Fuller.

"Mr. Compton: If they had a delegate what benefit would they derive?

"Mr. Grosskreutz said the A.S.P.A. work for the benefit of the sugar industry, and it was up to them to take an interest in it, as they had the sugar industry at heart. He was in one with the amendment that they send a delegate.

"Mr. Compton thought it would be a great mistake to appoint a delegate to represent Proserpine.

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"Mr. Lahey thought it was out of order at this meeting, as it was the members who subscribed to the association who should send a delegate.

"A vote was then taken, and 6 were in favour of being represented at the conference and 22 opposed to it.

"Mr. Compton: Is there any volunteer who would like to go?

"The chairman stated that at the last meeting it had been resolved that they would not give the A.W.A. an answer to their demands until they got an answer from Mr. Paddle as to whether he would raise the price of cane.

"Mr. Finnan moved that the wages be the same as last year. Mr. W. Compton seconded.

"Mr. Munro was sorry the way the meeting had taken the executive's minute. They were trying to cut prices off their face, and tread on them, and they had taken the wrong course. The A.W.A. had met them fairly, and he had been told they would have stuck to them if they had demanded a better price for their cane. In the meantime these things might have been dealt with amicably, instead of which there might be trouble.

"Mr. Duval moved that they grant the A.W.A. demand of eight hours and £2 a week.

"Mr. Finnan said the majority of farmers would be glad if the cutters worked eight hours.

"Mr. Grosskreutz said for the past six or seven years he had not got a man to work eight hours a day. He was not against giving a good man £2 a week, as the cheapest man he ever had had been paid that wage. The men never work eight hours. A good man earns his £2 a week in the cane field, and he believed they could afford that wage if they could get good men. You can employ a man by the day and sack him at night.

"Mr. Finnan, with the permission of his seconder, altered his motion to read—"Eight hours a day and £2 per week for the mountain men"—the same as last year.

"Mr. Gellespie wanted to know if that included all kinds of labour. He moved that they be paid £2 per week for cutting, but not for chipping. The best men follow cutting, but the rag-tail do chipping and are not worth £2.

"Mr. Compton moved that the labour conditions be the same as last year in all respects, which Mr. Roberts seconded."

There were twenty in favour of establishing last year's rate, and eighteen in favour of making the eight-hour day and £2 a week. That is in one centre—in Proserpine. In Bundaberg, large numbers of the growers took up the same attitude, and considered the demands of the Australian Workers' Association absolutely fair and reasonable. Mr. Catternull, the president of the Cane Growers' Union at Bundaberg, speaking at a meeting of the union, used these words—

"He would say this, however, that he had not the slightest intention of going back on a solitary word he had said. He had been paying his men the wages asked by the Amalgamated Workers' Association, and in the on-season he did not work more than the hours mentioned."

Mr. WHITE: That is not the case, though.

Mr. THEODORE: This is what he says, and I must accept his word for it. Those were the conditions under which he worked his men, and he said he was able to make a success of the business. He acknowledged that he observed the eight hours a day as applied to his employees, and had been able to make a success of it. We know that that is also admitted on the part of the growers at Ayr, Mackay, and other centres. But the small growers are entirely intimidated by the Australian Sugar Producers' Association and the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. Reports which have been published

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in the *Courier*, quite recently, lend colour to that suggestion. At the commencement of the trouble the farmers were quite agreeable to meet the workers in conference, and they did on several occasions; there was a conciliatory spirit prevailing, and the Ayr sugar-growers were quite willing to admit the eight-hour day, but delegates from the Australian Sugar Producers' Association went out and spoke to the farmers at Ayr.

Mr. COYNE: To intimidate them.

Mr. THEODORE: That was the intention, and they succeeded in intimidating them.

Mr. WHITE: They had decided to oppose it before.

Mr. THEODORE: After the visit of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company's delegates to Ayr, the farmers agreed to the proposal to tax themselves to the extent of 3d. per ton to fight the workers, and that sum was subsidised to the extent of £1,000 by Mr. Drysdale. He is a fleecer; that is the best way to term it.

Mr. FERRICKS: A tool of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company.

Mr. THEODORE: Subsequent to these events, there was a suggestion at Bundaberg that the growers should approach the millers and endeavour to get a little more for their cane, so that they could grant the demands.

At 5.10 p.m.,

The SPEAKER said: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but I am unable to continue in the chair, and, there being no Chairman of Committees, I ask the House, as a matter of privilege, to allow the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Maughan, to relieve me in the chair.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MAUGHAN thereupon took the chair.

Mr. THEODORE: I wish to quote, from the *Courier* of 22nd June, an extract which reads as follows:—

"An attempt is being made locally to influence the farmers by an agitation regarding the price of cane; that if the millers gave a better price it would be possible to concede the Amalgamated Workers' Association's demands. This phase is strongly opposed."

I need not add that this is contributed by the *Courier* representative, who is evidencing considerable bias in this matter. They were intimidated by certain representatives of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, and further evidence of intimidation is given in the following extract, which I quote from the *Courier* of 6th July instant:—

"A meeting of Woongarra farmers supplying cane to the Qunaba Mill was held this afternoon, forty-seven out of fifty-three suppliers being present. Mr. P. L. Elliot occupied the chair. It was unanimously agreed that, in the event of a strike, the farmers were prepared to man the mill to the best of their ability; that any farmer working in the mill shall receive the assistance of the other farmers to get his crop off; that the names of all prepared to work the mill be given to the manager at Qunaba; that the manager of Qunaba be requested not to take cane from farmers not prepared to stand by the foregoing resolutions. Those present also decided to form the Woongarra Farmers' Progress Association for mutual protection."

There is a direct evidence of intimidation. Some of the farmers evidently consider that the

demands of the workers are reasonable, and are prepared to concede those demands, but they are intimidated mostly by the representatives of the Australian Sugar Producers' Association, an organisation which was established under the wing of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, and which we know is being subsidised by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, and which employs notorious agents, such as Mr. Pritchard and Mr. Packer, the free workers' organiser, to go through the sugar districts endeavouring to incite people, and influence the farmers against paying fair wages and recognising reasonable conditions of employment. There has been abundant evidence of the efforts on the part of the workers to bring about a settlement of this trouble by every conciliatory means; and to show that no precipitated action was taken, or can be taken, I intend to quote a clause from the constitution of the Amalgamated Workers' Association of Queensland, which includes the sugar-workers.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Under the Standing Order the hon. member's time has expired.

Mr. THEODORE: With the permission of the House I should like to finish my speech.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the hon. member be further heard?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Lieut.-Colonel RANKIN: No.

Mr. WHITE: There would be no end to it.

Mr. THEODORE: I have to thank hon. members for granting me an extension of time. Clause 53 of the constitution of the Amalgamated Workers' Association of Queensland reads—

"(a) Should any infringement of the rights and privileges of the members of this association be attempted by the employers, the members employed shall lay a complaint in writing before the committee of their branch, who shall deal with the same, and give notice to the district committee, and, if necessary, appoint a deputation to wait upon the employer and endeavour to adjust the dispute. Failing in this, the matter shall be referred to a general meeting of the branch, convened for the purpose, which may, if deemed advisable, submit the whole matter to arbitration. Should no settlement be arrived at the members shall, with the consent of the district committee, cease work. All voting on proposed strikes or lockouts shall be by ballot."

I have endeavoured to show that the association have framed rules with the object of preventing their members from taking precipitate action, and I claim that they have exercised wisdom in that connection. No precipitate action was taken in this matter. The employers were asked to meet their representatives in conference, but they refused, and no other action was possible than the action which has been taken. I claim that the Government in lending the machinery of government for the purpose of recruiting blacklegs is one that should be condemned by all reasonable persons.

LIEUT.-COLONEL RANKIN (*Burrum*): I rise to a point of order. The hon. member for Woothakata has not been given the permission of the House to continue his speech.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I would point out to the hon. member that I understood the House had given permission.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. THEODORE: The action of the Government in connection with this matter is

a most reprehensible one. I intend to quote from a report of the proceedings at the Cairns Police Court in connection with the prosecution of some of the men who went on strike. It was brought out in evidence at these prosecutions that the food offered to men working at the Colonial Sugar Refining Company's mills was not fit for human consumption, and I claim that the Government in assisting the employers to engage scabs are deliberately attempting to continue the rotten conditions which previously had been applied to this industry. The case was heard in Cairns in June, and this is taken from the report in the *Trinity Times* of the evidence of one of the witnesses—

"The next witness called was Archibald Cowie, a labourer, living in Cairns. He deposed that until 13th June he was employed at the Hambleton Mill and worked there off and on for the past two years; he was getting £1 5s. per week and found; the board was about the roughest you could possibly get, and consisted mainly of meat, bread, and treacle; the quality of the fresh meat was of the very poorest; the corned beef was of bad quality; he ate very little of it, as it did not appeal to him; vegetables were mostly sweet potatoes; there had been porridge for the last two months, but the men did not all take it; witness took it once, and it tasted damp and fusty; he would not eat it again after he had tasted it; the company provided him with a room, in which were three others, and bare stretchers."

Similar evidence to that was given by other witnesses with reference to the poorness of the accommodation and the rottenness of the food supplied to the men, and justification is clearly shown there for the men to break the agreement under which they were compelled to work in that mill. A similar case came up before the police magistrate at Childers. This is what appeared in a report of the case in a Bundaberg paper on the 6th July—

"The police magistrate, in the course of his remarks, said that it was desirable in a case of this kind to comment on the evidence, as he was both judge and jury. It was a somewhat difficult case to deal with, as he had to decide several matters on which he had little help to guide him. The agreement was that the men were to get accommodation and food as commonly provided at the mills, but there was no evidence as to what was commonly provided. The menu of the company's mill was submitted, and Mr. Helms, the manager, had enumerated the articles of food supplied. Mr. Helms had also said that he had a scale of rations from which he could not go. He (the police magistrate) thought a big company like that should not tie down a trusted manager, as he believed Mr. Helms to be, to any scale. He objected, as a rule, to mention any religion, but it had been brought out in evidence that there were Roman Catholics employed in the mill, and no fish was provided for them. He thought very little of a man who was a Roman Catholic and who did not obey the rules of his church, and he considered it unreasonable for the company to expect such a man to work a shift of eleven and three-quarter hours on bread and treacle. It was in evidence that the defendant tried to speak to Mr. Helms as to the fish, and that Mr. Helms refused to listen to him because he was a newchum and did not know what he was talking about. This was unreasonable treatment, and was not the proper way to speak to new arrivals. In regard to sanitation, he (the police magistrate) had visited the mill and found it unsatisfactory."

The whole of the evidence given in the police court goes to show that the accommodation provided was bad and that the food was not fit for human consumption. I claim

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that the Government in assisting the employers to engage blacklegs to defeat the workers and uphold these conditions has shown that it has taken a partisan action. I have further evidence to prove this. The week before last I was in Sydney and I went to the office of the Queensland Intelligence Bureau, which is under the control of Mr. A. Meston. I saw men going in there seeking employment, and they were met, apparently, by appointment, by the representatives of Messrs. Young Brothers, the sugar-planters of Bundaberg. They were engaged there with the knowledge and with the assistance of that department and with the assistance of Mr. Meston. I asked Mr. Meston if he had told the men that there was a strike in progress at the places where he was sending them, and he said that he had no knowledge of such a strike; that was the only excuse he put forth. To my mind it was perfectly obvious that the Government was taking a partisan action in that case, and they have been using the Labour Bureau to help them.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. THEODORE: Advertisements have been appearing inviting men to call at the bureau, and that is sufficient evidence in favour of my contention. There are a lot of other matters that could be discussed in this connection, but I do not wish to trespass further on the time of the House. I have to thank the House for granting me an extension of time to deal with this question, as the time allowed by the Standing Orders is altogether inadequate to deal with it. Such matters as the action of the Government sending the police and the unfair partisanship shown by the Government in granting permits as engine-drivers to persons not properly qualified to act as such, and other such matters urgently require ventilation, but there is not sufficient provision to permit it in our Standing Orders at the present time. I will conclude by hoping that the Government will reform its methods in this connection and immediately discontinue to assist the employers in the matter, and that they will issue instructions that the Labour Bureau or Intelligence Bureau are not to assist the employers as against the employees as long as the strike continues.

Mr. WHITE (*Musgrave*): The hon. gentleman who has just resumed his seat has endeavoured to make out a very good case for the workers in the sugar industry. He referred very extensively to the rates of wages and class of food supplied to sugar workers. While there may be individual cases where defective food is supplied, I think that in the majority of cases—and I come from a sugar district and know the conditions—in the majority of cases it is exceptionally good.

Mr. THEODORE: You would not like to eat it?

Mr. WHITE: I have eaten it. I have eaten the food they supply to the men at Gin Gin and Qunaba, and I found it all right.

Mr. BARBER: They gave you a special meal at Qunaba.

Mr. WHITE: I think there is another side of the question and that is the canegrowers. (Hear, hear!) The canegrowers require some consideration. A good deal has been said about the action of the Government in allowing men to go to the different sugar districts in Queensland

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through the Labour Bureau. I think that the Labour Bureau has exercised a good deal of discretion in the matter. I know that a Bundaberg man went to Toowoomba only a few days ago, and he found there were plenty of men there, and they were willing to engage to work in the sugar districts, but the man in charge of the Labour Bureau there refused to engage men to go to the sugar fields. I think that the man in charge of that bureau was exceeding his duty.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: No, no! and other interruptions.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I must ask hon. members to allow the hon. member for Musgrave to deliver his speech without interruption.

Mr. WHITE: In most of the mills in my electorate the conditions are very good. With regard to the conditions of the canecutters in my district, I know that last season one set of men worked for a little over five months, and, after paying for their food bill, they went away with a little over £70 each of clear money, and I understand that not one penny of that was spent in Bundaberg. I say that the men who got that money earned it, but there are many men working in the Bundaberg district who do not try how much work they can do, but rather how much money they can get. I know that it is quite possible to pay a reasonable wage and give an eight-hour day if the men will do the work. The men are trying to get an eight-hour day for 10s. a day wages, but these men are not trying to see what they can do for the sugar industry, but rather what they can do for themselves.

Mr. BARBER: They are a good body of men.

Mr. WHITE: In one plantation last year, for the first three weeks, whole gangs averaged 1,700 tons of cane per day. I know one young canecutter named Zilka in the Woongara. He cut and loaded 6 tons of cane a day from a 25-ton crop. He was getting 3s. 9d. per ton, and he was earning over £1 per day.

Mr. COLLINS: What is the average for the whole of the canecutters?

Mr. WHITE: It can hardly be averaged, as some will only cut 2 tons a day and others will cut 6 tons. If the Australian Workers' Association will only guarantee that each man will cut not less than 2½ tons a day I have no doubt that they can get their eight-hour day from the farmers, and I do not think it would be an unreasonable thing to ask. I think that any active working man is fit to cut 2½ tons a day without any special effort. If he was able to cut 3 tons a day, the farmers would give him 12s. for an eight-hour day. It was said by the previous speaker that one gentleman said at Bundaberg that he could easily afford to pay these wages and give eight hours a day and make a success of it. Well, I question it. As a matter of fact, he refers to that meeting in Bundaberg. There were 240 canegrowers at that meeting, and out of the 240 only eleven stood up in favour of it, and those eleven between them did not grow 1,000 tons of cane altogether. They could not realise 1,000 tons amongst them, with the exception of the chairman. So they were very small growers indeed. At that meeting they were perfectly unanimous that they were unable to pay the wages demanded and give an eight-hour day

unless the Australian Workers' Association guaranteed to make a provision that each man would cut so much cane. If the cane-cutters are to get 10s. a day, it will mean that the farmers will have to work sixteen hours a day. Would that be a nice thing for the farmers to have to go on working themselves for sixteen hours after the men had knocked off after working only eight hours? My friend, the hon. member for Woothakata, quoted from the *Worker*, but that only gives one side of it in regard to the food business and that meeting at Bundaberg. Now, in Bundaberg six growers met six workers. They discussed the matter for two Saturdays, and they could not get past the eight hours. Not one of these farmers—Mr. Cattermull was one of them and there were three Labour men there—and not one of the farmers would agree to the conditions with an eight-hour day. This farmer said—

“The demands made on canegrowers and cane mills have now been denounced in every sugar district of the State as shamefully extortionate, and without good reason. So far as the Curra-jong-Gin Gin district is concerned, I offer you proof that such is the case. The Gin Gin Central State Mill is now in its fifteenth year, almost ready to commence crushing a heavy crop. Its cane suppliers during the term of its existence have experienced some very severe seasons, they have had to face several droughts, some disastrous visitations of frost, and got one terrible doing from the locust grasshoppers; but through all these troubles they fought like stout-hearted men to keep roofs over their heads and the heads of those belonging to them. During that long period the mill—a first-class one, fully equipped and furnished with a splendid system of tramlines—paid them for cane a sum averaging about 9s. 6d. per ton, and could not afford to pay one penny more for it. Proof of that lies in the fact that the mill is still heavily in debt. It had not paid its way. It now owes £53,000. Government records prove all this. Now, there could be only one way to account for such a position of affairs—which is, that the mill has either paid its cane suppliers too much (think of that, ye growers!) or its working expenses have been too heavy. The mill records are open to the perusal of members of Parliament. They have from time to time, in fact, been almost rammed down their throats; yet, quite recently, Mr. Lennon, acting leader of the Labour party, and a number of other Labour Parliamentary members, as a deputation, met the Hon. W. H. Barnes, Treasurer, and asked him to have the State-owned mills worked by three, instead of two, shifts of men, and as good as told the Minister, if he declined to do so, the mills would not be allowed to work during the impending season.”

There is a good deal more to the same effect.

Mr. COLLINS: You are drawing on your imagination.

Mr. WHITE: A good deal has been said about what this Government is doing to assist the sugar farmers. I hope [5.30 p.m.] to God they will do a great deal more to assist the farmer, because it is the sugar-grower who has made this State what it is, and made the sugar industry what it is. I sincerely think those men deserve the best thanks not only of the Government but of the whole community. I know what those men suffered in the drought. In 1903 when I was asking the suffrages of the canegrowers I went into a good many of their houses, and found those men with their families with not a bit to eat but a piece of pumpkin—the whole family sitting round a piece of

pumpkin and not a piece of bread, and in one case I sent up—I do not take any credit for it—I sent up a bag of flour for some of them, but that, of course, was after the election was over. (Loud laughter.) Immediately the election was over I considered something should be done, and that it was a disgrace that such a state of things should exist. I thought the Government at that time should assist the canegrowers to a greater extent than they had, and at that time I got the Government to consent to a loan of £2,000, so that those poor men would be able to buy sufficient cane plants to plant their fields. My friend, the Hon. Robert Philp, was the man who consented to do it, and I think he deserves the very greatest credit for what he did on that occasion. I know what those men suffered at that time, and I sincerely think more assistance should have been given them. Before that they had been paid 6s. 6d. a ton for the cane, and the mill could not afford to pay more, and then the mill worked at a loss. It has been said that the mills are making too much money. It depends a great deal on the crop whether the mill can give good prices for the cane or not. If a mill has 40,000 tons capacity and only 20,000 tons of cane to crush, they cannot afford a big price for the cane. This year if they had 40,000 tons they could probably afford 12s., and if they had 50,000 or 55,000 tons they could probably afford 14s. I know the sugar business as well as anyone, as I have been mixed up in it for years, and I think, on the whole, there is no man who goes into that industry and works as a canecutter, who cannot, if he is willing to work, make 12s. to £1 a day.

Mr. THEODORE: If he works fourteen hours.

Mr. WHITE: No, if he works ten hours. They go on at 6 o'clock and finish at 6 o'clock and have two hours off during the day.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: You stated they worked sixteen hours a day.

Mr. WHITE: I said the farmers worked sixteen hours a day, not the canecutter. (Interruption.)

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I ask hon. members to allow the hon. member for Musgrave to deliver his speech without interruption.

Mr. WHITE: I am quite satisfied that this scheme of trying to block the farmers from getting off their cane has been worked up for the last eighteen months. In our district I know there are two special organisers—two special agitators who have been in that district working the thing up, and not only that, there has been absolute tyranny used—tyranny towards every worker who would not join the Australian Workers' Union.

Mr. BARBER: That is all nonsense.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Prove it.

Mr. WHITE: I can prove it.

Mr. BARBER: It is absolute nonsense.

Mr. WHITE: I can give an instance where a young man in Bundaberg was going home to his friends when he was caught by three men in the street and asked why he came to work at a certain mill, and he said he had always been well treated at that mill and he was going to work there,

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and they said, "If we cannot get the workers out, Bell and Black will do the trick."

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Ah, ah! That is an old bogey.

Mr. ALLEN: Better mention the names.

Mr. WHITE: That is an absolute fact. We have seen men walking about the streets of Bundaberg with big white posters over their hats with the words, "Don't be a scab." (Interruption.) "Don't be a scab," or "Don't be a blackleg." Those same men I know have been round the corner of my street for the last three years, and I do not think they have done six days' honest work during the last two years.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. WHITE: I have heard my friend, the hon. member for Bundaberg, say the same thing.

Mr. BARBER: None of them are wearing the poster on their hats, and other interjections by Opposition members.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I must ask hon. members on the Opposition benches not to interrupt.

Mr. BARBER: It is very trying, Mr. Acting Speaker, when the hon. member makes such assertions—it is very trying indeed.

Mr. MANN: You will have your chance.

Mr. WHITE: I do not want to exasperate hon. members on the other side. They do not seem to like the truth. If they get a little of the stuff they throw over to this side of the Chamber continuously they do not like it. I do not know of anyone who would not be honestly pleased to see this unfortunate trouble come to a speedy end.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. WHITE: I certainly think this, and I say it advisedly; I think that £1 10s. a week in the mills and keep is none too much for any man.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. WHITE: I say any man working in a mill is well entitled to £2 a week or £1 10s. a week and tucker. I think the mill hands have not been too well treated in the past, but, as far as the cancutters are concerned, a single man willing to work can make from 12s. to £1 a day in the canefields of Queensland, in my district at any rate. I say that there is not any other country on God's earth where an unskilled labourer can earn as much in the same time as they can in the canefields of Queensland, and, so far as the food is concerned, they can have just what food they like. They have their own cook and they can have exactly what food they like, and if men are earning from £4 to £5 a week they can afford to have good food, and they must have good food to enable them to earn that money. I sincerely hope, in the interests of Queensland, in the interests of the workers themselves, and certainly in the interests of the growers I represent—I sincerely hope this trouble will come to an end. And I believe it is quite true what the Treasurer said: that those people went to him, not with the object of bringing the strike to an end—they went there to fan the flame.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: No, no!

Mr. WHITE: Mr. Tudor's visit to Bundaberg had only one effect, and that was to fan

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the flame and not to bring about a reconciliation of any kind. I can assure you that, so far as the growers are concerned, it is not a question of whether they will or whether they will not do it; it is a question that they are not able to afford it—they cannot do it however willing they may be.

Mr. ALLEN: The industry can afford it.

Mr. WHITE: Of course it has been said by the Opposition that they wanted to get the blacks out. I was very glad to see the blacks out of it, but they not only want to get the blacks out but they want to get the willing workers out as well.

Mr. HARDACRE: Can't they afford to pay £1 10s. a week for an eight-hour day?

Mr. WHITE: That is not the demand. The demand is for 10s. for eight hours, and it would not matter if the men are willing to cut a fair amount of cane. If so, I am perfectly sure they could get it. If the Amalgamated Workers' Union make a condition that the men must cut 2½ tons of cane a day, there is no reason in the world why they should not get 10s. a day. I have given the experience of a farmer that was paying £1 10s. a week and tucker to the men, and the average amount cut for seven gangs was 17 cwt. per day.

Mr. BARBER: What sort of crop?

Mr. HARDACRE: Any ordinary man can cut that amount.

Mr. WHITE: I say any ordinary man can do it.

Mr. HARDACRE: Then why don't they give that wage?

Mr. WHITE: Let the Amalgamated Workers' Union make that condition. If the Amalgamated Workers' Union will make the condition, it would be satisfactory. I have spoken on behalf of the growers, who are the people who require consideration, and I am quite sure if members opposite will only try and bring this strike to a peaceful and quiet and satisfactory ending, there it not a grower in my district who will not be willing to pay a reasonable price for cutting the cane so long as they can get men to do a reasonable day's work. Let us pay the men according to what they can do, not according to how little they can do. The object of the unions is to see how little they can do in eight hours. (Opposition dissent.) I sincerely hope that the Opposition will use their efforts in the right direction, and I am quite satisfied that the mills will pay a reasonable price for the work in the mills. A lot has been said about the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. I think the workers in the Colonial Sugar Refining Company will admit that they are fairly well treated.

Mr. THEODORE: The most miserable conditions in Queensland.

Mr. WHITE: I am not defending miserable conditions. I think the conditions of the workers in the Colonial Sugar Refining mills should be as good as those in any other mill, and I have no doubt that the discussion that has taken place and the fact that this is known will perhaps bring about better conditions amongst the workers in the mills.

LIEUT.-COLONEL RANKIN (*Burrum*): I should just like to make a few remarks. I regret that this unfortunate matter has been brought up in the House at all. I do not think it is one of those things which should be discussed in the House; at the same time

it might be wise, seeing that the question has been raised, to say something about it. We know perfectly well there are those who think the sugar-grower and the Colonial Sugar Refining Company are making tremendous sums of money out of the industry, but I can assure you that such is not the case. While we have in Queensland a duty of £6 per ton—which is only an effective duty of £5 a ton—it does not give very much to the grower. In Java they have labour for 6d. a day, and they can employ twenty-four men for every man employed here, which makes a great difference. I was speaking the other day to Mr. Tudor, and pointed out to him that his interference with the business was simply putting up the cost 47½ per cent. He said it was not so. I said to him that first of all he put up the price of labour from £1 2s. 6d. to £1 10s., and then he purposed to reduce the hours of labour from 44 to 35½.

Mr. THEODORE: When did he do that?

LIEUT.-COLONEL RANKIN: He is issuing regulations to that effect. It is increasing the price practically 47½ per cent.; and I do not think we can stand it. I am not troubling much about the strike; but I think we should try to keep the industry going, and make it what it ought to be—namely, one of the best industries in Australia.

At 5.45 p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. FERRICKS (*Bowen*): I very much regret the absence of the Treasurer. I was one of the members forming a deputation to the hon. gentleman to protest against the Labour Bureau being used for the supply of labour to the sugar fields and mills, and I regret to say that he was not only very discourteous but positively insulting to the deputation; and if he had been here this afternoon he would have heard, as we sometimes read in the papers, "something to his advantage." I regard the existing industrial trouble as of the greatest moment in the industrial annals of Queensland in some respects. The outstanding phase of the dispute is the right of our Australian democracy to an eight-hour day. While greater struggles may have occurred where the facilities are greater, this is a case where it is not convenient for 3,000 or 4,000 men to go into camp. Notwithstanding that, they have done so, living on hard fare, and in places sleeping on beds of gum-leaves. That should be sufficient refutation of the statement that sugar workers have no grievances. If they were only led by agitators, it is not likely that they would go to that sacrifice. As to the question of agitators, there are agitators on both sides; and the principal element of the present trouble is the boss agitator, Mr. Pritchard, the secretary of the Australian Sugar Producers' Association. The conditions in the sugar-mills, especially the privately-owned mills, are practically a disgrace to the Australian Sugar Producers' Association and the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, who employ the workers, to the people of Queensland who tolerate the existing condition of affairs, and to the Government who countenance and aid its continuance. In the privately-owned mills especially, the conditions are so bad that the men revolt against them. In many cases, especially those owned by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, what is known as the "kit system" was largely

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in vogue. That system consists of each man being supplied by the mill with a tin pannikin, a tin plate, and a knife and fork; and these utensils are supposed to be kept clean by the men. Each individual has to pass out of the door and dip his kit into a cask of warm or luke-warm water, wipe it with a piece of bagging, and dry it in the air. For the first thirty or forty kits it may be all right, but by the time seventy or eighty have passed through, the water is luke-warm or quite cold, and there is a layer of half an inch of grease on the top. The condition of things at the Goondi Mill, on the Johnstone River, for instance, was a disgrace. I charge every member of the Government, or every supporter of the Government, with aiding and abetting the continuance of the present unsatisfactory condition of affairs by using the State Labour Bureau to aid the employers. It is said, particularly by the hon. member for Musgrave, that the profits of the industry cannot afford an eight-hour day in the field. This industry can afford to pay a half-yearly dividend of £150,000 to the Colonial Sugar Refining monopoly; it has afforded to build up during seven years profits totalling £2,963,200 for that institution; during the past three and a-half years it has watered its stock or capitalised its reserves to the tune of £575,000; and it has written off in depreciation £500,000. These are the announced profits; but there are other profits which never see the light of balance-sheets. We know the company is extending its ramifications all over Australia and Fiji; and this is done out of profits. There is also interest and redemption on debentures issued to shareholders. When they get profits amounting to considerably over £500,000 per annum, they should be able to afford an eight-hour day and a minimum wage of £1 10s. When a man does a shift of eleven or twelve hours, there is also some time spent in going and coming, in preparation and changing, so that his day's activity will probably consist of fourteen hours; and after a man has been on his feet fourteen hours, I ask what inducement he has to bring out his best physically, morally, and mentally? What chance has he of self-improvement? Absolutely none. If there is one thing that gets a man down to the "don't care" stage quicker than another, it is degraded conditions; and when a man gets to that stage he is done; and the present system of working in sugar-mills, more particularly in privately-owned mills, is calculated to bring them to that degrading depth. Is this not inconsistent with the prating of the Government and their followers about bringing population to our shores? What chance has a man working under those conditions of doing anything to propagate his species? How can he get a home and get married, when he is simply used like a horse and then cast aside? There are some who may think that these men should look at the spiritual side of matters; but while working under degrading conditions, they have no fear of hell, because they have a hell on earth—a hell manufactured for them by such institutions as the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, aided by weak-kneed Governments. The hon. member for Musgrave said that perhaps eight hours a day could be worked in the mills, but it would not be enough in the fields. I contend that if a man in the field cannot do a day's work in eight hours, he is not going to do it in nine or ten hours. The sugar-growers in the North realise that, and in the Proserpine

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district 95 per cent. of the growers are prepared to concede eight hours a day in both mill and field.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Why do they not do so?

Mr. FERRICKS: Simply because they are intimidated. They are afraid of being designated "scabs" by the Australian Sugar Producers' Association. The majority of the growers on the Lower Burdekin are of the same opinion. The other day a deputation from the Amalgamated Workers' Association approached Mr. Drysdale, and asked him to come to some arrangement for a settlement, and he told them that personally he was not against eight hours, but he did not care to go back on the other combined mills. It can be conclusively proved that the profits of the Colonial [7 p.m.] Sugar Refining Company amount to 8s. per ton on every ton of cane crushed in Queensland and New South Wales, and the hon. member for Mackay, in pointing out the hardships to which the sugar-grower is subject in the present industrial dispute, which I do not deny, did not mention the fact that the sugar-growers as a class, every time they went to the ballot-box went arm in arm with supporters and sympathisers of the Colonial Sugar Refining monopoly, who rob them of 8s. per ton of cane on every ton they grow. Every time a canegrower puts a ton of cane on the truck, he can say to himself, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, you have earned 8s. for the Colonial Sugar Refining monopoly." The members of the Amalgamated Workers' Association are fighting at the present time, not against the growers as a class, but against the manufacturers and the refining monopoly. The Colonial Sugar Refining Company are providing the sinews of war, and engaging free labour not only in Brisbane but in Sydney and Tasmania, to send up to work in both mill and field in the sugar districts. It appealed to me very strongly, when the hon. member for Musgrave was passing reflections on workers in the Bundaberg district regarding their love of work and so forth, to remember the class of men who are going up at the present time to act as strike-breakers. I have interviewed them, and found that they did not know what they were going to do, and several of them told me that they did not intend to do any canecutting when they got up there. Around Brisbane the scum of the city has been raked up, and given free passes by the Colonial Sugar Refining monopoly to go up and break the strike. The ruffraff, from whatever source, was received with open arms by men in responsible positions, who should have known better. On one Saturday prior to the departure of the "Arawatta" for the North, with a host of strike-breakers, two attracted my attention particularly. Their class may be gauged from the fact that each of them had his twelve years' gathering in a sugar-bag, and with them was a woman of their acquaintance, whose profession was plainly evident from her whole bearing, and it was an open secret from the way they were blabbing on the wharf as to what their intentions were when they got up to the Northern sugar districts. And yet they were given free passes; but because they could not get a pass for their woman friend, or smuggle her on board, they went away with harsh and very angry looks. That is the class of people who are received with open arms at the Labour Bureau, and then

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the hon. member for Musgrave passes reflections on men who are respectable in every degree, but who happen at the present time to be standing up for their rights. I want to refer briefly to the recent visit of Mr. Tudor to Queensland, and his efforts to act as mediator to bring this strike to a peaceable settlement. For many years, as this House is aware, columns of ink have been wasted in the endeavour to make good the claim that the sugar-growers of Queensland are being robbed of £1 per ton of sugar in excess of excise over rebate. I do not want to introduce any irrelevant matter, or to start an argument as to who is paying the bounty, but my own opinion is that the consumer pays all taxes, and that he pays the bounty. That is not relevant to the occasion, but it is pertinent to the visit of Mr. Tudor to Queensland, for this reason: that our opponents, the people who are fighting the battle against the sugar-workers of Queensland, for years advocated the abolition of both excise and bounty. They even fought the Federal election on that issue, and I am pleased to say they bit the dust very badly. When they saw it was useless to advocate in sugar districts the removal of both excise and bounty, the next thing they went for was the excision of this excise and bounty, which is really a rebate. They have argued and advocated that for years, and the Australian Sugar Producers' Association, through its mouthpiece, the *Australian Sugar Journal*, has never ceased pounding away at that request; and when Mr. Tudor came up and offered the representatives of the sugar-growers at Bundaberg the excision of the bounty and rebate if they would concede eight hours a day and £1 10s. a week in the sugar-mills, they replied that it could not be done. It has been shown conclusively to-night that the Government of Queensland has acted as a partisan against the sugar-workers.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. FERRICKS: I think I can show where the Government of Queensland, through its head, the Premier, has also acted as a partisan against the sugar-growers of Queensland. For years we have been told that if the bounty and excise were abolished, or even if they were equalised, the grower would receive from 2s. to 2s. 6d. more for his cane. In my earlier speeches in this Chamber, I admitted that if the bounty and excise were removed sugar would be worth 2s. 4d. per ton more, but I expressed a doubt whether the sugar-grower would get the benefit of that increase. The other day, in perusing the official organ of the Australian Sugar Producers' Association, I came across something that was very striking to me in view of the utterance of their former hypocrisies for the abolition of excise and bounty, and the medium of the surprise was no less a person than the Premier of the present Government. In a leading article of the *Australian Sugar Journal*, of 19th May, 1911, is contained the following (*inter alia*):—

"The sugar commissioners were only able to recommend additional advances for central mills after finding that our net imports during the past ten years have worked out at something about 46,000 tons per annum. This is by no means a big margin, and a practical man like our present Premier, the Hon. D. F. Denham, could not fail, in his recent visit to the North, to be impressed with the enormous difference between the large areas of land awaiting occupation and the comparatively minute opportunities for expansion so far as

the sugar industry is concerned. Mr. Denham had facts staring him in the face day by day, as he travelled through the fertile alluvial lands of the North Queensland coast and listened to the information supplied him by experienced men. Naturally, he cast round for a way out—something by which expansion could be made possible—and we think it will be admitted that whatever differences of opinion may exist, the suggestion he has made ought not to be hastily set aside."

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member has exhausted the time allowed by the Standing Orders.

Mr. RYLAND (*Gympie*): I move that an extension of time be granted to the hon. member for Bowen.

The SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the hon. member should be granted an extension of time?

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. FERRICKS: It will only take me a few minutes to complete this. The Chief Secretary was talking about overcoming the difficulty of impending, or alleged impending, over-production. It was during his visit to the North, and the *Australian Sugar Journal* says that Mr. Denham's scheme is briefly this—

"The Commonwealth levies in excise every year a sum largely in excess of that which it repays to the industry under the quite misleading name of bounty, but which we prefer to describe by the more accurate term of rebate. This sum, which may be estimated at not far short of a quarter of a million sterling annually, might, Mr. Denham thinks, be justly used to create a special fund, from which could be paid a special bonus on all such sugars grown in this country as would require to be exported. This, Mr. Denham points out, could be worked in conjunction with a bookkeeping scheme in which the whole sugar production of the country would be pooled, and whatever loss accrued would be equally distributed over the whole. Here is a problem demanding the attention of the Federal Parliament on broad, statesman-like lines; here is just one of those matters for which the federation was designed."

The *Australian Sugar Journal* goes on to say—

"Mr. Denham has certainly shown insight in recognising the need for expanding our tropical industries. . . . Indeed, so far as the financial aspect of the proposal is concerned, it is practically a compliance with the request of the Australian Sugar Producers' Association when the recent legislation was before Parliament."

Did the Premier realise the seriousness of his suggestion? Did he realise the effect of the proposed arrangement which he entered into at the instigation of the Australian Sugar Producers' Association? It simply means that the people of Australia are to be taxed in the price they have to pay for their sugar, and that the sugar-workers are to be involved in a wage slavery, in order to produce sugar at a sufficiently low cost, to compete in the markets of the world. In other words, we are to penalise ourselves in order that foreign countries may obtain cheap sugar. The hon. member for Burrum incidentally stated that the £5 per ton duty was not sufficiently protective, but I may mention that the profits of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company nearly cover the whole of the tariff wall against foreign-grown sugar. I am not alone in that opinion. No less an authority than Mr. James Dunlop, one of the visiting Scottish Commissioners, in a letter to the *Glasgow Herald*, which was reprinted

in the *North Queensland Register* some time in January last, pointed out that even if Australia adopted the suicidal policy of freetrade, the profits of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company's monopoly would almost make up the difference—that at the present price that we are paying for our sugar we would be able to compete in the markets of the world, and at the same time allow the sugar-producer to profit by his industry. There is a proposal to approach the Federal Government with a view to obtaining an increase in the duty. I hold that the Federal Government will have very good grounds for refusing any further increase in the tariff until the new protection system is in force, and the producers of sugar are able to get a fair return for their industry. When Mr. Tudor was at Bundaberg the sugar-growers refused an equalisation of the sugar bounty and excise. It is a notable fact that Mr. Pritchard found himself at Bundaberg at the same time as Mr. Tudor. Of course, there could be no show without Punch. Mr. Pritchard, I understand, carries with him a permanent brief from the Townsville Chamber of Commerce, which provides him an "open sesame" to all conferences held in the South for the discussion of these matters. He is everywhere watching the interests of the manufacturers and refiners as against the interests of the sugar-producers, and but for his agitation in this matter, but for his meddlesome interference in the sugar industry, the strike of to-day would not have been in existence. The sugar-mills have nothing in common with the manufacturers. Their interests are diametrically opposed. How can it be supposed that the man who sells a commodity and the man who purchases that commodity have interests in common? And that is the position in this case. The growers and the workers, their employees, were in a position to band together against their common enemy, the refinery monopoly, were it not for the interference of this meddlesome association. In conclusion, I regret that the Premier made such ineffectual attempts to speak to the main issue of this discussion. Instead of dealing with the real matter at issue, he directed his remarks almost wholly to the action of the Commissioner of Police. What the leader of this party and the few members who spoke after him charged the hon. gentleman with was that he used a State institution, or allowed it to be used, for the purpose of supplying labour to the sugar-fields and sugar-mills during the progress of an industrial strike. The Hon. the Premier denied that the Labour Bureau had received any instructions from him. But, as a matter of fact, he read the advertisement, which concluded with the notification that applicants were to meet at the Labour Bureau. If a private land agent wanted to sell allotments of land by auction, would he be justified in advertising in the *Brisbane Courier* that the sale would be held at the Lands Office to-morrow morning? Would the Premier, when he was Minister for Lands, have tolerated that sort of thing? I say the very fact that the advertisement was endorsed Government Labour Bureau gave it a State significance. I have nothing but commendation for that official at Toowoomba who took up a different attitude from that adopted by Mr. McGee.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. FERRICKS: The Premier very unwisely interjected that that officer exceeded his duty.

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Mr. LENNON: He said he would inquire into the matter.

Mr. FERRICKS: Yes; he said he would inquire into the matter. Even if he did think that officer had exceeded his duty, the hon. gentleman should not have said so from his place in the House. While we have an official like Mr. McGee, who is prepared to take extreme measures in matters which do not concern him, at the head of the Labour Bureau, I hold that the Labour Bureau is a farce and should be abolished. I do not know what must be the feelings of those people who draw fat dividends from the Colonial Sugar Refining monopoly, in view of the fact that those dividends are ground out of suffering humanity. What must be the feelings of the members of this Government, who must realise that they are participators in that inhuman traffic? What must be the feelings of those gentlemen who sit behind the Government with such smug complacency? They have done their little bit, and are doing their little bit, to perpetuate these evils. I hope and firmly believe that it will not be long before the outraged democracy in Queensland will have its revenge. Retribution will overtake the present Government, and at the very first opportunity, I think. Members of the Labour party have been a long time fighting for an eight-hour day and a minimum wage. We have been a long time endeavouring to corner our friends opposite, but I think that they have cornered themselves on this occasion. Each and every one of their party and the members who have been supporting them have been advocating a twelve-hour day for £1 5s. a week. Everyone of them by continuing to keep the Government in power have incriminated themselves, and they are fit company for the three black labour Senators who misrepresent Queensland in the Federal Parliament.

Mr. ALLEN: Never again.

Mr. FERRICKS: I firmly believe that we will make one job of it by bagging the whole lot at the very first opportunity.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BARBER (*Bundaberg*): I want, first of all, to give, as far as the rules of this deliberative Assembly will permit me, an unqualified denial to the statement made by Mr. White, the hon. member for Musgrave. He said this afternoon that a number of men who were meeting the boats as they arrived at the wharves in Bundaberg, and also meeting the trains and getting into conversation with the men—the majority of whom were brought to the sugar districts under false pretences—that most of these men doing picket duty, and wearing the label of the union, for the past two years had been loafing at the corner of the street under his veranda. As a matter of fact, the hon. gentleman quoted me in support of his statement. I give that statement, so far as this House is concerned, an unqualified denial. There is not one man now doing duty for the Australian Workers' Association in Bundaberg that ever loafed under the hon. gentleman's veranda, nor under any veranda, because the class of men that loaf the labour movement and the labour unions desire to eliminate from and keep from our ranks, and provide for all classes of industry—the sugar industry or any other industry—a highly-trained, efficient class of men. That is what the labour unions stand for, despite all the

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statements that have been made here by the Premier and other speakers to the contrary. The hon. gentleman stated that the Hon. F. Tudor had been brought to Bundaberg simply to fan the flame. That statement is also incorrect. As a matter of fact, the Minister for Customs came from Melbourne to Bundaberg at the special request of the officials of our union there and the chairman of the Canegrowers' Association. He was wired to by these gentlemen, and, thinking that he might be able to bring about some settlement in this very serious trouble, he came to that sugar district, and on leaving on the Saturday night he regretted very much that he had been unable to bring about any satisfactory settlement. The Premier and the hon. member for Musgrave simply reiterated the statements that had been made by the great high priest of the Australian Sugar Producers' Association, Mr. Pritchard, who, from the first, stated that this sugar trouble was the outcome of one or two agitators. A more deliberate misstatement was never uttered. Of course, we expect that a prostituted Press like the metropolitan morning Press, that gives its space to the minions of capitalism, would make those statements; but for the Premier and the hon. member for Musgrave to get up in this House and say that it is the work of a few agitators, such statements are wrong, and they are as unwarrantable as they are incorrect. What is the position? At a conference of workers held in Townsville last December, there were delegates present from all parts of Queensland, more especially from the sugar districts. Although the question of demanding a shorter day and increased wages had been growing in the ranks of the sugar-workers for some years, it was not till last December that the conference considered them. We consider that the sugar-workers are only asking for what a late member of this House, the late Mr. J. V. Chataway, believed in himself. I believe that at the time Mr. Chataway was Treasurer.

Hon. R. PHILP: No; he was Minister for Agriculture.

Mr. BARBER: He was Minister for Agriculture, and he also ran the *Mackay Sugar Journal*. As far back as ten years ago Mr. Chataway then urged the workers in the sugar industry to organise and demand 7s. 6d. a day for an eight-hour day. Hence, Mr. Speaker, we had a man like Mr. Chataway to a very large extent giving us a lead in this matter. He was well versed in the conditions of the sugar industry when he made that recommendation, and practically the same conditions exist to-day.

Mr. MAUGHAN: He was Minister for Agriculture too.

Mr. BARBER: When hon. members talk about labour agitators, it simply evidences their crass ignorance of the whole position. The men who were advocating these demands, and who are now in the forefront of this movement, and working for better conditions for our sugar-workers, are the men who at the last Labour Conference in Townsville were elected by the delegates who were sent there by some thousands of their co-workers; these men—the organisers and secretaries—were elected by the delegates to occupy the positions that they hold to-day. After the business of the conference had been

deliberated upon, these demands were formulated, and were at once, or as soon as possible, given to the Press. I want to say here that, despite the fact that there are some men here opposing those demands, and despite all that has been said in the boodle Press that the men connected with the unions, made up by the toilers in the sugar industry, recognise just as strongly and just as clearly the great importance that the sugar industry is to this State. (Hear, hear!) Our trouble is not so much with the grower. As a matter of fact, the sugar-workers have generally got a far better deal from the small grower than what he has from the miller and manufacturer. We have had very little trouble with the grower himself; but we recognise that we have got a greater power to fight in this matter than the canegrower, and that is the big monopoly that occupies an octopus-like position to-day in the industrial life of Australia. At that conference our men recognised that for several years, especially since the transition from black labour to white in the industry,

[7.30 p.m.] on a number of plantations year after year strikes took place, which meant a considerable loss of time and money to the growers, a considerable loss of time and money to the millowners, and a general loss to Queensland all round. To avoid this taking place in the future, our people, after very serious and lengthy discussion, drew up certain rules, in which it is laid down that no member of the union will be allowed to strike or to "down tools" until the two parties—that is, the manufacturers or the millowners, or canegrowers, and a similar number of representatives from our side—have met and discussed the trouble. Under no consideration, no matter how long the trouble lasted, the men were not to be allowed to strike or to "down tools." I have seen men "get on the tank" on Saturday night, and on turning up on Monday morning not feeling very fit, and they might say, "This is no good to me," and down tools, which naturally resulted in serious loss to the grower and the millowner. To avoid that, the conference laid down this rule—

"Should any infringement of the rights and privileges of the members of this association be attempted by the employers, the members employed shall lay a complaint in writing before the committee of their branch, who shall deal with the same, and give notice to the district committee, and, if necessary, appoint a deputation to wait upon the employer and endeavour to adjust the dispute. Failing in this, the matter shall be referred to a general meeting of the branch, convened for the purpose, which may, if deemed advisable, submit the whole matter to arbitration. Should no settlement be arrived at, the members shall, with the consent of the district committee, cease work. All voting on proposed strikes or lockouts shall be by ballot."

I hope the metropolitan boodle Press will publish this, so that the general public in this State and throughout Australia generally will be able to see that, so far as the union is concerned, it has practically done everything on its part to endeavour to prevent these troubles occurring—

"No members of this association shall strike, nor shall any branch authorise its members to strike, for any cause; and no member or members shall resume work, nor shall any branch authorise its members to resume work, after a dispute without the consent of the district committee.

"If any member or members receive notice from their employer or employers of a reduc-

tion of wages or increased hours of labour, they shall continue to work under protest, and shall, at the earliest opportunity, give notice thereof to the chairman or secretary of their branch, who shall call a special meeting of the committee to consider same and act thereon."

I contend that, as far as the Australian Workers' Association is concerned, they have done their best to prevent any of these troubles occurring. Regarding the deputation that waited upon the Secretary for Public Works the other week, I regret very much that the hon. gentleman is not in his place this evening, because through you, Sir, I wished to address a few remarks to him. I had taken particular pains at that deputation to place before the hon. gentleman what that rule meant for our men in the future, and what it meant for the planters and the growers in the future. It simply meant the union would do all in its power to enable them to get a full supply of cane to work along without any industrial trouble or strike, and be able to work their machinery up to its fullest capacity. Yet, as soon as the hon. gentleman commenced his reply, he simply ignored this, and, after rubbing his hands with invisible soap, he told us, in that whining and unctuous manner so characteristic of the hon. gentleman, that, had it not been for us men fanning it into a flame, this trouble would not have occurred. A more insulting remark was never uttered to any deputation.

LABOUR MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. FERRICKS: From such a source.

Mr. BARBER: From such a source. All I was sorry for was that the hon. gentleman was not outside of the building. I know he was boss dog there, but I intended when he was here on the floor of this Chamber, where everybody is practically on a level, that I would make a few remarks to him.

Hon. R. PHILP: Plenty of time.

Mr. BARBER: That is so. The hon. gentleman deliberately insulted that deputation, which had gone there simply to ask that one thing only be done, and that was that the Government should not allow the whole of the Labour Bureau machinery to be handed over for the purpose of securing scab labour to work in the sugar industry. When we come to consider that the Government of Queensland at the present time—although they claim to be—what did the Home Secretary tell them?—the most progressive Government that ever sat on the Treasury benches in Queensland.

The HOME SECRETARY: Hear, hear! so it is.

Mr. BARBER: A Government of democrats! Well, all I have to say is—

The HOME SECRETARY: You are no judge.

Mr. BARBER: "Oh, democracy, what crimes are committed in thy name!" If this is a democratic Government, as the Home Secretary told us in his speech they were—

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member must not measure me by his own rule.

Mr. BARBER: Well, if this is a democratic Government, then Heaven help democracy! A democratic Government! Why, without about two exceptions, there is not one of the hon. gentlemen on the Treasury bench who has an idea more recent than 1830.

The HOME SECRETARY: Don't weep.

Mr. BARBER: I admit the hon. gentleman is one of the exceptions. He is the most progressive Minister of the whole crowd,

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at any rate, he says so. (Laughter.) If all that this very democratic Government is prepared to pay in its own sugar-mills is 4d. or 5d. an hour, then what a conservative Government would pay beats creation, or beggars description, as some hon. member interjects. I have made a lot of notes, but you, Sir, just intimated to me that I have taken up the time allowed to members. I would like to ask any member of the House, through you, Sir, whether they are prepared to state that the demands of the men are in any way exorbitant. While Mr. Tudor was in Bundaberg addressing that large meeting, he put the same question to them, and not a solitary one of them contended that the demands were in any way exorbitant. Thirty shillings a week and found in the mills! And when we come to consider what the conditions obtaining in some of the mills had been in the past, and are to-day, the wonder is they can get anybody to stop there at all. To give you an idea of the kind of stuff they expect the men to drink: Fairymead Mill, one of the biggest mills in Queensland, the other day bought 2 tons of tea to be used during the present season, at what price do you think? Fourpence per pound.

Mr. COLLINS: Was that for the men?

Mr. BARBER: That was for the men. Fourpence per lb.

Mr. FERRICKS: The Colonial Sugar Refining Company's directors would not drink tea at that price.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: They drink champagne.

Mr. BARBER: The Premier stated that the men were being intimidated. I contend that the farmers are being intimidated. In a Mackay paper the other day appears a letter from a Mackay farmer, in which he states he has been intimidated by the millers. At a meeting held in the Bundaberg district the other night, the farmers were practically coerced into promising to cut cane to keep the mill going, and were plainly told that, unless they did assist, their cane would not be accepted, and any grower who was known to have sympathy with the caneworkers would be dealt with by the proprietors of the mill.

Mr. COLLINS: Intimidation.

Mr. BARBER: Why, it is coercion and intimidation of the very worst form. There are a large number of canegrowers in the Gin Gin and Bundaberg districts who have been workmates and personal friends of mine. I know the struggle they have had, and the struggle they are having to-day, and I regret they find themselves in the difficult position they are in to-day, and I should have been pleased had we been able before now to have come to some understanding and been able to have seen the whole industry and the cane harvest in full swing. After all the business had been put before Mr. Tudor, he made certain suggestions, but on the Saturday those delegates or representatives of the manufacturers and the Colonial Sugar Refining Company went to him and stated what was practically their ultimatum, and practically told him they would see him in kingdom come before they would concede anything. Later on the delegates of the growers said they were not prepared to concede any reduction in hours, but they were prepared to make a slight advance for field workers

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during the slack season. Beyond that they were not prepared to go. Our men insisted upon the demand of eight hours a day and £1 10s. per week, which, I state again, no member of the House is game to say is in any way exorbitant. When we come to consider the hon. members who are supporting the Government are supporting a Ministry prepared to allow the whole of the machinery of the Labour Bureau to be utilised in providing scab labour for the sugar-planter, not so much the small sugar-grower, but for the big planter, because I do not think there have been half a dozen men sent out by the Labour Bureau to the small grower. It is the big fellow: the Bingera, Fairymead, and the Colonial Sugar Refining Company—the big sugar baron—they are the people who have the loan of the Government and have the loan of the Labour Bureau machinery.

The SPEAKER intimated that the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. FOLEY (*Townsville*): I did not intend to address the House on this question, not being a representative of a sugar district, and thinking, perhaps, the representatives of the sugar districts would be able to put the facts before the House, but since the debate commenced I take it it is incumbent upon me, as a representative of labour, never mind where employed, to make a few remarks. The demands made by the men employed in the sugar industry are so small and so modest that I think there should be no hesitation on the part of the employers to meet those demands. When we look at the wage asked for—£1 10s. a week and found for work in the canefields, and eight hours a day—I do not suppose there is a smaller wage in any industry in Queensland. Then, again, the mills are asked to pay £1 10s. a week and found for an eight-hour day, or £2 a week and find themselves. Now, the whole amount only comes to £2 2s. for a man with perhaps a wife and five or six children. I claim that the amount is so moderate and so modest that any employer of labour, making the profits that we know the people engaged in the sugar industry are making, should refuse, and I cannot for the life of me understand why the demands were not met. The industry is returning sufficient profit to enable the millers and the refiners to pay those wages and to pay such a price for the cane that the farmers will be able to pay the wages asked for. There is certainly some inequality in the distribution of the profits from the industry. Let me say here that the Government have not acted in the way they should, as a democratic Government, such as they term themselves. For instance, the Government Labour Bureau, notwithstanding anything the Premier may have said this afternoon—it is well known that the Government Labour Bureau is using its machinery to send men to the sugar-fields, knowing very well a strike is on, knowing the greater number they can send to those districts the sooner the strike will be settled. Now, I do not want the Labour Bureau to be used as a means for preventing men going to places of employment, but I certainly think, when a dispute of this description is taking place, the officer in charge of that bureau should at least warn the men and tell them of the dispute in the district in which they are seeking work, and then let the men act for themselves. As a matter of fact, we

have had evidence of men who came to Townsville, having been sent along by the Sydney Tourist Bureau, who were told in Sydney absolutely that there was no trouble in the Burdekin district—that there was no labour dispute—no strike on, notwithstanding that some of the men had heard that a strike was on. They were told there was no strike, and were sent there under an agreement to work for the farmers. Now, when those men arrived in Townsville and were interviewed by some of the union men, and were told of the trouble, they refused to go to work and joined the strikers' camp. While the Government Labour Bureau is a very useful institution and has done good work in finding employment for men and sending them to their work, I say that when there is a dispute of this description, the bureau should inform the men of the fact. We know that a large number of those intending to leave the South would not do so until the strike was settled. I say that the demands of the men are reasonable, and would have been agreed to had it not been for the interference of the millers and the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. I have had conversations with some of the leading farmers in the Burdekin delta, and they were willing to concede the men's demands when they were first made. I wish to protest against the remark that this strike was precipitated by the men without sufficient notice having been given to the farmers; and I was pleased to hear the leader of the Opposition read letters which showed that a conference was asked for as long ago as the 1st February. That request was ignored; and when the men found that the growers were not prepared to concede what was demanded they declined to go to work—they did not strike, because they did not commence work. The men are asking for the enormous wages of £1 10s. a week and found, or £2 2s. a week and find themselves, and anyone on the other side who will say that is too much does not know very much about bringing up a family on wages. I have had that experience myself, and know what I am talking about. I say that the demand is a reasonable one. In the Burdekin district the farmers met the men and discussed the matter amicably, and—before the Colonial Sugar Refining Company interfered—conceded practically everything the men asked for. They agreed to an eight-hour day in consideration of working six days a week; they also conceded £1 10s. a week and found; they also agreed to pay 4s. a ton by contract instead of 4s. 6d. for which the men asked, the amount paid last year being 3s. 6d. a ton. But the millers practically control the industry, and it is useless for the grower to cut his cane if he cannot get it crushed. The miller has the farmer in this position—that he makes a levy of 3d. a ton on his cane to enable the miller to fight the men. It reminds me of the dog who bit the hand that fed him and then turned round and licked the foot that kicked him. The miller cannot say he is not making sufficient profits to enable him to pay the farmer sufficient to pay the wages demanded by the men. One of the greatest millers in the Cairns district, Mr. Munro, admitted to me four years ago that the time worked in the mills was too long, and he would be willing to come to an understanding to have them shortened. He thought eight hours' work was sufficient. That was when the first conference of the Australian Sugar Planters' Association was held in

Townsville. The Colonial Sugar Refining Company also can afford to pay more, because we have it in their report that last year their profits amounted to over £400,000. And it is rumoured in Townsville that the profits of Drysdale Bros., in 1910, amounted to nearly £80,000 for their two mills in the Lower Burdekin.

Hon. R. PHILP: They do not own the two mills.

Mr. FOLEY: It is rumoured that their profits amounted to about £80,000 last year. Looking at the matter from a humane point of view, the Colonial Sugar Refining Company is composed of a handful of men compared with the number of men working in the industry. They reaped a

[8 p.m.] benefit of £400,000 to be divided between them. John Drysdale and his brother got something like £80,000 profit on these transactions.

Hon. R. PHILP: That is not true.

Mr. FOLEY: I have it in print here.

Hon. R. PHILP: You put it in print yourself.

Mr. FOLEY: I have used the statement, but I was not the first to use it.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: You are not the author of it.

Mr. FOLEY: No; I am not the author of it. But what I want to say is that if half of this amount of £400,000 was paid to the millers and farmers for the price of their cane, and the half of John Drysdale's £80,000 was divided between the farmers in the Lower Burdekin, it would enable them to pay the men working for them a better wage, and everybody would have a fair profit out of it on that basis. But the fact that this enormous profit goes to a handful of people, and the great bulk of the workers get a starvation wage, is the cause of the industrial trouble. The profits of the industry are not equitably shared, and the result is strife. We ask this democratic Government to do something to alter these things. They claimed during the referenda campaign, when the Federal Government were asking for powers to prevent this kind of thing, that the State should have the power, and if the referenda had been carried in the affirmative the present state of things would not have taken place. We have it on the authority of John Drysdale himself. He said, "Wait till the referenda is carried, and then we will talk to you." If the referenda had been carried this strike would not have taken place. John Drysdale would have found it worth his while to settle with the men. I won't say that if the referenda had been carried these troubles would have been put an end to, but with this unfair division of profits no industry will ever be carried on in a satisfactory manner. I ask the Government, who claim to have the power, to settle this matter by preventing these companies from making such enormous profits. I ask the Government to use its power, and do something which will prevent these industrial troubles taking place. If they have the power which they claim to have, let them use it in the interests of the wives and children of those who are on strike now, and compel the sugar-growers and the millers to come to an amicable agreement with the workers. As a citizen of Queensland and of Australia, I would be very sorry to see those large cane crops ruined for want of being cut and put through the mills. It would be a

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national calamity, and would mean that thousands of pounds would not be earned from the fact that certain men are allowed to hold out by the Government and prevent the men from working. The Government should compel these people to come to a conference so as to bring about a settlement of this trouble.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mackay*): I have listened with a great deal of interest to this debate; in fact, I presume I am an object of sympathy with the other side. I am one of those unfortunate individuals whom they assert were coerced into working these mills. Let me say that if anyone started to intimidate any of the 1,600 farmers in the Mackay district, they would have a very hard row to hoe. I do not think that any force in the State could coerce them into doing what they thought was wrong. The facts are these: There was no coercion on the part of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company or the Australian Sugar Producers' Association, or anyone else. The Australian Sugar Producers' Association has done excellent work for the sugar industry, and so has Mr. Pritchard. The first mill to start was the Plane Creek Mill, in the Mackay district. There was some burnt cane belonging to a young man, to whom it would have meant ruin if it had not been saved, and to help this young man we went into the mill and did the work, and I am glad we did so. We were mostly shoreholders in the mill, and we numbered something like 200 small growers. It is a mill which handles the largest quantity of cane in the district, but the growers are small men, and the action they took on that occasion was quite voluntary. Coming to the genesis of this strike, I have listened to what has been said, and I am still firmly of opinion that the strike was engineered from outside the sugar districts.

Mr. THEODORE: Nonsense!

Mr. SWAYNE: If the men had been left to themselves there would not have been any strike; in fact, I am safe in saying that two-thirds of them now, if left alone, would not be out on strike. In proof of that statement I would like to traverse some of the correspondence on this matter. The first communication was from the Australian Workers' Association to the Australian Sugar Producers' Association, whom they evidently looked upon as representing both growers and manufacturers at the time, suggesting a conference. The reply from the Australian Sugar Producers' Association was as follows:—

"I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated 1st instant, and in reply to say that my executive do not see that any good purpose would be served by a conference between our associations, for the reason that the question of wages and conditions of employment must be regarded as a "district" one, on account of each district having its own peculiarities, and, in consequence, disparity of remuneration particularly—for instance, in the price paid for the cutting of cane. We have been accustomed to allow matters of this sort to be settled by our district associations with the men whom they employ, and no good reason has been advanced to depart from this course."

There was no refusal to meet them in conference in that; they simply expressed the opinion that it would be better for them to approach the districts, and, speaking for my own district, I can say the growers were not

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approached. I maintain the Australian Sugar Producers' Association were correct in the stand they took, that it was a matter for local action. The last part of the letter reads as follows:—

"Furthermore, it is the policy of our association to encourage the creation of special wages boards in the various districts, and this appears to us to be the logical development of the attitude we have adopted in the past. Moreover, pending the result of the refenda, it would seem premature to discuss the subject-matter of your letter."

That appears to us to be a logical development of the attitude which they have adopted with wages boards.

Mr. THEODORE: It is very logical for your side.

Mr. SWAYNE: This is dated 17th February, and the previous November a wages board had been applied for and was in process of formation by the request of the manufacturers of the Mackay district.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Who applied?

Mr. SWAYNE: When the Bill was passed it provided that either section in an industry, if they wished, could secure a wages board. Without approaching the growers or millers in the Mackay district, the Australian Workers' Association then privately circularised its branches in a letter dated "Chillagoe, 1st April, 1911." In that letter the secretary of the Australian Workers' Association writes—

"The executive consider that any further overtures for a peaceful settlement would be useless; therefore, they are now submitting to you a list of the demands that are to be made upon the employers, such demands to be enforced by a cessation of all work in the sugar districts."

They were looking for a fight from the start. A great deal has been said about the demand centering on an eight-hour day and a minimum wage. But there was a great deal more behind that demand, and most sugar-growers looked upon the matter as a fight for the very existence of the sugar industry. In the letter from which I have quoted there is this statement—

"The whole question of contracting *versus* day labour was discussed, and while all unani- mously favoured the day system, it was thought that we could not possibly expect to alter the whole system in one season. . . .

"We think that the above demands are fair and reasonable, and we have not introduced any detail matter into the case. If we are successful in getting an eight-hour day and other concessions, we can easily arrange all detail matter by a conference with the employers in each district."

They did not ask for a conference with the millowners in the different districts, and that quotation from their circular shows clearly that there was a great deal behind what they had asked, that the system of contract cancutting was in danger. As further showing that they had fully made up their minds as to what they were going to do, I shall give an extract from a special circular of the same date—

"When all arrangements have been concluded, and immediately at the start of the crushing season, the executive council will officially ask all work to cease until such time as the employers agree to meet us and discuss our demands. It is our intention that no work be commenced in connection with the coming crushing season, and we ask all officials to work to that end."

In spite of what they said, however, not a single mill has been prevented from starting. Again, it is said—

“All the Southern papers will be communicated with, and we will try and warn all classes of labour to keep away from the sugar fields until we have arranged a settlement.”

Members have just told us that men were brought into the sugar districts in ignorance of the conditions prevailing there, and yet we have it stated in that correspondence of months ago that workers were to be warned against going into the sugar districts. With regard to the tactics pursued and the misstatements made in connection with this matter, the *Sydney Worker* stated that in the Cairns district men were cutting cane for 8s. 6d. and 8s. 6d. a day. The figures 5s. 6d. and 8s. 6d. are all right, but that was not the amount paid per day—it was the amount paid per ton. Yet it has been said that the *Sydney Worker* was truthful in stating that workers were required to work for 5s. 6d. and 8s. 6d. per day. The fact is that at the rate they were paid they could earn 16s. 6d. a day instead of 5s. 6d. As an instance of the specious misrepresentation indulged in by the party I refer to, I shall read a short extract from a British newspaper—*John Bull*. That extract will show Queenslanders how their State is slandered by such men.

“To work in tropical heat, smothered in running boils due to the furry growths in the sugar-cane”—

I thought that hon. members opposite had said the sugar industry was a white man's industry. This does not seem very enticing to white workers, and yet that is what has been stated in *John Bull*, in a production which there is every reason to believe emanated from Chillagoe—

“To receive as little as 4½d. an hour, or to average 6d. an hour, is not Elysium or Eldorado. To work from sunrise to sunset, the engine-drivers working twelve hours on the Chillagoe fields for 4s. 2d. per day, scanty rations and accommodation—insect infected—certainly has no prettiness in the picture.”

This article is headed “Sugar Slaves in Australia,” and yet the writer talks about engine-drivers on the Chillagoe field. Evidently he cannot get Chillagoe out of his mind.

Mr. FERRICKS: That is a proof that it came from Chillagoe, isn't it?

Mr. SWAYNE: I think so. The article goes on to say—

“Neither butter, vegetables, nor simple change in breadstuffs possible. Out of these scant wages all stoppages, due to wet season or accident, mean a docking of the miserable wages. And this after the Colonial Sugar Refinery Companies have in five years paid dividends amounting to £3,200,000. White labour has been reduced below the level of the kanaka labour, and is cheaper because of the wretched conditions imposed upon them. These companies exact a huge subsidy from the Government.”

Mr. MANN: Hughes refuted that statement, you know.

Mr. SWAYNE: I am not concerned with Mr. Hughes at the present moment. I am now dealing with the gentlemen who have engineered this strike, and I am showing the tactics they have adopted, and the way they have slandered Queensland. The article continues—

“Apparently the subsidy is granted unconditionally, hence the low standard of living. These things are common knowledge in Australia, but apparently unknown here. This

charge applies to Queensland and also to Victoria. Men and women and little children, while assured by the emigration agents of comfort, decency, and good prospects, find themselves dumped on the land in Victoria without a stick or habitation for shelter. Mr. Spence, member of the House of Representatives, stated in the Federal House some time back: “Thousands of people are being brought to Australia, and those who have any chance of doing so get away back again at once, and tell the truth to the people of the old world, whilst those who have to stay here write to their friends at home and warn them not to come to Australia.”

I think that after giving such a specimen of the tactics pursued by the gentlemen who have engineered this strike, very little credence will be attached to any statement they may make. Coming now to the motion which was moved by the leader of the Opposition, I maintain that it is uncalled for, and that for two reasons. The first reason is that there is not a single mill at the present time which is not working, and I am very pleased to say that the sugar crop is coming off. But the chief reason why the motion is uncalled for is that we have legislation on the statute-book which was specially passed for the purpose of dealing with crises of this kind. When the Wages Boards Act was passed we were assured by members on the other side that it would deal with industrial disputes, and would prevent strikes. In the opening speech of the leader of the Opposition, Mr. Bowman, that gentleman stated that it was a measure which would appeal to all parties in the House. I may say that all parties believed in the principle of the measure. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley also said that the measure would prevent a recurrence of strikes. That being so, and this House having passed that legislation, there should be no strikes. There is no get-away from the fact that these strikes are most deplorable. (Hear, hear!) We know that it has been estimated that in connection with three large strikes which we have recently had in Australia—the Broken Hill strike, Newcastle strike, and Harvester strike—that the wage-earners lost nearly £3,000,000 in wages alone.

Mr. RYAN: And the Newcastle strike lost the New South Wales Government their seats.

Mr. SWAYNE: In the face of all that, is it desirable that strikes should be resorted to? I most certainly think that we have got all the means for avoiding them, and we have a tribunal which is able to deal with all such disputes without strikes. That is the stand we are taking in our district. So far as the demands for higher wages are concerned, I am not just now dealing with them. Under the wages boards the employer is bound to abide by the award whether he likes it or not, and I say that the other side should also be compelled to abide by it too. What happened in connection with the formation of the wages board in the Mackay district? The members of the union were instructed by advertisement by their officials not to recognise the wages board at all. Nomination-papers were issued in connection with the board, but the union sent round a circular. I saw copies of the circular myself as they were sent to the mill hands, but the employees refused to avail themselves of the opportunity of forming a wages board. They refused to make any appointment to the board at all; and, acting under the power he had under the Act, the

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Minister appointed representatives of the men amongst some of the old mill hands. The board as constituted sat and made an award. I maintain that the men made a mistake when they listened to the advice of their officials and did not take part in the election of the board, but they could easily obtain redress if they wished to; if they were not satisfied with the decision of the board, under section 36 of the Wages Boards Act it is provided that the Minister in charge of the administration of the Act may suspend an award, and, in the event of his doing that, the board shall sit again and take evidence. This course is still open to those who have gone on strike. I say that the men should exhaust all other resources before they go on strike. If a strike is justifiable at all, it should only be after every other resource has been tried and failed. The men were urged to try the means the law provided, which I may say was the law passed by those now sitting in opposition, or at least it was passed by the Government which they kept in power. If the Act is bad, it is more a concern of those sitting opposite, as they were very prominent in passing it.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: It is a failure owing to the partisanship of the chairmen exhibited time after time.

Mr. SWAYNE: If anyone takes the trouble to look up the awards given by the wages boards, they will see that they are generally to the advantage of the working men.

Mr. ALLEN: No.

Mr. SWAYNE: Why, since the awards have been given by the wages boards wages have been increased by over 15 per cent. in Queensland, and yet hon. gentlemen opposite say that the legislation under it is no good.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: The partisanship of the chairman is no good.

Mr. SWAYNE: A good deal of misrepresentation has taken place in connection with this strike. We have heard about £1 10s. a week for men who are in receipt of such wages now. I have a list of the current rates of wages paid in the mills in my district, and I find that out of fifteen stations—and these do not include some of the highly-paid men such as engineers and the sugar-boilers nor men of that class—but out of fifteen stations nine of them receive over £1 10s. a week—from £1 12s. 6d. to £2 2s. and keep in addition, and the keep is estimated at 12s. 6d. a week. The remaining six stations—and they are the minority—get as low as £1 10s. a week, and these are men getting the minimum wage that is being asked for now. (Opposition laughter.) There is no occasion to strike at all. (Opposition laughter.) But the men accompany their demands for a minimum wage with a demand for conditions which the farmers, in the light of experience and knowledge, consider it is impossible to give them, and that is an eight-hour day in the field. Speaking with some knowledge of the sugar industry, and I have been engaged in farming for over twenty years—both as a small grower and a fairly large grower—it seems to me that it is impossible for the farmer in the North to agree to an eight-hour day. We were informed that there was not the slightest chance of the men withdrawing their demand for an eight-hour field day, and they accompanied their demand for increased wages with that. At any rate, we have a wages board to refer to, and I advise

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them to try that, and I feel sure that if their demands are reasonable the wages board will grant them.

Mr. COYNE: Do you think they are unreasonable?

Mr. SWAYNE: Yes, I consider that an eight-hour day in the field is unreasonable.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: How about the mill?

Mr. ALLEN: How long do you want them to work, all day and night?

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member has occupied the time allowed him by the Standing Orders.

Mr. SWAYNE: I would like to have a few minutes more to complete my speech. I ask for the same consideration that was shown to other members.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. SWAYNE: As we have tribunals appointed by our laws to deal with these matters, I do not think it is the place for members of this House to express an opinion upon the demands—as to whether they are just or not. If there were no wages boards, possibly it might be so. I am quite aware that at one time strikes and strong organisations were the only means by which the worker was able to obtain redress. He could not even obtain justice without that at one time, but now that legislation is passed to deal with industrial battles or wars—for that is what they really were—they are out of place. Concerning food, I cannot speak for everyone in Queensland, but so far as my own district is concerned there is very little cause for complaint. I had my meals in one of the mill dining-rooms a few days ago, and I slept in the barracks provided for the men, and I found them good enough for me or anyone belonging to me.

Mr. COYNE: Were you working there?

Mr. SWAYNE: Yes, I was working there.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: You were scabbing.

Mr. SWAYNE: I was working in our own mill. Surely we have a right to work in our own mill! What are you talking about? (Opposition laughter.) So far as the sleeping accommodation is concerned, there are two spring stretchers in each compartment for the men, and so far as the food is concerned, I do not think there can be any objection to it. We heard a great deal about Bundaberg in this discussion, and possibly the hon. member who represents that electorate when he spoke this afternoon had not seen the Bundaberg daily paper that I am going to quote from.

Mr. ALLEN: What paper is it—the *Bundaberg Mail*?

Mr. SWAYNE: No, it is the *Daily News*, which is the paper supported by the other side. This is what it says: It is a letter signed by Messrs. Campbell and Amos, Ltd., and reads—

"It has been stated freely that the food supplied at Fairymead is not fit for human consumption, that no butter is allowed the men, also that the oatmeal contains weevil. Having supplied this plantation with large parcels of the highest grade goods for years, we emphatically state that the allegations are most unfair. Tons of the choicest factory butter are purchased by Messrs. A. H. and E. Young for plantation use every year."

(Opposition laughter.)

"We ourselves supply the plantation named with the very best quality new season's oatmeal

regularly at short intervals, which arrives regularly from the South, where there is no weevil."

We have heard a great deal about the Colonial Sugar Refinery in this discussion. I should like to point out this: That there is a socialistic Government in power in Australia, and under section 51 of the Australian Constitution they have got power to deal with trade and commerce, and to make laws for its peace, order, and good government when the operations extend over the boundaries of one State; therefore, if the Colonial Sugar Refinery is guilty of the malpractices that we heard of this afternoon, then the Government in power at present is conniving with the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. They could deal with the Colonial Sugar Refining Company just as well as they can deal with the coal vend or the shipping combine. But if anything happened

[8.30 p.m.] to the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, the other side would lose one of their best election friends. If there is a referendum, they advise the people to vote "Yes" because of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. If there is a strike, they say it is caused by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. If they have a Labour candidate at an election, they tell the people to vote for him to down the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. I really do not know what they would do at election time if it were not for the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. Speaking as a grower, I would like to point out that at the present time from 60 to 70 per cent. of the total receipts of the canegrowers go in paying wages. Now, that is a very fair share, and I think it will be seen that the grower has a very small margin. I do not think there is any room for increased payments under the heading of wages. I do not think the grower can stand any addition to the cost of production. But I do think that the Federal Government might assist the industry by reducing the excise levied upon the industry to the amount paid by way of bounty or rebate, or vice versa. The excise is £4, and the rebate is only £3. I would like to use Mr. Tudor's own words in this connection. I did not expect this debate to take place this afternoon, or I would have come prepared to refer to the page of the Commonwealth *Hansard*, but if hon. members want to have his exact words I can get the quotation for them. I have heard it argued that the excise does not affect the growers. Well, when Mr. Tudor was in opposition on the occasion to which I allude, he was contending that the grower was not benefited in any way by the rebate, or the bounty, as they call it. At that time Federal members were in receipt of £400 per annum, and he put it in this way: "If you had to pay your £400 a year into the Commonwealth Treasury and only got £300 a year back, would you be any better off?" Could the position be put more clearly than that? I think it is only right to say that I consider the hon. member for Herbert and the hon. member for Bowen were remiss in their duty to their constituents last year when they would not join the deputation to the Federal Government, when they were asked to do so, to ask it to equalise the bounty and the excise. The legislation under which the excise was collected and the bounty paid was expiring, and it was expected to be renewed for a certain time, and we who were connected

with the sugar industry thought the time was opportune for asking for an alteration in the direction of equalising the excise and the rebate. Further, the Braddon section was expiring at the close of last year. It had always been urged by way of excuse that the Federal Government derived no benefit from it—in fact, it was alleged that they suffered a loss through it—but that excuse would no longer hold good, because, when the Braddon section expired, the Commonwealth would reap the whole benefit of the excise. The time was therefore most opportune for raising the question, and I think those two members might very well have joined us in the deputation. If they had done so, the canegrowers throughout Queensland might now be getting an increased amount of from 2s. to 2s. 6d. a ton for their cane, and then they would have been in a better position to meet the demands the men are now making.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

\* Mr. MANN (*Cairns*): I have listened with a great deal of interest to the debate, and I have heard practically every hon. member who has spoken on either side of the House. After listening to the debate, it reminds me of a story I once read about a little boy who was reading history, and, after reading about a great number of wars, he asked his father what caused war. His father started to explain, and his mother stopped him, and said, "Now, dad, that is wrong. Wars start in this fashion"; and they had a real good healthy argument. After they had exhausted themselves, the father began to explain again to the boy what caused war, and the boy said, "Never mind, father, I understand now." After hearing the hon. member for Mackay and one or two other members on either side, I can quite understand why there is a strike in the canefields. I am a little interested in this matter as I am a canegrower myself; and I must admit that, as far as my district is concerned, I believe the Australian Workers' Association at Chillagoe sent to every mill and to every association in the district asking for a conference. I believe that is quite true. I asked some of the prominent growers who were opposed to me politically, but with whom I am friendly otherwise, why they did not accept a conference, and the reason they gave was that, if they agreed to certain terms in conference with the Australian Workers' Association at Chillagoe, the Australian Workers' Association could give them no guarantee that the men who came mostly from Sydney and other places would accept the agreement come to. There is no doubt that the pay is low, the food is bad, and the accommodation in the mills is bad. Even the hon. member for Musgrave admitted that this afternoon—it is admitted on all hands, and I defy contradiction when I say that the conditions in the mills are not good. We had the spectacle this afternoon of the hon. member for Mackay reading a letter written by a firm—I suppose of storekeepers—in Bundaberg protesting against its being said that the food supplied at a certain mill in the Bundaberg district was bad. In my district—and I suppose it is the same in the Bundaberg district, where they have a plentiful rainfall—that, if you get in a good supply of goods—I do not care how reputable the grocers may be—after a few weeks, owing to the very moist

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weather and the great heat, maggots and other live things breed in the stores. The Colonial Sugar Refining Company in my district get large quantities of foodstuffs from Sydney, and I believe—as I read in the Cairns papers the other day with regard to the food given to the men at Hambleton Mill—that the food is bad, and the conditions ought to be made better. I was going to say that there is no reason for the cane-cutters in my district going out on strike because, so far as I have heard from going through the district, the farmers are unanimous in the belief that the cane-cutter is getting a good price for his work. But if the mill hands go out on strike, I would like to ask hon. members how the cane-cutters can keep working without assisting to break down the strike? If they go out into the field and cut cane, the cane cannot be crushed in the mill if there is not a sufficient staff of mill hands. On the other hand, if the cane-cutters go into the mill and crush the cane they have just cut, they would practically be assisting to down men whom every hon. member on that side of the House, with the exception of the hon. member for Mackay, has admitted ought to get better conditions? I do not think for one moment there would have been a strike if the millowners, in the first place, had given better conditions in the mills.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MANN: That is the sum and substance of the whole trouble. I have read carefully what some of the Federal members had to say in regard to this cane trouble. They said that the grower ought to go hand in hand with the worker to get better conditions. Now, how can the grower go hand in hand with the mill worker if the manufacturer goes to the grower and says, "Very well, we will give the worker the conditions you ask for, but we will stop the added cost out of your cane price"? What can grower would feel inclined to go with the mill workers and say, "We intend to help you to fight the millowners," knowing that the whole added cost would fall upon the growers? On top of that we have the cane-cutter asking for increased pay for his own work, so that if the grower goes hand in hand with the worker he is going to be squeezed on both sides. That is the position. Now, there is a way out of this difficulty if the Federal Government step in. The Federal Parliament made provision to ensure the manufacturer of raw sugar receiving a minimum price by giving him a protection of £6 a ton. Now, they ensure to the worker a minimum wage, and they can say to the grower if he does not pay a decent wage they will stop his rebate. Now, that amounts to 7s. 6d. a ton, and you can clearly see that the white grower will be very careful about the wage he pays if he knows he is likely to lose his 7s. 6d. a ton. I am not saying there are not bad conditions in the canegrowing districts. For example, there is the question of stoppage of pay for wet weather, which is a very large question indeed. I have spoken to some of the big growers about the matter, and they say, "Very well, suppose I start a gang and they work one day, and then comes a wet period, and I have fifteen or sixteen chippers. I am paying those men 7s. a day each and they work one day, and I have to pay them a week's wages; there is not much in canegrowing." I believe in

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what the Premier said about a commission to be appointed to go into the whole matter and have it thoroughly thrashed out. I am pleased to see that the Federal Government—practically every Federal Government that has been in power have been rather good to the sugar industry, but they stopped short of securing just conditions—they should have gone a step further. If they can collect £4 excise from the manufacturer, there is nothing, I take it, to prevent them collecting £8 and saying to the manufacturer, "You must pay a decent price to the grower for his cane."

Mr. RYAN: They cannot do that.

Mr. MANN: Why cannot they do it?

Mr. RYAN: That has been decided. They cannot prescribe conditions.

Mr. MANN: How can they prescribe conditions in the field? They prescribe to every canegrower who employs white labour a scale of wages, and he must pay that scale of wages or lose his rebate. I think the Federal Government have sufficient power. If they say to the grower, "You must pay a decent wage," they can say to the manufacturer, "You must pay a sufficient price for your cane." I think if they have not that power they ought to get it. I went out and fought on the side of the "Yes, yes" party for all I was worth for that reason. I could clearly see the State Government could not effectively deal with the sugar monopoly. It required the Federal Government to do it, and I say if it is a fair thing to compel the grower to pay decent wages, it is a fair thing to ask the manufacturer of my cane to pay a decent price for the raw material. That is the position I take up.

Hon. R. PHILIP: Increase the bonus, and we can give more pay.

Mr. MANN: If we could get, on the other hand, a guarantee that the mills would not reduce the price they are already paying. The fact remains that the manufacturers get the cane as cheaply as they possibly can, and one of the reasons why I was against interfering with the excise and bounty—why I was against wiping it out altogether—was because if they only have the protection, and no excise or bounty, the manufacturers could get Hindoos, Chinese, Japs, or other aliens to grow cane in competition with myself, and as I go oftener to the storekeeper, the baker, and the butcher, when it comes into competition for a living, they can beat me every time. I happened to meet one or two of my acquaintances in Cairns just before I came down here, and one of them happens to be a mechanic, who is very handy at driving crushing engines and possibly other jobs in the mills requiring skill, and I asked him what he was being paid, and he said "£1 16s. a week, and ration money worth about 11s. a week." That man is doing skilled labour at £2 7s. a week, as against a navy getting £2 14s. Do you wonder why there is trouble in the mills, and why the cane-cutters are out in sympathy with their friends in the mills? I do not wonder a bit. The position is very hard on the grower, and the only remedy is, as I said before, for the Federal Government to take some action.

Mr. COLLINS: What about the State Government?

Mr. MANN: The State Government, I believe, did take some action. In 1908 we

passed a Wages Boards Act, and who opposed that Bill most? The representatives of the farmers. The Act was passed three years ago, and when there was a strike at the Mulgrave Mill two years ago, did the farmers apply to form a wages board? No. Now they find themselves in a hole, they ask the workers why they do not come under that Act. If it was not good enough for the farmers two years ago, why is it good enough now? I fought for that Act—by the way, I just mention in passing, when I fought at the last election, I advocated an eight-hour day in the mills for men who attended machinery, and a maximum of fifty-four hours a week for employees doing other work, and along comes the Government representative, and I did not go far enough to please him—he wanted an eight-hour day in the mills all round, and the directors of the Mulgrave Mill were behind him to a man, and I noticed in the papers the other day that A. J. Draper said the men in the Mulgrave Mill had been working sixty-eight hours a week. I did not quite agree with my labour friends when they said they were working twelve-hour shifts, but I find Mr. Draper bears them out, as sixty-eight hours a week is practically a twelve-hour shift. If those men were behind the Government candidate at the last election, and supported an eight-hour day in the mills, why cannot they grant it now they have a chance? If it was good enough to try and beat me last election, it is surely good enough to put in operation now. I met some of the farmers before I came down, and I said to them, "You supported the man who promised eight hours a day, and I hope you like it. I quite understand if you get eight hours a day in the mill, you will soon have it in the field." I think myself a conference ought to be held between the employers and employees, and, in spite of, perhaps, the demands made by the men being rather more than the farmers or millowners will give, that conference would have done no harm, and narrowed down the points of difference by the farmers clearly showing those men the impossibility of granting some of the demands. For instance, regarding contracts: They ask in my district for 10s. a day for eight hours, and if a man cuts 2 tons of cane he is a cheap man, but if he only cuts 1 ton of cane you cannot afford to keep him.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Sack him.

Mr. MANN: You can only afford to sack him to put on a better man in his place. When labour is plentiful, and a man can pick and choose his employees, he can afford to pay good wages.

Mr. HARDACRE: There is an abundance of labour in the North.

Mr. MANN: There may be an abundance of labour in the North. If a man cuts 27 cwt. of cane, and asks 10s. a day, that amounts to about 8s. 7d. a ton. Now, if you pay that out of £1 a ton, you cannot afford to pay high wages to the man who plants the cane and does the chipping. The member for Townsville said they were not asking for 10s. a day for the man outside the cutter. Does any man expect to get a horse-driver at £1 10s. a week and tucker to work alongside another man getting 10s. a day? The whole thing boiled down is this: Will the Federal Government provide such a price for sugar as will enable the wages asked for

to be paid? I clearly understand the position—that at the present time the Colonial Sugar Refining Company are getting the cream of the sugar industry. We all quite clearly understand that. I do not know whether the Federal Government intend doing anything in regard to nationalising the sugar industry. I do not think they can do; but I think, in conjunction with the State Government, they could make such regulations as would prevent a monopoly getting the cream of the industry, while the workers and growers are fighting for a mere existence. I admit that in some cases growers are doing very well, and can afford to pay the wages asked for; but it comes worse on the small man all the time.

Mr. THEODORE: What are you?

Mr. MANN: I am a small grower; and the district is entirely under the dominance of the millowners, who will not take one-tenth of the cane that could be grown there. When I hear people talking about what should be done, I think they ought to make themselves acquainted with the industry before they speak on it. I do not intend to take up further time; but I will just refer to a remark made by the hon. member for Mackay, Mr. Swayne. The other day I got a letter from Mudie's, in London, addressed "John Mann, Parliament House, Brisbane, Adelaide," and when such a mistake is made by an establishment like Mudie's, one need not wonder at Ben Tillett's mistake. Years ago arguments were used against the sugar districts in the North being fit for white labour, and we have had to suffer in consequence. In 1906 we were seriously handicapped by want of labour. I remember going into one of the public offices and hearing of the diseases to which anyone going to the Cairns district would be liable, so you can understand that people would fight shy of going there. I am sorry this strike has taken place. I once engineered a strike against the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. I tried to get the farmers to stop supplying the company with cane until they got a better price, but I failed. As far as this trouble is concerned, if the men can get decent conditions, I believe in them trying to do so.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ADAMSON (*Rockhampton*), who was greeted with cheers, said: I would like to say a few words on this industrial trouble that has arisen in the sugar industry. I have tried to learn something about the cause of the trouble and what may be done to bring it to an end. I have gone to Bundaberg and spoken to canegrowers who are my personal friends, also canecutters and others who have to do the hard work of the industry, and have tried to find out what could be done. My sympathies are with the canecutters and other hard workers and with the growers, because I am convinced that both the growers and the men doing the hard toil are not being treated fairly by the millers and manufacturers. Now, I want to say one or two words in reply to what the Premier said. I think it is very undesirable that a gentleman holding his high position should have made practically the charge that the strikers have been using the firestick.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: No.

Mr. ADAMSON: Will he remember that that charge was made against the strikers in 1891, and recoiled upon the heads of

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those who made it? A man on the Mossman last year was taken up and charged with setting fire to cane or something—

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Using dynamite.

Mr. ADAMSON: He was charged with doing something criminal, and when the thing was gone into, it proved to be a complete fiasco, and the man was discharged. Before such a statement is made by the Premier, he should have more information than he appears to have at present. If he has more information, he should give it to this House. Another thing, the hon. gentleman said that practically the eight-hour day was conceded now.

The PREMIER: So it is in the Government mills.

Mr. ADAMSON: It is a remarkable thing that men should strike to get a thing they have already got. It is a sort of *reductio ad absurdum* to say that men will strike for a thing they have got. The Premier also said a lot of hard things about unions, because they used opprobrious names in relation to men who are seeking to break this strike. I do not use those names myself; I never call a man a scab or a black-leg. I am not finding fault with what my friends on this side do; I never force my views on them, and I claim the right to act in my own way, just as they claim the right to act in their way. I never use these names; all the same, I think we might have a little sympathy with the men—the unionists who by their sacrifices have won shorter hours, better wages, and better conditions of work for multitudes of people—men who have sacrificed their homes, their wives, and children—and the wives have been willing to be sacrificed. He speaks about the heroism of the women who are working in the canefields now. I admire the women standing by their husbands, and

[9 p.m.] seeking to get food for their children, which they think is right; but what about the women of the strikers? What about the women in many a hard-fought fight for justice and against oppression, who have stood by their husbands till they died, and have died themselves in doing it? We have a case like that now at Tonypany, in Wales, where for twelve months they have been striking, and the women say, "We will stand by our husbands, if we die." The women of the strikers, to my mind, are just as heroic as the women of the canegrowers, and I would like to pay a tribute to them as well as to the other. I want to say a word or two about what the Premier has said in relation to the matter of the unionists in this strike having refused wages boards. I want to ask the Premier if he knows that the Minister responsible for the department which has to do with this matter has refused a wages board to the men in the South-eastern district during the last twelve months. I will read the following letter, received from the Department of Public Works:—

"Department of Public Works,  
Brisbane, 29th April, 1910.

"Sir.—With further reference to your letter of the 21st ultimo, with enclosures, addressed to the Minister, applying on behalf of the A.S.W.U. and the Shore Engine Drivers' Union, Bundaberg, for a special wages board for the sugar industry in the south-eastern division of the State, I have the honour, by direction, to inform you that the Minister has given the matter full consideration, and regrets that he

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is unable to grant the request for the reason that many of the workers engaged in the sugar industry are provided for under existing determinations."

Supposing that there were some provided for under existing determinations. They could have been eliminated. Why could not the wages board have been given twelve months ago to the sugar-workers who asked for and were willing to abide by its determination? The Premier has said that the unionists have refused wages boards; but the sugar-growers and the manufacturers too have refused wages boards as well!

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ADAMSON: The Premier has made a lot of Mr. McCormack, and we have been told that this fight for better conditions in the sugar industry has been sprung upon us the last month or two. Why, the fight has been going on for the last five years, and as a proof of that I want to read an account of a meeting which was held in Childers in 1905—

"Workers' Political Organisation,  
9th October, 1905.

"At a general meeting of this organisation, held on Saturday last, a discussion took place on the benefits accruing to the sugar industry under Federal legislation, founded on the financial returns to growers prior to and since federation. Taking as a basis the position of the growers to our own central mill, it was pointed out that prior to federation the growers were receiving 9s. 6d. per ton for cane supplied. Taking for the source of information the financial statement of the same mill (Isis Central Mill) for last season, the grower received a net return from the mill of 17s. per ton, which with the bonus of 4s. 4d. would bring the total receipt per ton to the grower up to £1 1s. 4d. This shows an increase to the white grower of 11s. 10d. per ton, and an increase to those who were not registered for the bonus of 7s. 6d. per ton. Taking these figures into consideration, great stress was laid by the various speakers on the unearned betterment which accrued to the black grower, who not only has done absolutely nothing to entitle him to any betterment, but is at the present time pointing the evil of and decrying Federal legislation as being aimed at the extinction of the sugar industry; whereas the facts above stated clearly prove beyond contention that the industry was never in such a flourishing condition at the present time."

And in this account of the meeting he goes on to say that they asked these men to be willing to give up a portion of that bonus in order to provide shorter hours in the mill and in the field, and by doing that 50 per cent. more would be employed in the industry, and there would be some work found for some of the employees at that particular time. So that it is not right for the hon. gentleman to say that this is a new thing. The sugar-workers have been asking for an eight-hour day for five years, and I think it is time it was brought to a head. I want to say another thing. The Premier said that unionism had never done anything for the workers—that it was an evil as far as the worker was concerned, and an hindrance to workers. I want hon. members to listen to a statement in a book called "Australia's Awakening." The writer of this book, Mr. W. G. Spence, the president of the Australian Workers' Union, utters these words—

"To return to the economic. In order to present in a concrete form the monetary gain, I have taken the number of the sheep in the four States in which the union has hitherto operated. Making a deduction for those slaughtered unshorn, I find the average per year about 76,000,000. I have taken for the

last twenty-one years. Making allowance for actual increase in shearing rates, abolition of second price, saving in cost of rations, etc., and adding on the gain to shed hands in wages, together with the direct return in union benefits before mentioned, the total gain for twenty-one years in round figures reaches about £4,000,000 to the shearers and others in the wool industry."

I need not quote any more than that. In another place he says—

"The unions of the Commonwealth probably bring a gain to the workers of £6,500,000 per annum."

We are told that unionism has done nothing for the workers. The history of unionism has been better conditions for the workers, shorter hours, increased wages, and better times. The history of industrial capitalism has been to grind the poor and give them as little as possible, and the Premier must be exceedingly badly informed concerning the history of the trade-union movement to make the statement he did, that unionism had done harm to the industrial workers of this country and the world.

The PREMIER: I did not say so.

Mr. ADAMSON: I hold that the Premier did say so.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member must accept the Premier's disclaimer.

Mr. ADAMSON: I must accept the hon. member's disclaimer, but I cannot help remembering what he said. I would not intentionally misrepresent him nor any other man. I want to say that the requests of the sugar-workers are exceedingly reasonable. They are reasonable so far as the eight-hour day is concerned. Why do I say that? Because the eight-hour day is becoming the standard day in all industries, and the signs of the times are that we will soon have a statutory eight-hour day in all civilised nations of the world. (Hear, hear!) Many of the farmers are working very little more than eight hours a day. To reduce the hours of labour in this industry would be to act in harmony with what is being done the world over, and I would like the House to listen to a quotation from the *London Daily Mail* "Year Book" concerning the changes in the hours of labour—

"The changes in hours of labour in 1909 affected 562,891 workpeople, of whom 3,212 had their aggregate working time increased by 6,399 hours per week, and 559,679 had reductions amounting to 2,398,721 hours per week. The net effect of all the changes was thus a reduction of 2,392,322 hours in the weekly working time of the people affected."

So that the men who are asking for an eight-hour day, and who say that that is the principal thing in their request, are acting in harmony with the industrial workers of the world; and I hold that every man who takes a fair look at life, and realises what life means, knows that eight hours a day is long enough for a man to work. A man should have some season in which he can devote himself to pursuits which will brighten his manhood and his home, and an eight-hour day is a reasonable thing. Now, I want to say a word about the wages these men ask. They ask that mill hands shall be paid £1 10s. a week with keep, or £2 2s. a week without keep; that field hands shall be paid £2 10s. a week without keep, or £2 2s. a week with keep; and that cancutters shall receive 10s. per day without keep, or

8s. per day with their keep. Those are not unreasonable or exorbitant demands. I know that large sugar-growers can pay those wages, and pay them easily. I also know that there are some small growers who have been long settled in the industry and who have got on their feet, and that they can pay those rates as well. I know, too, that there are others who have been started for a comparatively short time, and who are in the hands of the banks, and that they are not able to pay the wages demanded; also that growers who have only newly started are not able to pay them. But I have met canegrowers and cancutters, men of intelligence—I will not mention names, but I may say that one is in the Pialba district and the other in the Isis district—and they have told me that relief must come from the top, as it is the miller and refiner who are getting the benefit of the prosperity in this particular industry. In proof of that I shall quote a statement made to Mr. Chapman by the Sugar Growers' Association when he visited the Isis in 1908. In that statement, which was issued to the public, I find the following:—

"In 1908 Bundaberg produced 65,669 tons of manufactured sugar—94 net titre sugar—equal to 62,000 tons of refined sugar. This at the market rates was worth £1,200,000. It took 610,036 tons of cane to make this amount of sugar. If the millers bought at 11s. per ton it would cost them £335,000. Excise at £4 per ton of sugar equals £248,000—leaving a balance of £637,000 for miller and refiner to pay working expenses and for profits. Looked at another way, it shows that after the cane has been purchased and excise provided for there still remains to the miller and refiner a little more than £1 on each ton of cane crushed."

That is a very remarkable statement.

Hon. R. PHILP: It is nonsense.

Mr. ADAMSON: That is the statement given, though part of it may perhaps be questioned. But here is another statement—

"Refiner pays miller £9 7s. 6d. per ton for raw sugar, and a bonus at the end of the season makes it up to £11 10s. per ton. Refiners sell at £20 and £21 per ton. Refining said to cost about £2 10s. per ton. Profit to refiner, £6 to £7 per ton."

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member has exceeded the time allowed by the Standing Orders.

Mr. THEODORE: I suggest that the hon. member for Rockhampton be allowed to continue his speech.

Hon. R. PHILP (*Townsville*): Mr. Speaker—

Mr. RYAN: I move that the hon. member for Rockhampton be given an extension of time.

The SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the hon. member be given an extension of time?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ADAMSON: I am glad that you have conceded to me the same privilege as has been granted to other hon. members, and I shall be brief in what I have still to say. The statement continues—

"The Colonial Sugar Refining monopoly showed a profit of £402,000 for the past twelve months, and during the past four and a-half years has capitalised £575,000 of profit."

If the other statement was not quite correct, I challenge the hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Philp, to controvert that statement, and

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if it is true that such a great profit has been made out of the industry, it seems to me that the grower and the worker have a right to combine to deal with the miller and the manufacturer—the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, which is a great monopoly. There is one other thing that I want to mention, and with that I shall bring my remarks to a conclusion. I refer to the agreements of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. Those agreements have been proved to be utterly unfair, and they have been condemned by legal authorities—at any rate, by men who hold high Government positions in this country. They have been proved to be wrong as far as equity is concerned. That was proved at Childers, where according to a telegram received—

“Agreement decided against Drysdale with costs, Douglas defendant, Marsland against.”

A telegram from Ayr says—

“Won all cases, agreement worthless, providing men do not accept subscriptions or arrive actual place named.”

Agreements have been issued by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company which men have been asked to sign without knowing their exact contents, and by which men have been practically defrauded. The hon. member for Townsville said something about the first figures I quoted. I got them from a very good authority. But here is another statement, made at a meeting of the Sugar-growers' Union of Australia, by Mr. Walker, who contested the electorate of Musgrave against the member for that constituency. I have no time to read the figures now, but they have been approved of by the Government chemist, Mr. Patten. He said that these calculations are absolutely correct. Mr. Brännich has practically said the same thing. Mr. Walker offered to debate the whole question with anybody that represented the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, and nobody would take him up. I want to say that these figures prove that the manufacturers were getting the plunder, and that it would be right for the growers and for the sugar-workers to combine to fight the Colonial Sugar Refining monopoly. (Hear, hear!) I would like to read the result of this case in Childers the other day, as this case proves that the agreements are bad, that the food is bad, and that the places where the men are called to live are practically insanitary. I want further to say that if we believe that the only wealth of a country is life, that in healthy men and in healthy women, in comfortable men and comfortable women, in intelligent men and intelligent women, that if we believe that that is the true wealth of a country, then for men to be asked to work under conditions and live under conditions as said to exist at the Childers Mill is altogether wrong, and the Government of Queensland ought to set itself against it altogether. (Hear, hear!) This is what this paper says with regard to the Childers case—

“On Tuesday last the police magistrate (Mr. J. Macalister), in reviewing the evidence prior to delivering judgment in the alleged breach of agreement case—Colonial Sugar Refining Company *versus* James Bennett—said: There was little to guide him in the evidence as to what was the customary food at the mill, and he felt surprised that an old and tried officer like Mr. Helms had not the power to go outside a certain scale. Referring to the Roman Catholics under the agreement, it was shown that on the Thursday they had worked for eleven and three-

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quarter hours, and it was not fair to expect men whose religious principles debarred them from eating meat on Friday to go to work that day on a ration of bread and golden syrup. He thought there should have been a little consideration shown under the circumstances. It was a subject he was reluctant to refer to. [Mr. Butler: There is no evidence of protest.] Mr. Helms in his evidence said he was not sure if defendant had complained of the food, but it must be remembered that Mr. Helms had refused to listen to him. Mr. Helms could not give any direct evidence as to the food, as he was not present when it was supplied, but the defendant and two other witnesses had sworn that it was not satisfactory. He (the police magistrate) certainly thought the men should have got green vegetables at such a time. The defendant did seem to be stretching his evidence somewhat, but the witness Downton had given his testimony in a very clear and straightforward manner. The same remark applied to Mr. Stutchbury, but there was nothing to corroborate his statement as to what promises were made to the men in Sydney. One thing he did not like was his remarking that the men complained of having been intimidated by the Australian workers, while at the same time he made no mention of them expressing dissatisfaction with the food.”

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member was granted an extension of time so that the hon. member might conclude any remarks which he might have to make. I think the hon. member is hardly treating the Chamber fairly in reading a long article.

Mr. ADAMSON: I must bow to your ruling, but I do so realising that other members read longer articles than that. Taking the whole facts of the case, it seems to me that both the sugar-growers and the sugar-workers have a cause which ought to appeal to the sympathy of all men in Queensland, and something ought to be done to better their condition. I do not think the Federal Government has the power to do it. I spoke to Mr. Tudor about it and he said, “We can deal with the field hands and perhaps with the agreement, but we cannot deal with the men in the mills, and the manufacture and refining of sugar.” If this is true, then I hold at any rate that the men who voted against referendum proposals brought forward by the Federal Government recently did their best to prevent a settlement of this dispute, and they are to blame for the dispute not being settled by the Federal Government at the present time.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. R. PHILP (*Townsville*): Had it not been for the remarks indulged in by the hon. member for Rockhampton, I would not have spoken at all. After the statements made by the hon. member for Rockhampton, I think there must be some refutation of these statements. I do not hold a brief for the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, but we are told that it costs them £11 per ton, that they sell it for £20 per ton, and that the difference is profit. Any boy in the Normal School knows better than that. The excise is paid by the refinery. I buy sugar quite good enough for my consumption at £20 per ton. I believe it costs the refineries fully £18 per ton to make that sugar. They have been giving from £11 10s. to £12 per ton for the sugar with the bonus, for some time past. They give that price at the mill. They have to find the bags, they pay the freight to the refinery, and afterwards distribute the sugar throughout Queensland, and I say that the consumer gets sugar good enough for the King of England to use for £20 per ton. It

costs something like £18 per ton to produce, and that leaves a profit of £2 per ton. This statement has been advanced in favour of the strikers. At first the debate was that the strikers struck against the farmer and the millowner, but latterly the debate has turned round in sympathy with the farmers against the millowners and against the refinery. The mistake made by the strikers was that they struck against the farmers. They saw the mistake they made, and members of this House saw the mistake they made, and now they are trying to excite sympathy for the poor farmers who would not pay the extra price for cutting the cane. I have no sympathy with men who can make £4, £5, and £6 per week cutting cane and then go on strike for more. That is what they have been getting in North Queensland for some time past.

Mr. THEODORE: Some exceptional cases.

HON. R. PHILP: The hon. member for Woothakata knows something about mining.

Mr. THEODORE: And about sugar, too.

HON. R. PHILP: And the hon. member knows something about strikes, too. A gentleman told me in Townsville that the hon. member for Woothakata and the hon. member for Bowen had a great deal to do with this strike. These members talk about the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. The Colonial Sugar Refining Company have two mills at the Herbert River, and there is no strike there; everything is going on peacefully. They have mills at Goondi and the Johnstone River, and everything is going on peacefully there. There is no strike there and no trouble there. I believe that if reasonable demands had been made to the millowners in a reasonable way that the men would have got what they asked for.

Mr. FERRICKS: Why don't they get it now?

HON. R. PHILP: Nobody likes a man to put a pistol at their throat and say, "Stand and deliver." That is the trouble. The Premier told the House that at the Government mills they paid time and a-quarter, and I believe the other mills would pay the same if they were asked in the right way. But they raised the ire of the farmers when they asked for more money for cutting cane.

Mr. THEODORE: The farmers are prepared to give all they ask for.

HON. R. PHILP: Why did they strike against the farmers then? I have seen some farmers, and they say that they are giving as much now as they can afford to give. It is not the price of cane that they object to, but this eight-hour system. In growing sugar it is not like an ordinary industry where you can work from January to December. You can only work the sugar industry in certain seasons. There is most expensive machinery, and they can only work for five or six months.

Mr. HARDACRE: Just like shearing.

HON. R. PHILP: No, it is not like shearing. It is almost impossible to have an eight-hour day system in connection with farming. It is only when the season is prevailing that they try to get their crop off at all. The hon. member for Leichhardt said that it was the same as shearing, but it is not.

Mr. HARDACRE: It is the same as shearing in that respect.

HON. R. PHILP: It is not the same with shearing. In Queensland you can shear

sheep from January to December. In the district of the hon. member for Bulloo sheep were being shorn last December and in January, and on the largest station in Queensland—Milo—they commenced in March. Sugar, on the other hand, in a seasonable crop.

Mr. THEODORE: They can get the whole crop off with an eight-hour day.

HON. R. PHILP: It would be impossible to get the whole crop off in an eight-hour day. If there is not sufficient accommodation provided at the mills for the present number of hands, there would be much less accommodation for a third more men.

Mr. THEODORE: Provide more accommodation.

HON. R. PHILP: If a reasonable thing had been asked for the mill hands, it would have been granted. The hon. member for Bowen said that Mr. Drysdale was quite willing to give it.

Mr. FERRICKS: Yes, but the Australian Sugar Producers' Association would not allow it.

HON. R. PHILP: I do not know anything about the Australian Sugar Producers' Association, but if Mr. Drysdale had been given due notice, I think he would have been quite willing to do something in a month's time, but they would not touch it.

Mr. THEODORE: No such proposition was made to the men.

HON. R. PHILP: The hon. member for Woothakata knows all about this thing. In fact, I believe he organised this strike. He is a pastmaster at that sort of thing. I do not think the leader of the Opposition had anything to do with the strike, because in his district the mills are all running without any trouble.

Mr. LENNON: They had a strike at Goondi last year.

HON. R. PHILP: Yes, but there is no strike this year. The sugar industry is one of the most important industries in Queensland. This is not a matter that can be decided by a debate in this House. It cannot be decided by one strike or two strikes. We have passed an Act to provide means for avoiding strikes. The Federal Government have also passed measures for preventing strikes. Why did not the men take the legal course open to them, if they were dissatisfied, to settle the matter? They were told in Mackay at the beginning of last year that a sugar board was forming, and the Australian Workers' Association advertised, "Have nothing whatever to do with it." Before the hon. member for Woothakata came to this House we had a good many strikes in the country, and we passed an Act specially to deal with strikes, but I am sorry to say it has not had the effect of preventing strikes. Still, no effort has been made by the sugar-workers to take advantage of it. I am certain that everybody in Queensland is dissatisfied that a strike should take place in the sugar industry, because it means a great loss to Queensland. If the employers were to give way to-day, it would not stop matters. What is to hinder the sugar-workers asking for another 6d. a day next year?

Mr. THEODORE: Nothing but the unreasonableness of the request.

HON. R. PHILP: We want to try and get a definite settlement of industrial disputes. I am sure hon. members on both sides want

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that; but it will not be accomplished by flouting the laws we have passed. If the Wages Boards Act is not perfect, try and make it better. When the Wages Boards Bill was going through, hon. members on the other side told us they were sick of strikes.

Mr. HARDACRE: Could a wages board have come to a decision in time to affect the operations this season?

HON. R. PHILP: I think it could.

Mr. FERRICKS: Yes—ten hours a day.

HON. R. PHILP: It is all very well talking about eight hours a day, but there are some occupations in which you cannot get continuous work. There is no harder work in Queensland than is done by wharf lumpers. If the wharf lumpers in Townsville were asked to work eight hours a day, would they be satisfied? Not likely.

Mr. FERRICKS: If they had eight hours every day they would.

HON. H. PHILP: How could you guarantee eight hours a day? Neither can you guarantee eight hours a day regularly in the sugar industry. The work has to be done in five or six months, and it is not possible to get sufficient men to take off the crop if you only work eight hours a day. There are two cane farmers in this House who have given evidence about canecutting on wages. The hon. member for Cairns is a cane farmer, and he found that he could only get 27 cwt. cut in one day at 10s. a day.

Mr. COLLINS: The hon. member for Cairns did not mention the tonnage per acre.

HON. R. PHILP: He told us that he could only get 27 cwt. cut in one day. The hon. member for Musgrave told us that some gangs only cut 17 cwt. in one day. I think that canecutting should be done by contract, the same as shearing.

Mr. THEODORE: It is pretty well all contract.

HON. R. PHILP: And the hon. member is seeking to destroy that.

Mr. THEODORE: No.

HON. R. PHILP: The hon. member says he wants the men to work eight hours a day and get 10s. a day.

Mr. THEODORE: We are not dealing with the contract system at all.

HON. R. PHILP: The hon. member wants 10s. a day for an eight-hour day.

Mr. THEODORE: That is only an alternative.

HON. R. PHILP: But he does not guarantee how much cane will be cut. There are some men who are not able to cut 2 tons a day, and there are others who can cut 4 or 5 tons a day. There are men who make good cheques every year by coming to Queensland and cutting their 4 or 5 tons a day. Sometimes they buy land in the districts and sometimes they buy land elsewhere. As a rule, they are a very good lot of men. I am glad to say that they have greatly improved in quality since the industry first took to white labour, and those good men are leaving the camps.

Mr. BARBER: That is not so.

HON. R. PHILP: I say the best men are leaving the camps and going away.

Mr. BARBER: No, they are not.

HON. R. PHILP: Well, that is the case in North Queensland, and I think it is a mis-

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take. If the Labour party, instead of fanning the flames, had gone about in a quiet way and tried to settle the trouble, there would have been no strike.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: We tried to do that in February.

HON. R. PHILP: The canegrowers were quite prepared to deal with the canecutters themselves. Everybody admits that canecutters have made very good wages. A man who can make his £4 or £5 or £6 a week at cutting cane is not badly off.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Fifteen hours a day.

HON. R. PHILP: Nobody works fifteen hours a day.

Mr. BARBER: Yes, they do.

HON. R. PHILP: The hon. member for Bundaberg told us some years ago about an old gentleman seventy-two years of age who could cut and load 6 tons a day.

Mr. BARBER: I said he could cut it, but I did not say he could load it.

HON. R. PHILP: We want to try to put an end to strikes, but we cannot do it by anything we say in this House. I would advise our friends on the other side to tell the men to go to work and save their money. I believe they would get better terms from the mills if they did that than they will get by going on as they are doing now. Why not try and get a wages board?

Mr. BARBER: One-sided all the time.

HON. R. PHILP: It has been claimed in this House that £200,000 or £300,000 more per annum is paid in wages in Queensland now than was paid before we had wages boards, so that they cannot be altogether one-sided. This strike is a serious thing for Queensland and a serious thing for the working men of Queensland, because, when it becomes known in other parts of Australia that men are refusing £4 and £5 and £6 a week for canecutting the place will be flooded with men wanting to work in the sugar industry. Now, we know almost every strike in Australia has ended disastrously for the worker. The Newcastle strike has driven the trade of Newcastle away from the port altogether. We know that trade that went into Newcastle from Manila and Singapore now goes to Japan and China. That is a well-known fact. Then, again, the harvester strike. We know that Mr. Mackay used to send thousands of harvesters to South America, and now the orders go to England. I hope that the men who cut cane will be advised to go on cutting cane, and I believe the men in the mills will make better terms with the masters if they come to terms now than if they hold out. It is a serious thing to those 5,000 farmers, and they are not all making money. Plenty of them owe money now—some having gone into the business in boom times, and it will take them all their time to keep their heads above water.

Mr. THEODORE: Will you advise the millers to make better terms?

HON. R. PHILP: I would be very glad to see the strike settled, and I would be very glad to see the mills make some better arrangements.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: What about the Colonial Sugar Refining Company?

HON. R. PHILP: I have no brief for the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. As a matter of fact, I have a grievance against the Colonial Sugar Refining Company privately,

but I am not going to allow a private grievance to interfere with my public duty. The Colonial Sugar Refining Company has done a good thing for Queensland in many ways. They have taught us how to make sugar.

Mr. FERRICKS: They never pioneered the sugar industry.

HON. R. PHILP: I know a great deal more about the sugar business than that young man in the corner. I know that when the sugar industry was tottering the Colonial Sugar Refining Company came here and made the industry much more prosperous than it was before. I remember at one time we had only a single crushing-mill, and 55 per cent. of the sugar was wasted, and now with the new machinery the Colonial Sugar Refining Company brought here something like 90 per cent. of the sugar is got out of the cane.

Mr. FERRICKS: They only brought them from New South Wales.

HON. R. PHILP: The Colonial Sugar Refining Company was one of the first companies to cut up their land and sell it to the farmers, and they sold the land whether the men had money or not, and they advanced money to grow cane, and a great number of the men who bought land from the Colonial Sugar Refining Company are independent to-day. They got better conditions from the Colonial Sugar Refining Company than could be got from anybody else at that time, and since that others have followed suit. Most of the big mills subsequently sold their lands. Very few mills are growing cane for themselves. That is in North Queensland; I do not know much about Southern Queensland. They are merely crushing cane for the farmers. Mr. Drysdale has seventy-four growers on his land. I remember the time the Burdekin was nearly ruined, and the Seaforth and the other mills were shut up, and the Pioneer Mill had a very big debt, but fortunately Mr. Drysdale came here and started to water the cane on the Burdekin. I say all honour to him, and all credit to him if he has made a success of it. As to having made £80,000 out of his mill last year, I would just as soon think he made 80,000 shillings. It is not possible to make £80,000 out of his crop.

Mr. FERRICKS: He has two mills.

HON. R. PHILP: He has only one mill.

Mr. FERRICKS: He has shares in another mill.

HON. R. PHILP: He has one interest, and that is the Pioneer Mill. The other mill belongs to a company, and I think Mr. Drysdale gives some attention to the management.

Mr. FERRICKS: He told the commission he had a controlling interest.

HON. R. PHILP: I do not know what he told the commission. He has only an interest in the Pioneer Mill, and I do not think it is a very large one either. There are four or five brothers.

Mr. FERRICKS: He is a "dummy" for the Colonial Sugar Refining Company.

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

HON. R. PHILP: Mr. Drysdale is a very fine man, and he has been the making of the Burdekin district, and he is now paying 16s. a ton for cane, which is a very good price.

Mr. FERRICKS again interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have called the hon. member for Bowen to order on two occasions, and I expect him to obey my call to order.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. R. PHILP: I have no desire to prolong the debate. I hope better counsels will prevail, and I am quite satisfied if members of this House will advise the men to go to work they will get better terms.

Mr. THEODORE: Will you advise the mill-owners to give better terms?

HON. R. PHILP: I shall not advise them to pay more for the cane, because they cannot afford it, but I will advise them to give better conditions.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member's time has expired.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Give him an extension of time.

Mr. THEODORE: I move that the hon. member be further heard.

The SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the hon. member be further heard?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. R. PHILP: I have no wish to say anything further, except that I am satisfied, if members on that side do all they can to stop this strike and advise the men to go to work, they will get better terms than they are getting now.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Will they get what they want?

HON. R. PHILP: I do not say that. It is not always good for people to get all they want. I think myself the canegrowers are paying the workers as much as they ought to for cutting cane. I think they are paying a good price, and all the speakers who have taken part in this debate have admitted that. They said the mills were not paying the mill-workers sufficient, and that they worked too long.

Mr. THEODORE: The most important thing is the demand for three shifts.

HON. R. PHILP: I say it is not possible to grant three shifts this year, as they have not sufficient room. I believe eight hours will come in the mills, but it is not possible this year.

Mr. THEODORE: That is the only thing standing in the way of a settlement.

HON. R. PHILP: I think the millowners will give a promise that eight hours will come next year, but it is not possible this year. You could not get the men in time, nor could you get accommodation put up in the short time. I say this is a matter of compromise, and if the Opposition are desirous, as I believe they are desirous, of seeing the strike ended and see the industry go ahead, I say they will advise the men to go to work and make better terms before next season.

Mr. COLLINS (*Burke*): I would not have taken part in this debate only for the fact that the Premier made special reference to the four mills which are under Government control—about the number of hours that are worked in those mills. The position is something like this: that the men are paid overtime after having worked ninety-six hours. There is no greater failure in this world than paying for overtime; it should be exposed, even in connection with the Government sugar-mills. Imagine a Government saying to a number of its employees that after working eight hours they are worth a quarter more than during the first hour! Yet that is the position in the Government sugar-mills. Any industry

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that can afford to pay time and a quarter to men after their usual day's work, when they are physically exhausted, can afford to pay time and a quarter for the first hour, when they are able to do the best work. The Government should be an ideal employer of labour, and should lead the way and not drag on behind the private employer. I admit that the food supply in the Government mills is equal to, if not better than, it is in the majority of the other mills, but as far as this strike is concerned, they have the remedy in their own hands and should pass an Eight-hour Bill for sugar-mills. This is a time for hasty legislation on this matter, and the Government ought to pass a Bill immediately. I stand behind the strikers every time. I am not here to apologise for them; I glory in the fact that they have struck. Free men should not have suffered unjust conditions so long, but should have kicked over the traces long ago. I am glad I had the opportunity to preach the gospel of discontent in nearly every sugar district; and I am glad to say it is to some extent owing to that preaching that the strike has taken place. There is no hope for any community that refuses to kick against unjust conditions; and surely no one will say the conditions in connection with the sugar industry are just! We boast of our twentieth century civilisation and our wonderful progress, and try to attract people here, and tell them that in a sugar-mill they must work twelve hours a day for £1 2s. 6d. a week and bad food. I had the opportunity of visiting the Childers strike camp and conversing with thirty-five people who had been only a month in the State. They told me they had been working in the Colonial Sugar Refining Mill, and the only decent food they had was in the strike camp. These conditions need not exist in connection with the sugar industry, and if the Government would establish the eight-hour system in their mills, private mills would follow the example. It is as easy to work three shifts as two in the twenty-four hours, and the cost of production would not mount to a great deal more than under the two-shift system. In "Knibbs" I find that in 1909 the total number of employees in the sugar-mills was 3,848, and the total wages £251,928, or an average of £65 9s. 4d. I know it will be said that they only work six months in the year; but some of the hands work pretty well all the year round. How can a man keep a wife and rear a family on £65 9s. 4d. a year? We are merely asking for a minimum of £1 10s. a week with food, or £2 2s. a week without food; and no one has stated that that is too much. Some members on the other side defend the action of the millowners on the one hand, and of the sugar-growers on the other hand. We have had to force this fight on the grower and make him think. We have heard of strikes being a failure; but never in the history of man has a strike been a failure. It is owing to strikes that we have made progress as far as the working classes are concerned. I glory in the strike; I glory in the thought that our native-born are demanding better conditions. Like the leader of the Opposition, I am surprised at their moderation. In the United Kingdom there have been two great strikes lately. In the case of the strike at Hull, the British Government sent their best man in connection with the Board of Trade to try and

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end the trouble, and he was successful; and they did the same at Manchester later on. But what has this Government done? Has it sent the most capable man to try and put an end to the trouble? No. They have sat back with folded arms. Why? Because they represent "the power behind the throne"—the capitalistic institutions. Reference was made to the secretary of the Amalgamated Workers' Association, Mr.

McCormack, but he is well able [10 p.m.] to hold his own with anyone on the other side. He occupies a position to which he has been elected by the votes of the unionists. He is not like a member of Parliament who has to go up for election every three years—Mr. McCormack has to go up for election every year, and he is only voicing the sentiments of the Australian Workers' Association. What I mean by the other side are the growers of sugar-cane in Queensland and the millowners. Our organisation is growing. They have tried to ignore it. When we communicated with them in February last, we offered at that time to meet them in conference, but they refused the request. Reference has been made this afternoon to a few agitators. Do you imagine for one moment that a few agitators could cause this big strike? The men must have been willing to strike. My experience for a number of years in organising was that the working classes are not so foolish as some people imagine—you cannot lead them so easily. There is nothing which will tend so much to open the eyes of the workers as the action of the Government, and that is what I meant when I said that no strike was a failure. This strike will set hundreds of men thinking. Why do the growers seek to fight the Australian Workers' Association? Because they go on what they consider the lines of least resistance—they would sooner force the worker than try to force the fight on the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. I am not here to pander to the farming population in any way whatever. The farmer must think for himself.

Mr. GRAYSON: And he does so.

Mr. COLLINS: We have been trying to point the way for a number of years to the farmer, but if they seek to ally themselves with a party which is opposed to them they will get a rude awakening in the near future. The senior member for Townsville quoted the hon. member for Cairns, to the effect that the farmers had tried canecutting under the old labour system, and they only averaged 27 cwt. per man. But the hon. member for Cairns forgot to tell the House the tonnage per acre. It all depends on the tonnage per acre. I have seen as high as 8s. per ton in the North paid for the cutting of cane. Why did they pay that? Because it was only a 7-ton cane crop.

Mr. LENNON: That would not pay them.

Mr. COLLINS: It would not pay the cutter. I, too, would like to see this strike settled, and in favour of the men. I would like to see the men get eight hours in the mill and eight hours in the field. We have been told that it cannot be done, but there is no more difficulty in working eight hours in the cutting of cane than there is in the shearing of sheep or the building of a railway. When I was in the Geraldton district I saw one farmer there who worked his men only eight hours, and I suppose he had to compete with the other men round about, but when we propose any reduction in the

hours of labour we are always told that it means ruination. When they introduced the ten hours Factory Act in England they were told that it meant ruination, but statistics show that the reduction of the hours of labour has resulted in increase in wealth-production. I am confident that if we had the eight-hour system in Queensland in the mills and in the field it would not mean ruin to the industry, but there would be a great expansion.

Mr. RYLAND (*Gympie*): I just wish to say a few words on this question. I condemn the Government for their partisan action in this dispute. From my personal knowledge of the Government bureau, the machinery of the Government has been used to send men up to the districts affected by the strike, and in some cases the men went under false pretences. The Government gave some of the men passes to the Bundaberg district, and told them there was no dispute as regards the sugar industry. The men went in and said they wanted work. They then went round to the back of the building, and there was an agency there, on behalf of the employers in the sugar industry, in Bundaberg especially—Young Bros. and others. I heard them tell those men that there was no dispute.

The HOME SECRETARY: You undeceived them, surely.

Mr. RYLAND: I knew it was wrong.

Mr. D. HUNTER: Did the Government officials tell them that?

Mr. RYLAND: The Government officials were there, and wrote out the authority to take to the Railway Department to get a pass to Bundaberg to work in the sugar industry, where the men were fighting for their rights.

Mr. HARDACRE: Their agents were behind the counter.

Mr. RYLAND: I do not know whether they were behind the counter, but they were there in the building.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member said he saw them himself.

Mr. D. HUNTER: Which Government officials were doing it?

Mr. RYLAND: The Queensland Government officials in connection with the Labour Bureau—I do not know the names of the officials. I think other members can back up my statement that passes were issued by a Government officer.

Mr. HARDACRE: I can assure you they were behind the counter when the men were being sent up.

Mr. RYLAND: They gave those men railway passes. Some of the men desired to go to Bingera and others to Fairymead, and after they had signed an agreement the Government officer gave them a paper or authority to take to the Railway Department. On that authority they were to get railway passes, on the understanding that they paid the amount of their fare, second class, out of their wages when they were paid. The Labour Bureau was not started to do that kind of thing; it was not started to supply men who would go into a district where other men were fighting for a fair wage, and I think that the officers who did that should be dealt with severely, as it is against the best interests of Queensland. Some of the men who applied for work had not been long out from the old country. Those men were brought out on the understanding that there

was plenty of work for them on railway construction, and I met some who had been working on a railway. When the particular work on which they were employed was finished they were sent to another part of the country—the Warwick district, I think—where there was a dispute going on with regard to the conditions under which the men had to work. When those men were sent there, they said they did not come out to Queensland to blackleg on fellow-workers, and they returned to Brisbane and went elsewhere. I do not think the Government were right in that matter either. It was not right to give men the sack because they would not blackleg on their fellow-workers. When those men came here to look for work, they were told that if they signed an agreement in Brisbane they would get a free railway pass to Bundaberg, and they were to go to that district in order to blackleg on their fellow-workers. The men said they had not come 16,000 miles to do that kind of thing, and I give them credit for their action. The Minister for Mines talks about his democracy, and says he is a son of Australia, but here, when men are fighting for a fair wage, he sides with the strong man and the oppressor against the working man. At Bundaberg the Hon. Mr. Gibson, speaking at a deputation, said the demands of the men were outrageous. What is there outrageous about their demands? Is a demand for an eight-hour day outrageous? Why, we boast about having an eight-hour day in Queensland. Every year we have a holiday in every town in Queensland in order to show to the world that we believe in an eight-hour day in our various industries; and a demand for an eight-hour day is the chief thing in this dispute. The men are not asking for an eight-hour day in the field. They do not make that a condition of their demand. They simply ask that there shall be an eight-hour day for men employed in the sugar-mills. Any one who knows anything about work in a sugar-mill, knows that it is just as easy to have an eight-hour day in a sugar-mill as in a factory, a shop, or a mine. Instead of working two shifts of twelve hours each, as the men do now, all they will have to do will be to work in three shifts of eight hours each, as is done in other industries. What sort of a life do the men live who have to work in a mill twelve hours a day? They have no time for self-improvement, no time for recreation, no time for anything but weary dreary work all the time. Is that anything to boast about? Is that a condition of things which is likely to attract men from the old country? Let us make the conditions of working men fair, and people will come to Queensland without the Government having to pay their passages to induce them to come. As it is, when new arrivals find out what the conditions are they write to their friends in the old country; they tell them what are the conditions attaching to work in the sugar industry and on our railways, and warn them against coming to Queensland. The Premier said they should allow things to go on—that is, allow the present condition of things as regards the sugar industry to continue—and he blamed the organiser, the unions, and the agitators for trying to cause discontent among the workers. The discontent is there, because the conditions are bad, and it is not the organiser or the agitator who has induced the men to resist those bad conditions. What would the condition of the workers throughout the civilised

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world be to-day if they had taken the advice offered by the Premier, and allowed things to go on? Why, if it were not for agitation, if it were not that men stood shoulder to shoulder fighting for little bits of liberty at a time, their condition would have been very different from what it is to-day. The hon. member for Burke referred to the time when men were abused for fighting for a ten-hour day in England. I remember that not very long ago, in reading the debates in the *Hansard* of the British Parliament of a few years back, I observed that members then advocated a ten-hour day for men employed in the mines, and urged that no woman, and no boy under ten years of age, should be allowed to work in a mine. Members of the British Parliament were telling people that if the Bill was passed it would mean that the great coal industry of England would tumble to the ground. They talked about what would happen to the great coal industry if they restricted the hours to so few hours as ten hours a day. "What are we to do with our great industry," they asked, "if the miners are only to work ten hours a day, and boys are not allowed to work in the mines until they are ten years of age." Then they went on, "If this Bill is to become law, what will become of the poor widow whose boys work to keep her." That Bill was passed, and one of the results of it was that the present Prime Minister of Australia lost his job because he was not ten years old at the time. Others lost their jobs, as they were not ten years old, and they were prevented from going to work, while men could not work more than ten hours a day. One thing that did not happen was that the great coal industry of England did not come tumbling down on the heads of the British people. In fact, the history of the business proved that the workers, in reducing the hours of labour, did not decrease the production, but practically increased it, although they worked less hours. The workmen were educated up to their work, and that was the result of the shortening of the hours. And that is what will happen in the sugar-fields. If you grant them an eight-hour day, you will find that they will do as much work in the eight hours as they formerly did in the longer hours. This canecutting work and the loading of the cane into the wagons is very hard work. I worked on the railway lines, and I have seen them at work, and I know that it is hard work. It is too much to expect these men to work longer than eight hours a day. It is not so much the eight hours a day in the fields that is asked for as the eight hours in the mills. Every time anything has been asked for the benefit of the workers it is said that the industry is going to be ruined. The money is not going to the sugar-worker or to the men who grow the cane, but to the monopolist, especially to the refinery. The Colonial Sugar Refining Company takes the cream off the whole of the industry. Although we are paying a duty of £6 per ton on imported sugar, that protection was put on by the Commonwealth Parliament, so that the industry would be able to pay a fair wage. But the Colonial Sugar Refining Company has a monopoly of the providing of sugar for Australia, and they get the biggest share of it. I noticed a return in connection with the refining of sugar that pointed out that the cost in London of refining the sugar is £2 per ton,

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in America it is £3 11s. 8d. per ton, and in Australia it is £6 1s. 6d. per ton. By looking over that we find that the extra cost in Australia, which I suppose means the net cost, is something that the workers are not getting. The average output of sugar in Australia for the last two or three years has been 165,000 tons per annum. Last year the Colonial Sugar Refining Company showed a net revenue of £400,000 over all expenses, which practically amounts to £2 10s. per ton on the total Australian output.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What about the operations in Fiji?

Mr. RYLAND: The growers asked the Federal Government to give back the £1 difference between the excise and bounty. Something might be done in connection with that at the present time, but according to what Mr. Tudor says—

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member has exceeded the time allowed him by the Standing Orders.

Mr. COYNE (*Warrego*): I just want to say half a dozen words on this subject before it goes through. I listened extra attentively to the Premier this afternoon when he was replying to the leader of the Opposition. If that hon. gentleman had only received notice of the motion just a few moments before, it was a surprise to me what a remarkable preparation he had made for the subject, with quotations from newspapers dated months back. I had the greatest sympathy for the Premier under the circumstances. He had an exceedingly bad case to argue. He did his best, but that was very poor indeed. He tried to blame the industrial unions.

The HOME SECRETARY: I do not think the Chief Secretary blamed the unions.

Mr. COYNE: He wishes to throw the whole responsibility for this trouble in the sugar districts to-day on to the Federal Government. Whether the Federal Government may be able to do something that they have not done in the past, we are sure that the present Government have done nothing at all to try and prevent any disturbance. They did everything they could to increase the trouble when it was on. What could be worse for the Government than to lend the machinery of their Labour Bureau for the purpose of providing scabs and blacklegs for the sugar districts? Now, some members object to the term "scabs and blacklegs," but the only thing I am sorry for is that there is no more vile term to apply to the man whom I look upon as the most loathsome creature on God's earth. When a man is fighting for his living, and fighting for ordinary comforts for his wife and children, the man who attempts to undermine him in that is a loathsome creature. There is no term in the English language which can be applied to such a man which is too severe for him. It is highly interesting to know that Mr. Meston knew that a certain advertisement appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, and still he knew nothing about the strike. That is a most extraordinary state of affairs. He knew that the advertisement came from Young Brothers; and that they were trying to find labour for the sugar industry. Although in that very same paper there was a notice about the sugar trouble in Queensland, Mr. Meston did not notice

the reference to the strike, yet in an obscure part of the paper he saw the advertisement. What struck me in connection with these conditions that the men are working for at the present time, is that no hon. member on the other side has denied the justice of the demands that they are making. Nobody has said that it is not a modest demand. But, judging from the attitude of hon. members on the other side, they appear to consider £1 10s. a week too much, and that they are justified in providing scabs to try to reduce that wage. What a bad advertisement that is for our immigration agents in the old country!

Mr. ALLEN: They will not use it.

Mr. COYNE: But it will be used in the old country. Men there will be told that they cannot get a living wage on the land in this country. There are creatures like Packer and other boss scabs who are prepared to cut the throats of their fellow-workers marching up from Melbourne to Queensland to try to burst up this trouble. There is not a force that capitalism can employ to-day in Australia that is not being used to down the unfortunate men who are fighting for an honest living and for fair comfort for themselves and their families in the sugar districts. We find from the hon. member for Mackay that the Australian Sugar Producers' Association would not meet the Australian Workers' Association in conference, but they would meet them in section, as it were. That is as much as saying, "We will not meet you at all in conference. We are not prepared to settle this thing amicably. We are prepared to fight it out with you, because we are the agents of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, and we are not going to reduce the big profits that they are receiving now." Everybody knows that the Australian Workers' Association is a big body of unionists, and that it is not divided into sections. Neither is the Australian Sugar Producers' Association divided into sections. They have their members in the various districts. But are the conditions more different with regard to the Australian Sugar Producers' Association than they are with regard to the Pastoralists' Association, and yet the Pastoralists' Association has no hesitation in meeting the Shearers' Union in conference? If the Australian Sugar Producers' Association had any desire to settle this trouble amicably, they could have done so. In fact, by inference, they tried to block anything being done in a conciliatory fashion. I have also learned during the course of this debate, from the hon. member for Mackay and from others, that there is no trouble at all in the sugar districts. We have been told that all the mills are working, and the hon. member for Mackay told us that the men are getting a great deal more than £1 10s. a week, and that they are only working eight hours a day. Then what is the necessity for the Chief Secretary allowing the Labour Bureau to be used to provide scab labour for North Queensland? If there is sufficient labour in the canefields and in the mills, besides about 10,000 or 12,000 men idle in those districts, where is the need for getting 400 odd immigrants into those districts to deal with the cane? I think that the Federal Government will be well advised before they accede to any such requests from this Government in future, seeing that at the present time, when the North is in a state of industrial turmoil, the whole of the mills are

working, and the cane is being cut, and there are from 5,000 to 10,000 men lying idle waiting for work which they cannot get.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: They can get it.

Mr. COYNE: Yes, if they will work for nothing or next to nothing. It does not matter whether they work for £1 10s. a week or whether they work for 5s. a week. So long as the Colonial Sugar Refining Company can make its big profits, that is about all this Government care for. We know that G. H. Pritchard is the boss agitator of Australia, but his name is never mentioned in connection with that by the other side. Right from the very commencement the Australian Workers' Association have been conciliatory. They have done everything possible to prevent the cane-growers from suffering any loss. As far back as February last they asked for a conference with the cane-growers and with the Australian Sugar Producers' Association, at a time when nobody could say there was any danger of frost or to the crops, and from then until now they have been appealing to the cane-growers to meet them in conference. The fault lies not with the Australian Workers' Association, but with the Colonial Sugar Refining Company and their agents. We heard a lot a while ago about the Federal Government not going on with the Sugar Commission. It is as well known to the Chief Secretary as it is to me or to any other member of this House who has followed the history of Federal parliamentary business that Mr. Deakin is as long-winded in accomplishing anything as the Government of Queensland. When he talked about appointing a Sugar Commission it was only dangling a sop before some of the malcontents in his own party so that they would not desert him at that particular time, and each and every one of them thought he was fair game to be appointed on the commission.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The commission was appointed, and they were not members of Parliament.

Mr. COYNE: At the finish they were appointed. When the Labour Government came into power they did not see what good would accrue from going on with the commission. Had we not had Sugar Commissions in Queensland before to-day? And what good accrued from any of them? After all the years that the present Government and their predecessors have been in power in this State, we cannot get £1 10s. a week for men working in the sugar districts. That is the outcome of their labours in Queensland. If the Federal Government cannot do any better than that—if they cannot get an eight-hour day in the sugar districts—it will be a sorry day for the Federal Government. We will have members on the other side getting up at the next Federal elections and pointing to the fact that the Federal Government did not give an eight-hour day to the men engaged in the sugar industry. We have heard a great deal to-night about the Wages Boards Act, and how they could rectify the whole trouble if the workers only desired to do so. And from whom did we hear this? From the hon. member for Mackay and the hon. member for Townsville and others on the other side of the House. In 1908 when the Wages Boards Bill was going through this House who were the opponents of the Bill? Who said that wages boards were going to ruin the

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primary industries of Queensland? Who moved an amendment to exclude the primary industries from the operations of the measure? The hon. member for Cambooya, Mr. Mackintosh. And who voted for the amendment? It is just as well to read the names. Those hon. members have plenty of sympathy with wages boards so long as their own nominee is chairman and has a casting vote. These are the members who voted for Mr. Paget's amendment: Messrs. Appel, G. P. Barnes, Campbell, Denham, Forrest, Grayson, Hanran, Jenkinson, Keogh, Paget, Petrie, Philp, Rankin, Stodart, Swayne, Thorn, Walker, and White.

Mr. D. HUNTER: Who were for it?

Mr. COYNE: I was for it, and I will tell the hon. member why I was for it. Mr. Mackintosh's amendment; this was the division—Ayes: Mr. Jenkinson, Mr. Mackintosh, and Mr. Thorn. (Government laughter.) On the motion "That the clause do now pass," the following members voted against it:—Mr. Appel, Mr. Armstrong, Mr. G. P. Barnes, Mr. Campbell, Mr. Denham, Mr. Forrest, Mr. Grayson, Mr. Hanran, Mr. Jenkinson, Mr. Keogh, Mr. Paget, Mr. Petrie, Mr. Philp, Mr. Rankin, Mr. Stodart, Mr. Swayne, Mr. Thorn, Mr. Walker, and Mr. White. Those were the gentlemen who did not believe in a wages board. I may tell the hon. member who interjected why the party on this side decided to vote for that Wages Boards Bill at that time. Up to that time hon. members on the other side of the House would have us believe that anything in the shape of arbitration would not help us to settle industrial disputes. We wanted to get the thin edge of the wedge in, so to speak, by supporting a wages board, not that we believed in it, but we wanted the House to affirm the principle that it was possible to stop industrial disputes by means of arbitration.

Mr. D. HUNTER: The speeches made on that occasion do not bear out that statement.

Mr. COYNE: The speeches on that occasion, I may tell the hon. member, do bear out that statement. I want some hon. member on the other side to stand up and tell us, if they will—because that is their belief according to their actions—that they do not believe in £1 10s. a week for able-bodied men in the canefields, and that eight hours a day is too short a time for them to work. We know very well they will not admit that is so, but every action of theirs points out that they do believe it is so. They do not deny it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The member for Musgrave intimated that he considered it was a reasonable thing.

Mr. COYNE: Then why are they supporting a Government providing "scab" labour to prevent the men getting £1 10s. a week? Of course it is very easy for hon. members to get up and say it is a reasonable thing. A solitary individual here and there does not make much difference to a Government which is governed by the Chamber of Commerce and the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. They will do as they are told irrespective of what any individual member of the party may do. I am not acquainted with work in the sugar industry myself. I do not pretend to know anything at all about it, but I do think it is my duty to resent the aspersions thrown on the large body of men by members on the opposite side of the House this afternoon, and upon the industrial unions of Queensland, and

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it is because of that that I have now taken up the few minutes I have taken up on this discussion. We were told it was a serious thing for 5,000 farmers to lose their cane crops, and what has been done by the Government to prevent them losing their cane crops? They know very well there is a large number of men out on strike asking for better conditions, and nobody can deny that they are modest—too modest, to my mind. £1 10s. a week is a too modest demand. Why should men come all the way from Tasmania to work two or three months at £1 10s. a week? What can he make at it? Nothing. At any rate, they say 5,000 farmers are going to lose their crops because of this strike, and in the same breath other hon. members stand up and tell us the whole of the mills are in full working order. The absurdity of the position of hon. members on the other side of the House is to be pitied, and I can assure you what I said at the commencement of my remarks is absolutely true—that the Chief Secretary had my entire sympathy this afternoon in the task he had to perform.

Mr. RYAN (*Barcoo*): I do not think any member of this House need apologise for passing a few remarks on the important motion moved by the deputy leader of the Opposition, the hon. member for Herbert. The hon. member, in moving the motion, made a very trenchant speech, and has drawn attention to the ineptitude of the Government and to their inactivity in bringing to a close, or endeavouring to bring to a close—a satisfactory close—a great strike in a great industry in Queensland. The Chief Secretary, in reply, evaded the whole issue that was put by the deputy leader of the Opposition. He tried to make out that the deputy leader of the Opposition found fault with the Press, that he found fault with the Commissioner of Police, and not that he found fault with the Government. Incidentally, no doubt, the deputy leader of the Opposition pointed out that the Press were assisting the Government and were endeavouring to suppress that which should be disclosed to the public, and certain communications were sent through purporting to be communications sent to the Commissioner of Police as to the strike existing in certain parts of the State. Suggestions were also made that the strikers were indulging, perhaps, in acts of violence or committing crime such as the setting of fire to sugar-cane, and so forth. These were incidental things that were referred to by the deputy leader of the Opposition. The Chief Secretary also said that he was surprised at the representative of a sugar district bringing forward a motion of this kind, and allowed it to be inferred—indeed, he stated it straight out—that he was not the friend of the sugar-grower. I think any member of the House who is acquainted with the doings of the hon. member for Herbert, and with those hon. members who followed him representing sugar districts, will know that to them is due the greater part of the credit for having that Sugar Commission appointed, and for having whatever good result has come from having it appointed. I think if it had not been for the efforts of the hon. member for Herbert that result would not have been brought about, and we would not have had any promise of further mills.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: And you are not satisfied now.

Mr. RYAN: We are not satisfied now, because we have not got enough; but I say

whatever has been done for the interests of the sugar-grower, the deputy leader of the Opposition is greatly responsible for it, and also those other hon. members of the Opposition representing sugar districts who have spoken to-night in support of this motion. I gather from the speeches made from that side of the House, particularly of the Chief Secretary, that his conception of the duty of the Government in a crisis of this kind was what the Frenchman term *laissez faire*—that is, let things go as they please.

Mr. COYNE: No; provide blacklegs.

Mr. RYAN: That is his contention. We say the Government are not doing what they should do, but they are providing scabs and blacklegs—that they are strike-breakers practically, and are allowing the machinery of the Government to be used for that purpose. I say the duty of the Government is, when they find a position of this kind has arisen, to endeavour to find some means of settling the dispute and bringing it to a satisfactory end without sitting still, neutral, as he claims they have done, and doing nothing until he is approached by either party. We are told of other strikes—that the Newcastle strike was not a success; that it did not do any good. But it did this good, and it might do this good also in this State—it turned the Government out there which proved itself incompetent to handle it properly. This motion, I take it, is brought forward by the deputy leader of the Opposition in order to focus public attention upon the inactivity of the Government in regard to this strike; moreover, to draw public attention to the fact that they are allowing the machinery of the Government to be used to support those who are against the strikers.

Mr. FERRICKS: The monopolists.

Mr. RYAN: The monopolies—the Colonial Sugar Refining Company and other mill-owners. Now, what do we say? We say, and this party's platform says, that if we were on that side of the House we would grapple with this position, and we would place the sugar-grower in the position of getting more for his sugar and at the same time be able to comply with the demands of the men.

Mr. FERRICKS: We would establish State refineries.

Mr. RYAN: Exactly. We would establish State refineries, and I am very pleased to see that the hon. member for Bowen has given notice of a motion in regard to the establishment of State refineries. Now, what is to stop the Government from establishing State refineries and seeing that the mills pay more to the sugar-grower for the cane than is supplied to it?

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: They have no backbone.

Mr. RYAN: They have no backbone. Does any hon. member on the other side say that the demands are not reasonable? That they are not necessary? By sitting silent they practically, admit, and, indeed, the Secretary for Public Lands quoted with approval what was said by the hon. member for Musgrave, and the hon. member for Townsville also said the amount asked is reasonable. The demands are reasonable; and should not the Government show the way and concede these conditions in their own mills? I listened with pleasure to the hon. member for Enoggera when he laid down the dictum that the Go-

vernment should be an ideal employer; and if they showed the way in their own mills they would soon break the strike, because those opposed to the demands of the workers would give way.

Mr. LENNON: We asked that by deputation.

Mr. RYAN: Yes. Though I was not on that deputation to the Treasurer, I think anyone who read the newspaper report could come to no other conclusion than that the Treasurer went out of his way to insult the members of that deputation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The deputation went out; they were very thin-skinned.

Mr. RYAN: They went out because the Treasurer refused to hear them further. What right had he to tell members that they were fanning the flame? We are not fanning the flame; we are endeavouring to bring about industrial peace for the benefit of the whole community. I think it has been practically proved that the Labour Bureau is being used for the purpose of sending men to these districts to break the strike. The Premier read a document to the effect that they were allowed to sign agreements because the men naturally preferred to go under agreements. But they signed at the bureau at the instigation of the agents of the mills and the companies so that if they went on strike they could be prosecuted—as they were—and if these agreements were not signed they could not be prosecuted. Can that be denied by anyone on the front bench opposite? They kept from the men the fact that a strike was on; and when men found out what were the conditions they went on strike. The result was a lot of prosecutions and fines. Some of the prosecutions failed, and failed in a way that proved beyond doubt that the demands of the men were reasonable. At Childers, Mr. Macalister, a police magistrate of great experience in different parts of the State, took the trouble to inspect the mill himself. He found that the place was in a filthy condition, that the food was bad, and dismissed the case. I believe there is some talk of an appeal, so perhaps it is not desirable to refer to that particular case further. An attempt has been made during the debate to shoulder the responsibility of this on the Federal Government; but I do not think they have any power to deal with the matter. I think that is clearly shown by the Harvester case decided in Victoria. The Excise Tariff Act of 1906 provided in the second section that—

“Duties of excise shall on and from the first day of January, 1907, be imposed on the dutiable goods specified in the schedule at the rates specified in the said schedule.

“Provided that this Act shall not apply to goods manufactured by any person in any part of the Commonwealth under conditions as to remuneration of labour which are declared by resolution of both Houses of Parliament to be fair and reasonable.”

And so on. That is the same principle; and that was declared by the High Court to be invalid, by three to two; and I will quote an interjection made by Mr. Justice Isaacs during the argument of the learned counsel for defendants, who succeeded in the case. He said—

“Supposing an Act purported to give a bounty on a condition that fair wages were paid, would it be valid?”

The learned counsel said—

“Not if the condition were similar to that in this Act.”

Mr. Ryan.]

I go further and say that if the validity of some of the Commonwealth legislation is tested and this case is followed, probably we will find it invalid. That also is borne out by what I will read from the judgment of Mr. Justice Higgins, who dissented. He said, as will be found in page 123, vol. vi., Commonwealth Law Reports—

“There is certainly no support for the defendants' doctrine in our Australian legislation since federation; and there is distinct authority against the defendants in the United States and in Canada. Consider our first Excise Tariff, 1902. There were many kanakas in Queensland; and, in order to induce planters to employ white labour, Parliament gave to the producers of sugar-cane by white labour a rebate of 4s. per ton in the sugar excise duty. That Act had nothing to do with immigration, or with foreign or interstate commerce; it was based on the taxing power; and it was clearly meant to influence the action of the planters with reference to a subject reserved to the States. Subsequently, with a view to the book-keeping clauses of the Constitution, the same benefit was given under the name of a bounty (Sugar Bounty Act, 1905). But whether we call it a remission of duty, or a bounty, the principle is the same—discrimination between producers based on their system with regard to employees. Our Customs tariff contains exemptions in favour of the Universities and hospitals, in favour of the blind and physically helpless. Yet these are the concern of the State; and if Parliament may, in its taxation, favour the physically helpless, why may it not favour the economically helpless—the day labourer? If the defendants are right, I cannot see how much of our “white Australia” legislation can be supported.”

That is Mr. Justice Higgins, and he says if that decision is right—and it is right, because the High Court says it is right—

[11 p.m.] that he does not know how much of our white Australia legislation can be supported. If the referenda had been passed, there is no doubt the Commonwealth would have the power, and I venture to say there would have been no strike in the sugar industry to-day; it would have been satisfactorily settled.

Mr. D. HUNTER: Is not the strike engineered?

Mr. RYAN: There is no evidence at all that the strike is engineered, and it is a pity the hon. member does not favour the House with his ideas on the subject, so that when the next election comes along we will be able to quote *Hansard* to his constituents.

Mr. D. HUNTER: You did your best to defeat the referendum, and you lost.

Mr. RYAN: I did my best in favour of the “Yes” vote on the referendum, and I was beaten, but not disgraced, and I will continue to fight it. (Hear, hear!) I think I have trespassed on the House sufficiently long, but I trust that the Government will have the good sense to understand that the revival of this motion is an indication to them that they are not doing their duty to bring the strike to a satisfactory conclusion. The Home Secretary shakes his head, and does not seem much concerned about it, but if he thinks it over seriously he will know that the Government can do something.

The HOME SECRETARY: If the Commonwealth have regulated the amount to be paid for labour in the cultivation of the cane, then they have the power to regulate the price to be paid for cutting the cane, and the hon. member knows it.

Mr. RYAN: I have quoted the decision of the High Court that they have not got the power.

[*Mr. Ryan.*]

The HOME SECRETARY: But they are doing it, and the canegrower is paying the wage which is regulated by the Commonwealth.

Mr. RYAN: I say the Commonwealth has not the power to regulate the price of cane, and it is a strange thing that now at the eleventh hour the Home Secretary grasps at a straw and tries to shift the responsibility on to somebody else's shoulders. The Chief Secretary replied to the deputy leader of the Opposition. It did not occur to him that he had any such subterfuge to enable him to keep out of it, until the hon. member for Cairns raised it.

The HOME SECRETARY: The Chief Secretary offered to intervene if he was invited to do so.

Mr. RYAN: He has not said so. I submit that the public of Queensland will look to the result for the proof of whether the Government has done it duty or not. The responsibility is not ours, but we have a responsibility to the country to do our duty and bring forward matters of this kind. The hon. member for Townsville was generous enough, when he was speaking on behalf of those who were opposed to the demands of the workers, to say that this party, if they desired, could end the strike—and he believed they did—those were his words. Does any hon. member on the other side think that any member on this side is desirous that the strike should go on? Do they think we are not *bonâ fide* in our request to have it ended? You have called attention to the time, Mr. Speaker; perhaps I have spoken too long, but I may have an opportunity of speaking again at a later stage.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Charters Towers*): I would like to make a few remarks on this subject before it goes through. Whilst I do not represent a sugar district, I should like to say that this question affects not only sugar districts but every district throughout Queensland. The men in the sugar districts feel it directly, but they do not suffer alone, as every district in the State is affected. Charters Towers is feeling it to a considerable extent, for the reason that during the depression which has existed on Charters Towers and other mining fields for the past year or two, the sugar districts formed an excellent outlet for the surplus labour, and quite a number of men in Charters Towers were expecting that during the next few months they would be able to find work in Ayr and other sugar districts, but after going down they had to make their way home again. The question has been fully and fairly discussed by this side of the House, and the effort of the Chief Secretary to defend the sugar-growers has failed most miserably. He certainly trifled with the whole question from the commencement, and took up a stand, which as far as the Government bureau is concerned, failed to justify the Government in the action they have taken. The very least the Government could do would be to take up a neutral position, and not favour one side or the other. But there has been ample evidence that the Government from the very commencement has done its best to supply employers with the labour that they require at a price which is neither reasonable nor just. In fact, the labour agents in different parts of the State in the past have not been allowed to expend money in advertising for labour of any kind so as to let men know where work was available on reasonable terms and good wages; but at the present time there is a departure from

that practice, for we find them advertising in various places for men for the sugar districts to try and break the strike. It is quite evident that these men have been sent there under false pretences. The conditions which prevail in the sugar-mills have been fairly well discussed, and anyone who has lived in the sugar districts knows that while black labour has been abolished to a large extent, the conditions which prevailed before black labour did go have not been banished with it, and the food and accommodation in many cases are not much above what they were when the kanakas were here. I think the reason the men have put up with the conditions has been that they were not in a union, and, being isolated from each other, were unable to do anything in this respect. I do not think any intelligent man will advocate strikes simply for the sake of striking, but there are times when there is nothing else left for the workman to do but to down tools and refuse to work under the conditions which prevail. It has been proved over and over again that the Australian Workers' Association tried to do its best to bring about an amicable settlement of this dispute before a strike was thought of. The correspondence with reference to this matter commenced immediately the last crushing season was over, so that there is no ground for the statement that the strike has been sprung on the growers or the manufacturers. There has been ample time and ample opportunity to discuss the whole situation, but the various parties concerned simply objected and gave an answer which was tantamount to a point blank refusal to meet the men in conference. As far as the wages paid are concerned, it is a remarkable thing that in a country like Queensland, where we make it our boast that the conditions of the workers are so much better than they are in other places, such wages are paid to the men employed in the sugar industry, and that they have to put up with the conditions which prevail. I have lately been reading a work called "Rural Denmark," in which the writer gives the wages and describes the conditions which prevail in a sugar-mill in that country. The conditions are equal to those which prevail in Queensland, if not better, and the wages paid are almost as good as are paid in Queensland, though Denmark is a low-wage country.

**THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS:** There is heavy protection for sugar there.

**Mr. WINSTANLEY:** No, not in Denmark. It is a freetrade country. But in Queensland sugar is protected. Protection has been given to the sugar industry in order to shelter it from outside competition, but, instead of the workers in the industry getting some of the benefits of that protection, it seems to be one of the very worst industries for men to work in. Instead of the employees being justly dealt with, they seem to be ground down to the last farthing. The Premier has stated that, if the conditions are not what they should be, there is a law in existence to remedy those conditions. It is quite probable that there is such a law. There is an Act on the statute-book known as the Shearers and Sugar Workers Accommodation Act, but what is the good of having an Act on the statute-book if it is not administered? The sugar-workers say that as far as that law is concerned it might as well not be on the

statute-book, for in some districts the inspectors do not visit the works from the beginning to the end of the crushing season, the result being that the accommodation is in many cases not such as any reasonable man should be asked to accept. It has been remarked that some men working in cane-fields have made wonderful cheques during the crushing season, and there is not the slightest doubt that some strong young fellows who have got into a good lot of cane have made decent cheques. But what are the average cheques made by cane-cutters? That is the matter we have to consider in a matter of this kind, and I venture to say that the average cheque is nothing to boast about. In my own district we occasionally hear of men who earn from £6 to £10 a week, and everybody knows everything about it, but very few hear or know anything about the man who earns only from £1 10s. to £2 per week. In the same way we hear very little about the cane-cutters who from the beginning to the end of a crushing season earn only enough to take them home again at the end of the season. Someone stated that cane-cutters cannot work more than ten hours a day, because there is not light enough for them to work. But, on the other hand, it has been stated, and truthfully stated, that it is no uncommon thing for those men to turn out after tea and work two or three hours in the light of the moon; so that really they have worked time and a-half. Moreover, it must not be forgotten that these men travel long distances in many cases to get to a sugar district, that they have to be there some time before crushing commences in order to make sure of getting work, that they have work for only five or six months and then have to go elsewhere to seek employment. A man working under such conditions is entitled to earn more than he would under other circumstances, where the work is constant all the year round, and he has not to spend part of his earnings in travelling expenses. Something has been said about the heroism of the women who are at the present time helping their husbands. Is it not always the case that in a strike it is the women and children who are the greatest sufferers? A young man may get on fairly well during a strike, but what about the man who is married and has a wife and children dependent upon him? And there are scores, probably hundreds, of such men in Queensland at the present time who are concerned in this strike. It has been suggested that the grower is not able to pay the increase demanded by the men. As a matter of fact, it has been clearly proved over and over again that the industry is not in such an insolvent condition that it cannot pay the men what they ask. We see that money can be found to defeat the strikers in their modest demands, and yet we are told that there is not sufficient money in the industry to pay something like a reasonable wage to the men employed, and to provide them with reasonable and fair conditions. As a matter of fact, the whole position was conceded to-night by the hon. member for Townsville when he stated that he believed the men were entitled to better conditions and better wages in the mills than they were receiving at the present time. It was stated previous to the visit of Mr. Tudor that, if the Federal Government would only return the full amount collected in excise, the growers would be able to pay the increased wages demanded

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by the men. Yet, when asked if they would do this, they simply refused to accede to the men's demands, which shows that they were not really anxious to do a fair and just thing, but desired only to defeat the workers. There may be some growers who have not been long in the industry and who are not on their feet yet, that cannot under present conditions pay the wages demanded. It is just as well to know that scores and hundreds of them in the industry are now in a position, and whose profits will allow them to accede to the men's demands, and then not leave them in any poverty-stricken condition whatever. It is just as well to know that men in the Ayr district, who are now growing cane, admit that the men are entitled to something more than they are getting at the present time. It is also just as well to know that their souls are not their own, and if they say anything contrary to the manufacturers they know what the result will be in the very near future. Over and over again when they have expressed their opinions frankly and freely—not in connection with the price of cane but in connection with other matters—when the crushing season afterwards came on they were informed that the mill was not prepared to crush their cane. The only course open to a man placed in that position is to get out of the industry at once, and he does it at a sacrifice to himself, crushed out by the powers that be. These growers know that the workers are entitled to better conditions and also to a fair and reasonable wage, which would be paid if they were allowed to exercise their own discretion in the matter. But they have been told that it is not in the interests of the millowners, nor in the interests of the manufacturers, and the consequence is that they do not say anything contrary to them. A great deal has been said in reference to the Wages Boards Act. When the Wages Boards Act was going through the House it was recognised and was distinctly stated that this party did not think that the wages boards were going to bring in the millennium by any means, and, as a matter of fact, had there been no Wages Boards Act placed on the statute-book there would have been a rise in wages, as there is a rise in wages in outside industries at the present time. What has ruined the wages boards, so far as the workers are concerned, is that in nine cases out of ten it is impossible to get an impartial chairman, and it is generally left to the chairman to fix the wages. The result is that those who are now advocating wages boards only do so because it suits their purpose. The question is whether the men are entitled to what they are asking for at the present time. Anybody knowing the conditions under which these men live cannot but see that their demands are reasonable and moderate, especially when we take into consideration the work that they have to do. It is not easy work nor simple work. It is enough to be kept in a sugar-mill for eight hours without being there for twelve hours. The statement was made by the senior member for Townsville that Mr. Drysdale was prepared to grant eight hours in the mill if they would go to work for a month. That applied only to the engine-drivers, and not to the rest of the workers. It showed, at any rate, that so far as the engine-men were concerned they could work three shifts, and why could not the same be done in reference to all the employees in the mill? The excuse that accommodation could not be found is

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too paltry to be taken into consideration. As a matter of fact, they can put them on for three shifts as they do in other mills—crushing mills, for instance—where each man works eight hours, and is then finished for the day. The idea seems to prevail that the longer a man works and the less wages he works for the cheaper he is. It has been proved that such is not the case. When men are working shorter hours they are more energetic—the loss is not so great as is often imagined. The Government, instead of supplying labour, might be using their influence in bringing about a reasonable settlement, and instead of these men being idle and the mills being idle—in spite of all the utterances in the Press that the mills are working half time—they are not doing so—then the cane crushing would be going on, and it would be better for the State and better for the men, for the industry, and for everyone connected with it.

Mr. MULLAN (*Charters Towers*): This is perhaps the greatest industrial upheaval experienced in Queensland since the great maritime and shearers' strikes in the early nineties, and it is to be regretted that the present Government are fanning the flame by taking sides. Where a Government is prepared to place the machinery of the Labour and Tourist Bureau at the disposal of practically the Colonial Sugar Refining Company and manufacturers generally, well, it is clear evidence to me and to every reasonable man that they are prepared to assist these people, and it is very unfair indeed of them. The least we could have expected was strict neutrality from the Government. It is a fight between the manufacturers and the workers in the sugar industry. Certainly the growers have been dragged in, but their only alternative was to side with the manufacturer or be intimidated by the manufacturer refusing to crush their cane. The Government at the present moment have turned the Labour Bureau into a scab-making and strike-breaking institution, and certainly that will not help the Labour Bureau in the future. The Labour Bureau has had to live down a great many prejudices in the past, and it is very likely that it is going to be seriously injured in the future, owing to the position which the Government have taken up in converting it into a scab-making and strike-breaking machine. I have abundance of correspondence here which, if time were available, would show that the Sydney Tourist Bureau has now been placed at the disposal of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company for the purpose of sending scabs to Queensland. It is only a matter of a few years since the sugar industry was in the hands of the kanaka, but, owing to the attitude of the Federal Government, backed up by the united support of the Federal and State Labour parties, the position is entirely altered, and the sugar industry to-day is practically a white man's industry, as can be proved from the fact that out of the 132,810 tons of sugar produced last year only 14,452 tons were produced by black labour. The black labour crowd said that the sugar industry would be ruined if the kanaka were removed and deported, but their predictions have been falsified, and the sugar industry to-day is in a more flourishing condition than ever it was before. (Hear, hear!) I wish to say tonight that if this industry suffers from this strike it will be entirely the fault of the Australian Sugar Producers' Association,

because they virtually refused to confer with the men concerning this trouble when they were requested to do so by the Australian Workers' Association, as the correspondence previously read this afternoon proves. It is a regrettable thing that the referenda proposals of the Federal Government were not accepted by the people.

[11.30 p.m.] Had they been, I am quite positive this trouble would never have occurred. I have inferential proof of this in a sentence from the reply sent by Mr. G. H. Pritchard to the request of the Amalgamated Workers' Association for a conference. He said, "Moreover, pending the result of the referenda, it would seem premature to discuss the subject-matter of your letter." That clearly indicated that they were going to wait and see how the referenda proposals went. They felt they were safe so far as the State Government were concerned. The State Government would not do anything to hurt them. But they knew quite well that, if the referenda proposals of the Federal Government were carried, the Federal Government would at once see that they granted fair conditions as to hours of employment, and the Colonial Sugar Refining Company would have had sense enough to concede everything, as they knew that the Federal Government would then have power to insist upon the reasonable demands of the Amalgamated Workers' Association being conceded. But, unfortunately, the Federal Government have no power to-day to compel the Colonial Sugar Refining Company to concede those demands, and I am quite sure, from the attitude already taken up by the State Government, they are not going to exercise the powers they have to make them yield. Had this conference taken place, I am quite sure the strike would never have taken place, and the trouble would have been settled long ago. But, owing to the warlike reply of the Australian Sugar Producers' Association, the Amalgamated Workers' Association could do nothing else than formulate their demands and submit them, and insist upon every one of their members demanding them as rights. Now, what are those demands? An eight-hour day, a modification of the present agreement, and a minimum wage of 7½d. an hour, or £1 10s. a week and found. What is there unreasonable about an eight-hour day? Is there a man on the other side of the House who will get up and say that an eight-hour day in the sugar industry is not fair?

Mr. PETRIE: Yes

Mr. MULLAN: There is one man on the Government side who says that an eight-hour day for a white worker is not fair. Is there a Minister who is game to stand up in his place and say that an eight-hour day is not a fair demand? Not even the Secretary for Railways, the representative of Mackay—who perhaps knows more about the sugar industry than any man on the other side—

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: A great deal more than you know about it.

Mr. MULLAN: A man who has had his land fertilised with the blood of kanakas ought to know a little about it.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MULLAN: The hon. member should keep quiet. Even he is not prepared to say that an eight-hour day is unreasonable. Then why are they fighting?

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Moderate your language.

Mr. MULLAN: I am certainly going to exercise moderation in this House, as I am constrained to do under the Standing Orders, and as I generally do outside the House, where there are no Standing Orders; but in a debate like this, when we are confronted with a body of men who refuse to accede to the reasonable request of the Amalgamated Workers' Association, and who are not even courageous enough to stand up and say why they refuse, it is little wonder if one should lose his temper perhaps and use language that is not desirable. In the days of black labour we were told that white men were not physically capable of working in the canefields in tropical Queensland at all. One would imagine that the men who said that would now plead for an eight-hour day for white workers in those same canefields on humanitarian grounds; but we find that those very men would like to keep white men working in canefields twelve and even sixteen hours a day. Where is their consistency? So far as I can see, they would be prepared to insist on their working twenty-four hours a day if it were physically possible. It is about time we began to realise that an eight-hour day was a fair thing. Thorold Rogers, in his famous work "Six Centuries of Work and Wages," points out that in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Englishmen lived, and lived well, on an eight-hour day. Since then the sailing ship, which depended upon uncertain winds, has been superseded by the ocean greyhound travelling to a set time-table, and the bullock team has given place to the train travelling at a pace that would have amazed our forefathers. In every conceivable way the industrial productivity of labour has been marvelously increased, so that, if 400 or 500 years ago an eight-hour day was regarded as sufficient for the people of England, an eight-hour day should be sufficient for men working in the canefields of tropical Queensland. The mining industry is to-day suffering from a depression more severe than any industry in Queensland, perhaps, has ever suffered from, and yet that industry is maintaining itself on an eight-hour basis. Even contractors in the mines will not work more than eight hours. They recognise that if they do a good solid eight hours it is undesirable to go any further. Our railways are supposed to be run on an eight-hour basis, and in every trade of importance throughout the State we regard an eight-hour day as sufficient. Then surely an eight-hour day should be sufficient in an industry that is spoonfed like the sugar industry. Looking at the question from the economic standpoint, what has the worker to gain by an extension of his hours to ten or twelve per day? If it were physically possible for the worker to work twenty-four hours a day, he would be no better off in the last analysis than with an eight-hour day, because the margin between the cost of living and wages is always tending towards vanishing point. That must be recognised everywhere. While the wages fluctuate here and there, and there may be temporary margins of disparity between the cost of living and wages, yet on the average the wages are just above the point that is necessary to maintain existence. And the most effectual way by which the worker can improve his condition is not so much by the wages—by forcing up wages—

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as by raising his standard of living. If he raises his standard of living, it means better food, better clothing, and better housing. These things in themselves create inevitable demands for an increase in his income, and it is only by the worker realising that he is entitled to a higher standard of living will he eventually be able to command the necessary increase in wages to maintain that standard. And, again, there is another aspect of this eight-hour day question. The man who works eight hours and rests sixteen in a day, has had time to recuperate. The man, on the other hand, who works sixteen and only rests eight hours—what possibility has that man to recuperate? And it is a moot question indeed whether or not the man who works eight hours a day all the year is not physically capable of doing, and in fact does, more work than the man who works sixteen hours a day all the year round. I believe it would be better for the community, better for the individual, and better for the country if we strictly adhered to the eight-hour principle and introduced a statutory enactment to that effect. It is a regrettable fact, notwithstanding all the Premier said to-night, that our Government sugar-mills are showing a very bad example in this matter of wages. I have here a statement culled from Government returns, showing clearly the wages in our sugar-mills are certainly not sufficient to keep the men in comfort, especially the married men, and, judging by the wages paid, the Government seem to think they are going to get all single men in the mills. I claim men getting 4½d. per hour are not in a position to keep a family, and after all I think, when we are paying these men, it should be on a basis of a man being able to keep, not only himself, but a family as well. I claim the men who do the most for this country, the men who are the best for this country, are the married men, and I think we should encourage those men by giving them the means of subsistence for themselves and families. There is abundant evidence to show that the worker does not get the product of his industry, and the canegrower does not get the product of his industry, and there is abundant evidence to show that if they got it there would not be any trouble whatever in the matter of strikes. The industry can afford it, as statistics can be brought forward to prove. How can the workers in the industry get a fair deal while the octopus, the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, derives such huge profits out of it? Take the statements of this company for the last seven and a-half years. I find the profits amount to practically £2,117,513, and in addition to paying 10 per cent. per annum they have been able to capitalise profits from reserves amounting to £575,000. This capitalisation, I might mention, has taken place within the last three and a-half years. These large profits show clearly that the company is making too much of a good thing. Up to three and a-half years ago the capital of this rich company was £2,425,000. Owing to this capitalisation the capital of the company is now £3,000,000, and they are getting 10 per cent. on that amount, not on the original capital. Now, as a matter of fact, on the basis of the capitalisation during the last three and a-half years, this company instead of receiving 10 per cent. is receiving nearly 12½ per cent., and if you take the original capital of the company, as computed by some of the best authorities, this company is receiving now no less than

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20 per cent. on the original capital. It is a remarkable thing that the men should be sweated, that the canegrower should be sweated, and the worker in the sugar-mills should be sweated, while this huge octopus derives the enormous profit of 20 per cent.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member's time has expired.

Mr. NEVITT (*Carpentaria*): I did not intend to speak on this subject, and at this late hour I do not intend to delay the House at any great length. There is one phase of this question which has not yet been touched upon. During the time the Premier was speaking he stated the unions were not working in the interests of the workers. I would like to call the hon. gentleman's attention to what Mr. Frederick Harrison said on the question of unions. He said—

"It would be as easy to eradicate the cancer of unionism as it would to eradicate the cancer of public meetings or the disease of a free Press."

They do not realise that trades unions is the only thing the worker has got to defend himself. Further on, in speaking on this particular matter, Mr. Harrison said—

"Unionism, right or wrong, is a grand movement, which the working classes have at heart. Men of sense will recognise this fact, and deal with it accordingly. It is the prevalence of misjudgments like these which makes these trade struggles so obstinate, and perhaps it is that which makes them so common."

I call the Premier's attention to those remarks. Had he discreetly handled this question in its infancy, I venture to say we would not have had what we have to-day. Had the Government acted as mediators instead of partisans, we would have been in a different position to-day. The Premier denied that the Government had acted as partisans in this trouble. I again call the hon. member's attention to a further remark of Mr. Fred. Harrison. He says—

"To the capitalist a trade struggle is a blot on his balance-sheet. To the workman, if isolated and unaided, it means every affliction which the imagination can conceive."

Does the hon. gentleman think for one moment that those 5,000 men who are out on strike asking for better conditions of labour did not realise, when they went into this trouble, what it meant to them and to their wives and families? And the hon. gentleman, with the Government behind him, came to the assistance of those well able to look after themselves and throw the power of the Government into the scales of the oppressors against the oppressed, and if this discussion has done one thing more than another it has proved that members on the other side consider the conditions in the mills are not what they ought to be. I say if the discussion has done nothing more than to bring that fact prominently before the people of Queensland, it has been well worth the time taken up. But that reminds me of an expression the Premier made use of some two years ago in this House. He then said he did not consider the primary functions of the Government were to look after the welfare and the happiness of its people. Now, Mr. Speaker, I think you will realise they have kept up to that principle—that from the inception of this trouble they have not considered it was their duty to look after the welfare of the subjects over whom at the present time they exercise considerable power. The Premier said his Government

had kept up to that expression, and with all due respect to the Chief Secretary or any other member of the House, I say the primary functions of a Government should be to secure the welfare and happiness of its people, and if the Government had done their duty and acted as mediators we would not have had the trouble we now have. I wish to call the hon. gentleman's attention to the fact also that in the country which is practically the home of labour bureaux—that is Germany—when a strike takes place every man in charge of a labour bureau is instructed to send no men to the district where a strike is in progress. If this Government had acted in the same way, we would not have had this trouble. The hon. member for Musgrave said the deputation that waited on the Treasurer fanned the trouble into a flame. I give that statement an emphatic denial. All I went on the deputation for was to ask the Government to be impartial and to act as mediators; but they have acted in the capacity of partisans from the inception of the trouble. I am sorry the Treasurer is not here, because I intended to deal at length with his treatment of the deputation, but I will reserve my remarks on that matter until a future occasion. In whose interests are the Government working? The big grower and planter. Those gentlemen may never have cut a throat or dishonored a bill, but they were responsible for the deaths of thousands of kanakas when they had the opportunity of employing them. It is on record that the death rate was as high as 147 per 1,000 per annum—making Queensland's death rate higher than in any other portion of Australia; now we find our death rate lower than that of any country in the Southern hemisphere, with the exception of New Zealand. And some of the men who were responsible for the lives of those kanakas are now trying to prevent the men working in the industry from getting a reasonable rate of pay. Their demands are so mild that, like the hon. member for Burke, I am surprised at their moderation. It is not a living wage for a man with a family to bring them up in decent comfort. Up to the present there has not been one charge of law-breaking brought against the men in the strike camp; and if they had broken the law, there would have been nobody but the Government to blame. It is the old story of the rich wanting to become richer and to make the poor poorer. As I have said before here, capital has no soul, and no god except itself. What are the conditions the Mossman Mill is asking the men to comply with? Wages are to be paid on the second Saturday of each month for the preceding month. Why should they be allowed to keep back a fortnight's wages after the money has been earned? Another condition is that if a labourer is charged with drunkenness or other breach of the law, no bonus is to be paid to him. It is called a bonus, but it is really part of what the man has earned. No self-respecting body of men will put up with such conditions, yet the Government are a party to asking the men to comply with such conditions. It reminds me of what Mr. Hertzberg said in the Brisbane Chamber of Commerce on the 11th February, shortly after the rearrangement of the Cabinet was effected. He said now they had two members of the Chamber of Commerce, Messrs. Denham and Macartney,

in the Cabinet, they should get a better deal in the future. Before the session is over, I shall bring before the House the deal they have already had, and if they want more, I do not think the people of Queensland will put up with it. That remark of Mr. Hertzberg's shows that this Government is controlled by the Brisbane Chamber of Commerce to a very large extent. In conclusion, I should like to call attention to another quotation—that wealth never made a citizen or a State or a nation—that you want a happy, contented community before you can get a nation. I commend to the hon. gentleman those few quotations, and if he will act on them from a humanitarian point of view, he will find that conditions will be much better in the future than they have been in the past.

Mr. LENNON said that he might be allowed, under the Standing Orders, to make a brief reply. The debate had [12 p.m.] more than justified the action taken by his party. The other side had scarcely attempted in any way to justify the present rate of wages in the sugar industry. He might mention that a recent deputation in connection with the banana industry said that they would be prepared to pay a wage of £1 10s. a week and keep, and if they were prepared to pay that rate in an industry which was in such a parlous condition, surely the sugar industry, which was regarded as in a most prosperous condition, should be prepared to pay a similar wage. Mr. Tudor, who had come up at the invitation of the growers and caneworkers at Bundaberg, asked the growers at a meeting there, whether, if the Federal Government were to refund to them the £1 hitherto retained out of the excise they would concede the demands of the men, but the grower said "No." The offer was practically to give them a return of 2s. 3d. per ton of cane. The growers were acting under the thumb of the Australian Sugar Producers' Association, and the Australian Sugar Producers' Association was under the thumb of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. He thought the farmers were very foolish not to accept the offer immediately. The Premier had said that contracts were not allowed under the Australian Workers' Association organisation, but they were not insisting on the contract system. The Premier inquired why the Federal Government had not prevented coloured labour in the mills when they had the chance, but the Federal Government had not the power, and the people had foolishly refused the request of the Federal Government on the recent referenda. The Premier had said that he (Mr. Lennon) had sneered at the women, but he had no intention of doing so. It was a physical impossibility, except perhaps for a woman of a rare amount of strength, to be equal to such a task, yet the newspapers were saying that they were equal to it. He would refer to the fact that up to the present not one single act of violence had been committed by the strikers, but the Premier had alluded to the fact that the Commissioner of Police was very much on the alert to send police to protect what were called free workers, and told the House that he was in possession of information that justified him in concluding that the burning of the 600 tons of cane at Ayr was not accidental, and had led the House to believe that he had information in his

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possession that would sheet home a charge of incendiarism to some of the strikers in that district.

The PREMIER: No, I did not say the strikers.

Mr. LENNON: He would not like to do the hon. gentleman an injustice. His remarks implied that some of the people in the district connected with the strikers were responsible for the burning of the cane. He did not think the hon. gentleman would deny that, and he would be very loth to do him an injustice by fixing an opinion on him that he did not desire to convey.

The PREMIER: You are doing so.

Mr. LENNON: He was not doing so, and if the hon. gentleman said that he had no intention of fixing it on the strikers, he would accept his disclaimer. Was that the hon. gentleman's disclaimer?

The PREMIER: Yes; the facts will reveal themselves shortly.

Mr. LENNON: The action of his party had been very careful. They had approached the Government in a properly organised deputation, and asked them to lead the way in this matter, and set an example to the sugar-millers of Queensland, by giving effect to the eight-hour day in the four central mills owned by the Government.

The PREMIER: It exists now.

Mr. LENNON: The evidence proved that some men worked eleven hours a day, and the claim that the men were well paid in the mill was not supported by the evidence they had had from the other side. The sugar industry transcended in importance any other industry in Queensland except that of wool, and it behoved the Government to do everything possible to foster it; but the Government had not taken any action, and they had not replied to the request of the deputation. It had been stated that the strike was waning, but he challenged the contradiction of his statement, that under present conditions they could not possibly take off more than one-third of the crop this year. He estimated that there would be a considerable falling off in the cane crop this year as compared with last year. The yield would not exceed 160,000 tons this year, even if it were dealt with in the ordinary way, but if dealt with under present conditions, with the men and women working at it, he ventured to predict that it will not exceed 50,000 tons. Taking it at £12 a ton, the ordinary yield would be worth the magnificent sum of £1,920,000, and if, owing to the want of action on the part of the Government, the yield was reduced as he had indicated, that would mean a reduction of £600,000. He charged the Government with being responsible for that reduction. Had they adopted the 8-hour day as embodied in our statutes, this strike would have ended in a few days, but by entering into a conspiracy with the Australian Sugar Producers' Association and the Colonial Sugar Refining Company they had prolonged the strike; and if it should turn out that there was a loss of £600,000 this year in connection with this splendid industry, that loss would be chargeable to the Denham Government. His side has proved its case up to the hilt, and there had been no effective reply from the other side. In order to give emphasis to what they had said, they intended to call for a division on the question.

[*Mr. Lennon.*

Question—That the House do now adjourn—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 25.

Mr. Adamson	Mr. Lennon
„ Allen	„ McLachlan
„ Barber	„ Maughan
„ Breslin	„ May
„ Collins	„ Mullan
„ Coyne	„ Nevitt
„ Crawford	„ O'Sullivan
„ Ferricks	„ Payne
„ Foley	„ Ryan
„ Hamilton	„ Ryland
„ Hardacre	„ Theodore
„ Hunter, J. M.	„ Winstanley
„ Land	

*Tellers:* Mr. Foley and Mr. Nevitt.

NOES, 32.

Mr. Allan	Mr. Hodge
„ Appel	„ Hunter, D.
„ Barnes, G. P.	„ Macartney
„ Booker	„ Mackintosh
„ Bouchard	„ Morgan
„ Brennan	„ Paget
„ Bridges	„ Petrie
„ Corser	„ Philp
„ Cottell	„ Rankin
„ Cribb	„ Roberts
„ Denham	„ Stodart
„ Forsyth	„ Swayne
„ Fox	„ Tolmie
„ Grant	„ Trout
„ Grayson	„ Vowles
„ Gunn	„ Wienholt

*Tellers:* Mr. Bouchard and Mr. Wienholt.

PAIRS.

Ayes—Mr. Douglas, Mr. Blair, Mr. Mann, Mr. Murphy, and Mr. Lesiau.

Noes—Mr. Somerset, Mr. Forrest, Mr. White, Mr. Thorn, and Mr. Walker.

Resolved in the negative.

#### DAYS OF SITTING.

The PREMIER moved—

“That, unless otherwise ordered, the House will meet for the despatch of business at 3 o'clock p.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday in each week, and that on Tuesday and Wednesday, and after 7 o'clock p.m. on Thursday, Government business do take precedence of all other business.”

This was the usual motion with regard to the sittings of the House made at the beginning of the session, and he hoped the House would accept it.

Question put and passed.

#### CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

The PREMIER moved—

“That Mr. James Stodart be appointed Chairman of Committees of the Whole House.”

At this late hour few words were necessary to commend the resolution to the House. It was desirable that the Chairman of Committees should be a man of calm temperament, tolerant, and yet firm, having a good knowledge of how to conduct the business of the House. If to be *persona grata* was also an advantage, then he was sure that of the seventy-two members of Parliament there was not one who was more favourably known and respected than Mr. Jas. Stodart. (Hear, hear!) Mr. Stodart had been for a large number of years in the House, and, with his experience, they might look to see the business put through in such a manner as would reflect credit on both sides of the House.

Mr. RYAN moved as an amendment that the words “James Stodart” be omitted with

the view of inserting the words "Thomas Nevitt." He quite agreed with what the Chief Secretary said, that the qualifications for a Chairman of Committees were calm temperament, tolerance, and knowledge of parliamentary practice and procedure. Mr. Nevitt was a gentleman who possessed those qualifications. At the same time he could say that no member on the Opposition side of the House could say anything disparaging of Mr. Stodart. Mr. Stodart was an hon. member who commanded the respect of every member of the House, and that could also be said of Mr. Nevitt. The Opposition could not let the motion go through without amendment, because they felt that the Government should not make the question of Speaker or Chairman of Committees a party question. They already had the exhibition of the Premier announcing beforehand who was to be the Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member cannot refer to that.

Mr. RYAN: And something similar was done in connection with the Chairman of Committees. He protested against the Chief Secretary making these announcements beforehand, and he thought his remarks would be agreed with by many members on the Government side.

Mr. RYLAND seconded the amendment, and thought that Mr. Nevitt would make a good Chairman of Committees.

Mr. MULLAN rose for the purpose of pointing out that the present Government had been dictated to and dominated by the Brisbane Chamber of Commerce, and they now exalted the president of that body to be Chairman of Committees of the House. (Laughter.)

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 31.

Mr. Allan	Mr. Hodge
" Appel	" Hunter, D.
" Barnes, G. P.	" Macartney
" Booker	" Mackintosh
" Bouchard	" Morgan
" Brennan	" Paget
" Bridges	" Petrie
" Corser	" Phi p
" Cottell	" Raukin
" Cribb	" Roberts
" Denham	" Swayne
" Forsyth	" Tolmie
" Fox	" Trout
" Grant	" Vowles
" Grayson	" Wienholt
" Gunn	

Tellers: Mr. Gunn and Mr. Morgan.

NOES, 24.

Mr. Adamson	Mr. Land
" Allen	" Lennon
" Barber	" McLachlan
" Breslin	" Maughan
" Collins	" May
" Coyne	" Mullan
" Crawford	" O'Sullivan
" Ferricks	" Payne
" Foley	" Ryan
" Hamilton	" Ryland
" Hardacre	" Theodore
" Hunter, J. M.	" Winstanley

Tellers: Mr. Breslin and Mr. Theodore.

PAIRS

Ayes—Mr. Somerset, Mr. Forrest, Mr. White, Mr. Thorn, and Mr. Walker.

Noes—Mr. Douglas, Mr. Blair, Mr. Mann, Mr. Murphy, and Mr. Lesina.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Original question put and passed.

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## SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS.

The PREMIER, in moving—

"That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended for this day as would otherwise prevent the immediate constitution of Committees of Supply and Ways and Means, the receiving of resolutions on the same day on which they shall have passed in those committees, and the passing of an Appropriation Bill through all its stages in one day"—

expressed regret that the exigencies of the case demanded that the motion should be passed before the House rose, as [12.30a.m.] the fortnightly pay of the railway employees had to be made on Saturday. He proposed to ask for two months' Supply. It had been suggested that it would be convenient to obviate the necessity for asking for temporary Supply by amending the Audit Act so as to enable payments to be made for an additional month without parliamentary sanction, but, awkward as the present method was, it was preferable to the course suggested.

Question put and passed.

## SUPPLY.

### POLICE IN STRIKE AREAS.

The PREMIER moved that the message from His Excellency be referred to a Committee of Supply.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that the Speaker do now leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the Supply to be granted to His Majesty.

Mr. THEODORE asked for an assurance from the Government that they would remodel their ways in connection with sending additional police into districts in which men were on strike. It seemed to be the practice at such times to select young and inexperienced members of the force for such duty, who thought they would gain kudos by arresting peaceful citizens. It was right enough to send police into a district if a breach of the peace actually took place, but to send them before a breach of the peace had occurred, did not tend to promote industrial peace. He specially referred to Sub-Inspector Malone, who had gained rapid promotion for the way in which he had badgered strikers in connection with the shearers' strike in 1891, and who had upheld his reputation during recent years in the Cairns district. Sub-Inspector Malone was one of those gentlemen who did more to create misunderstanding and cause disturbances than to maintain peace. It should be the policy of the Government to see that no section of the community was unduly badgered by the police or by any other public servants. He hoped the Premier would give them some assurance that, so far as the Government were concerned, they would see that the police did not militate against the securing of industrial peace.

The PREMIER was only too desirous to see the trouble brought to an end, and he would once more assure the House that the Government had not interfered with the Commissioner of Police in the discharge of his duties. When a number of men were massed together, there was just a possibility of some turbulent spirit causing trouble, but

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as to the police doing anything to incite men to break the peace, nothing was further from their functions. He had nothing to excuse, as no instructions had been given to the Commissioner; the Commissioner knew his responsibilities and duties too well to need instructing.

Mr. PAYNE trusted that during the present trouble the Premier would carry out what he had just said. He could speak with some authority in reference to industrial disputes, and he was sorry to say that during the troublous times in 1891, during the shearers' strike, the Government at that time had not done their duty. Whatever dispute might arise, he hoped the Government would not do as was done in 1891, as industrial disputes in the twentieth century were not to be settled as was done in 1891.

Question—That the Speaker do now leave the chair—put and passed.

#### COMMITTEE.

The CHAIRMAN, who on taking the chair was received with cheers, said: In taking the chair for the first time he wished to say he was fully seized of the very great honour they had conferred upon him, and he hoped that his conduct of business while in the chair would be such as to merit their confidence. (Hear, hear!) He thanked hon. members for the high personal encomiums they had been pleased to make respecting him.

The PREMIER congratulated the Chairman upon his election to the office, and felt sure his aspirations would be more than realised.

Mr. LENNON said in putting forward Mr. Nevitt it was not because they had any fault to find with the Chairman. It was because Mr. Nevitt was their man, and a very excellent man, deserving of the honour. As the Premier had said, the Chairman was quite *persona grata* with all, and they had not the slightest objection to him.

The PREMIER moved—

“That there be granted to His Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1911-12, a sum not exceeding £680,000 towards defraying the expenses of the various departments and services of the State.”

Mr. ALLEN asked if any of that amount asked for was to be expended in a survey of a railway known as the Drayton Deviation, and if the Government intended to build that railway this session?

The PREMIER: I think not.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported the resolution to the House, and the resolution was agreed to.

#### WAYS AND MEANS.

##### COMMITTEE.

The PREMIER moved—

“ (a) That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1911-1912, a sum not exceeding £400,000 be granted out of the consolidated revenue fund of Queensland, exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the loan fund account.

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“ (b) That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1911-1912, a sum not exceeding £30,000 be granted from the trust and special funds.

“ (c) That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1911-1912, a sum not exceeding £250,000 be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the loan fund account.”

Mr. RYAN asked whether it was intended to bring in a Bill of indemnity with respect to the surplus revenue appropriation in connection with the University last session for the reasons then put forward by the Honourable the present Secretary for Public Lands.

The PREMIER said it was not so intended, but added that the lines taken last year had not been followed this year.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed, and the resolutions were agreed to.

#### APPROPRIATION BILL No. 1.

##### ALL STAGES.

This Bill, founded on the resolutions passed in Committee, was passed through all its stages without amendment or debate, and was ordered to be transmitted to the Council for their concurrence.

The House adjourned at 1 o'clock a.m.