

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Council

TUESDAY, 14 JULY 1914

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

TUESDAY, 14 JULY, 1914.

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

APPROPRIATION BILL No. 1.

ASSENT.

The SPEAKER: I have to report that I presented to His Excellency the Governor Appropriation Bill No. 1 for the Royal assent, and that His Excellency was pleased, in my presence, to subscribe his assent thereto in the name and on behalf of His Majesty.

A message was also received from His Excellency the Governor assenting to the said Bill.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORTS.

SINKING FUND UNDER GOVERNMENT LOAN ACTS.

The SPEAKER laid upon the table the following papers:—

Report of the Auditor-General on the sinking fund under the Government Loan Act of 1910.

Report of the Auditor-General on the sinking fund under the Government Loan Act of 1911.

Ordered to be printed.

PAPERS.

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

Thirtieth report on the creation, inscription, and issue of stock under the Queensland Stock Inscription Act.

Regulations under the Harbour Boards Act, 1892, and the Gladstone Harbour Board Act of 1913.

Report of the Official Trustee in Insolvency, Townsville, for the year 1913.

Report of the Local Deputy Curator of Intestate Estates, Townsville, for the year 1913.

The following papers were also laid on the table:—

Rules of the Supreme Court of Queensland, as of Thursday, 4th December, 1913, being the Law Calendar for the year 1914.

Statements of various insurance companies under the Life Assurance Companies Act of 1901.

DEPARTURE OF THE GOVERNOR.

The PREMIER (Hon. D. F. Denham, *Oxley*) said: Mr. Speaker,—I desire to move a motion without notice.

The SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the Chief Secretary be allowed to move a motion without notice.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: I am obliged to the House for their permission to move, without notice, the following motion:—

"That the second paragraph of the Address in Reply as now printed be deleted, and that a special address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, as follows:—

"To His Excellency Sir William MacGregor, Doctor of Medicine, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, Companion of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, Governor of the State of Queensland and its Dependencies, in the Commonwealth of Australia.

"May it please Your Excellency,—We, the members of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, in Parliament assembled, learn with deepest regret of Your Excellency's approaching retirement from the service of the Crown, and beg to assure Your Excellency that you will carry with you our sincere affection and goodwill, and our earnest hope that all happiness and prosperity may attend you and your family."

Whatever may be the fate of the Address in Reply—whether it be adopted or amended—certain it is that the second paragraph will meet with the hearty concurrence and approval of the House.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: As we all know, His Excellency leaves to-morrow morning, and there is no possible chance of the Address in Reply being adopted by that time. Yet I am sure that I am consulting the wishes of hon. members in that before he leaves Brisbane there should be communicated to him our appreciation of the splendid service he has rendered to the Crown and the people, and our good wishes that will accompany him and his family for all time.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: Right from Cape York to Point Danger, and from east to west, Sir William MacGregor has earned the goodwill of all classes of the community. (Hear, hear!) To his gentleness and kindness of spirit there has been added exceptional learning and ability, and he has never spared himself in travelling, nor has he spared himself in imparting to young and old the rich stores of knowledge he possesses. He is a loyal servant of the King and a good friend of the people, and I am sure that this House desires to convey to him appreciation of the services he has rendered, and to express to him our heartiest goodwill and best wishes.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: With these few words, I move the motion, and I am sure, having conferred with the leader of the Opposition, that he will heartily support it. And I would further add to the motion, that on its adoption, the House desires that you, Mr. Speaker, should convey to His Excellency the purport of the Address.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. RYAN (*Barcoo*): I have much pleasure in supporting the motion that has been moved by the Chief Secretary, and also in endorsing the remarks that have just fallen from the hon. gentleman. I think that the expressions that have come from all classes of the community throughout Queensland are sufficient evidence that the regret felt at the departure of Sir William is widespread, and I think it only fitting that a resolution should be placed on the records of the House expressing the regret that we feel at his departure.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. RYAN: Many things have been said with regard to the good qualities of Sir William at the many meetings which have recently been held on the eve of his departure. One particular feature with regard to Sir William's discharge of his duties in the office of Governor of Queensland has struck me, and that was the faculty he had of seeing, at all official functions at which representatives of both parties were present, that both parties had the opportunity of being heard.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. RYAN: That is only what might have been expected from a man who had had the wide experience and the natural disposition of Sir William, and it is a practice from which, I think, many of our adult population might take example. I regret very much the course which have led Sir William to take the course he is taking in retiring from the service of the Crown, and I trust that the leisure which he will enjoy when he goes to the old country will lead to the restoration of his health, and that he and Lady MacGregor may be long spared to enjoy the well-merited honour which has come to him from a long and honourable career in the service of the Crown. I have much pleasure in supporting the resolution.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Question put and passed.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

WANT OF CONFIDENCE MOTION—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): At one time I did not propose to speak on this amendment, and more especially after the speech of the hon. member for Burrum, when, so far as I remember, he expressed his willingness to accept something better, if it was offered, than the measure on which this motion hinges. But there has been so much criticism of the measure that was introduced last session that I am not disposed to use a common term, although it expresses perhaps more than one really means—I am not disposed to take it all "lying down." I think that the Bill was certainly justified, although to a certain extent—and perhaps unintentionally—it has been misrepresented. So I propose for a short time to deal with sundry speeches that have been made in reference to it. I think it needless for me to say that no industry is of greater importance to the future of Australia than that of sugar.

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It seems to me that with it a successful settlement of our Northern coastal lands and the future of our white Australia policy are largely bound up. This is one of those industries which has been shown to be particularly adapted to the solution of that question, so that it is not merely its economical feature that has to be considered. Further, I would point out that the growers, in asking for the particular intervention of this Parliament, can show that their position is one which does not exist in any other industry. During the discussion it has been stated that if the Bill is required in the case of cane price boards, then it will be required in the case of prices of other commodities. I do not agree with that, as I do not think there is any class of producer so limited in his range of buyers as the canegrower. When a man buys a farm in the proximity of a mill, he has generally to sell to that mill, whether he likes it or not; but in the case of any other industry, if the producer is not treated fairly, or growing a crop which does not remunerate him sufficiently, he can change his farming altogether; he can go in for general farming or dairying. In the case of the cane farmer, however, frequently he is limited to the one buyer. I mention this to show that conditions exist in the sugar industry which do not exist at all in other industries. We have been told that the Bill upon which this amendment is framed is opposed to Liberalism, but I sometimes think that Liberalism is in as nebulous a state as socialism. (Opposition laughter.) I have often asked myself, "What is Liberalism?" It seems to me that while we think that the system of individual ownership and individual enterprise is best calculated to make for the best prosperity of this country, still, under certain existing conditions, injustice might arise. It appears that we have three schools of political thought. On the one hand you have the old-time Conservative, who thinks that things are just as they were fifty years ago, when, under the old-time law of supply and demand, men were able to meet any difficulty that might arise and secure fairly good treatment, or a certain amount of equity all round. On the other hand, we have the socialist, who believes in collective ownership of everything and the nationalisation of all industries, and will leave nothing at all to private ownership. Between the two we have the Liberal, who does not agree with collective ownership of all the means of production, distribution, and exchange as being calculated to bring forth the best results, but who recognises that under altered methods, improved transport facilities, and such like, there are times when he is called upon to interfere, and see that no wrong is done. Coming back more particularly to the industry which is affected by this amendment, I might point out that a few years ago anyone could establish a sugar-mill with the expenditure of £3,000, £5,000, or £10,000, as the case may be, and in those times there was no monopoly of the business at all. It was a comparatively easy matter to establish a mill then to suit a certain group of growers. But, now, when we know that it requires a capital of nothing less than £150,000 to establish an up-to-date sugar-mill, properly equipped, it is manifest that the competition so far as the milling is concerned is limited. Seeing that it costs so much to establish a mill, one is not going to put one up just for the fun of the thing. The owner of a

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mill has therefore a monopoly over all the cane grown within his sphere of action. I do not think that that is a state of things which exists in any other industry. For instance, take the dairying industry. It is a comparatively small matter to establish a butter factory. The amount of money required is much smaller, and there is always the Government aid to be relied on to the extent of at least half the cost. I just mention these features to show that those who brought the Bill before the House last session had good warrant for doing so.

Mr. RYAN: Then why don't you stick to your guns?

Mr. SWAYNE: If the hon. gentleman will only be patient and let me go on in my own way, I will give him a good reason to show why I am taking the action I propose to take when this question comes to a division. Dealing with the criticisms, I notice that the Premier, speaking last session, said—

"If there is to be public control of prices for one set of conditions, then it will have to be followed right through in every industry."

Those are not his exact words, but that is the effect of what the Premier said. That does not appear to me to be the case at all. I just pointed out the peculiar circumstances of the canegrowers, and I will show that it is far easier for the miller to secure better treatment for himself than it is for the primary producer to do so. About two-thirds of the sugar grown in Queensland at the present time comes from mills which are altogether outside the mills of the refiners. When you consider that two-thirds of the sugar in Queensland comes from mills that have no connection with the refiners, you can see that if they are not fairly treated by the refiner it is well within their power to establish their own refinery, or else to take advantage of the new processes that from time to time are discovered, and so be able to put the raw sugar direct on the market. They might find it worth while to go into this matter, and see if it will pay them to compete with the refined sugar. I mention that just to show that they are far better off and more able to take care of themselves than the grower is. They are not, as the grower often is at present, tied hand and foot, and absolutely in the hands of one buyer. Then, if the consumers think they are unfairly treated by the refiner, they can get their sugar from outside Australia by paying the import duty, and again are not in the same position as the grower. At the present time, the refiner must sell his sugar at the same or a lower price than the landed cost of the foreign article. Another objection to the Bill which I found was made by the Premier when he referred to the inelastic character of the Bill. The hon. gentleman said—

"Naturally, a product such as cane, which differs so much in the essential elements of value, differs as to its density, differs as to its fibre, and to such diverse treatment in the mills, mills of varying power and efficiency, could not be dealt with in the same way as wages boards."

We have many industries dealt with by wages boards, under which the same conditions arise, and we have to provide for all these exigencies. The price of cane in the Bill depends on a number of different factors. What has not been looked at in this debate

is the fact that a board appointed under the Bill would be able to regulate all conditions of sale. It would be left to the boards to fix the prices according to the conditions which arise from time to time. It is not a hard-and-fast measure, to deal with the industry on hard-and-fast lines, and when it was stated that it was, that was something that was undeserved. We find that a good deal of misunderstanding has arisen in connection with the establishment of cane boards. For instance, there was a discussion between the Premier, the hon. member for Chillagoe, and the hon. member for Herbert as to whether the cane should be paid for according to analysis or upon the gross tonnage. The Bill did not deal exactly with that question at all. It did not say you must buy according to the analysis or according to the gross tonnage, but just left it open for the boards, which were practically acquainted, not only with the general conditions of the industry, but with the local conditions as well, to fix the proper price. I think that this Bill that has been so criticised would meet all those objections. It would enable the parties concerned to come together and arrive at an equitable decision as to the distribution of the profits, giving so much to the miller and the grower respectively. It has been said by inference that an attempt is being made by the grower to get an increase in price for his cane. I should like to say that the Bill does not say that at all. The Bill lays down that there must be a fair and equitable division of whatever profit there is. For instance, say that the profit amounts to 20 per cent—I do not say that it does amount to 20 per cent, but I am just using that figure for the sake of argument—under the present system, the miller gets 15 per cent., and the grower 5 per cent. Under the cane price board, as provided for in the Bill introduced last session, the idea is that they should each get 10 per cent. of the profit. The Premier, when speaking the other night, said that it was a most difficult problem. He then went on—

“On the part of some, I am told that good farming is yielding a really excellent result and a profit. By others, who are equally dependable, as far as veracity goes, we are told that, under present conditions, it is not profitable. We learn in some places that cane lands are changing hands at very extreme prices, and usually men do not pay extreme prices if they are not pretty certain that the land will yield them an adequate result and profit.”

Those who are well acquainted with the industry know that high prices are paid for the land that has a crop growing on it. We know that men may pay £1 per acre for their land, and then put a crop upon it and sell it at a high price, but we must consider that they have to spend a lot of money before they get a crop. And that was one crop in many years, and when that crop was off the value of the land might have gone down to £5, £10, or £12 an acre, which is not excessive for good farming land. I refer to this to show that the values which we hear mentioned from time to time are not a true criterion of the position. I

might cite other instances in [4 p.m.] which good farming land has been sold at very low prices, but in these cases again local conditions must

account for the low prices. I notice that the Premier said—

“It is far better that we should find a way out of the difficulty along the lines of mutual arrangement rather than by statutory enactments.”

Yes, if we could find a way out of the difficulty in that manner, that would be all very well; but I ask anybody who has observed recent transactions, what prospect there is of arriving at a mutual arrangement? The millers simply take up a hard-and-fast position. Of course, I know that quite recently the canegrowers and the directors of a central mill met together to discuss the question of the prices to be paid for cane, and there was give and take; but then there is the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, who are quite the reverse; but, speaking broadly, it is impossible, once a miller has made an offer, to get him to depart from it. Such a thing as moral suasion is of very little use to us in this matter. I think it is right that I should point out that there was nothing in the Cane Price Boards Bill fixing the price of cane. The Bill simply aimed at bringing the two interested parties together in order to make an arrangement with regard to the price which should be paid for cane, and it provided that when an agreement was made that agreement should be binding on both parties. I know that some people do not think it right to exercise compulsion in a matter of this sort, but I ask, how would it be possible for an understanding to be arrived at unless there was some compulsion exercised? All over the world, and in places where socialism is almost unheard of, it is recognised that where privately owned concerns are exploiting the public, it is a proper thing for the State to intervene. I have here a magazine entitled “The Round Table,” in which there is a description of what is called “The Grain Growers’ Movement in Western Canada.” I find that—

“No elevator can refuse grain if it has room for it, or discriminate in favour of special parties.”

I also find that by legislative enactment it is provided that—

“On a written approved application of ten farmers within twenty miles of the nearest shipping point, any railway company operating there is required to build at its depot a loading platform of certain length and width for the purpose of loading grain directly into grain cars, and all persons may have access to these platforms free of charge.”

It has been stated by one hon. member—I think it is the hon. member for Townsville—that you might as well attempt to fix the price of bullocks by such means as those provided in the Cane Price Boards Bill as to fix the price of cane. The present Commonwealth Government are actually doing something like that at the present time. I have seen in the Press a telegram with reference to an agreement with a meatworks firm at Port Darwin, in which it is provided that a certain amount of accommodation shall be reserved for cattle owners, and the rates to be charged are, too, a matter of arrangement. If no arrangement is arrived at between the parties, then the matter is to go to arbitration before a judge of the High Court or the Federal Arbitration Court. The very same principle has been found

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necessary in many other connections, because as I have already said, things have changed a great deal from what they were years ago. There are instances in which under the facilities that civilisation provides very great powers have accrued in the hands of one individual or a few individuals, and it is necessary in behalf of the public welfare for the State to step in and regulate matters. It would be very hard to justify individual ownership unless that right obtained, and I think we have come to the stage now when such a right should be exercised. Before concluding my reply to the objections raised on this side of the House, I should like to refer to the remark of the Treasurer, who said that the central mills were not doing as well as they might do, although it seems to me that that remark has no bearing on this discussion. All we seek to show is that the parties interested should come together and divide whatever profit there is attached to the industry. You cannot, however, arrive at a true idea of the position of the industry by referring to the results of the operations for one or two years. The Treasurer pointed out that the Auditor-General in his report on the central mills for 1911-1912, stated that from out of the nine mills dealt with in his report four had worked at a loss. But what was the position of the farmers in that year? It was a bad year, and more than four out of every five of them worked at a loss. All these mills had paid their year's interest, and ample provision has also been made for maintenance and depreciation. I have in my hand the balance-sheet for last year, according to which one of the mills referred to, after making ample provision to meet all charges for maintenance, depreciation, and repayments to the Treasurer for interest and redemption, shows a profit of £15,000 upon a paid-up capital of £60,000. That is something like 25 per cent. profit for one year; but, as I have said, you should not place the result of one year as a criterion. The mover of the amendment gave the House the very best possible reason for not supporting it. He said—

“What hope is there of getting a measure through the Upper House that is not introduced and supported by the Government? They place their nominees there, and, even if it passed its second reading here and went through Committee under the control of some private member, there is not a 10,000 to 1 chance of its getting through in another place.

That shows conclusively that the hon. member recognised that there is not the slightest business in his proposal. The hon. member knows that those who are in favour of the Bill would like to see it made law; but, looking at the matter from the point of view of the farmers, I would ask. Would it be of any use under the circumstances for those members to support the amendment? If the hon. member had really been in earnest about the matter, if he had really been desirous of giving the cane farmer any assistance, if he had been genuine in the expression of his desire to assist the farmers, he would have come to us who are cane-growers, and who are directly concerned in this matter, and would have said to us, “What do you think is the best way of getting the Bill placed upon the statute-book this year?”

Mr. RYAN: I wanted to show that you talk one way and vote another.

Mr. Swayne.

Mr. SWAYNE: I contend that if the hon. member had not been actuated by party politics, had not been actuated simply by a desire to embarrass some members on this side of the House—(Government laughter)—he would have consulted the members on this side who represent cane-growers. Anyone who knows anything at all about the matter knows very well that there is not the slightest chance of getting the Cane Price Boards Bill made a Government measure by the plan he has adopted. The hon. member has taken the very best course of preventing anything of that kind being done.

Mr. RYAN: You support the amendment and we will soon get a Government measure.

Mr. SWAYNE: Oh, no; the hon. member knows very well that we are not going to get a Government measure in the way he proposes. I am quite willing to leave it to the electors to say whether he is in earnest in this proposal or not or whether he is in earnest in his desire to do something for the farmers. I can quite understand the anxiety of hon. members opposite to get on this side of the House, and that is a perfectly fair desire; but what will the farmers get if they (the Opposition) do come over to this side of the House? An official explanation of the platform of the Labour party appeared in the “Worker.” One plank in that platform is carefully shirked by the leaders of the Labour party both in this House and in the Federal Parliament, and that is the plank which provides for the nationalisation of all means of production, exchange, and distribution. That means the confiscation of farms. (Opposition laughter.) What else does it mean? I believe the statement which emanates from the official organ of the party. Do hon. members opposite mean to say that such statements are false?

Mr. KIRWAN: No; we don't.

Mr. SWAYNE: Well, here it is officially announced by the mouthpiece of the party that they intend to nationalise all means of production, exchange, and distribution. The farmer, as a rule, is a man who has worked hard on his holding in order to establish his home, and we who represent farmers are asked by members opposite, under cover of this amendment, to put them in a position to carry out that plank in their platform. (Opposition laughter.) It is all very well to laugh, but the plank is in the platform, and until that plank is eliminated it is no use asking us to support that party.

Mr. COYNE: What platform is that?

Mr. SWAYNE: I have read from a reprinted article which appeared in the “Worker” explaining what the Labour platform means.

Mr. COYNE: How old is that?

Mr. SWAYNE: Members opposite must either admit that this article, which is dated 1911, interprets their platform or affirms that it does not.

Mr. RYAN: We interpret our platform, not you.

Mr. SWAYNE: In view of that official interpretation of the platform of the Labour party, members on this side, believing as we do in private enterprise and in private ownership, would be very foolish to do anything which would enable that party to take office while they retain that plank. What the farmers generally have in view is co-operation; and a further reason for not supporting

the amendment is that the leader of the Liberal party, in his utterances this session, has shown that he is fully alive to that, and I think quite sufficient reason has been shown to warrant us in waiting to see what may be brought forward. So far, any promise made from this side of the House has been carried out. I remember when there was a little delay in the building of the Babinda and South Johnstone Sugar Mills, how it was seized upon by the other side and thrown up to us as a broken promise of the Premier's. It was said it was never intended that those mills should be built—that it was simply an election promise and all that sort of thing. As a matter of fact, these mills are now being built. Again, as showing that this side of the House has assisted the growers in such matters, I remember that as far back as 8th December, 1911, I asked the Premier this question—

“If evidence upon investigation discloses that Messrs. Drysdale Brothers are paying an unduly low price for cane, will the Government consider the erection of a sugar-mill upon the north side of the Burdekin River?”

And I got this answer from him—

“I shall cause careful investigation to be made, and, even though the mill referred to in paragraph 2, page 51, of the report of the Royal Commission on Sugar Mills, is being erected, if circumstances demand it, the Government will favourably consider any representations which the Jarvisfield growers may make.”

That promise was acted upon, and the result is that the growers in that locality received a considerable sum of money through the direct intervention of the Treasurer of the present Administration. If a scheme can be evolved for converting our raw sugar-mills into genuine co-operative mills—if that can be done (I am quite content to wait and see if it is forthcoming) that will largely meet the case. More than once during this debate it has been said that co-operative alternatives are in view, and we have it referred to in the Governor's Speech. On the whole, I think we can hardly be expected to support the amendment. The hon. member who moved it, in his mind, must know that under the conditions in which he brought it forward he can hardly expect us to vote for him.

Mr. RYAN: I do not expect you. I want to show you in your true colours to the people.

Mr. SWAYNE: As no member on that side of the House is so largely concerned in the industry as men like the hon. member for Burrum, the hon. member for Bowen, myself, and others, who are canegrowers ourselves, it is only fair to say that we are genuine. Everything we have is wrapped up in the industry, so I do not think the remarks of hon. members opposite, to use a common phrase, will wash outside. I have pointed out that the position of the growers demands that something should be done, but the amendment, introduced on the third day the House met, was moved palpably not with the intention of really benefiting the grower. In fact, I think it can be fairly urged that it is more calculated to prevent anything being done, and in view of all the circumstances we can be hardly expected to vote for it.

Mr. FORSYTH (*Murrumba*): I do not intend to take up much time in connection with this debate, but I should like to make a few remarks with regard to the matter. I

quite agree with the last speaker that the leader of the Opposition did not mean business when he moved the amendment.

Mr. RYAN: Who told you that?

Mr. FORSYTH: The hon. member knew that, but the arguments that have been used by hon. members opposite require to be explained. The leader of the Opposition did not enter into the question very fully; he simply made a few remarks about it and then moved the amendment. Last year, when this question was being discussed, hon. members opposite told us that it was not enough, that if you wanted to work the proposal in the right way you must begin at the beginning and go right on to the end—you must start with the labourer, then go on to the raw miller, then to the refiner, and right on to the consumer—go right through the piece. No doubt that is the policy of the Labour party—collective ownership by the State of all means of production, distribution, and exchange. There can be no getting away from that fact. The price in connection with this Cane Price Boards Bill is only in connection with the miller. The miller might say “I cannot afford to give you that price unless I get a certain price from the refiner.” Therefore, you must go to the refiner and tell him whatever profits he may make he must give a certain proportion to the miller, and then the miller must give a fair proportion to the canegrower. Of course, we know the labourer is getting a fair thing now.

Mr. THEODORE: I thought you said it was not a fair thing.

Mr. FORSYTH: I am speaking for myself. I say the workers are getting a fair thing now. But how is the price of sugar fixed? I am very glad indeed that the hon. member for Chillagoe is in his place, because I want to say a few words to him in regard to the speech he made last year in connection with this matter, and I also want to make a statement which I can prove in black and white. The hon. member, in speaking last year, as reported on page 2766 of “Hansard,” made use of these words—

“It must not only regulate the price of cane, but there must be some authority to regulate the price of raw and refined sugar. At present the regulation price of refined and raw sugar is indisputably in the hands of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. The most representative millers in the Southern part of the State own up to that. It is regulated by Messrs. Kater, Knox, and other gentlemen in the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. The cost of production of sugar in Europe has no bearing on the cost of sugar here. It is the greatest fallacy to say that the European market has any actual effect on the price of sugar in Queensland. It suits hon. members on that side who advocated the millers' cause to say so. It is throwing dust in the eyes of the farmers to say that sugar in Queensland is influenced by the price of sugar in Europe.”

If he had the slightest conception of what this really means, he would know that his statement is absolutely fallacious, and I challenge him or any other member on that side of the House to show me that the statement is correct.

Mr. THEODORE: Judge Macnaughton said the Colonial Sugar Refining Company fixes the price of sugar in Australia.

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Mr. FORSYTH: It is quite true that they fix the price of sugar in Australia. The hon. member is trying to shuffle out of it; he stated that the price of sugar in the markets of the world has nothing to do with the price of sugar here. The hon. member is absolutely wrong, and I will give a reason for that to which he cannot reply. During the last ten days the Colonial Sugar Refining Company have reduced the price of sugar by £1 a ton. If, as the hon. member for Chillagoe says, they can charge what price they like, why have they reduced the price by £1 per ton? It is simply because the price of beet sugar in the markets of the world has gone down, and they must reduce their price accordingly. Does the hon. member know that the price of sugar in the markets of the world fluctuates to an enormous extent? He laughs. The Colonial Sugar Refining Company practically handle about three-fourths of the total sugar consumed in Australia. There are about 20,000 tons of sugar a month consumed in Australia, and out of that quantity—I think I am well within the mark—in fact, the Royal Commission says that about three-fourths of that sugar is handled by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. That is equal to 15,000 tons a month. Does anybody in his sane senses imagine that for the sake of fun the Colonial Sugar Refining Company are going to give away £15,000 a month by reducing the price of sugar by £1 a ton? To show the wonderful difference in the prices ruling in the world in one year, I want to give another quotation, because it is just as well for people to understand how truly ridiculous the statement made by the hon. member for Chillagoe is. In 1911, the highest price for beet sugar in Hamburg was 18s. 9d. a hundredweight and the lowest price was 9s. 3d.—just about one-half. Does the hon. member mean to tell me that when the price of beet sugar comes down like that, it does not affect the price of cane-sugar as well? The price here must come down, and if this were a monopoly of the Commonwealth Government the price would have to come down just the same, so as to keep out other sugars of the world. In 1912 the highest quotation for beet sugar was 16s. 1½d. per hundredweight and the lowest 9s. 3d. Last year was not so bad. In 1913 the highest price for beet sugar was 10s. a hundredweight and the lowest 8s. 10½d. The reason why the price is reduced here is because of these wonderful fluctuations. It may be because of federation; it may be because the quantity of sugar on the market is not available, or somebody has had a bad crop, and up goes the price. That is what rules the price of sugar in Australia just as well as anything else, and I challenge any member on the other side to get up and deny it. If the hon. member for Chillagoe will only use his common sense he will see that such must be the case, and surely he will see that the Colonial Sugar Refining Company is not so philanthropic as to give away £15,000 a month. In some years they have reduced the price by £3 a ton, and in some years they inflate the price by £2 or £3 a ton—according to the markets of the world. It is the markets of the world which rule the price. The Colonial Sugar Refining Company's basic price for A1 sugar is £19 per ton, and whenever the price exceeds that it is paid back to the growers—every £1 per ton above that figure is not kept by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. The

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Colonial Sugar Refining Company do not make one solitary shilling over and above the price of £19 per ton.

Mr. THEODORE: How do you know?

Mr. FORSYTH: I will show you how. It shows how little the hon. member knows. When the price of sugar goes up £1 a ton beyond the basic price of £19 a ton they hand back to the miller 18s. a ton.

Mr. LENNON: What do they do with the 2s.?

Mr. FORSYTH: No doubt they lose money by retaining that 2s.—because they pay upon the refined price, and they pay the miller on the raw price.

Mr. LENNON: Do they make their profits out of the losses?

Mr. FORSYTH: No. In connection with this matter I do not think the Cane Price Boards Bill will effect the purpose at all, because if you take the average price as paid to the miller for raw sugars during the last year or two it works out in this way: In 1911 the price was £9 7s. 6d., and they actually got additional payment, because of the increased price, of no less an amount than £4 1s., making the average that year £13 8s. 6d. In 1912 they got £5 9s. 8½d. over the basic price, and then they got £12 17s. 2½d. Last year they got £2 15s. 10½d. over the £19. The miller got that and therefore they got £15 17s. 6½d. per ton; but the Colonial Sugar Refining Company did not get a shilling piece of that. We all know that the Colonial

Sugar Refining Company crushes [4.30 p.m.] about one-third of the raw sugar in Queensland, but I am not concerned about that; I am speaking generally. These are the arguments that have been used, and they are fallacious, because of every 100 tons of raw sugar 95 per cent. net titre they lose 6½ tons, and that is the reason, if the hon. member for Herbert wishes to know, why they cannot make any profits out of that 2s. They get back £3 15s. 6d. and they cannot afford to pay £4. The price that the miller gets for raw sugar is £13 2s. 6d. per ton. The question that occurs is—is the man who sells his cane getting a fair deal? I say that if he is not getting a fair deal it is only right that he should. But you have got to go a great deal further than fixing the price as between the grower and the miller. And that is what I want to try to explain, because, whatever the price may be over the basic price, the Colonial Sugar Refining Company does not get it. That goes back to the miller. The only question then is whether the basic price is a fair deal as between the sugar-grower and the miller. Now, what does this company make? We hear all sorts of yarns about how much they make and how much they do not make. It is said that the markets of the world really are the thing that fixes the price of sugar, and I am going to use the evidence of my friend, the hon. member for Herbert, as against the hon. member for Chillagoe. In his speech the other night, when he was talking about the price being fixed, he said, on page 61 of "Hansard," that they were fixed upon the markets of the world. I wonder what the hon. member for Chillagoe has to say to that. The hon. member for Herbert at least knows something about the matter, but I must say that so far as the remarks of the hon. member for Chillagoe go, he apparently knows very little. These are facts. There is no getting away from them. After all, what do we want? We want to have a fair

deal between the grower and the miller. The miller may say, "If you are determined to take £1 or £1 10s. per ton more, I cannot do it, because my price is fixed on the money received from the Colonial Sugar Refining Company." Therefore, I say that the Bill is not sufficient. If you are going to touch it at all, you should touch it all. You have to go further; you have to deal with it from beginning to end, as the leader of the Opposition said. This party does not believe in the nationalisation of industry. The Liberal party believes in intense individualism—and in that they are directly antagonistic to the Labour party. We believe in giving every man a fair deal and then letting him fight his own battle the best way he can. The hon. member for Chillagoe again makes the stupid statement that the Colonial Sugar Refining Company's balance-sheet shows that the major portion of the profit was made on sugar made in Queensland.

Mr. THEODORE: Hear, hear! That is admitted.

Mr. FORSYTH: Did he read the balance-sheet of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company?

Mr. THEODORE: I have read the whole of the criticism.

Mr. FORSYTH: He has read the criticism, but I have got better than that. I have got the balance-sheet, and I want to show how utterly ridiculous his statements are. We will take the two last periods of six months if you like. The actual profit made for the half-year ended September, 1913—and this is from the printed balance-sheet of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, which anybody can get; it is not a secret document—was, in Australia, £128,000, and in Fiji and New Zealand, £127,000. For the following six months, that is, the half-year ended 31st March, 1914, the profit was—in Australia, £133,760, and in Fiji and New Zealand, £130,000. And yet the hon. member for Chillagoe deliberately states—makes a statement which is absolutely false—that the major portion of the profits made were made in Australia.

Mr. THEODORE: Do you expect us to swallow that?

Mr. FORSYTH: We must believe facts when they are put forward by men who have at least the reputation of being honest, straightforward dealing people. You can't get away from facts.

Mr. LENNON: Is there any record of a sum of £2,000 being given away? (Laughter.)

Mr. FORSYTH: I have never heard of any sum of that nature being given away. If the hon. member thinks that he will draw me off the track by that remark, he never made a greater mistake in his life. To get back to the policy of the Labour party, I hold in my hand a book by the Hon. W. M. Hughes, a very able man, who was Attorney-General in the late Federal Government. The book is entitled, "Labour in Power," and on page 19, dealing with this subject, he says—

"It is beginning to be realised that the regulation of prices is the complement to the regulation of wages. It is the immediate cause of all industrial unrest, and until a solution is found, industrial unrest must inevitably continue. Whether effective regulation of prices is possible under any system while private

enterprise remains in occupation of any substantial portion of the economic field remains to be seen."

That is the position, and that is just the reason why we, as Liberals, are absolutely against the proposal. Here is something else. The hon. member for Eacham also knows a good deal about this question of sugar, and he says that the price of sugar is only about £21 a ton, and he was also honest enough to state that the Colonial Sugar Refining Company had reduced the price by some 10s. within the last few days; since then there has been a further 10s. reduction, making it £1 in all. But he works upon a somewhat wrong basis. On page 82 of "Hansard" this year, he states this—

"A fair average price for manufacturing raws is £1 15s. 9d. per ton for 95 per cent. net titre. It is safe to assume from the sworn answers by Mr. Knox and others that the cost of refining in Australia is £1 5s. If we allow another £1 5s. for reasonable profits, depreciation, interest, etc., we find that the total cost of manufacturing—refining and marketing—a ton of sugar is about £4 5s. 9d."

The hon. member may be all right up to a certain point. I do not profess to know whether the cost of raws is £1 15s. 9d. or not. I do not know whether refined sugar costs £1 5s. or not, but what I do know is that in Mr. Knox's sworn evidence before the Royal Commission he stated that the profit from raw sugar was 16s. per ton. The hon. member for Eacham stated that "it therefore proves that the miller can afford to pay £1 13s. 6d. per ton to the grower." Now, taking as an average that 9 tons of cane go to make 1 ton of sugar, as the hon. member for Eacham said, that would give the grower £16 4s. a ton. If you take off the £4 5s. 9d. from the £21 10s., it would leave £17 4s. 3d., as against the £16 4s. which he says the miller can afford to give the grower. But the hon. member has forgotten a great deal, of which he has not spoken. How about freight and insurance, harbour dues, wharfage, and other expenses, which Mr. Knox put down in his evidence at £1 4s. per ton? The hon. member pays no attention to the fact, as the hon. member for Herbert well knows, that the agent who sells the sugar gets about £1 3s. or £1 5s. per ton commission. Therefore, when that hon. member argues with a view to convince the House and people outside the House that his figures are correct, he is wrong, because he must know—and I know it is correct—as Mr. Knox said, that 5½ per cent. is the average commission they pay.

Mr. GILLIES: Is £21 10s. too high an average?

Mr. FORSYTH: It makes no difference whether it is £21 or £41, because they do not benefit over £19 basic price. That is all handed to the miller.

Mr. RYAN: But they have a lot of mills?

Mr. FORSYTH: Yes; and they make a profit out of their raw mills, I suppose, just the same as out of refining.

Mr. RYAN: Would they not make a profit on that?

Mr. FORSYTH: They would make a proportion. What I am arguing is this: That whatever the price of sugar may be in

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the market over £19, the Colonial Sugar Refining Company get no benefit.

Mr. GILLIES: They make one-third of the raw sugar themselves.

Mr. FORSYTH: I am not concerned about that. I understand that they manufacture one-third of the total quantity of raw sugar manufactured in Queensland. They have some mills, and I presume they also make a profit out of them. But you cannot go on the price of £21 10s. which has been fixed, so far as refined sugar is concerned. You must only work on the basis of £19. And therefore, if you take off £1 4s. or £1 5s. commission and all other charges, you can see that if they gave £1 16s. a ton to the grower they would make a dead loss.

Mr. GILLIES: Did I not allow £1 5s. for that?

Mr. FORSYTH: The hon. member states distinctly that the cost of refining is £1 5s., and that if they allow another £1 5s. for reasonable profits, depreciation, interest, etc., they found that the total cost of manufacturing—refining and marketing—a ton of sugar was about £1 4s. 9d. But hon. members will see that he has left out the commission they have got to pay.

Mr. LENNON: He certainly meant interest to cover commission.

Mr. FORSYTH: It could not cover that.

Mr. GILLIES: You have not proved that.

Mr. FORSYTH: I am prepared to state that. The hon. member did not refer to two or three things. He said that £1 15s. per ton was a fair average price for manufacturing raw sugar, that £1 5s. was a fair price for refining, and that another £1 5s. was a fair allowance for depreciation, profits, and interest but I say that he has forgotten altogether the cost of freight and the commission, and the discount that they have to pay when they sell sugar, charges which Mr. Knox says are £1 4s. a ton, whilst the commission is £1 5s. a ton. So, therefore, it appears that it is not so much the Colonial Sugar Refining Company who get the benefit as it is the raw miller, because he gets the benefit of any increase. Therefore, it is a question as to whether the raw miller gives to the grower a fair proportion of the increase over the base price of £18 per ton which he receives himself. If the raw miller does not do that, then all I can say is that the grower is entitled to get it.

Mr. GILLIES: What do you propose to do for the grower?

Mr. FORSYTH: I say that it is only a fair thing that the grower should get a fair proportion of that increase. The hon. member for Burrum, in speaking the other night, stated that there were two mills at Childers, and while one mill only paid 12s. 6d. a ton for cane, the other paid 16s. per ton. It is a remarkable thing that, although the Colonial Sugar Refining Company are being continually maligned by the Labour party, yet it was the Colonial Sugar Refining Company that paid that 16s. per ton at Childers, while the other company paid only 12s. 6d. I made inquiry about this, and got the information from the hon. member for Burrum himself. So it does not appear that the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, so far as this is concerned, are doing a bad thing for the growers. In that particular district, it

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takes 8 tons of cane to make a ton of sugar, so that it would appear that the difference which the Colonial Sugar Refining Company pay for the cane, as compared with the other company, would be something considerable, when the amount of sugar manufactured is taken into consideration. I do not think for one moment that cane price boards will meet the case at all. Another thing, I do not think the farmers look to the Labour party for any assistance whatever. (Opposition dissent.) Although the hon. member for Chillagoe referred to the Liberal Government as being Conservatives and Tories of the worst kind, we know that, as a matter of fact, the present Liberal Government in power have for years passed the most humanitarian legislation that has been passed anywhere in the world. (Opposition laughter.)

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: Where are you referring to?

Mr. FORSYTH: In Queensland. The farmers have always voted against the Labour party, and I think they always will.

Mr. RYAN: No.

Mr. FORSYTH: You cannot get them to swallow your arguments, or to believe that the Labour Party are their friends. Look at the different measures the various Liberal Governments have passed. They passed the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act, the Agricultural Bank Act, the Workers' Compensation Act, the Workers' Dwellings Act, the Industrial Peace Act, and many other measures.

Mr. THEODORE: The postal vote.

Mr. FORSYTH: Yes, that was also a humanitarian Act. The hon. gentleman would not allow anybody to have a postal vote if he had his way. All these measures which I have mentioned were humanitarian, and some of them have received a good word even from members of the Labour Party. The farmers know whom to depend on as being their friends; they have depended on the Liberal Government in the past and they will do so in the future. The Labour Party, not only in Queensland, but right throughout Australia, are endeavouring to force the farmer's log down the throats of the farmers of Australia, while at the same time the Liberals are working in the interests of the farmers in endeavouring to prevent that from being done. I voted against the Bill which was introduced last session, because I do not think for one moment that cane price boards will meet the case. It is better to arrive at some other solution than placing on the statute-book of Queensland a Bill such as that introduced last session.

Mr. BARBER: (*Bundaberg*): After the eloquent disquisition on commercial ethics and business generally that we have just listened to from the hon. member for Murrumba, it seems to me the hon. gentleman has simply left the House in a perfect maze and whirl of figures, as per usual, and while we are looking at these matters from a purely commercial point of view, the cane-growers are obtaining no assistance. What the cane farmers desire to know is what this House, or the Commonwealth Government, are going to do to assist them out of the trouble they find themselves involved in. The hon. gentleman who has just resumed his seat laid great stress upon the statement

—a statement upon which a large percentage of the people of Australia are in ignorance—that the price of sugar in Australia is controlled by the price of sugar in the old world. We recently had a Sugar Commission, of which Sir John Gordon was chairman. It was comprised of men who were thoroughly conversant and fully acquainted with all the commercial life of Australia. Sir John Gordon himself is a man of a most acute mind, and one of the best legal minds, a mind that was able to sift evidence quickly, and lay his finger on the weak spot of any evidence that was tendered during the examination of witnesses before that commission. He was also able to draw his own deductions as to the accuracy or otherwise of the evidence submitted. The proceedings of that commission covered nearly 40,000 questions that were submitted to various witnesses, and in dealing with the point referred to by the hon. member for Murrumba, regarding the price of sugar, I find that the commission makes this statement—

“We do not think it would be unfair to state that the general scheme of prices for cane, raw sugar, and refined sugar in Australia is so manipulated that the advantage of enhanced prices for sugar resulting from high foreign prices accrues, generally speaking, almost exclusively to the miller and refiner. But even if this were not the case, it appears to us that nothing can justify fluctuation in the price of Australian sugar depending upon causes which have no connection with local production costs. That an international conference of sugar producing States, or possibly an international sugar combine, should have a power of determining to so large an extent, even indirectly, the price to Australian consumers of an Australian produced and tariff protected commodity appears to us a condition of things which cannot be justified by argument or by practical necessities.”

That entirely annihilates the argument advanced not only by the hon. member for Murrumba but other hon. members who are ever ready to bolster up that large and influential corporation, the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. I happened to be in Bundaberg last week, and was away while the debate was going on, but from my reading of “Hansard” it seems to me that the hon. gentleman who was responsible for the introduction of the Cane Price Boards Bill last year—a Bill that received some considerable support from some of his colleagues on that side—was very anxious to show that there was more interest taken in the welfare of the primary producer among members on that side of the House than there is among members on this side.

Lieut.-Colonel RANKIN: That is a well-known fact.

Mr. BARBER: It might be a well-known assertion to the hon. gentleman. The hon. gentleman was not at all modest during the Federal campaign when he was speaking to the canegrowers of Bundaberg and contiguous districts, and pointing out how desirous he was of assisting those canegrowers.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: That is quite right.

Mr. BARBER: The hon. gentleman may think so. Practically every report of the hon.

member for Burrum's speeches stated that Lieut.-Colonel Rankin completed his speech by a brilliant peroration. (Opposition laughter.) I noticed that the hon. member for Burrum had a meeting at Childers on the 11th May last, and the report of that speech also ended up by stating that the hon. member finished up with a brilliant peroration. (Opposition laughter.) The hon. member for Burrum may be a brilliant perorator and a brilliant pierrot—(laughter)—but I think he is a brilliant and lamentable failure as a prophet, at any rate. He made a prophecy, and, so far as that is concerned, it was a lamentable failure. I did not intend to deal with this portion of my remarks at the present time. I desired to do it at a later period. When I was in Bundaberg last week, the Australian Sugar Producers' Association Conference was in session, and during their deliberations on the question of the sugar industry, which I think every member of this Chamber looks upon, so far as Queensland is concerned, as a very important industry, they claimed that more assistance should be given to the canegrower. I consider that the sugar industry is a most important industry, so far as the interests of Queensland are concerned, because I do not know any other industry in this State where 3 acres of land will provide, as it does under a sugar cultivation, for two inhabitants. That is a fact, so far as the sugar industry is concerned. It is an important industry, and should have the careful and best attention of this Government and of every member of this House. I read the report of the deliberations of the conference in Bundaberg last week, and the men attending that conference were very anxious that some immediate assistance should be given to the canegrower. It seemed to me that it was quite immaterial to them as to what party it came from. Now, the party at present in power in Queensland have not included in the Governor's Speech any provision for dealing with this much-vexed question. The party on this side are quite prepared to show their sympathy with the primary producer, not merely by words, but in a very material manner if we get the opportunity. We recognise that as no mention is made in the Speech of a measure

which will grant relief to these people, it is the duty of the House

[5 p.m.] to take action and endeavour to bring about some immediate improvement in the condition of the canegrower, if their condition is as parlous as the hon. member for Burrum and other hon. members contend it is. We must admit either that the condition of the sugar industry, as far as the canegrower is concerned, is in a very bad condition or that it is not. We heard last year, and also during this session, from the hon. member for Townsville and the hon. member for Wide Bay, that the sugar industry is in a flourishing condition, even from the growers' standpoint. We have heard the hon. member for Burrum over and over again chanting the funeral dirge of this industry. I have heard him perform the funeral obsequies of the industry times without number, and yet the hon. member has not done one solitary thing, except as far as words are concerned, to assist the canegrowers. It appears to me that the hon. member and other members on that side of the House recognise that the primary producers, whether engaged in the sugar

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industry or other farming pursuits, are gradually slipping out of their hands. They recognise that the primary producer has little to hope for from the present Government, or even from the members who are supposed to constitute the farmers' party.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: And less from the other side.

Mr. BARBER: In ever-increasing numbers the farmers are looking to the Labour party to help them out of their difficulties. When the Labour party embody a principle in their printed platform, and when Labour members state on the hustings or in a hall or on the floor of the Legislative Assembly state that they are prepared, whenever they have the power to do so, to introduce certain legislation, not only for the immediate amelioration of the condition of the primary producers but also to make their position more permanently successful than it has been in the past, then the House and the country may rely upon it that the party mean what they say. There is no manoeuvring and no shadow-sparring by this party. The one thing that the party opposite fear is that this party will carry out its promises. The Labour party has never been condemned for their sins of omission as they have been for their sins of commission in both the Federal and the State Parliaments. It is quite correct to state that owing to the fluctuations in the price of sugar the Colonial Sugar Refining Company have retained the best part of the amount realised over a certain price. I know that is correct, because I made out some scores, probably hundreds, of those agreements years ago. It is practically stated in those agreements—whether the agreement is with the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, or with the Milliquin Company, or with other large companies—for all the troubles of the canegrowers are not altogether connected with the Colonial Sugar Refining Company—that when they get back 18s. per ton on a rise above a certain price, the canegrower gets a very small percentage of that 18s. In some cases the canegrower gets nothing at all. That is one of the complaints that the canegrower is putting forward at the present time. I have here a copy of a report by Mr. Cattermull, one of the largest and up-to-date canegrowers in the Bundaberg district. Mr. Cattermull dealt with this matter very fully when the Sugar Commission was sitting at Bundaberg, and in the statement he made on behalf of the members of the Canegrowers Union he urged that a considerable percentage of the 18s. should be returned to the grower. He pointed out that that would to a great extent do away with the difficulty which then existed. An avalanche of figures have been quoted in the course of this discussion, and I do not intend to repeat them, because I do not think it would serve any useful purpose to do so. The hon. member for Burrum did not impress the cane producers of Queensland that he was very sincere in the attitude he took up when he introduced his Cane Price Boards Bill last year, and although the hon. member has endeavoured during the recent recess to justify his action in voting against certain amendments and certain motions submitted by the party on this side of the House, I know that a considerable number of canegrowers are not satisfied with the action of the hon. member. The discussions which have taken place on this matter during the past few years demonstrate in the

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most forcible manner possible the utter confusion which has arisen in connection with the position of the canegrower and the sugar industry owing to the unwarranted interference of members like the hon. member for Burrum and those who are supporting him. I believe I am correct in stating that during the past twenty or thirty years there has not been a session of Parliament in which there has not been considerable discussion on the sugar industry. We were told some twenty or thirty years ago that the sugar industry was in a very bad way. We were assured that the deportation of coloured labour would ruin the industry, and it was pointed out that the Labour party by its action in advocating a white Australia and the Federal Parliament by their legislation with regard to coloured labour would absolutely ruin the sugar industry. I have here newspaper extracts containing quotations from speeches, letters, and Press interviews with the Hon. Robert Philp, Sir Alfred Cowley, and other prominent men connected with the sugar industry in Queensland, and all predicted the absolute and hopeless ruin of the sugar industry. I ask this House, and I ask the people of Queensland, and even the canegrowers themselves, whether the sugar industry has ever been in a better financial position than it has been during the past ten years. I contend that it has been more flourishing during those ten years than it was at any previous period of its history. The industry has been put on a sounder basis, and more money has been made out of it by millers and refiners during that period than during any previous ten years.

Mr. MORGAN: Why do you want to interfere with it then?

Mr. BARBER: We want to improve it. There are a large section of the smaller men among the canegrowers who are being squeezed by the millers and the refiners, and who are not getting a fair whack out of the business.

Mr. MORGAN: Then it is not in a flourishing condition?

Mr. BARBER: I believe I am safe in making the assertion that if the hon. member will read the reports of the commissions which have made inquiries into the sugar industry at different times, he will not find one statement by a grower, miller, or a manufacturer to the effect that there is not a good thing in the industry commercially, financially, economically, and in other ways. If a fair amount of the profits connected with the industry were apportioned to the parties interested, that is to the refiners, the millers, the growers, and the workers, there would be very little to complain of. One is almost inclined to think that that remark which the hon. member for Burrum made during the Federal election campaign of 1913 was made out of pure cussedness, when he stated from the various platforms from which he addressed public meetings that he considered it was the iniquitous and infamous desire of the Federal Labour party to crush the sugar industry. Yet the hon. member made this statement at a public meeting in Bundaberg on the night before the poll—and the hon. member no doubt brilliantly perorated that night and finished up by predicting that the farmers' candidate, owing to the iniquity of the Labour party in connection with the industry—he waved his hand like a gallant charging to battle—and said, "I am sure. Mr. Chairman, the farmers' candidate will be returned to-morrow."

Mr. HUXHAM: He was not.

Mr. BARBER: He was returned; he was 3,000 or 4,000 behind, and he returned home. (Laughter.) There is, in my opinion, and in the opinion of an ever-increasing number of canegrowers, one remedy for this trouble. The Premier made certain promises on the Commonwealth Labour Government promising to do certain things; he promised to introduce certain legislation, and large numbers of the canegrowers of Queensland believed that the Denham Government intended to give them some measure of protection from the hungry maws of the miller and the refiner. So far the administration of the Sugar Cultivation Act has been absolutely worthless, absolutely useless as far as the canegrower is concerned; and as for the administration of the regulations in connection with employment in the sugar industry, it has been absolutely rotten.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is all you know.

Mr. BARBER: We saw that a gentleman the other day in Bundaberg—a man who is a large grower of sugar in North Queensland; a man who has no time for the Labour party—in a speech pointed out that it was only a matter of a few months or at most a few years before they would practically have all aliens and foreigners employed in the business. The deputation that waited on the Secretary for Agriculture some time ago, consisting of the President of the Australian Sugar Producers' Association and a large number of the members of that association—all blue-blooded Tories with absolutely no sympathy with Labour sentiment or Labour ideals—pointed out that the fact of that gentleman, or the Government generally, allowing such a large number of permits to be granted would create a strong sentiment amongst the people in the southern part of the Commonwealth against increasing the duty. They further pointed out that it would have the opposite effect; that the people down there, seeing that such a large number of aliens were permitted to be employed in the industry, would commence agitating for a reduction in the tariff.

The PREMIER: In spite of the wages being the same.

Mr. BARBER: Those are the words of the friends of the hon. gentleman, and of a strong association that backs up the present Government.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is the first time you have called it a strong association.

Mr. BARBER: That backs up the Minister for Agriculture.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You are wrong.

Mr. BARBER: I am not wrong. With all due deference to my colleague, I contend on this occasion that I am not wrong. There are times when I am wrong, but not often. (Laughter.) That deputation consisted of men who are strong supporters of the hon. gentleman. Take, for instance, the Hon. Angus Gibson. What were his statements on that occasion? It seems that these gentlemen who attended the deputation to the Secretary for Agriculture were not very much concerned about the white worker; their chief trouble seemed to be that the duty on sugar would be reduced by £1 a ton.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There was no deputation at all.

Mr. BARBER: The mere fact that hundreds of coloured aliens were permitted to work in this industry did not seem to trouble them a snap of the finger. The mere fact that hundreds of native-born Australians were being squeezed out of the industry did not concern them at all.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There was no deputation.

Mr. BARBER: Will my hon. friend "bide a wee"?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There was no deputation.

Mr. BARBER: Well, I know what I read in the "Courier," and I also read in the "Sugar Journal" that a deputation waited on the Government.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

Mr. BARBER: Well, on the Acting Premier.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Wrong again.

Mr. BARBER: I am not wrong. The fact remains that a deputation waited on members of the Government.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What for?

Mr. BARBER: For several reasons, but mainly to protest against the large number of aliens being allowed to undertake work in the sugar industry.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Wrong again.

Mr. BARBER: I say that the members of that deputation are strong supporters of the hon. gentleman, and it is through the work of the Australian Sugar Producers' Association, backed up by the hon. member for Burrum, that the sugar industry largely finds itself in the parlous position that it is in to-day. There is only one remedy, and that is to allow the sugar industry to revert to the control of the Federal Government. Whatever legislation may be introduced in this House, whether in the shape of cane price boards or any other Bill, it will never, in my opinion, settle the trouble until this industry reverts back to Federal control. Then we shall be able to deal with the industry in the way the Premier stated last year it requires to be dealt with—from the top to the bottom. A deputation waited on the Treasurer the other day and asked for some assistance, and the hon. gentleman asked them if they expected assistance from the consolidated revenue. I do not think one member of the deputation said "Yes," but at the same time the Queensland consolidated revenue received a considerable sum during the years 1901 to 1911 from the sugar industry—on an average something like £80,000 a year, and during the course of that ten years about £826,000 were paid to the Queensland Government by the Federal Government. Can the Secretary for Agriculture deny that?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not want to. I think they should have paid a great deal more.

Mr. BARBER: The hon. member for Burrum, while criticising the action of the Federal Labour party, pointed out that that party were robbing Queensland. During the

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Federal campaign the hon. member, dealing with the period from 1901-2 to 1910-11, put the position this way—

“The amount levied by way of excise by the Commonwealth Government was £5,145,544. The amount paid in bounty for the same period was £2,836,336; expenses in connection therewith amounted to £53,918; leaving a balance of £2,255,290 taken from the sugar-grower and paid into the coffers of the Federal Treasurer.”

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Is that not correct?

Mr. BARBER: It is not correct, and if the hon. gentleman will turn to Knibbs' "Commonwealth Year Book," No. 5, page 394, he will find, as the hon. member for Burrum found out afterwards, that it is not correct. For a certain number of years, under the Federal Constitution, certain sums of money had to be paid back to the States—for a period of ten years under the "Braddon blot"—and during that time the amounts paid to the Queensland Government averaged about £80,000 per annum. Yet in face of that the hon. member for Burrum has been continually quoting that the sum of over £2,250,000 has been taken from the cane-grower and put into the coffers of the Federal Government, while, as a matter of fact, owing to the amount of money paid back to the State during that time the Federal Government actually lost over £1,000,000.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Not through the sugar industry.

Mr. BARBER: The amount collected as excise by the Commonwealth Government during the ten years on sugar was £5,145,544; the expenses in connection therewith amounted to £53,982; the amount paid in bounty for the same period was £2,836,336, leaving a balance, as the hon. member said, of £2,255,290, which, he asserted, was taken from the growers and paid into the coffers of the Federal Treasury. Everyone in this House knows that under the "Braddon blot" during the first ten years of our national life, three-fourths of the net Customs and excise had to be handed over to the States comprising the Commonwealth. This meant that, while the excise stood at £3 a ton, £2 5s. had to be handed back to the State. When it was increased to £4 a ton then £3 had to be handed back to the State, which meant that of the amount of £5,145,544 collected three-fourths had to be paid to the various State Treasurers amounting to £3,818,719. The growers were paid as bounty £2,836,336, and the cost of administration was £53,918. The total amount paid by the Federal Government during that ten years amounted to £6,655,055. Deduct from that the amount that was paid by way of bonus, etc., and it will be seen that the Commonwealth lost £1,562,529.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Did Queensland gain it?

Mr. BARBER: Queensland got about £826,000 during that time, which they never got before. That was an additional source of revenue, an average of over [5.30 p.m.] £80,000 a year from the sugar excise. And yet the hon. member for Burrum held up to ridicule, as a band of pirates and buccaneers, the Federal Labour party—who were doing all they could to crush the sugar-grower. The hon. member quoted figures to suit his own pur-

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pose. The figures in themselves were correct, but the application of the figures was incorrect, which the Hon. the Secretary for Agriculture knows—as was pointed out by the Bundaberg "News."

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Absolute rot!

Mr. BARBER: The hon. member interjects "absolute rot." On the morning the hon. member for Burrum's letter appeared in that brilliant organ which gives the hon. member so much support—I refer to the Bundaberg "Mail"—I met the hon. member in the street, and his face shone like the morning sun. (Laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It always does. (Laughter.)

Mr. BARBER: Shone like the morning sun—like those of his friends up there, the members of the Chamber of Commerce and others. It was the one weapon, the one jaw-bone that would slay the Fisher Philistines. But when these figures were analysed by men capable of analysing them, and when the full quotations were given from the "Commonwealth Year Book," No. 5, page 324, and when a statement of the exact position was set out in the "Daily News" next morning, you would have thought that an epidemic of plague or fever had struck the commercial and right-thinking community. (Laughter.) The hon. member was not seen out for a week.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I was not there. (Laughter.)

Mr. BARBER: I admit the hon. member was not there; he cleared out.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

Mr. BARBER: Just to remind the hon. member that I was not wrong in my statement, my colleague has been good enough to look the matter up in the "Sugar Journal" of 5th March, 1914, and I see that the deputation was to the Acting Premier. He was the acting head of the Government, and, whatever action was taken by him, the responsibility must be shared by his colleagues and by the Government party as a whole. I do not intend to say any more, beyond that I consider that in the interests of the sugar-growers the Government should take immediate action. I know that during the past three or four months there has been deputation upon deputation in regard to this matter. A deputation waited upon the hon. member for Mackay when he was up that way. Since that time we have seen that there has been trouble at Plano Creek, there has been trouble at Mourilyan, trouble in the Isis, and if anyone desires to know the powerful influence that is exercised in Queensland by that corporation, the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, I think there is every indication of it, as was pointed out by the hon. member for Burrum the other week at a deputation, when he said that they were not prepared to deal with the growers unless the growers consented to give them the running rights for a term of fifty years. Why, fifty years, at the rate at which we live to-day, means that two generations of people will be born and die before that term expires. And yet the only hope that the hon. member for Burrum can hold out is that "In his opinion it is time that something was done." But when? What is the hon. gentleman going to do? What can he do? What can his Government do? In the course of the interview

with a deputation that waited on the Hon. the Treasurer the other day, the hon. member practically admitted that he was quite helpless and unable to assist the canegrowers. And although the hon. member for Burrum, I see, spoke in Childers last night, trying to keep up the courage of the canegrower, the hon. member knows as well as I know and as well as any member in this House knows that under the present conditions the sugar industry, being controlled as it is by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company and one or two other large concerns, is such that the State Government finds itself absolutely helpless to do anything to bring about a permanent settlement of the trouble or an improvement of the conditions of the canegrower.

Mr. WILLIAMS: You are against the amendment?

Mr. BARBER: I am not. I believe in the sentiment expressed in "The Village Blacksmith"—

"Something attempted, something done."

We may not be able to grapple with this monster, the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, and the other big concerns, yet I believe it is possible to do a little to help these men; and, believing that, I give my hearty support to the amendment moved by the leader of the Opposition.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CAINE (*Bowen*): Last session I supported the Cane Price Boards Bill, and this session I see no reason to change my attitude so far as support of that measure is concerned. I listened on Thursday evening to the arguments of the Hon. the Premier against such a Bill; and I see no reason from them why I should change the view which I hold. We are told that some mills are giving the growers a fair deal—that some mills are not doing too well. That may be so. All that we are asking is that the growers should get a fair deal and a reasonable proportion of what is earned, or rather I should say, not an unreasonable proportion. If the mill is making a failure or only a fair thing, the grower, even though he is not getting much for his labour, cannot expect to get much more of a return for himself. But I say that we want to see some reasonable protection afforded to the grower. The moment we suggest such a measure we are confronted with those who say: "Move along those lines—nationalisation—leaving the Liberal platform altogether." I ask: Is that the sum and substance of the move that is made? Where does nationalisation come from such a Bill as the Cane Price Boards Bill?" I fail to see it, and I see nothing in the arguments which support that contention.

Mr. FOLEY: You might say the same for the Wages Boards Bill.

Mr. CAINE: I am coming to that. We are told that to do anything of this kind means class legislation. It is too late to talk of anything of that kind. Are we not here to look after a class—any class; every class? Did this House not think fit to support the working classes, and does anybody to-day oppose the industrial legislation which is on the statute-book—placed there certainly by the Liberal party? But if the workers are to get any consideration of that sort, is it unreasonable to suggest that in an extreme

case the workers, who happen to be the growers of cane, should get some consideration also? The only argument that I can see against that view is that the growers have put into the industry, along with their toil, a certain amount of capital. But is that fact going to debar them from reasonable consideration? I, for one, certainly think not, and I fail to see that when we find that the growers are being crushed we should not make an effort to assist them. And when we recognise the marvellously exceptional conditions of the sugar-grower as compared with other growers and producers, and we think fit to look towards their troubles and lend them a helping hand, I fail to see that we are going to bring about that state of things that every plank of the Liberal platform is going to be smashed to atoms.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CAINE: Did I think so, I would look with pleasure on the smashing of that platform, but I do not think anything of the kind. I contend that the Liberal platform is sufficiently liberal to help every class in the community, and that the grower and the producer are not outside that protection.

Mr. RYAN: There seems to be a difference of opinion as to what the Liberal platform is.

Mr. CAINE: There seems to be a difference as to what the Labour platform is, because when we come to inquire about it we cannot find out what it is. It vanishes. I was just referring to my opinion of the Liberal platform. Then we are told that the remedy will be incomplete, that you want to have a remedy from one end of the industry to the other, affecting the grower, the miller, the refiner, and the consumer. I say that we should take things as we find them, and do what we can to assist the canegrower. We may not be able to help every person who is a part of this particular industry, but let us take things as we find them. Let us take the value of raw sugar to the miller and at any rate see that the grower does not get an unreasonable proportion of that sum. As I said before, if there is a mill which is not making a profit the grower cannot expect any more.

Mr. RYAN: Are you in favour of the amendment?

Mr. CAINE: I am in favour of the Bill. I will deal with the amendment later on. I contend, as I said before, that if we cannot do everything for the grower, we can do something, and let us do what we can, for it is much better that he should get some consideration rather than none at all. If we are going to sit down here and say that we will do nothing until we can deal with every phase of this industry, such an attitude is unreasonable and unjustifiable. One hon. member said that if the mill could not afford to pay the price awarded by a cane price board, it would close its doors. I take it that if the Bill was brought into operation no mill would be asked to pay an unreasonable proportion of what is got. It seems to me that there are many hon. members, or at any rate some of them, who oppose this particular Bill, who do not really appreciate its provisions. They look at it as fixing a hard-and-fast price which must be paid. But the Bill provides a basis, and I say a reasonable basis, and the matters that can be taken

into consideration include the quality, the quantity of the sugar-cane, the efficiency of the mill, and the value of the sugar, and so you ultimately arrive at what is a reasonable price. It is not even like a wages board, which fixes a wage which is a reasonable payment for the workman irrespective of what is in the industry. But in this Bill we look to something that is absolutely reasonable. As I said before, if there is nothing in the particular industry, the cane-grower cannot expect to get it, but the workman does, and so far he gets it whether profit is there or not. We do not want to suggest anything that is going to crush the miller, but we want, if possible, to avoid the present state of affairs, in which in many cases the grower is crushed.

Mr. RYAN: He is going to remain crushed if you have your way.

Mr. CAINE: Nothing of the kind. He is not going to remain crushed at all. What are we asked to do? Am I going to support the amendment? What would I have to do to support the amendment? We are asked to support the amendment, which is a want of confidence motion. It is an amendment which asks that the Labour party virtually should be put into power. What would that mean for the country? What have the Labour party done for the growers? Members of the Labour party tell us time and again that they are the friends of the growers, but they take good care to sacrifice the interests of the producers and growers every time in the interests of the workers. They see that the workers get their fair share, but they crush the growers every time. What did we see only two years ago, when the general strike took place in Brisbane? Did that strike receive the support of the Labour party—of members sitting on the opposite side of the House? What did that strike mean to the producers? Go back three years to the sugar strike. Did the sugar strike receive the support of hon. members opposite? What did that strike mean to the producers? It meant practically for two seasons—the 1911 and 1912 seasons—the producers in the sugar districts were ruined. That is the sort of support members opposite give to the producers. Then they come along and try to dish the Government, and ask us to support them, as if we would really believe that they are the supporters of the producers. I might give an apt illustration to explain the position. It is just like the boy at school. He turns to his neighbour and gives him a good hard dig, and when his neighbour turns indignant he says, "That is all right, pass it on." That is the attitude of the Labour party to-day. They give the grower a good hard dig, and tell him to pass it on, whether he can do it or not. As a matter of fact, they do not care whether he can pass it on or not. They are all ready to absolutely crush the growers. Hon. members opposite would have us believe that they are ready to give assistance to the producers, but from our experience of them in the past we know that they would take good care that if they gave a helping hand now, it would be well counter-balanced by the good hard dig that they would give the producers whenever the opportunity occurred to assist their own particular supporters.

Mr. RYAN: You are making a good speech for us.

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Mr. CAINE: I am very glad to hear it. I am content with what I am saying. I am saying what I mean, at any rate. (Hear, hear!) I could not for one moment support a want of confidence motion to put into office those who have opposed the producers in the past. I intend to vote against this amendment, and to support the Government, because all along the Government have done all they could to assist the growers, and to assist Queensland generally, and because I feel satisfied that they are ready to continue along those lines in the future. We are told that there is no reference to this particular measure in the Governor's Speech to grant relief to the cane-grower. Because there is no reference to that in the Speech, it does not follow that no such relief will be forthcoming. I see a reference to the growers in the direction of co-operation, and I trust that the Government will see fit to bring in a measure under that heading which will afford some relief, not necessarily cane price boards, but something that will relieve these growers. I trust that the Government will do that during the present session. (Government members: Hear, hear!) If something is not done to afford some relief to the growers, then there are members on this side who will take good care that they will do their utmost in that direction by introducing some measure to assist the growers, because they are entitled to some consideration from us.

Mr. KIRWAN (*Brisbane*): I desire to say a few words on this very important question. I might say at the very outset that I cannot help contrasting the change of front that we have had displayed by the leader of the country Liberal party. I went to the trouble last night of reading up the speeches made by the hon. gentleman during the Federal campaign of 1913. The hon. gentleman deluded the sugar-growers of the particular district of which he is a representative, and also the Wide Bay district generally, when he told them that he had the assurance of the Premier that if the excise and bounty were abolished that immediately a measure would be brought in to give the cane-growers something better than they were getting for the cane. Does the hon. gentleman deny that? He cannot deny it. In order that the matter may be stated fairly and squarely, I will read an extract from a deputation that the hon. member for Burrum engineered, not for the purpose of doing the sugar-growers any good, but for the purpose of providing political capital for his party, in order that they might be able to wrest the reins of Government from the Fisher Administration, and for no other purpose. The hon. member for Burrum introduced a deputation to the ex-Prime Minister of the Commonwealth at Childers, and he asked Mr. Fisher not to wait until the Chief Secretary had carried out his part of the contract, but to immediately issue a proclamation abolishing the excise and bounty in order that the Premier of Queensland would be enabled to look after the interests of the sugar-grower. On that occasion, according to the report in the "Bundaberg Mail" of the 4th April, 1913, the hon. member for Burrum introduced the deputation. The deputation was a very large and representative one. It comprised all the leading men on the various local bodies of Childers. The hon. gentleman took care to arrange it on a big scale so that a deep and lasting impression would be made on the people whom

he was then trying to impress that he was looking after their interests. On that occasion the hon. member for Burrum said—

“The abolition of the excise and bounty would give the grower an additional 2s. 2d. per ton for his cane, but that was not enough. During the last session of Parliament he had received an assurance from Mr. Denham that in the event of the excise and bounty being abolished, he (Mr. Denham), would introduce legislation to give effect to any practical scheme that would ensure to the grower the full economic value of his cane. Such a scheme would be submitted when Parliament met, but in the meantime—”

Now you will see how anxious the hon. member pretended to be for the interests of the sugar-grower when he stressed this point—

“In the meantime all cane harvested from the beginning of the season would be subject to the deductions caused by excise and bounty, and any harassing conditions that might be imposed by the Minister for Customs.”

The Minister for Customs happened to be a Labour man, and the hon. gentleman could not resist the temptation of having a dig at him. The hon. gentleman went on—

“Whereas by granting the request it would place all growers on the same footing, give an increase of 2s. 2d. per ton on their cane and open the door for further assistance from the State Government legislation.”

The hon. gentleman deliberately and wilfully deceived the canegrowers on that occasion.

Lieut.-Colonel RANKIN: On what grounds do you make that assertion? It is a bald assertion and is absolutely untrue.

Mr. KIRWAN: I accept the hon. gentleman's denial, but when the sugar-growers of the Childers district read these extracts they will say something stronger than I have said.

Lieut.-Colonel RANKIN: The Childers people know me better than you do.

Mr. KIRWAN: The hon. member for Burrum could not resist the temptation of having a further dig at the ex-Prime Minister when he declined to issue the proclamation asked for. When Mr. Fisher resumed his seat the hon. member for Burrum said—

“He regretted the reply. He said the industry was of importance to the State, and pointed out that the issue of the proclamation as asked for would give the State Premier the opportunity of carrying out his promise providing for the better regulation of the price for cane, and in addition immediate relief would follow the abolition of the excise and bounty.”

Lieut.-Colonel RANKIN: Did Mr. Fisher do it?

Mr. KIRWAN: Mr. Fisher did not grant the request of the hon. gentleman, and the Right Hon. Joseph Cook did not grant the request of the hon. gentleman, thereby vindicating the attitude taken up by the Hon. Andrew Fisher. The hon. gentleman knows that perfectly well. He knows that the Liberal senators were permitted to tell the

canegrowers that if they were returned a proclamation would be issued immediately. That proclamation was not issued. It was only after Mr. Cook had several communications with the Chief Secretary of Queensland that that was carried out. The hon. member for Burrum also wrote a very long letter to the papers of Bundaberg with the object of impressing the sugar-growers with the attitude that was adopted by the Labour Government on that occasion. In order to be absolutely fair to the hon. gentleman, I shall read the extract in full, as it appears in the Bundaberg “Daily News” of the 21st April, 1913. There is a rather significant heading, “Sugar Crisis,” and then the letter reads—

“And a matter of even greater moment is the fact that this bounty or bonus is only allowed to those growers who pay the rate of wages and fulfil other conditions laid down from time to time by the Minister for Customs.

“Iniquitous as this is in itself, it has a much more far-reaching and deadly effect, because it prevents the State Government from doing anything to help the grower, who, metaphorically speaking, is between the devil and the deep sea.”

That is where he is to-day, although the excise and bounty is abolished, and that is where he is going to remain by the votes of the country Liberal party. I

[7 p.m.] congratulate the Premier in all sincerity for having whipped up these gentlemen in order that it may be demonstrated that the country party no longer represents the country interests, but that they are part and parcel of the great Liberal party in Queensland. I hope that, now they have come under the Premier's umbrella, they will be comfortable. (Laughter.) I must say that I could not help admiring the Chief Secretary the other night. The hon. member for Burrum, in his letter, goes on to say—

“On one hand he has to pay his workers whatever rate a capricious Federal Minister chooses to dictate, and in the second place he has to accept whatever price the miller chooses to pay for his cane. In some cases the miller treats the growers fairly, but many of us are of the opinion that in some instances the grower is not receiving a fair deal, and that State legislative action is desirable to place the grower on a better footing.

“It is, however, impossible for the State to interfere with the price of cane while the Federal Minister for Customs, through the operation of the Excise and Bounty Acts, controls the price of labour. That the State Government is prepared to secure fair treatment to the grower is shown by a statement made by Mr. Denham in reply to a question by myself.”

I will quote that reply from “Hansard” for 1912, page 2929. Lieut.-Col. Rankin asked the Premier—

“1. Has any communication been received by him from the Federal Prime Minister in reply to his letter of the 5th September relative to the abolition of the excise and bounty on sugar?

“2. In the event of the Federal Government abolishing the excise and bounty, will he bring in legislation to

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secure to the growers a price for their cane commensurate with the protection afforded by the tariff?"

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

"1. Merely an acknowledgment of my letter.

"2. I will introduce legislation to give effect to any practical scheme that may ensure to the grower the full economic value of his cane."

I presume the hon. member for Burrum had some definite and clear promise from the Premier when he made that statement, otherwise we can only come to the conclusion that the hon. member was endeavouring to make political capital for the purpose of bringing about the defeat of a certain party. The hon. member in his letter went on to say—

"This promise still holds good, and, as pointed out by me to Mr. Fisher, at Childers, on 3rd April, was one of the reasons which prompted me to urge upon him the desirability of freeing the industry from the excise and bounty at the earliest possible moment."

It is evident that during that particular time there was a coalition between the Premier and the hon. member for Burrum. They were doing their level best in their own way—and I do not quarrel with them on that ground, as they were perfectly justified when a political battle was on in fighting for the interests of their party. Our party do not complain of that, but what we complain of is that all the promises which were made to the sugar-growers during that period have evaporated like the morning dew. Last session the hon. member for Burrum brought down his Cane Price Boards Bill, and I cannot help contrasting his ignominious retreat the other night with the stand he made when he moved the second reading of that Bill. There was an altogether different tone in his speech when introducing the measure from that which characterised his speech the other night. His former speech was full of confidence, and was one which gave the House the impression that he had at last formulated a scheme which was going to give the canegrowers of Queensland a fair deal. His behaviour on that occasion was quite buoyant, and the abundant vocabulary which he possesses was used to its full extent in advocating the cause of the canegrowers.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: He issued a pamphlet, too.

Mr. KIRWAN: Yes; as the hon. member for Kennedy interjects, he issued a pamphlet to explain what would be the operations of the Bill. Contrast the speech he made on the second reading of the Bill with the lame, paltry, hesitating effort of the hon. member the other night, which amounted to a most ignominious retreat from the attitude he had previously taken up.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There was no hesitation about it.

Mr. KIRWAN: On that occasion the hon. member urged the farmers in the sugar district of South Queensland to throw off Federal control, or, as was interjected the other night, Federal interference, and the chief ground for the advice which he gave on that occasion was that the Premier would see that the matter was dealt with. One of the Bundaberg newspapers at that time uttered a prophecy which has been amply

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fulfilled, and will be again amply fulfilled when the division is taken on this amendment. The "Bundaberg Daily News" of the 23rd April last year said—

"In our judgment the whole business is nothing but a ruse on the part of those who speak for the State Government to once more induce the growers to do their utmost to reinstate the Queensland Government in control of the industry. Such a development, in our judgment, would be the very worst thing that could happen to growers, because paramountcy would thus be continued to the refining and milling interests in the industry."

That is absolutely true; that is the position to-day. The other week we had the spectacle of a deputation representing the sugar-growers—the people who are now most directly interested in the matter we are discussing—waiting upon the Acting Premier and placing before him their position in clear and unmistakable language. They pointed out that the time had arrived when the Government should do something to fulfil their promise.

Lieut.-Colonel RANKIN: What did that deputation want?

Mr. KIRWAN: The point I wish to make is that the Premier during the Federal campaign told the people of Queensland that this Parliament possessed all the powers requisite to deal with any question that might come before it, and that the Acting Premier told that deputation of sugar-growers that he would write to the Premier, who was expected to arrive in Sydney on the 6th of June, and that he would call upon Mr. Knox and discuss the matter with him.

Lieut.-Colonel RANKIN: That deals with the tramway agreement. The cane price board would not deal with that.

Mr. KIRWAN: The hon. member may interject that that related to the tramway agreement, but I say that if a company are not prepared to deal fairly with the canegrowers in connection with the tramway agreement the hon. member for Burrum can scarcely imagine for one moment that the Premier is going to interfere in the matter. We can only judge the Government by their past actions, and I think we are justified in coming to the conclusion that they would not interfere.

Mr. E. B. C. CORSER: Don't come to a hasty conclusion; the time is not ripe.

Mr. KIRWAN: It is very strange what haste the hon. gentleman showed to deal with the sugar-growers' difficulties when they asked Mr. Fisher to break the agreement he had made with the Premier of this State, and it is very interesting to contrast the action of the Government then with regard to Federal control with their action since the excise and bounty were repealed. The hon. member to-day delivered one of those perorations for which he is noted against the leader of his own party.

Mr. E. B. C. CORSER: To please you.

Mr. KIRWAN: I do not expect the hon. member for Burrum or the hon. member for Maryborough to do anything to please me. The position of the hon. member for Burrum is that he has failed to please the sugar-growers.

Lieut.-Colonel RANKIN: We will in due course; at the proper time.

Mr. KIRWAN: We are told that something will be done in due course. Why did not the hon. gentleman do it when the sugar-growers of the Burrum were asking him to deal with the question during the Federal campaign? The hon. member did not advocate putting the matter off then, but bombarded the Prime Minister with deputations, and bombarded his opponents with speeches from the political platform. But now the hon. member is absolutely silent. Only the other day he delivered a speech at Childers, in which he distinctly told the sugar-growers, or, at any rate, gave them the impression that something would be done for them. I do not wish to take up the valuable time of the House by reading long quotations, but hon. members can see from the report of the "Daily News" that the hon. member for Burrum, on that occasion, led the sugar-growers to believe that the Government would do something for them. At any rate, he felt very sore and expressed himself in indignant language when Senator Givens questioned his sincerity. Whatever the professions of the hon. member may be, whatever may be the policy he has advocated in the past, no man can get behind the vote which he gives. After the miserable arguments and the miserable special pleading, it is evident that the hon. member has placed himself in an equivocal position. The hon. member is not getting a fair price for the canegrowers, or, rather, is not pushing the passing of a measure which will enable them to get a fair price. They do not want any platitudes or excuses from the hon. member. What they want and what they demand is that they shall get a fair price for their cane. We had the sugar shuffle last year, and this year we have the sugar betrayal. The hon. member, in the course of his political campaign on the occasion I have referred to, distinctly stated that if the growers would only throw off Federal control, if they could only get rid of Federal interference and of the harassing regulations of men like Mr. Tudor, if the State Government could only get control of the sugar industry, immediately all would be well.

Lieut.-Colonel RANKIN: So it would.

Mr. KIRWAN: And now the hon. gentleman says in "due time" the sugar-growers will get what they desire. Whenever the primary producers of this State ask for anything definite, and particularly when a motion is moved by a member on this side of the House to comply with their requests, the Country Liberal party and their leader immediately get up a campaign of misrepresentation as far as the political principles of this party are concerned. We have fought that kind of thing in the past. The hon. member and those who support him have denounced instalments of socialism which they have frequently passed. We hear members opposite raising their voices against the Cane Price Boards Bill because it is socialistic, and yet we read in the opening Speech that the Government propose to introduce a State Insurance Bill. Is that not an interference with private enterprise? I think the common sense of the country will come to the conclusion that State insurance as forecast in the Governor's Opening Speech is more socialistic than Cane Price Boards Bill. I can give extracts from the speech of the leader of the Country Liberal party when moving the second reading of the Cane Price Boards Bill, but I have no

wish to do so. But I would ask why have he and his party abandoned the position they took up last year? Why have they forsaken the political principles which they espoused so eloquently on that occasion? Simply because the leader of the Opposition has seen fit to introduce this motion, and whatever else it may do, it will do as their official organ said last year when they announced the formation of a Country Liberal party—they said they hoped some measure or some resolution would be moved in the House that would separate the sheep from the goats. I believe the effect of this resolution will be to have that very necessary separation, and the primary producer will see that hon. members opposite are in favour of the principles of liberalism as against the principles of their own party. When we have the spectacle of the hon. member for Toowong, whose adherence to the front Treasury bench no man can question—when we hear that hon. member stating in this House that the principle of the Cane Price Boards Bill is opposed to all the true principles of liberalism then we can only come to the conclusion that the principles of liberalism stand for low wages and long hours, and as far as the primary producers are concerned, low prices for their product.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: How do you arrive at that?

Mr. KIRWAN: The hon. gentleman gave me the reason. The hon. gentleman denounced the award made by Mr. Justice Macnaughton, and to-day we have appeals made to the Premier to secure the repeal of an award which only provides for a living wage. Am I not justified on that evidence in stating that this Government, if not the Government, at least some of its principal supporters, including one of its Ministers, contends that a living wage is not a fair thing for the sugar workers.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is not what I said at that.

Mr. KIRWAN: The hon. gentleman cannot quibble. Mr. Justice Macnaughton's award is laid down on the principle outlined by Mr. Justice Higgins, and followed by Mr. Justice Hayden of the New South Wales Arbitration Court, and that is, that the worker is entitled to a living wage.

Mr. BOWMAN: You have made a mistake when you say the Minister cannot quibble.

Mr. KIRWAN: Perhaps I should accept the correction of the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, who assures me that I am wrong when I say that the Minister for Agriculture cannot quibble. We may justly ask why has not the Premier made a move in the direction of doing something for the sugar-grower? If not in the direction of the Bill outlined by the member for Burrum, then why not in some other direction? The sugar-growers are perfectly entitled to ask at this time of the day why has not the Government carried out their promises as far as they are concerned? They were lavish in their promises when the Federal elections were on; they were told "Once get rid of the curse of Federal control and all will be well." Now we find the Government has absolutely failed to carry out their promises, and even when the hon. member who leads the Country Liberal party brought in his measure last year it was practically kicked out. I think the reason for the attitude of

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the Government is correctly stated in the "Inniskill Democrat" of 20th June, when it says—

"The Government is in open alliance with the sugar and shipping trusts against the people—a perfectly natural and wholly congenial position for a 'Liberal' Government to occupy—but it is certainly the people's own fault if they do not compel it to retreat from that position by exposing and denouncing its treachery to the communal interests, its dishonouring of the sacred oaths of office and its abuse and perversion of the highest and most honourable positions in the gift of the people."

Mr. KESSELL: What are you speaking of? On the amendment?

Mr. KIRWAN: Mr. Speaker, I have yet to learn that you are not the Speaker of this House. It would suit the hon. member for Port Curtis a great deal better to cork up his interjections and give them in the form of an intelligent speech, when they would be much more appreciated. I think his interjection is a reflection on the Speaker of this House. The hon. member for Murrumba, whom nobody will accuse of twisting on this question—the hon. member for Murrumba, the hon. member for Toowong, and the hon. member for Townsville, have been perfectly consistent on this question, and I am sure they must be laughing to-day at the attitude of the hon. member for Burrum, as compared with his attitude last year on this question. I wonder how the primary producers will regard his action. The hon. member assured us that he came down last year on business bent, and he assured us in a speech last night that he did not mean business—that it was only for the purpose of having a loan of the Labour party. He said, "If I used the Labour party last year, they are not going to use me this session." That is not going to get the canegrowers a fair deal. That sort of argument will not appeal to the canegrowers of Queensland. What they want to know is what the hon. gentleman is going to do to carry out his oft-repeated promises.

Mr. MORGAN: We will let you know when we come to a vote on the amendment.

Mr. KIRWAN: We have somebody chirping from the corner party that the vote of confidence will show what they are going to do. Of course, this is a vote of confidence in the hon. member for Burrum, and it may be a vote of confidence in the front bench. The hon. member for Murrumba stated that this scheme was impracticable. We did not hear that during the campaign. I did not read any speech of the hon. member for Murrumba where he pointed out to the canegrowers of his district that the hon. member for Burrum was deceiving and deluding them when he said the Cane Price Boards Bill was going to give them a fair return from the miller. Then the hon. member spoke about interfering with private enterprise, and he boosted up individual enterprise. The safe axiom to adopt in passing legislation in these days is, that the interests of the community come first, and the interests of any private individual or company come second. If we find that the canegrowers of Queensland are not getting a fair deal, if we find there are unfair agreements or honourable understandings as they are termed, or if we find that by other means the growers are being deprived of the just fruits of their industry, it is about

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time this House decided to do something in the matter. The hon. member for Mirani said that moral suasion was no use in this case. I endorse that sentiment, and I say whether the legislation comes this session or later, legislative enactment will have to deal with this question. We have also been told that the measure was socialistic, and that it means confiscation. What is the use of hon. members rising at this time of the day and alleging that this party stands for confiscation.

Mr. BOOKER: Read the "Standard." That is absolute confiscation, every line of it.

Mr. KIRWAN: I heard a well-known Liberal supporter of the present Government say that the only party that believed in confiscation was the present occupants of the front Treasury Bench. Before concluding, I think it would be just as well to quote the opinion of the Bundaberg "Daily News" of Tuesday last on the attitude of the hon. member for Burrum in connection with this particular matter. The article in question states—

"While the position makes clear the attitude of the Labour party—"

The SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. member connect his remarks with the question before the House?

Mr. KIRWAN: I find I have the wrong paper. What I wish to say is that as far as this paper is concerned, it distinctly points out that no matter what result comes from this vote it cannot but make clear to the country the attitude adopted not only by the present occupants of the Treasury bench but also by the country Liberal party. We know very well that they are fast losing any reputation they may have had, and only quite recently at Maryborough, when the question of selecting a candidate for the present campaign came up for discussion, the farmers' representatives rose up and said they did not want a Liberal candidate in that electorate, simply because the name stank in the nostrils of every farmer. I suppose the hon. member for Burrum read the report of a meeting of canegrowers last Saturday where some very strong language was used, and the hon. member and his associates in connection with this matter were denounced in very plain language. As far as the Labour party is concerned, we have absolutely nothing to fear in connection with this vote; we are not like the hon. member who advocates certain principles one year and next year throws them overboard. If the hon. member were consistent he would certainly have supported this motion, but he prefers to be consistent only in his inconsistency. The article I desired earlier to quote is from Monday's "Daily News," and is as follows:—

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will be in order in referring to the article, but he will not be in order in reading it at length and founding his speech upon it.

Mr. KIRWAN: It does not matter. Quite sufficient has been said by the Opposition to prove the absolute insincerity of the hon. member when he tackled the Cane Price Boards Bill. It has been proved that there is no industry in Queensland to-day that is in a better position to pay a living wage, seeing there is no industry that is in a better position to give the growers a fair return for their industry, and the whole question is

summed up in this: By what means can we secure a more equitable distribution of the large profits made out of the sugar industry? The hon. member was very keen to get the extra 2s. 2d. for the growers when Mr. Fisher was head of the Federal Government; he was very keen in getting the bounty abolished in order to get the Premier to bring in legislation to deal with this particular question. Now we find him displaying masterful inactivity. We find him retiring from the position, beating an ignominious retreat, and altogether the country Liberal party has been wiped out, and we find that those who were supporting this measure last year are sitting solidly behind the Treasury benches. We must, at any rate, congratulate the Government with having whipped them into line, and put them in their proper position.

Mr. MACROSSAN (*Windsor*): From the utterances which have fallen from members of the Opposition on this occasion one would be almost inclined to think that [7.50 p.m.] an election was looming; the protestations, the continual outpouring of earnest—apparently earnest— anxiety for the welfare of the man on the land would lead one to the conclusion that these men had some end in view. Why are they so lavish in their attempts during the last couple of evenings to satisfy somebody who is not in this House that they are the people? The last speaker was apparently under the impression that the question was whether his party should be elected at the next election or whether this party should be elected at the next election.

Mr. KIRWAN: He showed the hypocrisy of the country party.

Mr. MACROSSAN: And he concluded his speech by most forcibly demonstrating that they are where they ought to be—behind the Government. I have yet to learn that party politics have been abolished in this State. I much regret that they have not been so abolished. I have had occasion more than once previously to express such regret. But this is a party question and we shall give a party vote. The question at issue raised by the leader of the Opposition is simply, whether this House should express its regret that when the Premier, in conjunction with his advisers—his collaborators—framed the Governor's Speech, he did not include in it a certain measure. The hon. the leader of the Opposition's motion practically amounts to this—an expression of regret that he did not have the opportunity of writing the Governor's Speech. I am quite confident, Mr. Speaker, that you will agree with me that that is not a subject for regret, and the only way in which we can voice our absence of regret is by giving a vote, and I have no hesitation in saying that I propose to give a party vote on a party matter, a matter which is essentially a party matter in the way in which it has been placed before the House, and which does not involve in any one scintilla the question whether the Cane Price Boards Bill is a desirable or an undesirable measure.

Mr. RYAN: You have not read the amendment.

Mr. MACROSSAN: I have read the amendment very carefully.

Mr. RYAN: Read the last line.

Mr. MACROSSAN: And I read the last line, and I am confident, Mr. Speaker, that you will agree with me that the question is not whether this House does or does not

desire to confirm the principle of a Cane Price Boards Bill. His Excellency's advisers did not take the same view that a majority of the House did on the last occasion when the matter was placed before the House, essentially as a non-party measure, introduced as a non-party measure and dealt with as a non-party measure, and practically condemned wholesale by the Opposition for some paltry political gain.

Mr. RYAN: How did they condemn it?

Mr. MACROSSAN: Did not the hon. member for Maranoa stand up the other night and tell the House in his speech that this Bill was no good?

Mr. RYAN: This motion favours the introduction of such a measure.

Mr. MACROSSAN: It does not. It says that the leader of the Opposition expresses regret that it was not put in the Governor's speech.

Mr. RYAN: Finish it.

Mr. MACROSSAN (quoting):

"We regret that no reference is made in the Speech"—

The whole thing is in that. What is the use of the leader of the Opposition and myself engaging in an argument across the floor of the House?

Mr. MURPHY: There is no money in it, anyway. (Laughter.)

Mr. MACROSSAN: Not at all. Let us read it once more. It has been read so much that if we read it again perhaps even the leader of the Opposition will know what his amendment really is.

"We regret that no reference is made in the Speech to any intention on the part of your advisers to introduce a Sugar-cane Price Boards Bill having for its object the establishment of representative and impartial tribunals to secure fair prices and conditions to sugar-cane suppliers, and we are of opinion that legislation on those lines should be submitted to Parliament without delay."

By whom?

Mr. RYAN: The sting is in the tail.

Mr. MACROSSAN: If the leader of the Opposition considers that his sting is in his tail let him have it so by all means. (Laughter.) I understood him to say so.

Mr. RYAN: You misunderstood me.

Mr. MACROSSAN: "Submitted to Parliament without delay." Submitted by whom? If the leader of the Opposition introduces it I promise him I will vote for it. But I, for one, am not going to assist to foist upon a prosperous community, such as Queensland, an incompetent Government as would be represented on the other side of the House. We know that the Bill last session was discussed fully and amply, and was approached by everybody from a non-party point of view, and I had the pleasure of recording my approval of it, and if I have the opportunity, I have the intention of reaffirming my approval. But that is not the question. The question is whether it is desirable that the leader of the Opposition should have written the Governor's Speech. I think it very undesirable, and I have no hesitation in saying so. The discussion has so far largely gone on

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the lines as to whether the Bill was a desirable measure or not. I say that that is not the issue. I say that I cannot agree for one moment with the Premier, the member for Townsville, or the member for Toowong, when they say that legislation of this description is hostile to the principles of Liberalism.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MACROSSAN: I have yet to learn that there cannot be within a composite party conscientious differences. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, when you retire to your virtuous couch, do you recollect that your last glance took in the leader of the Opposition sitting cheek by jowl with the deputy leader? Do you laugh? Do you give a silent chuckle? Are these men who have anything in common? (Laughter.) Yet there they are sitting cheek by jowl, and they have exactly the same differences as we have.

Mr. MURPHY: That is libellous, you know.

Mr. MACROSSAN: But let me point out this, that while a member opposite who wishes to disagree with the platform in some of its principles has got to vote for those principles which he does not approve of when they come before this House, when I do not approve of such principles I do not vote for them. The point at issue is whether it is desirable that Queensland is to continue in the prosperity which she at present enjoys under a wise and sane Administration.

Mr. RYAN: That is very concise.

Mr. MACROSSAN: There is no doubt about it. It reduces the whole thing to a very simple problem, whether the hon. member for Barcoo is more desirable as leader of the Government than one we could select from this side of the House.

Mr. RYAN: It is whether his policy is more desirable.

Mr. MACROSSAN: Unfortunately, that is the question we are going to vote on. The question is whether the members of this Cabinet who framed the Governor's Speech should have put in it something of which they do not conscientiously approve. It has been said by members of the Government party that such a measure would splinter every plank in the platform of the Liberal party.

Mr. GILLIES: Do you believe that?

Mr. MACROSSAN: Believe it? I think it is all moonshine. Is it not an absolutely logical corollary to wages boards that a man who is compelled to pay a rate of wages should have the right to make a profit from the industry in which he is engaged in order to enable him to pay those wages? Liberalism, as the hon. member for Barcoo knows, is the spirit of the age, a spirit of progressiveness, not hide-bound, but typified by a true democracy.

Mr. McCORMACK: There is a difference, then, between Liberalism and political Liberalism?

Mr. MACROSSAN: The same difference, I presume, that there is between unionism and political unionism. Liberalism is a moving force and will continue to be so. Now that I have had an interjection from the hon. member for Cairns, may I draw his attention to the fact that, while I congratulate him on the moderation which he

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displayed and on the sound reasoning which he put forward, it would be just as well for him to be a little more careful in some of his facts. He pointed out that because Mr. John Drysdale in five years made £155,000 profit on an original capital of £125,000, that by dividing five years by two and getting two and a-half you arrive at the extraordinary conclusion that he made £125,000 in two and a-half years.

Mr. McCORMACK: Mr. Drysdale arrives at that conclusion.

Mr. MACROSSAN: He did not. He arrived at the conclusion that in five years he made an amount of profits more than equal to the original capital.

Mr. FOLEY: Doubled his capital.

Mr. MACROSSAN: Yes, because he had his original capital and profits, which, if capitalised, would represent an equal amount.

Mr. McCORMACK: Just what I said.

Mr. MACROSSAN: No, the hon. member said that if in five years he made a profit equal to his full capital then in two and a-half years he would make the same amount. If he reads his speech he will find that he said what I say he said, although I admit that he did not mean it. At the very conclusion of the speech of the leader of the Opposition he pointed out that this was a non-party measure when the Cane Price Boards Bill was introduced last session, and yet forsooth they want now to make it a party measure.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: Your leader made it a party measure.

Mr. MACROSSAN: My leader did what most leaders under the circumstances would do.

Mr. RYAN: Cracked the whip. (Laughter.)

Mr. MACROSSAN: Quite likely. I must at any rate announce to the House that no whip has been cracked over me. My leader took the view that if the House was going to compel him to put something in the Speech of which he did not approve he would have to resign. But it does not follow that because he took the view that the Bill was undesirable that I should follow him. I have affirmed my approval of the principle, and I propose to reaffirm it when I get the opportunity. Why does not the leader of the Opposition introduce such a measure? He says that the Government ought to do it, and the reason he gives is that he wants it to be done by the Government, because there would be no chance of getting it through without the Upper House throwing it out if a private member introduced it.

Mr. RYAN: No.

Mr. MACROSSAN: That is the reason you gave in your speech. But if this principle be affirmed in two successive sessions, under the Constitution Referendum Act it automatically goes to the people to say by referendum whether they want it or not.

Mr. HAMILTON: We know that a private member has no chance of getting it through.

Mr. MACROSSAN: It was introduced by a private member before and it went through.

Mr. RYAN: If the Premier will give me the time I will do it.

The SPEAKER: Order, I must ask hon. members on my left to refrain from making interjections. The hon. member for Windsor has possession of the Chair.

Mr. MACROSSAN: If it becomes a fact that two sections in one party are so diverse and opposite in their views that it is no longer possible for them to remain a composite whole, then it behoves one of those branches to consider seriously whether they should be on this side of the House or the other. That is the whole question. But for the hon. member for Toowong to calmly suggest to this House that Liberalism is opposed to enforcing the right of a man engaged in an industry to an opportunity of deriving sufficient profit to pay the wages that he is bound to pay by law, then all I can say is that the sooner Liberalism changes that view the better.

Mr. FOLEY: That is Toryism.

Mr. MACROSSAN: That is rank Toryism, precisely. As you are aware, Mr. Speaker, Liberalism is not a hidebound exactitude, a sort of line with length but no breadth—it is a broad living spirit keeping pace with the necessities of a moving civilisation. I think you will agree with me, Mr. Speaker, when I say that no argument has been adduced to show that the principle of cane price boards is economically unsound. Consider the disparities that were revealed in the speech of the hon. member for Cairns. They could not be disputed. No one has attempted to dispute the accuracy of the facts which the hon. member for Cairns stated in his speech with regard to the disparity in the prices paid by one mill as compared with those paid by another mill under practically identical circumstances. It appears to me that, so far as those at present engaged in the industry are concerned, the growers do not receive a fair share of the profits which accrue from that industry. How can it be right for one minute for this House to compel a farmer to pay wages which will prevent him from making a profit out of his industry, if at the same time this House is prevented from consistently taking the logical step of compelling the person with whom he deals to give that person a price at any rate sufficiently high to enable him to pay the rate of wages demanded by the labour engaged in it? One thing follows the other, in my opinion, just as clearly as morning follows the eve. There is no need for me to beat about the bush, and I have no hesitation in saying that I support such a sound democratic measure as that introduced last year, which is in consonance with the most advanced ideas of Liberalism. Liberalism has not underlying it a wooden, mechanical platform of exactitude and precision with no power of expansion. Liberalism has the power of developing itself according to the spirit of the age, and keeping time with the development of the country in the interests of country life, in the interests of the population, and not only in the interests of one class of population, not in the interests of one class only, but in the interests of all classes. Even hon. members on the opposite side will be able to agree with that. We are not going to be like children to be frightened by a name. Just because someone gets up and says, "That is socialism," are we going to be frightened like little children and run away from it? We have only to look at the Governor's Speech as framed and placed before the

House this session, to see that it contains measures which have socialistic principles in them in many respects. What about the Agricultural Bank Act? What else is that but socialism?

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MACROSSAN: What about the Workers' Dwellings Act? What else is that but socialism? (Hear, hear!) What about the proposal to establish insurance? What else is that but socialism? Are we going to be frightened by any shibboleths or any Aunt Sallys that are put up for the purpose of frightening us. Certainly not. We are going along the broad roadway of progressive Liberalism. (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. RYAN: What are Aunt Sallys?

Mr. MACROSSAN: An Aunt Sally was put up by the hon. member for Toowong.

Mr. RYAN: Exactly. I quite agree with you.

Mr. MACROSSAN: Apart from your concurrence, I say so just the same, although, of course, I am glad to have your concurrence. I may say that the leader of the Opposition himself has put up an Aunt Sally, and it is not very difficult to knock it down. The hon. gentleman wants to come in behind a lot of men in order to get on the Treasury benches. Everyone knows that while party government exists it is impossible for those pledged to support certain political principles to turn round and support another party whose principles are diametrically opposed to theirs. The hon. the leader of the Opposition could not sit there conscientiously as leader of the Labour party unless he were prepared to carry out measures that tended to nationalise all the means of production, distribution, and exchange. Does the hon. member really believe in such a thing? I am not concerned which member on the other side answers my question. Apparently no one on the other side is prepared to take the responsibility of saying that they agree with such a proposal. The hon. the leader of the Opposition may have set a nice net to catch the unintelligible voter, but I think they will be able to see through it. Does the hon. member believe in the nationalisation of everything?

Mr. COYNE: No.

Mr. MACROSSAN: It matters not whether he believes in it or not, but I would like to get an answer from the leader of the Opposition.

Mr. COYNE: You are wrong in saying that members on this side are pledged to nationalise everything.

Mr. MACROSSAN: Then the hon. member is not fully conversant with the platform which he has signed, because all members on that side have signed a platform under which they pledge themselves to that object, and they do not know it. The hon. member does not know it.

Mr. McCORMACK: You also signed a platform.

Mr. MACROSSAN: I did not. I did not sign any platform. I came here under a sound democratic policy.

Mr. RYAN: Your policy is to vote for the Government.

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Mr. MACROSSAN: It is rather humorous for the hon. member to talk like that, seeing that last year I voted for the Cane Price Boards Bill. If he calls that voting for the Government then that is my policy.

Mr. HAMILTON: You knew that there was no chance of its being carried.

Mr. MACROSSAN: It was carried.

The SPEAKER: Order! If the hon. member for Windsor invites interjections and answers them, then he has to put up with the consequences. I am trying to keep the House in something like order, and I would suggest to the hon. member for Windsor to continue his speech and not answer or invite interjections.

Mr. MACROSSAN: Thank you for your kind suggestion, Mr. Speaker, which I will adopt. I would just like to call the attention of the House to this fact: that I consider legislation of this kind—namely, the fixing of prices—as a corollary to what we have already fixed—namely, the amount of wages that the grower has to pay for the labour employed by him. There is no industry more fittingly suitable than the sugar industry is for passing such a Bill as this. It is the only industry we have in Queensland which is self-sufficient, and for that reason it is one where we could fittingly introduce the principle of fixing prices. We must also realise that the law of supply and demand has been wiped out as a basis on which to fix the rate of wages. That has been done away with, and instead of the law of supply and demand being adopted as a fair thing to fix wages, we have now to fix them so as to constitute a living wage for those engaged in the industry. That is the law, and we must abide by it. We have placed that law on the statute-book in the Industrial Peace Act, and we must abide by it. We cannot act like the ostrich and bury our heads in the sand so as not to see these things. The principle of a cane price board is one which I have no hesitation in supporting, but so far as my present intention is concerned with regard to the amendment, I am going to vote against it.

Mr. WILLIAMS (*Charters Towers*): I think the hon. member who has just resumed his seat has perhaps put the chief issue—that is, whether the gentlemen on the other side of the House should occupy these benches or whether we should. There are also other aspects of the question to be considered. Reference has been made to members on this side who voted for the second reading of the Cane Price Boards Bill last session. Their names have been paraded before the House on two occasions, once last year and also during the debate on this motion. Anyone would think, judging from the remarks of some hon. members, that hon. members on this side of the House who voted for the second reading of that Bill were really fit subjects for a chamber of horrors. With reference to the vote I gave on that occasion, I have not shed any tears since on the subject, nor have I lost a wink of sleep over it. Under the same circumstances, I should record my vote in the same way again. As to my reasons for giving that vote, I might say that it appeared to me to be an obnoxious Bill as it stood; but it did not seem to me to be hopeless of amendment in the right direction. We must admit that in the hon. member for Burrum we have a man who has a great knowledge of the subject before the House. He is a man of

great ability and honest sincerity, and we know he has taken a lot of trouble to try and relieve the man on the land. I think that his scheme should have been given fuller discussion than it was. For that reason I voted for the second reading of the Bill, hoping that it would get into Committee so that the subject might be discussed. With regard to the principle of the Bill, I am not an old parliamentarian, but I always understood that when a Bill is pernicious, when it is introduced into the House, the pernicious part of it is pointed out when it is being introduced, and that is the time to reject it if it is pernicious. Some members on this side appeared to get into a panic. There were loud lamentations on their part because some of their confrères voted for the second reading of that Bill, and we were accused of going into the back yard of the Opposition and of smashing up the planks of the party platform, and also of treachery. I have no doubt that these remarks were made in haste.

Mr. RYAN: They were very true remarks.

Mr. WILLIAMS: True remarks as to what?

Mr. RYAN: As to the Liberal platform.

Mr. WILLIAMS: They were not true remarks at all. Some hon. gentlemen on this side seemed to be unable to discriminate between the paternal functions of a Government and what are socialistic measures. There are some cases in which the paternal functions should be invoked, and this was one if an injurious combination existed. I do not consider that it was necessarily a socialistic measure and I think that some good could be got out of it if drastically amended. There seemed to be a lot of scuttling among our friends over that Bill. It should really have been called a Bill to prevent the injurious combination of owners of sugar-mills. The name seems to make a lot of difference. The Federal Parliament has proved a dismal failure in connection with dealing with trusts. The only trust they ever attempted to deal with was a good trust—the Coal Vend—that was a splendid combination. It was a fair thing for the owner, and a splendid thing for the wages men. The Federal Government never touched the tobacco trust. Because the Federal Government proved a dismal failure in dealing with trusts, that is not a reason why this House should not deal with them. I approve of the object if an injurious combination exists. Why did not the leader of the Opposition put forward a scheme? He did not put forward a scheme at all. Members opposite said they would amend the hon. member for Burrum's scheme. We know what amendments mean. We know when the Stock and Produce Bill went up to the Upper House it was so amended that only the title was left. There is a way out of this that I can suggest, although, perhaps, it would be too costly. I suggest something that will remove all the socialistic taints from it. If a mill will not come under the Bill, let that mill be resumed by the Government, and let the Government lease it out subject to cane price boards. One of the obnoxious features of the Bill introduced by the hon. member for Burrum was its failure to make any provision for compensation. All agreements were to be cancelled, and there was a chance

[8 p.m.] of very serious injury being done to some persons. But the purpose of the hon. member for Burrum in

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trying to help the sugar-grower I approved of, and that was the reason why I voted for its second reading. If the measure had gone into Committee I should have voted against those features of it to which I objected. There are abundant reasons why members on this side should oppose the amendment of the leader of the Opposition which is now before the House. The hon. member for Windsor has stated one reason very cogently; another reason why we cannot vote for the amendment is that by voting for it we should practically be voting for a sort of Cane Price Boards Bill that the leader of the Opposition and his friends would give us. We have seen that the canegrowers have got nothing from the socialistic party in the Federal Parliament, and it is not likely that they would get anything from the same party in this Parliament. There is no doubt that a Bill introduced by the leader of the Opposition would give some sort of relief to the canegrowers, but it would be accompanied by a smack on the other side of the face. The deputy-leader of the Opposition called attention to what he termed the ring of insincerity in the speeches delivered by members on this side of the House. How insincere are the speeches of hon. members on the other side. They have shown over and over again that they cannot be the friends of the man on the land or of any capitalist whatsoever. Their platform is to eliminate the capitalist—to nationalise the means of production, and that means eliminating the capitalist. I do not see how hon. members opposite are going to eliminate the capitalist and at the same time help him. There are many ways of eliminating the capitalist. One is by increasing wages to such an extent that it will be impossible for him to pay them, and another is by shortening the hours of labour to four or six hours a day. Only recently at a conference of labour representatives it was suggested that they should change the minimum working hours from eight to six hours a day, and it was due to the shrewdness of Mr. Watson that it was not carried. Hon. members opposite would possibly give the sugar-grower some temporary relief, but no doubt they would couple it with the condition that they should increase the wages of the worker and make the working hours only four hours a day, or some other kind of harassing conditions. As I have said, the Labour party are pledged to eliminate the capitalists, including every holder of a little property, a cane-farm, or a stationery business, and how can they be consistent and at the same time work for the capitalists? I recently read an extract from a newspaper called "The Navy," which puts the position very clearly. "The Navy," which is a worker's paper, stated that some Labour members said they were going into the House to work for all classes, whereas they must remember they were put there for one class alone—namely, the manual workers.

Mr. BOWMAN: Who is the editor of "The Navy"?

Mr. WILLIAMS: I do not know. When you get a declaration to the effect that Labour members are to work for one class alone, how on earth they are to help the sugar-grower I cannot see. I think the leader of the Opposition must be very sorry that he laid this gaudy trap. The man on the land is not a fool: he has got his eyes wide open; he knows what shon to go to, and he is not going to listen to the flash bargains put up

by the other side. The Premier and the hon. member for Burrum have given some assurance that they will endeavour to see a way out of this difficulty. I think they do see a way out, and for that reason, and in the interest of the man on the land, I shall have much pleasure in voting against the amendment.

SPECIAL ADDRESS TO THE GOVERNOR.

At eleven minutes past 8 o'clock,

The SPEAKER left the chair for the purpose of presenting the Address to the Governor at Government House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. J. Stodart, Logan) thereupon took the chair.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

WANT OF CONFIDENCE MOTION—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. FOLEY (*Mundingburra*), continuing the debate on Mr. Ryan's amendment on the motion for the adoption for the Address in Reply, said: Before this amendment goes to a division I should like to say a few words on it, because I find that I also have a few cane farmers in my electorate who are very anxious to know whether the Cane Price Boards Bill is ever going to pass through this House. During the recess I paid a visit to the Houghton River district, where there are a good many cane farmers established, and I spoke to them about several matters, but the matter regarding which they principally wanted to see me was that of explaining, if I could, the reason why the Government had thrown out what they considered to be the one bit of legislation that was going to do any good for the cane farmers. They said in effect that they had always supposed that the Government and their supporters were friends of the farmers, that members on that side of the House had always posed as such, and that the farmers looked upon them as their friends in the House. The cane-growers were accordingly surprised that when there was an opportunity to give them the means of getting what they considered reasonable prices for their cane the Government and their supporters should throw out the measure. I told them in my own language that I did not believe that the gentlemen sitting on the Treasury benches were friends of the cane farmers, and that neither did I believe that the members sitting behind the Government who posed as friends of the farmers were really their friends, unless it was to make a profit out of them. I further told them that I did not think that they had any reason to expect any good from the people who posed as their friends in this House. If any member imagines that the farmers do not want a Cane Price Boards Bill he is certainly making a mistake. I not only visited the Houghton River district, but I also paid a visit to the Avr district and addressed a good number of cane farmers there, and I can say that the farmers in both the Houghton River and Avr districts are unanimously in favour of the Cane Price Boards Bill; and they are very much disappointed at the result of the discussion which took place in this House last session. At

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the end of the conversation I had with them they took some consolation from the idea they had got into their heads that the Cane Price Boards Bill would be brought forward this session and passed into law, but I told them that in my opinion so long as the present Government held possession of the Treasury benches they need never expect to get a Cane Price Boards Bill put through the Assembly as the Government themselves were up against it. I shall never forget the look on the Premier's face when the second reading of the Bill was passed last session, and the leader of the Opposition asked him when he was going on with the Bill in Committee. The Premier looked across at the leader of the Opposition and said, "You will never see that Bill any more," which was conclusive evidence to me that the Government had no intention of bringing the Bill forward again. Nor will they allow the leader of the Opposition to bring in a Bill having for its object the establishment of boards to fix the prices of cane as between the grower and the miller. It has been very amusing to me to hear members on the other side arguing that the whole intention of the Opposition in introducing this amendment is to nationalise the sugar industry. During the whole of the discussion which has taken place there has not been one word said by any member on this side which would show that it is the intention of this party to nationalise the sugar industry. While the nationalisation of all industries is a plank in the Labour party's platform, that plank is not going to be brought into existence at once even if this party went over to the other side to-morrow. That is the ultimate aim of the party, but we have no idea of rushing it on to the statute-book the first day we get on to the Treasury benches. That is the end in view; its accomplishment may be a long way ahead or it may not; it depends upon what the people of Queensland think more than what this party think of the matter, and it is a very poor argument to advance against the amendment the statement that its object is to enable the members on this side to nationalise the sugar industry or any other industry. I cannot understand how gentlemen can be found in this twentieth century to use arguments of that sort. We have had a Labour Government in the National Parliament, and industries have not been nationalised yet. When the member for Charters Towers talks about nationalisation meaning the elimination of little capitalists, such as small grocers, he is ridiculous and shows his ignorance regarding what nationalisation really means. I cannot understand what the hon. member was driving at. We know that there are large profits in the sugar industry. It has been said by members on both sides of the House that the millers and refiners are making enormous profits, and it is admitted also that the grower is not getting a fair return for his industry, particularly now that the Industrial Court has fixed the rate of wage he has to pay the worker. It is necessary that something should be done to enable the grower to get a sufficient price for his cane to enable him to pay those wages and still get a living wage for himself. It was never argued, when we endeavoured to get the worker a fair wage, that there was a chance of nationalising the industry, but when the canegrower asks that something should be done to see that he gets a fair thing, the idea is thrown out that all

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we want to do is to nationalise the industry. In justice to the farmers I want to say that they are not opposed to paying the rate of wages laid down by the Industrial Court. They admit that a man who works in a cane-field for eight hours a day, in the hot broiling sun, is entitled to all the wages allowed to him by the Industrial Court, but they say in effect, "While we are willing to pay these wages we want to be assured that we will get sufficient for our cane to enable us to do so and still leave us a fair profit for our labour." No one denies them that unless it be members on the other side who are against the introduction of this Cane Price Boards Bill, which has for its object the giving of the canegrower a fair deal. It has been said by members on the Government side that if the Labour party had the appointing of these boards they would appoint a board that would fix such a price for the cane that the miller would not be able to do anything with his mill. The fact of cane price boards being made the law would not give the Government, whoever might be in power, the right to appoint those boards. All we ask is that legislation be passed, and then the millers and the growers would meet together and appoint a board to determine what price shall be paid for the cane during the ensuing season. That board could meet every season if they liked and decide what the price should be for cane during that season, and the Government would have nothing to do as regards fixing the price of cane. In no case would the price be fixed for more than one season at a time, and that being the case I do not see what objection there can be to it. If the miller does not get enough for his sugar then it will be for the miller to see that a sugar board is appointed to fix a fair price for the raw product. The grower at present says he is not getting a fair price for his cane, and that he has no means of saying what the price should be. Only in March of this year I saw an announcement in the "Townsville Daily Bulletin" that the price for cane during this season would be 3s. per ton less than it was for last season. That announcement was published by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. What say had the grower got as to whether he was satisfied with 3s. a ton less for his cane than he got last year? He had no say at all. He simply had to take it or leave it, and if he refused to accept the price offered by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company he would have to leave his cane in the ground to rot. What recompense would he get for his industry by leaving his cane in the ground? The House should see the justice and wisdom of passing a measure that will give relief to the growers as they are at the mercy of the millers. Whether the miller is at the mercy of the refiner or not remains to be proved, but in any case some means should be devised by which the grower should have a chance of saying what price he should get for his cane in the same way that the worker has an opportunity of saying what wages he shall get for his labour. We know from the evidence given before the Royal Commission that the Colonial Sugar Refining Company was making enormous profits—John Drysdale himself admitted that he was making enormous profits—and if half those profits were divided amongst the canegrowers, both the Colonial Sugar Refining Company and John Drysdale would still make a very good profit out of the industry. But what do they do? They

simply cut the cane down to the lowest price they possibly can, and the farmer has to be satisfied, because he has no say as to what the price should be. The Treasurer when speaking on this question said that the passing of the Cane Price Boards Bill would not affect the Colonial Sugar Refining Company at all. I would point out that the Colonial Sugar Refining Company are not only refiners but large millers as well. They have a large number of farmers growing cane for them on the Johnstone and Herbert Rivers, and in other places in Queensland they have mills of their own, and cane price boards would affect them to the same extent as it would affect private millowners. While they may be able to get raw sugar from the millers at their own price, if they had to form a cane price board they would be called upon to meet the growers and mutually decide upon a price. The farmers are looking to the country party to pass a Cane Price Boards Bill, and they are certainly disappointed because there is no forecast of such a Bill in the Governor's Speech, and, like the leader of the Opposition, I regret exceedingly that the Government could not see their way clear to put into the Governor's mouth some statement with regard to the passing of a measure that would give the relief the farmers are looking for. In order to substantiate what I have said, I have here the report of a deputation consisting of members of the Sugar Farmers' Association in Mackay, that waited on the Secretary for Railways. Mr. Johnson, the president of the Sugar Farmers' Association, in his speech said—

“The farmer felt that not having a voice in the price of his product was an anomaly, and thought this might be overcome by legislative action. The Bill introduced last year by Colonel Rankin and Mr. E. B. Swayne had received the endorsement of all farmers in this and other districts, but unfortunately it did not receive the Government support. He considered the measure was not inconsistent with Liberal principles. There was the feeling that much better results would be obtained from the mills if such boards were appointed.”

There were several other speakers who supported Mr. Johnson in that statement, among whom was Mr. Swayne, the member for Mirani, who was also a member of the deputation. The Minister for Railways, Mr. Paget, in his reply, said—

“The Bill was not thrown out last year, as stated. It was introduced as a private member's Bill. Desiring to introduce the measure, Colonel Rankin arranged with the Premier for a certain portion of the Government time. When that time was up the Bill dropped. In view of the fact that the deputation intended waiting on the Premier in regard to that measure, they would have to leave it in the Premier's hands. He promised to lay the request before the Premier.”

The “Bundaberg Daily Mail” rang up Colonel Rankin, member for Burrum, on the telephone, with regard to this particular deputation and asked him what he thought about it, and he replied as follows:—

“Of course I am pleased with what I think it is reasonable to describe as the encouraging tone of Mr. Paget's remarks. I am, however, still more pleased, indeed

gratified, with the evidence I have recently had that a strong wave of feeling is developing in all the sugar districts of the State in favour of the Cane Price Boards Bill. In this respect I may say I have received most encouraging letters from growers' associations as well as from numerous individual growers, a fact which persuades one that a case of irresistible strength will shortly be developed in favour of that measure.”

The Government are losing an opportunity in not passing a measure similar to that asked for or putting it in the Governor's Speech in order to satisfy the farmers that something is going to be done to do away with the anomaly of which they complain. I did not intend to make a long speech on this question, but I thought I would like to make the few remarks I have because I promised the farmers that if I had an opportunity I would mention the fact that they were anxious that this Bill should be passed this year. And having done so, I must content myself with leaving it in the hands of the Government to say whether they will do anything or not. We have been

[8.30 p.m.] told by the Premier that something may be done, something will be done. But it reminds me of the Federal Government when asked whether they would do something towards amending the Constitution, because they all said it required amending—they said it would be done, but not yet. That is always the reply, that the time is not ripe, we cannot do it yet but it will be done eventually. In the meantime the farmers are starving, or they are likely to be so crippled that they will not be able to carry on their industries, and the result will be that those who have put all their time and money into cane-growing will be able to continue no longer. I ask the Government, as honest men, not to leave them in that position but to do something so that they may not be ruined but so that sufficient may still be left for the miller and the refiner and so that everybody will be better satisfied.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. J. White, *Musgrave*): I have no wish to delay the House in coming to a vote on the amendment. I am very pleased that the member who has just resumed his seat referred to the front Treasury bench as honest men who were anxious to do their duty towards the primary producers of Queensland. A great deal of the speeches that have been made seem to show, I think, that the Opposition would be delighted to know that we had not brought forward the measure if it was going to do the farmers so much harm. As a matter of fact, I have never thought that the Cane Price Boards Bill was a practical scheme. In my opinion it was impracticable, and for many good reasons. As the matter was very much discussed last session, and has been discussed on the present amendment, it is unnecessary to make very many remarks, but I should just like to explain my position. At the same time I should like to say that I congratulate the hon. and gallant member for Burrum and those associated with him on their efforts to improve the conditions of cane farmers. I am quite sure that it was the earnest desire of these people to do something for the primary producers and sugar-growers who, in my opinion, were in some districts compelled to take a lower price than the actual value of

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their cane. But there are other methods, and I have always had the opinion that the proper system by which the cane farmer could be benefited to the fullest extent is by co-operation, assisted by the Government, either in the purchase of mills at reasonable prices, or by methods such as were adopted in the dairying and meat industries. It has been said that the cost of an up-to-date sugar-mill is beyond the ability of the growers. But in my opinion even small farmers could come in and work a mill for themselves if they were assisted by the Government in the same way as the butter and meat factories were assisted years ago. This is the only method, in my opinion, by which the canegrowers in Queensland can be adequately helped—by helping themselves to some extent. There is also another system—I do not know whether it could be made compulsory or not—but I consider that all cane should be paid for by analysis, that there should be a base price according to the efficiency of the mill, and that at least two-thirds of any increased price should go to the grower and one-third to the manufacturer of the raw sugar. That would do away with the present system, and as the raw mills got an increased price for the manufactured article, the grower would benefit. That is the system which prevails in butter factories, where the suppliers are paid for their cream according to its quality, and, if there is any increase in the price of butter, the dairyman gets the advantage of that increase. That would materially assist the sugar-producers of Queensland. As a matter of fact, the Premier, in speaking two nights ago, stated that the dairying industry at its commencement was entirely in the hands of private firms. It is now entirely co-operative and entirely successful, and the proprietary firms are out of it altogether. But there is no question about what those private firms did for the industry when it started. I have heard the hon. member for Drayton state that when they started cheese and butter factories on the Downs they got great assistance from Denham Bros. and other private firms here in disposing of their produce at a very low commission. I am not going to defend the mills, but I am going to endeavour to show that it would be good for the sugar-growers to have co-operative mills, and at the same time I would like to warn them against the statement made by the hon. member for Eacham in speaking on this question—they must not by that means expect to get 36s a ton for their cane. The hon. member for Eacham stated, and it was pretty well explained this afternoon by the hon. member for Murrumba, that the cost of milling as well as growing affected the question, and I will endeavour to give figures as to the cost.

Mr. FIDELLY: Are you going to use his figures?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No, I can get figures for myself. The statements he made was, that he took the average of sugar throughout the whole State, and came to the conclusion that about 9 tons of cane were required to make 1 ton of raw sugar. The hon. member for Eacham stated that the raw mills could afford to pay 36s. for every ton of cane.

Mr. GILLIES: I did not say the raw mills.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Well, the refining mills. Taking that as a basis, that would be £16 4s. for cane, and to

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that we have to add the cost of manufacturing, which in the nine central mills in Queensland, in 1912, averaged £7 1s. 1d. for manufacturing cane into raw sugar, 94 per cent. net titre, and in 1913 was £6 19s. 7½d. The figures are not out for this year, but I fully expect that they will be somewhat less, probably not more than £6 per ton, owing to the very large season we have had. That makes £23 5s. as the cost for every ton of raw sugar.

Mr. GILLIES: Where did you get those figures?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am taking the hon. member's figures. Surely he does not object to that. I am also taking the figures from the Auditor-General's report, 1912-1913, on the central mills of Queensland. In a good year, such as last, the mills receive the base price of £13 2s. 6d. and the deferred payment, which has come out within the last two days, amounting to £2 15s. 0½d., or equal to a total of £15 17s. 6½d. per ton. If we subtract this amount from the price which should be paid for cane, according to the hon. member for Eacham, plus manufacturing charge, we get the cost of 1 ton of raw sugar at £23 5s. 11d., and the return to the miller of £15 7s. 6d., leaving a loss of £7 7s. 6½d. per ton. Is that the way that the business of sugar-growing is to be carried on? As the Minister for Agriculture, I think it my duty to warn sugar-growers that it would be impossible for them, even under a system of co-operative mills, to receive 36s. a ton for their cane.

Mr. GILLIES: Do you state deliberately that it takes £6 to make a ton of raw sugar?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I take the figures from the Auditor-General's report. I remember the hon. member for Cairns quoted the speech of Mr. Draper, that they were manufacturing sugar at the Mulgrave Mill for £2 a ton. I do not know where he got his figures, but in looking up the figures for the year before last I find that the cost at the Mulgrave mill, which is one of the best of the Northern mills, was £4 17s. 8d. for manufacturing 1 ton of raw sugar. Those figures, of course, include interest and redemption and all charges for the twelve months—it is impossible to carry on the mill without those charges.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: And the manager's salary.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Of course, why should not the manager have his salary? I am not disputing the fact that Mr. Draper made the statement, as the hon. member for Cairns has said, because it is given as a quotation from "Hansard" of a speech delivered by Mr. Draper at Cairns.

Mr. FOLEY: He knows what he is talking about.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: And I know what I am talking about as well as the hon. member for Cairns, and Mr. Draper, and the hon. member for Mundingburra. That is the reason why I think that a co-operative system, with a basic price fixed, would be the proper thing, because if the price rises the miller gets nine-tenths, which is equal to 18s. in the £1. It is said that the 2s. kept by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company is too much. But at least 1s. 2d. goes for discounts and the

rest goes in expenses, and makes up for the actual difference in the titre between the 94 and 99 per cent. I am sorry that the hon. member for Eacham misled the House with the figures he quoted, although I am sure he did it unintentionally. His figures would mislead people outside the House, and some members inside the House who have no knowledge of the sugar industry.

Mr. GILLIES: You misled the House when you said it cost £7 per ton to manufacture a ton of raw sugar.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I got it from the Auditor-General's report for 1912-13.

Mr. GILLIES: What page?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You can find the page for yourself. (Laughter.) You should have looked up all this before you gave the figures to the House. In 1911-12, owing to the unexpected rise in the world's markets after contracts for the year had been made, the difference paid by the jam and other manufacturers and that received for sugar sold for direct consumption amounted to no less than £3 per ton. So that, instead of getting £22 per ton from the jam manufacturers, the Colonial Sugar Refining Company were only getting £19 per ton. It must also be remembered that the statement that 9 tons of cane are required to make 1 ton of refined sugar is erroneous. It is 1 ton of raw sugar that is made from 9 tons of cane—a different matter altogether.

Mr. THEODORE: What statement are you reading?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am reading something which I drafted out myself on Saturday morning. I devoted the whole morning to it.

Mr. MURPHY: You are very foolish when you have got an Under Secretary.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I wanted to be very sure of it. So far as the refining costs are concerned, I am not going to bother much about them, although perhaps I might give them here. It must be remembered that the manufacturers of jam get their sugar at a lower price than that paid by the public. Contracts are made at the beginning of each year, one and two years ahead, in order to enable the jam manufacturers to make their calculations, and they then get their sugar at a low price. That is a good system, which is adopted by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. I suppose that the Sugar Commission carried out their duties in an exemplary manner, and the majority of that commission were people who were absolutely against the Colonial Sugar Refining Company from beginning to end. Still, this is what the commission said in their report—

“We have frequently had occasion to criticise the Colonial Sugar Refining Company from various points of view, but we do not hesitate to express our admiration of the economic efficiency which characterises every branch of its business which has come under our notice. In order to prove really effective for the purposes we have now in view, the Commonwealth refinery would have to proceed on a large scale. This would imply a duplication of refining plants in Australia, quite inconsistent with a sound

economy of national resources. For the foregoing considerations, as well as for others, we are of opinion that the proposal to establish a Commonwealth refinery is impracticable.”

It has been said that the refining profits are large, but the refining profits in Australia are the lowest of any refining profits known in the world. According to the report of the Royal Commission the cost of refining to the Colonial Sugar Refining Company is £1 5s. per ton, but it costs the Millaquin Company more than that. Depreciation amounts to 4s. 6d. per ton. From this statement, which appears in the Sugar Commission's report, it is shown that cane price boards would be absolutely impracticable. This statement will be found on page 68 of the report—

“The suggested solution would afford no guarantee of securing that protection to the grower which should be the chief object in view. It would be as likely to tell for decreasing efficiency in milling and refining as to tell for a more equitable distribution of profits.

“The proposal under consideration might well be nullified to a large extent in practical operation by concealment of profits—*e.g.*, stock watering, renewal of plant when depreciation is allowed for, extensions of plant, secret manipulation of reserves, nepotism, extravagant salaries to directors, managers, etc., etc.”

That is exactly what I stated to the hon. member for Burrum. We can find out all the working expenses of the mills under our own control, because they are audited by the Auditor-General, and there would be no object in concealing the profits in regard to the mills under the control of the Treasury.

Mr. FIDELLY: Did you tell that to the hon. member for Burrum last year?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I did not speak on this question myself last year. When the hon. member for Burrum introduced the matter I was not opposed to it, but I said that I did not think it would have the effect that he desired, and the effect that those associated with him desired to bring about—that was, to fix the price of cane. If we had co-operative mills, they would all get the full benefit of them. We could allow the existing mills to pay by analysis with a base price and an increasing price for every £1 sterling which sugar increased during the year.

Mr. GILLIES: What do you suggest as a base price? £1 per ton?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It would have to be more than £1 a ton, and it would then work on with the increasing price. The base price would be for refined sugar, probably £19 per ton, and there would be a base price for cane also, which could be arrived at mutually between the millers and the growers. There are not a great many mills in Queensland where the farmers are not perfectly satisfied, and where the farmers are not doing better in growing sugar than they would be doing in growing any other product I know of in Queensland. It has been said by members on the other side that the mills are taking the whole of the profits. I do not think that the millers are doing anything of the kind. I know that in the Bundaberg district a great number of millers have been

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forced out of the business who have not been making sufficient profits to keep them going. It may be said that the mills were not up to the mark, and that is another matter that we will have to consider. As was mentioned by the hon. member for Eacham, the Agricultural Department has introduced a great many canes, sweeter canes and better canes. These will have the effect of giving a better class of cane, so that the mills will have to pay by analysis and the mills will have to go in for more power. At the present time, the loss on the manufacture of raw sugar is something like 20 per cent. throughout the whole of the mills in Queensland, with the exception of the Colonial Sugar Refining mills. The Colonial Sugar Refining Company's mills have kept their actual loss down to, I believe, about 13 per cent. I got these figures from my officers during last year, and under our present milling power the loss is something like 20 per cent. If we got first-class milling power, we will be able to reduce that loss to something like 12 or 13 per cent. The mills under the control of the Treasurer are not the best mills in Queensland. These mills will have to be brought up to date, and to do so the Treasurer will have to spend a great deal of money.

Mr. FIDELLY: What do you think of Nerang?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Nerang is all right. (Hear, hear!) That mill was put there to help the growers, and I am not going to say anything about it. I would not like to quote the figures about Nerang. I do not think it is necessary for me to quote the figures about the refining operations of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, because I am not here to defend that company. That company has given me a good deal of trouble, and I am not here to defend them.

Mr. BERTRAM: They have given you a good deal of support, too.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I want no support from the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, nor from the hon. member either. I am not asking for assistance from them.

Mr. FIDELLY: Where did the £2,000 come from?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Talking of the £2,000, I can say that the party on the opposite side of the House spends ten times more on elections and electioneering than we do on this side of the House.

Mr. FIDELLY: We know where it comes from, though.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: So do the poor wretches who have to pay it. (Government laughter.) There is another matter that I would like to deal with. Some remarks were made by the hon. member for Cairns in regard to the administration under the Sugar Cultivation Act of last year.

Mr. THEODORE: Let us hear your apology for that.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: As a matter of fact, I have no apology to make. The hon. member for Cairns said that there was loose administration in regard to that Act. He said that the administration was bad, and certain things happened last year. When the Sugar Works Act was

passed it was understood that there were certain people engaged in the industry last year. During the previous year and for a great many years prior to that there were a large number of kanakas in Queensland who had permits from the Com-

[9 p.m.] monwealth Government to work in the sugar industry in Queensland. This fact was recognised when the Bill was going through the House, and ample provision was made in the measure for formulating regulations dealing with the matter. It was also understood that there were certain treaty rights arising under treaties between Great Britain and other parts of the world which would have to be recognised when the measure came into force. Those treaty rights were fully recognised, and had to be recognised, when the regulations were framed, and it was clearly understood between the Imperial Government and the Government of Queensland that the Act was to be carried out in a humane and just manner towards people who were already in the State.

Mr. BARBER: But you have overdone it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am coming to that; just give me time. Immediately the Act became law, and the regulations were issued, certain people in Cairns did what the hon. member for Cairns said was done. There was a regular yarding up of coloured people in the district, and they were informed that unless they got permits they would not be allowed to work in Queensland at all. Those men began to think that another poll tax was imposed, and that they had to pay another 10s. each in order to be allowed to remain in Queensland. I think that was represented to them by certain people in Cairns.

Mr. RYAN: Who did that?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Some solicitors in Cairns did it. They were instrumental in getting 200 or 300 people yarded up for this purpose. Some people belonging to the Labour party also did it, whether with the object of bringing discredit on the Act or not I do not know, but they had some object in view.

Mr. RYAN: They could not get the permits, surely?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No. I have got the applications for permits in my hand, and I may tell hon. members that misleading statements were put on them. The hon. member for Cairns said—

“If the question is put to you, you can find out that the number of exemptions issued in my district from the clerk of petty sessions in Cairns was 203—that number had already been issued on that date.”

That date was the 5th November, and as a matter of fact no permits were issued by the Government on the 5th November. When applications for these exemptions first came in, I came to some marked Cook, and others marked Laundry, of Cairns. Immediately I came to those, I stopped signing the exemptions altogether, and issued instructions for any that had been sent on to Cairns to be kept back by the clerk of petty sessions, and that no further permits should be issued unless the applications were accompanied by a declaration sworn before a justice of the

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peace that the applicant had been engaged in the sugar industry in Queensland during the previous year. Only 224 had been dealt with up to that time, but although they had been dealt with they had not all been issued. I wired to the clerk of petty sessions at Cairns to stop the issuing of the exemptions, and no deputation waited upon me with regard to that matter.

At four minutes past 9 o'clock,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The letter dealing with the matter is dated the 22nd January, 1914. The declaration, a copy of which I hold in my hand, requires the applicant to give his name in full, country of origin, place of birth, nationality, age last birthday, date of arrival in Queensland, date of arrival in Commonwealth, previous place or places of residence in Commonwealth, if any, present place of residence, and occupation. One of those declarations was signed by Willie Lee Ling, who states that his country of origin is Queensland, his place of birth Cooktown, that he was twenty-four years of age last birthday, and that by occupation he is a farm labourer. On his application there is endorsed the following declaration:—

"I do hereby declare that I am a cane-cutter, that I was actually employed in the sugar industry at the commencement of this Act and during the sugar season of 1913, and that I intend to continue in the occupation of a cane-cutter."

That is signed by the applicant, and is witnessed by the clerk of petty sessions at Cairns. There was no permit issued to any man who had not been ten years in the State and engaged in the sugar industry the previous year. With regard to those who were engaged as farmers, I consider that, instead of giving compensation, it was better to allow them to go out of the sugar industry altogether at the end of the year 1915, and permits were issued to a comparatively few people growing cane.

Mr. THEODORE: You say there were no exemptions to anyone except those employed in the industry the previous year?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is right, unless a few were issued before I was able to stop them by wire. The total number of permits which have been issued in the Cairns district up to date is 400, and the number refused is 149. I have taken very great care in dealing with this matter, and I have not the slightest apology to make, either to the House or the country, because I consider I have acted in a humane manner towards people who were already in the State, a great many of whom were very old men. The hon. member for Cairns stated that he was quite agreeable that those who had been engaged in the industry should be allowed to remain in it, and I have taken every possible precaution to see that no one got a permit unless he had been engaged in the industry the previous year. I had to go over 2,000 of these certificates and sign them in duplicate. As I have said, a great many of these people are very old: eighty-five of the applicants were over sixty years of age, some of them seventy years of age; 356 were between fifty and sixty years of age; 672 between forty and fifty years of age; and 492 between thirty and forty years of age. I

shall give the answer to the question of the hon. member for Cairns as to the total number of permits issued in a day or two. From inquiries which I made when I was in Cairns, I am assured that at least 200 of the people who had permits there and called themselves cane-cutters were growing maize in the Atherton district, and that solicitors in Cairns charged 10s. apiece for getting these applications put through. I am very sorry to know that such a thing ever happened in the Cairns district.

Mr. THEODORE: It is a perfect scandal.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, it is a scandal. I put my foot down very firmly, and did everything I could to make the sugar industry white. I have had many applications from those who desired to remain in the sugar industry after 1915, but have extended that leniency only in one case, and that is the case of a white woman who is married to a Chinaman.

Mr. RYAN: Could not you cancel the permits wrongly granted?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Some of them. There were only 224 issued altogether in the Cairns district, and that was the only district where there was a yarding up of these people, and a charge of 10s. apiece made for getting their permits through. I am quite willing to stand or fall by what I have done in this matter, because I consider I have acted in a humane manner towards these people, and according to treaty rights which Queensland must recognise. As far as cane price boards are concerned, I have explained the position which I have always taken up with regard to that measure. The hon. member for Burrum knows the position I have taken up, and that my opinion is that there is only one way of dealing with this matter, and that is by co-operative effort on the part of the cane-growers themselves in the establishment of co-operative mills, or the purchase of mills already in existence, so that they may obtain the profits of their industry. I do not think the profits of the sugar industry are as large as some have represented them to be. The Treasurer has given an explanation with regard to profits as far as the central mills are concerned. The central mills have been a great thing for the primary producer in both the North and South of Queensland, and have helped them wonderfully; they have been a check on private mills in regard to the prices paid for cane. But even the central mills, as the Treasurer has shown, have not paid more for cane than other mills have paid, and it has taken them a long time to make any progress. They have been at enormous expense year after year for renewals, and the fact that the mills are only working for five or six months of the year adds to the cost of producing raw sugar, which last year amounted to £7 1s., and the previous year to £6 19s. per ton. I think the sugar-growers will find out that when they get mills of their own they must not expect £1 16s. per ton or anything approaching that for their cane, but a reasonable price, and I hope the growers will be able to get a reasonable price for their cane in the future. I do not think they have been too badly treated in the past, except in the case of a few mills, and even where proprietary mills are not giving a fair go to the growers I think it is the duty of

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the Government to assist the growers to go in for co-operative effort, and enable them to get the full profit of their work.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. DOUGLAS (*Cook*): The leader of the Opposition, in launching this amendment, had no doubt the idea of making the country believe that the Labour party are desirous of giving the sugar-farmers better conditions than they, at the present time, enjoy. The subject of the amendment amounting to a direct want of confidence in the Government, it has naturally consolidated Government supporters, and, I think, in the interest of the sugar-farmers themselves, it is a very ill-advised amendment to bring forward. A Bill to provide cane price boards was introduced by a member on the Government side of the House last year, and was discussed at some length, and now the Opposition have sought the very earliest opportunity of stealing some of the ideas which were launched from this side of the House, endeavouring to make the public believe that they are the only ones here who have the interest of the sugar-cane farmers at heart. It has simply had the effect of consolidating Government supporters, and had the Labour party been bonâ fide interested in the sugar-growers they would have left this question alone, and it may have been brought forward later by some member on the Government side. There are many other questions that the Opposition may have dealt with besides the sugar question. Take the meat trust, for instance.

Mr. RYAN: We will before the present session is past.

Mr. DOUGLAS: I think the Labour party have done the sugar-farmers an injustice in bringing this matter forward at the present time.

Mr. RYAN: Will you support a motion dealing with the meat trust?

Mr. DOUGLAS: I am not prepared to give a definite statement on that matter off-hand. I simply mention the meat trust in passing. I represent a district in which sugar is grown, but fortunately those people have a central mill—the Mossman—and they get the full price for their cane. The growers for central mills are in a very fortunate position, and I find that there are not many complaints. I consulted them on the question during the recess, and I find that they make no demand for a cane price board. The member for Burrum gave us some statistics from the Isis district from which it would appear that there are farmers in that district growing cane under very unfortunate circumstances, but I understand some improvement has taken place, as a result of the discussion on this question during the last twelve months. I do not intend to speak at any length on this question, but I feel that it is not a subject on which I can give a silent vote, as sugar is grown in the Cook district. When the Sugar Cane Price Boards Bill was before the House last year I voted against it, and the matter was subsequently dropped. There was certainly nothing in the Governor's Speech with regard to this question, but I daresay it is one of those subjects that would have been brought forward from this side of the House. The Opposition have raised the question immediately, and it being a direct want of confidence in the Government, I,

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as a member of this side of the House, am not going to support it. I hope, for the sake of the sugar-farmers who are labouring under unfortunate circumstances, and do not get a fair price for their cane, that some solution of the difficulty will be arrived at. It has been suggested that there should be a board appointed to fix the price of cane. To a very large extent the sugar-growers, who having had to pay considerable increases for their labour, find they cannot make sufficient profit out of their product at the prices they have been receiving for many years past. The whole demand for an increase in the price of cane comes through the increased cost of production very largely caused by the increase in the price of field labour, and we cannot be surprised that there should be this demand for an increase. It has been said that the millers are making very big profits. I have no figures by me to quote, but I daresay the profits that are shown in the Colonial Sugar Refining Company's balance-sheet are made to a considerable extent through milling. Naturally they must make a profit on their operations. One hears at different times from the Opposition of the very serious domination of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, but I think there are a good many sugar-growers to-day who have laid the foundations of their fortunes, if they have made any fortunes in the sugar industry, through the assistance of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. I have no brief for the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, and they do not operate in the district that I represent, but I know the sugar industry is very important to Queensland, particularly to the Northern districts, and I trust that before long there will be an extension of central mills. It seems to me that an extension of the system of co-operative mills will do away to a very large extent with the necessity for cane price boards. If any solution of the difficulty can be arrived at whereby co-operative mills can be brought into existence on a satisfactory basis, I think it will be of benefit to the canegrowers. I intend to vote against the amendment.

Mr. FIELLY (*Paddington*): Before this question goes to the vote I wish to give some information that I have collected from "Hansard," and, like the Secretary for Agriculture, I would not like it to be wasted. It appears to me that the attitude of hon. members opposite is one not of actual hostility to the amendment, or at least they would intend us to think so, but that it is inexpedient in so far that it is not to be permitted to be used by this side. The amendment has been the means of consolidating Government members, but individual members seem to be very unhappy in the process of that consolidation. Even to-night they have been very persistent in their remarks, but one could hardly suggest for a moment that they are the happy family that a consolidated party should be. I have in my hand a booklet entitled "The Sugar Cane Price Boards Bill," which is got up in fairly decent form; the printing is good and it is a credit to the Government printer.

Mr. RYAN: Who is the author of that?

Mr. FIELLY: It is marked "By Lieut.-Colonel C. D. W. Rankin, M.L.A.," and underneath "Sugar Cane Price Boards Bill" appears "Its Aims and Objects," and

Lieut.-Colonel Rankin, whom, I presume, is the member for Burrum, spreads himself over eleven pages in order to show the uses of the Cane Price Boards Bill.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: A very good address.

Mr. FIELLY: I agree with the hon. member entirely. An excellent address and more's the pity that the opinions expressed here were not consistently adhered to; and it is a pity the hon. member for Drayton is not also a little more consistent. He has tumbled more than his leader, although the evidence is not so plain. There is no booklet like that from his leader, but possibly when the Cane Price Boards Bill receives further consideration the hon. member will issue an essay on it and submit it to the rest of the Chamber. However, this booklet was left in my box in this House last session, and I presume it was sent to me by the hon. member who represents Burrum, and I regret very much that to-day he is not in accordance with the arguments he expressed at that time. For instance, he says—

"In introducing the Sugar Cane Price Boards Bill, I disclaim at once any pretence to originality. It is based on the result of my personal experience and study."

And he fortifies himself by other remarks. The hon. member seems now to have forgotten his personal experience, or else it was the result of his personal inexperience, as he has now stated he is not going to vote for the amendment. In looking through "Hansard" and glancing at the speech of the hon. member for Burrum, I found the following, which I will take the opportunity of again having inserted in "Hansard" through the House. The hon. member was very eloquent on that occasion, and stated—

"When I look at the petitions I have received from associations and from hundreds of men I have never seen, praying me to take some action in this direction, I feel that it would be worse than criminal on my part were I to turn a deaf ear to their appeals. It is not my intention to do so. . . . I say it would be criminal were I to refuse to take any notice of their requests or be guided by the appeals received from various sources. Since this Bill was introduced I have watched most carefully for some outward mark of feeling outside with regard to it, and I must confess that so far as the Press from the metropolis northward along our seaboard is concerned . . . they have nothing but praise for it."

The hon. member continues—

"I cannot see why manufacturers should object to the Bill. After all, what does the Bill seek to do? It only seeks to give a fair deal, nothing more nor less. I believe that we, as Britishers, who believe in British fairplay, do believe in giving a fair deal. . . . We would be guilty of criminal neglect if we did not take some steps to help the farmers."

That is merely introductory to the hon. member's speech in connection with the second reading of that Bill. I am sorry he is not in his place to-night as some of these

little reminders might assist him in his vote later on. He next proceeded to deal with Mr. Knox. Some farmers went to Sydney to interview Mr. Knox in regard to the Bill. He said—

"Mr. Knox told the delegation of farmers that he was opposed to the Bill, although in the same breath he told them he had never seen the Bill."

He then proceeded to heave a brick in the direction of Mr. Kater. Mr. Kater, he said, comes along and suddenly discovers why it is that he is opposed to the Bill. The reason was that he was opposed to certain things which, after all, were not [9.30 p.m.] in the Bill. He implied that Mr.

Knox and Mr. Kater were the most ignorant persons in Australia in regard to sugar and the Bill. Not content with dealing with this case generally, he went as far north as Bundaberg and connected the Hon. Angus Gibson with some of his criticisms. He was in a rather savage mood. Before criticising Mr. Gibson, he first of all gave this quotation in a Bundaberg paper. Mr. Gibson was reported as having said—

"He would not mention his friend Colonel Rankin, but they were going to give him a very hot time, so that he would be very sorry that he ever brought in a Sugar Bill."

He also said in regard to the man he was not going to mention—

"If he had to put in improvements, and the other had to get half his profits, then he would take devilish good care he would not."

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Devilish?

Mr. FIELLY: Yes; Mr. Gibson was not in a Sunday school humour on that particular occasion. The Colonel dealt with him rather severely, and bracketed Mr. Gibson, Mr. Knox, and Mr. Kater in the following words:—

"They have condemned, criticised, and found fault with the measure, the purport of which neither of them seems to be acquainted with."

It seemed to him that that could be applied to members on the other side, some of whom had been mainly satisfied to give an exposition of Liberalism. One of them gave a lecture on the ethics of party government; he said it would be a very useful suggestion, and no doubt the Cane Price Boards Bill would be a very useful amendment of the law. But it was absurd that such a thing moved by the leader of the Labour party should be supported by members on the other side. In effect, he said, "We cannot complain here; we must vote; we are whipped in, and we must do exactly as we are told." It is a great pity if this House, as a deliberative assembly, comes to look at matters from that point of view. Personally, I am addressing myself to the question mainly because I think the grower is being hardly dealt with, because the hon. member for Burrum and our own sugar members have impressed me with his case, and because I think that justice should be done. It is for the information of hon. members opposite that I am quoting the opinion of the leader of the country party.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Very valuable information.

Mr. Fihelly.]

Mr. FIDELLY: Very valuable, indeed. I trust the hon. member will "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" it. The hon. member for Burrum on that occasion also said—

"What we seek to do is to assure the grower that a certain proportion of that price (of sugar) should go to the grower. Is there any principle involved in that to which hon. members cannot subscribe? Is there any principle involved in the mere fact that those people who, after all, have two-thirds of the interest in the commodity (the growers) should have some say in the price itself? I submit there is not."

That, apparently, would suggest that he had persuaded himself that the growers had an excellent case, but now he has persuaded himself that they have not.

Mr. E. B. C. CORSER: Who said so?

Mr. FIDELLY: It is perfectly obvious from the vote he is going to give and the speech which he has made.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: We are going to give them something better.

Mr. FIDELLY: I might remind the hon. member that we have a book here which the hon. member for Burrum has published. The Bill was his eldest child—it was the whole family; and when the hon. member for Maryborough endeavours to lead us to believe that his leader—I understand that he is in the farmers' party—is still of the same opinion, it seems very strange. All I can say is that his latest speech conceals the fact very successfully. He says: "Is there any principle to which members cannot subscribe?" That was a very pertinent question, and it was answered by the hon. member for Toowong last year, who said it would splinter every plank in the Liberal platform, that platform which is a spirit and which has a number of planks. He appears to be up against that at the present time, and that is perhaps why the hon. and gallant member for Burrum changed his mind. He also referred to the Doolbi figures: he said that they were getting 12s. 6d. a ton for their cane, while the Isis Central was getting 17s. 3½d. and the Colonial Sugar Refining Mill farmers were getting 16s. 1½d. He also went further and declared that the farmers were at the mercy of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. They could not sell their cane elsewhere, the mills would not take it, and two circulars were quoted from other mills proving that they would not. The Secretary for Agriculture does not believe that there is a way out. Although his colleagues would lead us to believe that there is a way out, which would leave the country party with its honour untarnished, he does not tell us what he is going to do with Doolbi. Is the Government going to take any measure to give them, as the Colonel himself says, British fair play? They are entitled to some relief from the Government, instead of the vague statement that there is a way out. Then the hon. member came back to Knox. He was tickled to death at Mr. Knox's reply to the Sugar Commission when they asked him "what governed him in fixing the prices and making agreements?" His reply was, "The Mosaic Law." The hon. member's criticism upon this was that he didn't know what the Mosaic Law was, but that the Eighth Com-

mandment was "Thou shalt not steal," and he offered the opinion that the matter was too serious to be left to the Mosaic Law. If the hon. member for Burrum is still under the impression, as given here, that the Colonial Sugar Refining Company is stealing, that they are breaking the Eighth Commandment, he is hardly coming up to the sentiments recently expressed. In concluding his peroration he said—

"We are simply actuated by a desire to give a fair deal. . . . We are actuated by the desire to do justly, rightly, and honestly, as between man and man. The cry of the sugar-grower comes to us here as pronounced as it can come to any representative body of men. . . . The grower is chained hand and foot, he has to take what is given to him without a chance of going elsewhere and obtaining the benefit of competition. . . . We appeal to this House to come to the rescue of the sugar-grower . . . the man who bears the heat and burthen of the day, the man who is the mainstay of the industry itself."

It was very pathetic, but I am afraid that the chains are not going to be struck off the grower, and that the Eighth Commandment still is going to be interfered with. I notice also that the secretary of the farmers' party last year said that he thought that the Bill, as before the House, was not contrary to the policy of the Liberal party. That is very significant in view of the statement made by the hon. member for Charters Towers, who apologised for a quarter of an hour for the vote which he gave last year. That hon. member interrupted the Premier when he was speaking last year, and he was a fervent supporter of it. Now we find that there was something at fault in connection with it—perhaps the marriage tie, or perhaps capital was leaving the country. Anyhow, there is something sticking against the Bill in the hon. member's opinion that has compelled him to go behind the Government and help the country party to save them from defeat. We hear from time to time mention of a sum of £2,000 that some members were so impertinent as to suggest came from the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. I hardly think that that is so. It seems extraordinary that no donor was prepared to hand out £2,000 to the MacGregor fund for the establishment of a Chair of Medicine at the University, but that this Liberalism, this spirit that envelopes all hon. members sitting opposite, seems to get in the way, although one Liberal supporter would only give £1,000 if nine others will give the same. There must be some reason; there must be some quid pro quo. No federation of employers in the city will give £2,000 for nothing. I do not think, either, that they gave the testimonial to the Commissioner for Railways for nothing; I am satisfied that they got something for that. I understand that members are anxious to take a division, and I do not desire to continue further. I know that it has been generally admitted that the amendment is a good one and the growers deserve some consideration, and that the Government should immediately attend to their wants. Even if for party reasons they are going to defeat our amendment, I hope that will not prevent them taking up the question and doing something that will alleviate the condition of the cane-farmer. There is no question that he has not the same legislation, or we might call it

[Mr. Fidelity.]

machinery, to enable him to get the same return for his produce that exists in other industries. The labourer has his wages fixed by legal enactment, and the Colonial Sugar Refining Company can get any price it wants for its sugar—that is, within reasonable bounds and considering the tariff. But the grower cannot, and it is to be hoped that the Liberal party will do something even if party spleen or party jealousies will not permit them to vote for the principle to-night.

Question—That the words proposed to be added (*Mr. Ryan's amendment*) be so added—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 22.

Mr. Adamson	Mr. Kirwan
" Barber	" Land
" Bertram	" Larcombe
" Bowman	" Lennon
" Coyne	" May
" Fihelly	" McCormack
" Gilday	" O'Sullivan
" Gillies	" Payne
" Hamilton	" Ryan
" Hardacre	" Theodore
" Hunter	" Winstanley
<i>Tellers: Mr. Bertram and Mr. Larcombe.</i>	

NOES, 39.

Mr. Appel	Mr. Luke
" Barnes, G. P.	" Mackay
" Barnes, W. H.	" Mackintosh
" Bebbington	" Macrossan
" Bell	" Morgan
" Blair	" Paget
" Booker	" Peirie
" Bouchard	Lieut.-Col Rankin
" Bridges	Mr. Roberts
" Caine	" Stevens
" Corser, B. H.	" Stodart
" Corser, E. B. C.	" Swayne
" Crawford	" Tolmie
" Denham	" Trout
" Douglas	" Vowles
" Forsyth	" Walker
" Grayson	" Walsev
" Gunn	" White
" Hodge	" Williams
" Kessell	
<i>Tellers: Mr. Crawford and Mr. Kessell.</i>	

PAIRS.

Ayes—Mr. Murphy, Mr. Foley, and Mr. Huxham.
Noes—Mr. Archer, Mr. Philp, and Mr. Macartney.

Resolved in the negative.

Original question stated.

Mr. HUXHAM (*Buranda*): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed.

The resumption of the debate was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

PRESENTATION OF ADDRESS TO GOVERNOR.

The SPEAKER: I have to announce this evening that I presented to His Excellency the Governor the Address passed by this House at an earlier period of the sitting, and that His Excellency was pleased to make the following reply:—

"Government House,
Brisbane, 14th July, 1914.

"MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

"I thank you sincerely for the great and signal honour of this visit; and I am grateful to you for the expression

of your good wishes towards my family and myself. The term of my office as representative of the Crown in Queensland has been to me and mine a period of unclouded happiness; and we leave this State with deeply grateful feelings for the great kindness we have at all times received from the people of Queensland. I shall, in my retirement, look back with much pride and pleasure to the last Parliament I have been associated with; and I shall never forget the dignity, the earnestness, and the patriotic spirit in which your deliberations have been conducted.

"I trust that the excellent example you have given may be followed by future Parliaments, here and elsewhere.

"My association with Queensland extends over many years, and to you, gentlemen, the chosen representatives of the people, I express heartfelt gratitude for the extraordinary and uniform kindness I have always experienced in this great State from all classes of its affectionate and warm hearted people.

"WM. MACGREGOR."

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I beg to move that the House do now adjourn.

Mr. RYAN: On the motion for adjournment I would like to ask the Chief Secretary if he is to receive a deputation to-morrow advocating the introduction of cane price boards? (Government laughter.)

The PREMIER: I have not had any intimation of any such deputation. About ten days ago I saw it stated in a morning paper that a gentleman had left Mackay. I have not had any further intimation.

Question put and passed.

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