

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 1 NOVEMBER 1916

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

WEDNESDAY, 1 NOVEMBER, 1916.

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

QUESTIONS.

PURCHASE OF 1917 SUGAR CROP.

Mr. BOOKER (*Wide Bay*) asked the
Premier—

“Is he prepared to give an assurance
that the Government will not attempt to
acquire the sugar crop of 1917 without
first consulting the producers, seeing that
under the present industrial conditions
£18 per ton is a ruinous price for raw
sugar?”

The PREMIER (Hon. T. J. Ryan,
Barcoo) replied—

“Action was taken by the Government
to acquire the 1916 crop at the request
and with the approval of the producers.
The Government will take no action
with regard to the 1917 crop without
fully considering the interests of the pro-
ducers.”

POSITION OF THE SUGAR INDUSTRY.

Mr. BERTRAM, for Mr. McPhail (*Wind-
sor*) asked the Premier—

“1. Has his attention been called to
the report of an interview with Mr.
Pritchard, Australian Sugar Producers'
Association, in which he stated that Mr.
Hughes had promised to deal with the
sugar position if the referendum was
carried?”

“2. If so, has he any information
as to the way in which Mr. Hughes
proposes to give relief?”

The PREMIER replied—

“1. Yes.

“2. No.”

PAPER.

The following paper, laid on the table, was ordered to be printed:—

Report of the Workers' Dwellings Board for the year ended 30th June, 1916.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

CHANGE IN MINISTRY.

The PREMIER (Hon. T. J. Ryan, *Barcoo*): I desire to inform the House that on the 13th October, 1916, His Excellency the Governor accepted the resignation of the Hon. Thomas Joseph Ryan as Secretary for Railways for Queensland. On the same day His Excellency the Governor appointed the Hon. John Harry Coyne to be a member of the Executive Council and Secretary for Railways. On a previous occasion I took the opportunity of expressing the feelings of both sides of the House, I think, and their satisfaction at the impartial and capable manner in which Mr. Coyne discharged his duties while filling the very responsible position of Chairman of Committees.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: I think, too, that I voice the feelings of members of the House when I say we extend to Mr. Coyne our congratulations on his having received the well-merited promotion which he has received at the hands of his party, and in saying that it is hoped he will be spared for many years to occupy the position which he now holds in this Government.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: I beg to lay the "Government Gazette" containing these notifications on the table of the House.

ESTIMATES FOR 1916-17.

The SPEAKER reported the receipt of a message from His Excellency the Governor, forwarding the Estimates of Probable Ways and Means and Expenditure for the year ending the 30th June, 1917.

The Estimates were ordered to be printed and referred to Committee of Supply.

WAYS AND MEANS.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Bertram, Maree, in the chair.*)

FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*), who was received with "Hear, hears" from the Government benches, said—

Mr. Bertram.—Members of the Committee will, I am convinced, appreciate the difficult nature of the task imposed upon a Treasurer during the abnormal times through which we are passing. The war has had a wide-reaching effect in all spheres of activity, but nowhere has its effect been so disquieting as in the realm of finance. To its agency can be attributed the dissipation of many preconceived notions relating to this great subject, and the settled financial order has been so disturbed that any comparison between present-day money matters and those of pre-war times is of little avail.

I shall, however, endeavour to place before members a comprehensive view of the financial position of the State without burdening my speech with details or figures which are readily obtainable from the Treasurer's tables and from other sources.

Mr. MACARTNEY: We have not got a copy of the Statement.

The TREASURER: I am afraid it will not be circulated until after it is delivered.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I rise to a point of order. The document which is being read by the Treasurer is an important one, and I cannot hear what the hon. gentleman is saying. It is unusual to deliver the Financial Statement without circulating copies among hon. members.

The CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order in the matter raised by the hon. member.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Surely hon. members are entitled to hear what is said on an important matter of this sort. I cannot hear a word the hon. member says.

The TREASURER: I will endeavour to speak a little louder.

Conditions arising from war and drought combined during the year to make an exceedingly difficult situation. The increased cost of stores used by Government departments; the higher cost of maintenance of the charitable and other institutions; the greater amount of overtime worked in consequence of the enlistment in the Australian Imperial Forces of men from the Government services; the increased remuneration to Government employees necessitated by the upward tendency of the cost of living; the higher cost involved in the maintenance of State children; the increased amount required for outdoor relief; the necessity of providing assistance for settlers who suffered in the drought; the cost of railway concessions to soldiers of the Australian Imperial Forces; and the cost of other services arising out of the war—all contributed to an unavoidable increase in expenditure during the year as compared with previous years.

It will be seen, however, from the table following that, in spite of the disturbing factors, the Estimates of total revenue and expenditure submitted to Parliament last year were remarkably accurate:—

	Esti- mated.	Actual.	
	£	£	
Revenue ...	7,687,755	7,708,365	Over the estimate, £18,610
Expenditure	7,683,319	7,671,573	Under the estimate, £11,746
Surplus ...	4,436	34,792	

The following tables disclose the increases and decreases of revenue and expenditure as compared with the Estimates laid before Parliament last year. I ask the Committee to take the tables as read, and allow them to be embodied in the report of the speech.

The CHAIRMAN: Is it the pleasure of the Committee that the tables be taken as read?

HON. J. TOLMIE (*Toowoomba*): I do not think they should be taken as read under the circumstances. In fact, we would be

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justified in taking exception to the hon. gentleman reading his speech. It has become the practice to allow the Treasurer to read his Financial Statement simply because a copy has generally been handed to each member before the delivery of the Statement, and as we have not a copy of the Statement, I think the hon. gentleman should read the tables.

MR. FORSYTH: When will we have copies of the Statement?

THE TREASURER: This evening, if possible—as soon as the Government Printer can send them on.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Well, we will take no exception to the reading of the larger tables being omitted, relying upon the promise of

the hon. gentleman to furnish us with copies of the Statement as soon as possible.

THE TREASURER: The tables are as follow:—

Head of Revenue.	REVENUE.			
	Esti- mated.	Actual.	In- crease.	De- crease.
	£	£	£	£
Commonwealth	848,547	838,324	...	15,223
Taxation ...	1,243,000	1,455,358	212,358	...
Land ...	994,208	914,825	...	49,383
Mining ...	27,000	28,199	1,199	...
Railways ...	3,950,000	3,756,901	...	193,099
Other receipts ...	625,000	687,738	62,738	...
Totals ...	7,687,755	7,706,365	276,310	257,705
Net excess	£18,610			£18,610

EXPENDITURE.

	Appropriation.	Expended.	Saving.	Excess.
	£	£	£	£
Schedules ...	210,385	200,643	9,742	...
Interest on public debt ...	2,266,362	2,197,169	59,193	...
Executive and Legislative	19,437	19,702	...	265
Chief Secretary ...	117,336	122,451	...	5,115
Home Secretary ...	854,403	862,169	...	7,766
Public Works ...	197,100	205,553	...	8,453
Justice ...	95,532	100,508	...	4,976
Treasurer ...	238,152	243,120	...	4,968
Public Lands ...	210,643	183,375	27,268	...
Agriculture and Stock ...	77,839	125,430	...	47,591
Public Instruction ...	644,867	592,178	52,689	...
Mines ...	86,043	69,055	16,988	...
Railways ...	2,675,220	2,750,220	...	75,000
Total ...	7,683,319	7,671,573	165,990	154,134
Net saving ...		£11,746		£11,746

The increase in the rates of taxation imposed by Parliament last year resulted in a very considerable addition to the revenue.

The anticipated revenue from the income tax was exceeded—due to the fact that after the estimate was made the market for wool, hides, tallow, and all produce usually exported, recovered in a remarkable manner, while the price for live stock went very high. The realisation of good prices in these products counterbalanced to some extent the losses by drought, and the mercantile and trading community substantially benefited in this State by the expenditure by the Commonwealth Government of war loan money.

My estimate of land tax was more than realised, notwithstanding the number of remissions of tax granted to landowners who had suffered losses during the year. The number of these remissions was 866, and the amount of tax remitted £20,268.

The failure to realise the estimate of revenue expected from public lands was largely accounted for by the decision of the Government to allow the rents of selections held by men who had enlisted to be deferred while such men are on active service.

The earnings of the Railway Department suffered severely, owing to the falling off of agricultural produce, wool, and live stock traffic, caused by the drought. In addition to the effects of the reduced traffic, the revenue also suffered in consequence of the liberal concessions made on the conveyance of stock from drought-stricken areas to regions more favourably situated. A rebate of 33½

per cent. each way was allowed, the amount involved for the year being £18,181. Fodder for starving stock was also carried at especially low rates, a reduction of 75 per cent. off the ordinary rates—equivalent in freight to £40,566 for the year.

The departments responsible for the greatest excess of expenditure, as compared with the Estimates, were the Department of Railways and the Department of Agriculture and Stock. In connection with the former an unforeseen increase in the cost of stores and fuel, and a heavy charge for extra overtime worked by the staff, which was not anticipated when the Estimates were being prepared, account for part of the excess.

The excess expenditure by the Department of Agriculture and Stock is explained by the assistance granted to farmers to help them tide over the bad time. The principal items are particularised as follows:—

	£
Purchase of seed wheat and expenses of storage and distribution ...	33,138
Purchase of seed maize and expenses of storage and distribution ...	570
Purchase of fodder to assist farmers during the drought ...	13,200
Purchase of cane plants for the assistance of settlers on the Burdekin ...	147
Total ...	£47,055

The goods mentioned were supplied at cost price. Repayments will be made in due course.

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LOAN FUND.

The following table gives particulars of the loan cash transactions for the year:—

	Current Account.	Extended Deposits.	Total Credit.
	£	£	£
Cash balance at credit, 1st July, 1915	2,014,023	143,734	2,157,757
Repayments of extended deposits by banks	3,313	3,313	
Repayments by local authorities, central sugar-mills, railways, etc., etc.	271,069		
Receipts under the Land Sales Proceeds Act of 1906	17,793		
Net proceeds of sale of debentures issued under Loan Act of 1914	522,414		
Balance of proceeds of conversion loan issued in February, 1915, under Loan Act of 1913	166,755		
Loan from Commonwealth of Australia	1,200,000		
EXPENDITURE—	£		
Railways	2,034,613		
Buildings	127,924		
Water supply	612		
Abattoirs	1,684		
Sugar-mills	302,783		
Loans to local bodies	537,918		
Purchase of diamond drill plants	4,759		
Wire netting	8,367		
Industrial Undertakings	43,174		
	3,061,839	140,421	
Legal expenses account conversion loan issued in February, 1915	75		
Debentures issued under Loan Acts 1875 to 1882, due 1st July, 1915, redeemed	327,300		
	3,389,214		
Less amount overcharged for depreciation and charges in connection with conversion loan	65	3,389,149	
Cash balance at credit, 30th June, 1916	806,218	140,421	946,639

It will be seen that two-thirds of the loan money expended was absorbed in railway building, and a considerable sum has been spent in completing the two large sugar-mills in the North which are now in commission. More than half a million pounds sterling was advanced to local bodies during the year, and was used in connection with harbour improvements, water supply works, sewerage and sanitation works, and bridge-building. Advances from the loan fund to local bodies have been confined to works of outstanding importance or urgency.

Members of the Committee will not need to be reminded how difficult it is for Governments to raise loans in these times for public works. Literally, all available money supplies in Australia and in the United Kingdom are being used for war purposes; and both the Imperial authorities and the Commonwealth Government are exercising, in the interests of war finance, a very rigid control over the money market, and drastically regulating all new issues of public and private stock and securities.

Thus in view of the demands made on the loan market for war purposes, and realising that all money raised even for necessary public works is diverted from the more important object, the Government saw that it was justified in proceeding with its public works policy only so far as such policy would enable the State to deal with works which would brook of no delay and at the same time allow us to cope with post-war problems. To meet these conditions the loan expenditure has been considerably curtailed, and the works policy modified to enable the maximum amount of effort to be exerted in the direction indicated.

Meanwhile, in order to raise the money necessary to carry out this policy, the Government co-operated with the Governments of Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, and Tasmania in entering into an agreement with the Commonwealth Government, under which the Commonwealth is for a term to be the sole borrower overseas for the Commonwealth and the five States concerned. Under the agreement the Commonwealth Government undertakes to raise for distribution among the five States £8,940,000 during the calendar year 1916, and £7,450,000 during the year 1917.

In order to carry out its obligations to the States, the Commonwealth Government made its first public appearance as a borrower in London during June with a 5½ per cent. loan of £4,000,000; the issue, which was at par, being a complete success.

We have received from the Commonwealth Government, up to the end of June—by virtue of our agreement—the sum of £1,200,000, leaving a balance due for the remainder of the calendar year of £1,362,000, less the State's proportion of expenses incurred by the Commonwealth Government in raising the loans. The latter sum, and the amount we are to receive from the Commonwealth during 1917, together with repayments from local bodies, will enable the Government to proceed with the policy which has been adopted.

In carrying out the policy of reduced loan expenditure, it will be necessary to suspend operations on some of the railway construction works in order that work may be concentrated on lines which will conform to the conditions laid down—that is to say, we shall have to concentrate our energies on lines which will open land for settlement when the war is over.

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The following railway lines are at present under construction:—

	Miles.
Southern Division—	
*Munbilla-Mount Edwards (2nd section)	11
*Roma-Orallo	29
Enoggera-Terror's Creek (2nd section)	24
Extension beyond Tara	50
Goondoon-Kalliwa	31
Murgon-Proston	26
Branch to Winderera	12
Great Western Railway—	
*Section "A"—Cheepie-Bulloo River	48
	— 231
Central Division—	
*Mount Morgan-Dawson Valley (3rd section)	25
Rockhampton-Alton Downs	18
Great Western Railway—	
*Section B—Emmet to near Welford	32
North Coast Railway—	
*Section A — Kunwarara-Marlborough	18
	— 93
Northern Division—	
*Malanda-Millaa Millaa (2nd section)	4
*Tamoulin-Cedar Creek	5
*Koolamarra-Mount Cuthbert	28
Great Western Railway—	
*Section C—Winton to Elderslie	37
*Section D—Butru toward Sulie-man Creek	20
North Coast Railway—	
*Section B — Koumala - Camilla Creek	26
*Section B—Mackay-St. Helens... ..	31
*Section D—Rollingstone-Ingham	34
*Section E—Mooliba-Innisfail	12
	— 197
Total	521

It is anticipated that all those lines marked with an asterisk will be completed and opened for traffic during the financial year.

TRUST FUNDS.

The trust fund transactions during last year exceeded in volume those of any previous year. This is accounted for by the increased advances made by the Agricultural Bank to farmers and settlers—£369,044 having been advanced last year as compared with £296,396 in 1914-15, and £228,101 in 1913-14. The central sugar-mills' financial operations have also increased in magnitude owing to the completion of the new sugar-mill at Babinda. A large sum of money was required also to finance the wheat and butter transactions. The business in connection with both these matters has now been completed. The inclusion in the trust accounts of the funds of the various State enterprises has increased the importance of these accounts. Full particulars of the finances of these enterprises will be referred to later.

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THE GOVERNMENT SAVINGS BANK.

The following table gives particulars of the operations of the Government Savings Bank during the year, as compared with previous years:—

Year.	Excess of Deposits over Withdrawals.	Number of Depositors.	Total Amount to Credit.
	£		£
1906-7	286,329	92,912	4,543,104
1907-8	252,901	100,324	4,921,881
1908-9	103,693	106,827	5,158,219
1909-10	323,603	114,720	5,622,986
1910-11	597,153	127,219	6,376,969
1911-12	780,758	139,091	7,342,811
1912-13	652,768	154,957	8,213,116
1913-14	890,235	176,941	9,354,998
1914-15	1,031,287	192,402	10,663,856
1915-16	331,653	204,223	11,338,568

The excess of deposits over withdrawals for the year was £331,653, as compared with £1,031,287 in the previous year—the falling-off being chiefly due to withdrawals by depositors for investment in the Commonwealth war loan. (Hear, hear!) The number of depositors, however, increased, and the total amount of funds to the credit of depositors on 30th June, 1916, was £11,338,568, which is the highest amount so far reached. The sphere of usefulness of this institution will be greatly extended when the bank is reorganised under the scheme of the Bill now before Parliament.

RAILWAYS.

The capital expenditure on the State railways to 30th June is shown in the following table:—

To 30 June—	On opened lines.	On unopened lines.	Total Expenditure
1912 ...	£27,751,227	£2,308,664	£30,059,891
1913 ...	31,823,257	2,248,656	34,076,913
1914 ...	33,845,676	1,875,878	35,721,554
1915 ...	35,464,770	1,868,160	37,332,930
1916 ...	36,838,440	2,374,150	39,212,590

The revenue for the year ended 30th June, in comparison with the two previous years (exclusive of the Etheridge Railway), was as follows:—

	1913-14.	1914-15.	1915-16.
	£	£	£
Gross earnings	3,660,022	3,832,003	3,745,350
Deduct working expenses ...	2,371,261	2,401,679	2,745,061
Producing a net revenue of ...	£1,288,761	£1,430,324	£1,000,239

It will be seen that, exclusive of the Etheridge Railway, and after paying all working and maintenance expenses, the net revenue for the year amounted to £1,000,239, which is equal to £2 14s. 3½d. per cent. on the capital invested in railways now open for traffic, or £2 11s. 0½d. per cent. on the total capital expended on open and unopened lines. The amount required to cover interest on railway capital is £1,509,685. Consequently, the deficit on the year's working amounted to £509,396. This deficit was quite unavoidable owing to the reduced earnings on the railways, the increased cost of stores, material,

and fuel; the increased freight charged by shipping companies for railway stores and fuel shipped to Northern ports; the increased cost of labour due to placing the employees of the Railway Department on a footing comparable with those of other States; and the losses on new lines built under the previous Administration.

The Commissioner for Railways has pointed out that it cannot be expected that the rates and fares in Queensland, with her great mileage of railways and sparse population, should compare with those of New South Wales or Victoria. Queensland has a population of only 137 to each mile of railway, compared with 446 in New South Wales and 369 in Victoria.

Notwithstanding the improvement in the seasonal conditions, the Commissioner is not optimistic concerning railway revenue for the current financial year. The wool and live stock traffic will not be nearly so great as in years preceding the drought, and there is considerable uncertainty too in regard to agricultural produce and coal traffic. In view of these circumstances, the Government approved of the Commissioner's proposal to supplement the railway revenue by increasing the rates on wool and sheep by 5 per cent., and on cattle by 10 per cent., and there are to be certain other small adjustments in rates to correct anomalies.

Although strict economy is being exercised in the purchase and use of stores and material, no reduction in the railway expenditure can be expected during the current year owing to the high prices ruling as a result of the war. The Railway Department is buying in markets which give the best advantage possible, but prices exceed those of normal times by anything up to 75 per cent., and these prices the Commissioner anticipates may increase rather than decrease.

STATE BUSINESS ENTERPRISES.

As a summary of the operations of the several business undertakings may be of interest, I will briefly refer to them.

STATE BUTCHERY.

Premises for the retail sale of meat were opened as follow:—

Roma street	...	12th March, 1916.
Woolloongabba	...	2nd June, 1916.
Valley	...	29th June, 1916

The number of customers served daily has averaged 2,500.

The balance-sheet to 30th September, 1916, discloses a net profit of £7,576, made up as follows:—

State butchers' shops	...	£2,865
Sales of meat to Southern buyers	£4,711	
		<u>£7,576</u>

In arriving at the profit on these shops, due provision for rent, rates, and depreciation on plant at the rate of 25 per cent. per annum has been made.

STATE COALMINE.

A coalmine has been acquired at Warra with the primary object of supplying the Railway Department with a better class of

coal for use on the Western line, and at a lower price than for coal supplied from private coalowners in other districts.

The mine is being rapidly developed to enable the output to be increased. Boring operations have proved the existence of a 6-foot seam throughout the Government property at 550 feet from the surface. A new shaft will be sunk to work this seam. When this is done, it is anticipated that all the requirements of the Western line will be supplied from the mine.

The expenditure on the mine to date has been £10,646, £8,000 of which has been charged to loan, and the balance to trust account. The receipts to date amount to £1,683.

STATE BATTERY.

A crushing battery consisting of five head of stampers, with the most suitable and up-to-date metal-saving appliances, is being erected at Bamford, near Pefferd, on the Chillagoe Railway, for the purpose of treating the molybdenite and wolfram ores in the district, a large proportion of which ores have been found too poor to stand the cost of conveyance from the field. The plant is nearing completion, and a dam has been built adjacent to supply the battery with water. The cost of the whole plant complete is likely to reach about £5,000. The impetus which it is expected will be given to mining in the district will make the battery self-supporting as soon as it is got into thorough working order.

STATE SAWMILLS.

The Government having decided to establish State sawmills, primarily for the supply of timber for day-labour works under the Department of Public Works and to borrowers under the Workers' Dwellings Act, satisfactory arrangements were made in December last to acquire the sawmilling properties of A. J. Raymond and Company, situated at Brisbane and Taromeo.

The Brisbane property comprised 3 acres 13 7/10 perches of land, fenced, including railway siding, sawmills, and planing-mills, offices, storage, and drying sheds and racks, caretaker's quarters and outbuildings, engines, boilers, machinery, and plant.

The Taromeo mill comprised 1,241 acres of freehold land, with standing timber thereon (pine and hardwood), sawmills, blacksmith's shop, store, manager's quarters, eight workmen's cottages, single men's quarters, tramway, well, tanks, windmill, farm cottage, and other buildings, engines, boilers, machinery, and plant.

The total amount paid for the above properties, including timber in stock at both mills, stock in general store at Taromeo, traction engine, wagons, gear, and horses, was £36,937.

The acquisition of these mills has had a marked tendency to keep down the prices of building timber within reasonable limits.

The Timber Merchants' Association at the time the State mills were purchased were considering a proposal to make a general advance in the prices of timber from 5s. to 5s. per 100 superficial feet. This increase was delayed for nearly six months owing to the position created by the establishment of

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State sawmills, thus saving many thousands of pounds to the pockets of the public. In connection with the erection of workers' dwellings this was a matter of great importance, and the saving to borrowers considerable.

The State mills, in addition to selling timber at lower prices than the Timber Association, have allowed a discount of 5 per cent. to borrowers under the Workers' Dwellings Act obtaining timber for their dwellings from the State mills.

The establishment of the State mills has been of great advantage to the Department of Public Works in its operations under the day-labour system of carrying out public works in the southern portion of the State, and will be of still greater advantage as these operations are extended.

	£
The gross sales for the period under review amount to	32,211
Wages and salaries paid ...	10,483
Amount paid to Railway Department for freight ...	3,847
Amount paid in royalties to Lands Department for timber cut on State reserves ...	1,600

The value of the stock on hand on 30th September, taken at bare cost, amounts to £12,835.

The assets allowed for at Taromeo do not include a considerable quantity of standing pine and hardwood on the mill's freeholds in excess of the quantity purchased, the realisation of which will have the effect of materially improving the position by the end of June next. Although the operations for the nine months of the existence of the mills as a State undertaking, after allowing for interest, depreciation, and all possible charges, has resulted in a net loss of £1,380, all things considered the position cannot be regarded otherwise than as satisfactory.

Every confidence is felt that the successful future of the mills is assured, and their acquirement and running as State enterprises fully justified.

STATE STATIONS.

Early in the year the Government decided to enter into the pastoral industry as a business proposition.

Up to the present the following properties have been acquired, namely:—

Mount Hutton, Leichhardt district, comprising an area of 525 square miles, carrying approximately 260 horses and 10,243 cattle. The unexpired term of the lease was ten and a-half years. The property was purchased for £73,500, and the purchase included all improvements and plant, valued at £2,322. This holding will ultimately be subdivided for close settlement, but will be used as a State station until railway communication is completed and subdivisional surveys are made.

Dillalah, Warrego district, comprising an area of 515 square miles. The stock purchased comprised 160 horses and 4,000 cattle. The price paid was £61,226, which included £9,265 for 1,090 bullocks purchased in North Queensland for Dillalah. The purchase included all improvements and plant, valued at £23,624. The lease of this property had

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expired, but owing to the suitability of the country for a depot, it was decided to retain it as a State station.

Wando Vale, North Kennedy district, comprising Wando Vale, Jamison, Bulgeri, and Kinloch leases, a total area of 778 square miles. The unexpired terms of the leases were twenty-two, thirty-five, thirty-two, and thirty-two years, respectively. The stock purchased were 350 horses and 10,000 cattle. The property was purchased for £82,000, and the price included all improvements and plant, valued at £5,620.

Other properties are under offer to the Government, and negotiations for their purchase are proceeding.

STATE ACCIDENT INSURANCE OFFICE.

The following is a brief summary of the operations of the State Accident Insurance Office for the three months' period from 1st July to 30th September, 1916:—

Premiums charged (exclusive of Government business) ...	£165,000
Number of policies ...	28,000
Premiums collected ...	150,000
Premiums in course of collection ...	15,000
Claims intimated (fatal, 27; others, 1,673) ...	1,700
Claims settled ...	1,181
Claims outstanding ...	519

Expenses—

Preliminary expenses ...	£2,750
Legal expenses (estimated at) ...	2,250
Furniture and other assets ...	2,000
Working expenses; advertising, rent, etc. ...	3,000
Salaries ...	2,575
Claims paid and outstanding ...	15,000

The earned premiums to 30th September exceeded £40,000.

Expenses and all liabilities (including nearly £8,000 non-recurring expenditure) amounted to £27,575.

On the above basis a clear profit of at least £50,000 may be expected for the year, out of which, after providing for all liabilities and carrying, say, 15 per cent. to reserves, a bonus to policy-holders of at least 15 per cent. on the premiums paid may reasonably be anticipated. This means that approximately double benefits to those ruling under the repealed Acts have been given for 15 per cent. less than the previous cost to employers.

The establishment of the office has involved the State in no outlay beyond a temporary loan of under £3,000, all of which has already been repaid.

The £20,000 provided by the Act from the consolidated revenue fund for the establishment of the office was duly paid over to the Commissioner in July, but was at once returned by him as being in his opinion not needed.

The arrangements made by which the clerks of petty sessions and other Government officers act as the agents of the State Accident Insurance Office are working admirably, especially in regard to the quick payment of small claims, a very large

number of which are finally settled by the officers in question before the papers are forwarded to Brisbane.

At 30th September the office had on deposit at the Government Savings Bank the sum of £80,000, in addition to which £50,000 Government debentures had been purchased.

Very early in the administration of this office a certain amount of difficulty arose with the larger employers, practically all of whom had been receiving commissions and other large discounts and allowances from the companies, nominally in payment for services rendered as directors or agents, but actually in reduction of the tariff rates, which the smaller employers had to pay in full.

This anomaly is now removed, and the smaller employer is placed on the same footing with regard to rates as his larger competitor. (Hear, hear !)

THE CENTRAL SUGAR MILLS.

The Babinda Mill, erected under the provisions of the Sugar Works Act of 1911, commenced operations last year and treated 47,800 tons of cane. The mill has now been taken over by the Corporation of the Treasurer, and the crop to be harvested this year is estimated to exceed 140,000 tons of cane—which will constitute a record for any mill in Queensland.

The South Johnstone Mill—a duplicate of Babinda mill and erected under the same Act—commences operations this year, and it is estimated that the crop to be harvested will exceed 40,000 tons of cane; whilst the present crop prospects for next year are considered good. The erection of these two mills has led to a wonderful development of the areas concerned, and under favourable economic conditions they should prove successful business undertakings.

The financial results of the operations of the Gin Gin and Mount Bauple mills were unsatisfactory. Notwithstanding an increased price being obtained for raw sugar the quantity and quality of the crop were insufficient to allow of the mill making a profit. In view of the serious effects of the drought, and the urgent need for financial assistance to farmers, these mills paid more for cane than they could afford.

The Nerang Mill showed a small profit exclusive of redemption. The Proserpine mill was the only one to make a profit after meeting its interest and redemption payments to the Treasury.

The Babinda Mill, owing to the fact that the interest for the first year is capitalised and no redemption charge is made for the first two years after the issue of the certificate of capital cost, was able to pay growers at the rate of £1 4s. 7d. per ton of cane.

Of five mills which still are indebted to the Treasury, but managing their own affairs, all except North Eton met their obligations in respect of annual instalments of interest and redemption. North Eton,

due to the serious drought, made further losses, and the present financial position of this mill is unsatisfactory.

THE PUBLIC CURATOR.

The business of the Public Curator's Office shows remarkable progress during the short period that the Act has been in operation, and the public is showing a ready appreciation of the facilities which the office now provides.

The receipts at the head office, Brisbane, for nine months ended 30th September, 1916, amount to £129,709, and the estates administered total 430. Of this number, ninety-four represent estates administered under wills, and 336 estates administered in intestacy, the total value of these estates being, approximately, £107,901.

Investments have been made from the common fund, on first mortgage of real estate, amounting to £82,610; to which is to be added a further sum of £1,560, representing advances passed but not yet paid over.

In insolvency and liquidation ninety-nine estates are in course of audit.

During the nine months' period the estates of 311 insane patients were handed over to the Public Curator to be dealt with, also eighty-seven insolvent estates, and 288 estates of persons admitted to the Diamantina Hospital, Jubilee Sanatorium, and Benevolent Asylum at Dunwich.

One thousand five hundred and five wills, covering broadly estates valued at a total of £1,000,000, were prepared and filed; 101 matters lodged for safe custody; and powers of attorney were arranged in twenty-nine cases.

It is interesting to observe that the machinery of the department is being continually used in securing to dependents under the Workers' Compensation Act the benefits to which they are entitled, and since the inception of the office a sum of £7,500 has been recovered for those concerned.

Our soldiers in particular, it might be added, benefit considerably through fully availing themselves of the department's help; and that the assistance rendered in the drawing of wills and providing legal advice free of charge is welcomed is shown by the fact that 287 soldiers' estates have been placed in the Public Curator's hands for administration.

One other feature of the office that must commend itself is the defence of poor prisoners. First offenders are in every instance furnished with legal assistance, and the cases of all who are in indifferent circumstances are conducted where any reasonable defence exists. It may also be stated that preliminary legal advice is never refused to those seeking it.

LAND SETTLEMENT.

The drought and the call of the war have each contributed to a decline in the demand for land for selection, and the figures for the year show a decrease on those of the previous

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year for the first time since the year 1903, which was the lowest since the Act of 1898 came into force. The meagre demand in 1903 was also due to drought conditions. The total area made available for selection during the financial year was 9,073,353 acres, as against 9,322,232 acres during the previous year. This area included 559,053 acres opened to agricultural selection, of which 554,073 acres were also open to perpetual lease selection; 7,337,992 acres for grazing selection; and 1,150,697 acres for prickly-pear selection. The area selected was 5,440,239 acres, including 171,639 acres as agricultural farms, 3,154 acres as unconditional selections, 101,467 acres as perpetual lease selections, 270,344 acres as prickly-pear selections, and 4,892,627 acres as grazing selections; as against 7,607,307 acres in the previous year, which included 447,227 acres as agricultural farms, 11,354 acres as unconditional selections, 15,674 acres as perpetual leases, 654,840 acres as prickly-pear selections, and 6,473,530 acres as grazing selections.

The rents due 30th September, 1915, on pastoral holdings and occupation licenses amounted to £338,726, and of this 97 per cent. was paid; and the total amount of rents on selections due on 31st March, 1916, was £538,661, of which 80 per cent. has been paid.

All sales of land by auction have been confined to perpetual lease, and they have been very successful. No sales have been made on a freehold basis. In five cases all the lots offered were sold at an advance of 407½ per cent. on the upset prices. In one case eighty lots, offered at £1,557, realised £11,826; being an advance of 659½ per cent. on upset prices.

Owing to the reasons already mentioned, selection on the closer settlement estates has also been retarded. During the year thirteen portions on Widgee and twenty-nine portions on Inkerman Estate were selected.

The Agricultural Settlers' Relief Act afforded relief to the selectors on Jimbour Estate, who had suffered from a succession of bad seasons and were unable to pay their rents. The arrears funded under this Act amounted to £13,454 for rent on seventy-seven selections, and £252 survey fees on fifty-six selections, and are payable in five to twenty years in accordance with the number of years in arrears; such payments commencing on 31st March, 1919. During the three years 1915, 1916, and 1917, no rents or survey fees will be payable, and the leases will be extended to forty-three years to cover this lapse. The rents and survey fees thus held over amount to £66,822 and £301 respectively.

Up to 30th June, 1916, the number of selectors who had enlisted was 1,058, holding 1,173 selections, with an annual rental of £21,897. As previously mentioned, these rents are not being demanded during the absence of the selectors on active service.

PRODUCTION AND TRADE.

There was a marked decrease in the cane crop harvested during last season as compared with the two previous seasons; the amount harvested totalled 1,152,516 tons of cane, which yielded 140,496 tons of raw sugar. The shortage of production was due entirely to the effects of the drought, which affected practically the whole of the sugar-producing districts of the State.

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Manufactured products of the rural industries also fell off considerably as a result of the failure of the season. The production of butter, cheese, and condensed milk diminished during 1915 as compared with 1914 by 32.29 per cent., 45.45 per cent., and 31.98 per cent. respectively.

The total area under crop was 729,588 acres, as against 792,568 in 1914; and the value of the crops was £5,023,304, as against £5,679,783 in the previous year.

The total quantity of milk obtained was approximately 70,000,000 gallons, which represented a decrease for the year of approximately 30,000,000 gallons. The number of dairy cattle used for the production of milk was reduced by 87,568.

The live stock losses through drought were very severe; the numbers also were affected by the active operations during the year of the meatworks and bacon factories. The number of horses was reduced by 56,188, cattle by 675,050, sheep by 7,179,765, and pigs by 48,851. The production of wool during the year was diminished by 24,000,000 lb. as compared with the previous year, and the value of wool produced declined by one and a-half millions sterling.

The mineral output was valued at £3,324,861, which is £348,581 more than that of the previous year. While the waning productiveness of our older goldfields has, in the absence of fresh discoveries, continued, and must continue in the future unless new finds are made, it is gratifying to find that the total value of other mineral products is increasing rapidly and is easily counterbalancing the declining gold yield. The production of copper alone now considerably exceeds in value that of gold. In copper there was last year an increase of £310,145—an improvement at the rate of over 27 per cent.; while for the first half of the current year there has been a further comparative enhanced yield to the value of £317,410, or an increase of 46 per cent. The aggregate value of all other minerals, including copper, was last year more than double that of gold, and of these during the past six months the production (exclusive of coal) was worth £1,212,301, or an increase of about 42 per cent. over that of the corresponding period of last year.

The collection of pearlshell has not been resumed since the failure of the London market at the outbreak of the war, but active operations have been in progress during the year to obtain other marine products of the reefs, chiefly béche-de-mer and trochus-shell. For both there is a keen demand, and there has been a marked increase in the quantities obtained and exported in each case. Briefly, the position of the industry is that the loss of trade in pearlshell has been almost counterbalanced by the development of the trade in trochus-shell. There has been an increase of about 70 per cent. in the number of boats licensed in the industry during the financial year as compared with the number licensed at 30th June, 1915.

The following table, relating to the productive powers of the State, and indicating the progress made during recent years and the effect of the season and the war on produc-

tion and trade, will prove of interest to members:—

		1911.	1912.	1913.	1914.	1915.
Railway earnings	£	2,885,609	3,156,759	3,530,587	3,711,365	3,795,618
Tonnage of shipping inwards	tons	2,010,781	2,024,328	2,247,434	†1,208,507	‡2,110,254
Tonnage of shipping outwards	tons	2,004,444	2,033,803	2,251,503	†1,181,261	‡2,125,396
Quantity of sugar produced*	tons	173,296	113,060	242,837	225,847	140,496
Value of raw sugar produced	£	1,940,765	1,331,686	3,519,341	3,241,749	2,402,788
Quantity of butter produced	lb.	27,858,535	30,307,339	35,199,987	37,230,240	25,456,714
Value of butter produced ...	£	1,189,783	1,483,797	1,613,305	1,667,604	1,272,836
Quantity of wool produced	lb.	142,382,269	136,878,270	154,183,114	155,478,740	130,783,277
Value of wool produced ...	£	5,580,000	5,561,000	6,296,000	6,707,000	5,122,345
Value of minerals	£	3,661,063	4,175,355	3,857,881	2,976,280	3,324,861
Number of cattle ... ..	...	5,073,201	5,210,891	5,322,033	5,455,943	4,780,893
Number of sheep ... ..	...	20,740,981	20,310,036	21,786,000	23,129,919	15,930,154
Savings Bank deposits ...	£	3,961,711	4,895,195	5,428,629	6,498,570	6,649,332
Savings Bank withdrawals	£	3,434,832	4,047,572	4,483,272	5,584,905	6,035,744
Area of land selected under the Land Act	acres	6,261,719	6,976,745	7,748,260	8,096,889	7,295,685

* 84 per cent. net titre

† Six months to 30th June only; full year not available.

‡ Year 1914-1915.

During the past year the volume of shipping visiting Brisbane, although showing a small decrease, appears to have been adequate for the requirements of trade. Comparative figures are quoted as follows:—

Year.	Number of Vessels Entered at Customs.	Net Tonnage.
1913	1,457 ...	2,832,819
1914	1,386 ...	2,828,844
1915	1,366 ...	2,484,092

The volume of trade, as indicated by the harbour dues collections, may be compared with that of previous years in the following table:—

Year ending 30th June, 1916.	Harbour Dues.
	£
1913	70,425
1914	71,047
1915	71,928
1916	64,195

Harbour improvement works have been carried on at all ports where trade has been active, but certain applications for loans for further works made by harbour boards have either not been granted, or granted in part only, owing to the difficulty of meeting such requests in view of the shortage of loan moneys.

The depth in the navigation channel in the Brisbane River has been increased from 24 feet to 26 feet at low-water springs as far up as Pinkenba, which would enable a vessel drawing 29 or 30 feet to reach the wharves there at high water. Work is being continued to extend the depth of 26 feet to Bulimba Reach; as the volume of work involved is very considerable, it will require, perhaps, two years more to do this. In this portion of the river, and in the town reaches, a depth of 24 feet has been maintained, the amount of work involved in the latter being considerable.

Generally speaking, the revenues of the various Northern harbour boards, although showing a decrease as compared with the

years immediately preceding the past year, have not suffered any very material decrease, indicating that the trade of the various ports has, as a whole, not suffered to any very large extent. It is probable that such diminution as has occurred is due more to the adverse season than to the disturbed condition of trade with Europe.

THE OUTLOOK.

The splendid rains that have fallen during the past few months over the wheat area have done an immense amount of good, and the outlook at the present moment for the coming wheat season is excellent. There is every prospect of a record wheat crop.

In North Queensland the cane crop is good; in the Mackay district it is fairly good; but in the Bundaberg district it is poor, being practically only half a crop.

During the last few months beneficial rains have afforded the dairying industry a much-needed relief. The outlook in this industry is promising at present; but it will take some considerable time to make up for the drought losses.

The pastures generally throughout Queensland are now in excellent order, and the spring rains, which have benefited a large area, will perfect the growth of grass to furnish summer requirements. The increase of sheep from lambing has not been very satisfactory, but it is hoped that the calving will show favourable results towards moderate increases in the cattle herds.

Ordinary mercantile business continues to be good, but a great deal of the turnover is due to war expenditure.

When the scheme for the Government control and betterment of the public fish supply is brought into operation, there will be a considerable development of the inshore fisheries by private enterprise in response to the demand which will undoubtedly result from the stabilising of prices and the regulating of supplies, and it is confidently hoped that, at an early date, deep-sea fishing off

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the Queensland coast will be a permanent factor in the commercial activities of the State.

ESTIMATES, 1916-17.

Great care has been exercised in preparing the Estimates for the current year. In view of the absence of elasticity on the revenue side, and the knowledge that unavoidable increases in expenditure in some directions would have to be met, the departments were asked, while formulating their estimates, to provide only for the essential requirements of the service.

As a result of careful consideration of the information submitted by the departments, I am able to forecast the following position for the current year—

Amount to be received from Commonwealth	£	£
...	...	835,000
Taxation—		
Income tax ...	700,000	
Land tax ...	280,000	
Licenses ...	90,000	
Stamp duty ...	308,000	
Totalisator tax ...	28,000	
		1,406,000
Land revenue ...		978,048
Mining receipts ...		27,500
Railways ...		3,940,000
Other receipts ...		690,000
		£7,876,548

Taxation generally is not expected to yield quite as much revenue as was realised under this heading last year. Although £43,000 more land tax is expected than was received last year, it is not thought there will be much variation in the unimproved value of land as compared with the previous year, but with the more favourable seasons the applications for exemptions and reductions of tax will cease; therefore the amount stated is considered to be a fair estimate. The land revenue is expected to increase by £34,000, due principally to the increased amount for rents of selections which become payable during the year. The railways are expected to earn £184,000 more than they earned last year: about £80,000 of this amount will be due to the adjustment of rates which have been decided on, and the balance will be due chiefly to the revenue from new lines. The revenue received by the Department of Agriculture is expected to increase as a result of repayments by farmers for seed wheat, maize, and fodder. There will be a decrease in the miscellaneous receipts, but receipts from all other sources are expected to remain almost stationary.

EXPENDITURE.

	£
Schedules ...	226,067
Executive and Legislative ...	19,791
Chief Secretary ...	166,208
Home Secretary ...	912,991
Department of Public Works ...	206,665
Department of Justice ...	96,571
The Treasurer ...	241,582
Department of Public Lands ...	236,401
Department of Agriculture and Stock ...	77,667
Department of Public Instruc- tion ...	648,723
Department of Mines ...	72,475
Department of Railways ...	2,837,560
Interest on the Public Debt ...	2,291,923
	£8,034,624

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This estimate provides for a sum of £363,051 more than the actual disbursements for last year. In this sum is included an additional payment of £94,000 for interest on the public debt, and a grant of £20,000 to the insurance fund under the Workers' Compensation Act of 1916. Full classification increases are being granted for those officers of the public service whose salaries will not thereby be extended beyond £110 per annum. Other officers in receipt of less than £200 per annum are to receive increases of not more than £10, provided such officers are recommended by the heads of departments. Under this arrangement 7,093 officers will benefit, and the total amount involved is £61,739, of which £59,417 is chargeable to the revenue fund.

Extra payments to natural and foster mothers in charge of State children, which were granted during 1915, and the increased subsidies payable to orphanages, necessitate an extra expenditure this year of approximately £25,000.

It will cost approximately £43,000 more this year to finance the State schools; £12,000 more for the Police Department; and about £6,000 more will be required in connection with insanity.

The Government, realising the necessity of making early preparation for the settlement of returned soldiers on the land, have placed £25,000 on the Estimates towards the preliminary expenses of this work.

A special vote of £25,000 is provided on the Estimates for the purpose of enabling the Government to make a grant in aid of returned wounded and maimed soldiers. It is learned from the Queensland War Council that 2,162 Queensland soldiers have returned from the war. A certain percentage of these have suffered permanent injuries, totally or partly incapacitating them from following their usual civil avocations. The Government will supplement the efforts of the Commonwealth Government in assisting such men.

A great many demands which cannot be ignored are made on the Government from time to time by patriotic bodies and organisations which have in hand the work of ameliorating the conditions of the soldiers and ex-service men. In addition to this, each State Government is expected to materially assist the scheme for the repatriation of Australian soldiers. A vote of £50,000 is placed on the Estimates, and is intended to enable the Government to carry out its obligations with regard to these matters.

A vote of £1,000 as a grant towards the establishment of a residential club for returned soldiers and sailors is also provided.

These votes for patriotic objects, amounting in the aggregate, as will be seen, to over £100,000, have had the effect of somewhat inflating the estimated expenditure, but it is believed that Parliament will not hesitate to approve of the proposals and make the necessary appropriations.

The estimates of expenditure in all departments have been cut down to an irreducible minimum; but, notwithstanding

this, the balance-sheet shows an excess of expenditure over revenue. The following figures reveal the position:—

Estimated expenditure ...	£8,034,624
Estimated revenue ...	£7,876,548
Deficit ...	£158,076

To meet this shortage it is proposed—

- (a) To slightly adjust the incidence of the income tax by providing two additional resting places in the progressive scale for incomes earned by personal exertion and incomes derived from the produce of property, and an additional resting place in the progressive scale for incomes of absentees; and applying a higher rate of tax to the incomes affected by the new resting places; and
- (b) By imposing a super-tax equal to 20 per cent. increase on the tax payable on all taxable incomes from £200 upwards, so that all incomes up to £400 shall be exempt from such super-tax. The super-tax is to cease to operate after the year in which peace is declared.

An amendment of the Income Tax Acts is to be submitted to allow deductions from incomes of all contributions in cash or kind to the repatriation fund and donations of £5 and over to the patriotic funds; to increase the deduction which is allowed in respect of children under seventeen years of age from £15 to £20; and to make the law less ambiguous with reference to the position of certain companies in relation to their obligation to pay income tax.

It is anticipated that these alterations in the income tax will produce an additional £160,000, which will have the effect of transforming the estimated deficit into a surplus of £1,924.

It is a subject for congratulation that, in the face of immense difficulties arising out of circumstances over which the Government has no control, it is still possible, with the exercise of extreme caution and economy, to present proposals which will enable the Government to meet all its just obligations and still balance its accounts.

Mr. Bertram, I move—

“That towards making good the supplies necessary to defray His Majesty's public expenses and making an addition to the public revenue—

It is desirable—

That there be charged, levied, collected, and paid for each year, on all income derived from personal exertion—

If the total income subject to the tax—

Exceeds £3,000 and does not exceed £4,500—18d. in each and every £1.

Exceeds £4,500 and does not exceed £6,000—21d. in each and every £1.

Exceeds £6,000—24d. in each and every £1.

On all income derived from property—

If the total income subject to tax—

Exceeds £3,000 and does not exceed £4,500—20d. in each and every £1.

Exceeds £4,500 and does not exceed £6,000—24d. in each and every £1.

Exceeds £6,000—27d. in each and every £1.

On the incomes of all absentees—

If the total income subject to tax—

Exceeds £3,000 and does not exceed £4,500—24d. in each and every £1.

Exceeds £4,500—27d. in each and every £1.

“That there be charged, levied, collected, and paid for the year 1916, and for every year thereafter during the continuance of the present war, including the year in which peace is proclaimed, in addition to income tax payable under the Income Tax Act of 1902 as amended by subsequent Acts, a super-tax in respect of the annual amount of the taxable incomes of all persons at the rate of twenty pounds per centum on the amount of the income tax (after a further deduction of £200 from such incomes) payable under the said Act as so amended.”

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported progress, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

TREASURER'S FINANCIAL TABLES.

The TREASURER laid on the table the tables relating to the Treasurer's Financial Statement for 1916-17.

Ordered to be printed.

MONEY LENDERS BILL.

INTRODUCTION IN COMMITTEE.

HON. J. A. FIELLY (*Paddington*), in moving—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the law with respect to persons carrying on business as money-lenders,”

said: The object of the Bill, as stated by him yesterday, was to have some [4.30 p.m.] Governmental control over the business of money-lenders. As the transactions between borrowers and lenders had been found not to work as satisfactorily as they might, legislation was necessary, and in effect they were following the lines laid down in other parts of the Empire. Briefly, provision was made so that a court of ordinary civil jurisdiction might inquire into any transactions between the lender and the borrower, and might, if necessary, compel the lender to repay a sum of money; or, on the other hand, to modify the terms of the agreement. Another matter of some importance in these days of time-payment business was that the time purchasers would come under the same supervision. The Bill really protected the lender to the same extent as the borrower, only it insisted that he should only ask for a fair and reasonable interest on money, or on

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goods, which he had given, and, perhaps, the third object was a minor one and it would affect the debt-collecting agent. It was the practice with the debt-collecting agent in sending out notice for prompt payment of debts to add a charge of 2s. 6d., 5s., or 10s. as a sort of super tax.

Mr. BARNES: He cannot enforce it.

HON. J. A. FIDELLY: The Bill provided that there should be a penalty for asking for it.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. J. A. FIDELLY: The trouble was that the average individual was bluffed—to use the vernacular—by the letter from the money-lender or the collecting-agent, and they knew debt-collecting firms thrived on that particular business by frightening unfortunate borrowers into paying a few shillings extra for the letter. This Bill proposed to impose a penalty, so that agents would not endeavour to obtain that money wrongfully. He thought he had covered the whole ambit of the Bill. He had omitted, perhaps, to state that it was not proposed to fix a maximum amount of interest to be charged. They had such a respect for the police magistrates and the different court officials that they thought they were quite competent to properly adjust the rates chargeable.

Mr. VOWLES: You are not protecting the citizen.

Mr. MURPHY: How could the Government fix the rate of interest? They can't fix their own rate.

HON. J. A. FIDELLY: Very possibly they might have conflicting decisions, but that was a lesser evil than the arbitrary fixation of a maximum percentage of interest; it was the lesser evil of the two. Personally, he could not see how they could fix definitely a maximum percentage. Perhaps with the aid of hon. members opposite they might arrive at some satisfactory maximum amount, and at a later stage of the Bill he would be quite prepared to accept such an amendment, but at present he could not see how they could arrive at it, and he thought it better in every case to leave it to the magistrate, who, after making close inquiries into the transaction, would arrive at a fair decision both to the lender and to the borrower.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Before the motion went through he wished to say a word or two upon it. Yesterday the hon. gentleman told them a message from the Governor would disclose the relations existing between himself and the Governor.

HON. J. A. FIDELLY: No. I said, "You will have a message from the Governor tomorrow."

HON. J. TOLMIE: Of course they were naturally disappointed that they had not got that information.

HON. J. A. FIDELLY: Don't reflect on the Governor.

HON. J. TOLMIE: They took it, at any rate, that the hon. gentleman had made an ample apology, otherwise he would not have received the message. The Minister had pointed out three of the main features of the measure, but one did not prove to be a main feature at all. The one he referred to was the collection of the fee of 5s.

HON. J. A. FIDELLY: That is not an important feature.

HON. J. TOLMIE: As the hon. gentleman knew, that charge could not be enforced,

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and he thought there were very few persons in the State who were not aware of that fact. When they were asked to pay up their account by a collector and there was 5s. added on as the collecting fee, they were quite well aware that there was no necessity for them to pay the 5s., and they did not pay it.

HON. J. A. FIDELLY: Is it not just as well to make it clear?

HON. J. TOLMIE: It struck him that the Government were out to get as much praise as they could from the public in this matter by putting a feature of this kind in the Bill. They thought it was going to impress the public, but he thought that would hardly be the effect when the public already knew there was no necessity to pay the 5s. Then the Bill appeared to be quite unsatisfactory in regard to the fact that there was not going to be any maximum rate of interest specified. The Government might have the courage, at any rate, to say what they considered was the maximum rate of interest beyond which no charge should be made.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What do you consider should be a fair maximum?

HON. J. TOLMIE: He was not called upon to express an opinion on the subject, but an eminent banking authority, as the hon. gentleman had been, ought to be well enough versed to enlighten the House upon it, and ought to be in a position to impart that information to his colleagues in the Cabinet so that they might have intimated what they thought was a fair and reasonable rate to be charged, because, without such a maximum in the Bill, it was going to make "confusion worse confounded." The hon. gentleman said the police magistrates were going to be allowed to decide as to what was a fair and proper charge to be made. In connection with an arrangement come to between a borrower and a lender at a time the borrower went to the lender, he would tell him he was willing to pay a certain specified sum, knowing at that moment that he was going to ask the court to intervene between himself and the man who was giving him the accommodation. That was what the position was going to be, and it would injure borrowers to a very great extent, because lenders, being entirely at the mercy of the borrowers in this respect, would in many cases refuse to make advances in circumstances where people might be very much in need of money. If the Government stated there was to be a certain maximum beyond which no person would be allowed to pay interest, it would be ever so much more satisfactory to both parties, and would lead to business being conducted with more amicable relations. The hon. gentleman was going to increase litigation. He was offering inducements for every transaction to be brought up before the court for the purpose of being adjudicated on, and that was certainly not going to be for the improvement of commercial relations.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The very fear of that happening would lessen the evil.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Perhaps it appeared to the hon. gentleman that that was so. He would like the Minister in charge of the

Bill to tell them if there was anything further in the measure of which they should have some knowledge.

Hon. J. A. FIBELLY : What do you suggest ?

Hon. J. TOLMIE : It appeared to him that this was an attempt on the part of the Government to hang out the three golden balls, judging from the statement that had just been supplied by the Treasurer.

Hon. J. A. FIBELLY : They will be making an advance on the Opposition policy. (Laughter.)

Hon. J. TOLMIE : They had a good policy to advance upon. It appeared to him that the Government were investing in a pawnbroker's business. They had been in office eighteen months and came down and proposed to make a very heavy impost upon the people. They had used such measures as this for the purpose of collecting additional revenue. One measure which was said to be introduced to ameliorate the condition of the people had turned out to be a money-making transaction, and the Government had refused to deal with estates in which they could not make a profit.

Hon. J. A. FIBELLY : No.

Hon. J. TOLMIE : Was that going to be the object of the Bill before them ?

Hon. J. A. FIBELLY : The hon. gentleman is very suspicious.

Hon. J. TOLMIE : They were all suspicious of anything that emanated from the hon. gentleman.

Hon. J. A. FIBELLY : That is unworthy of you.

Hon. J. TOLMIE : It might be unworthy, but their trusting natures had been imposed upon by the hon. gentleman on so many occasions that it was necessary that they should be very chary about any statements which he made. They would like to know if the measure contained any provision by which fees were to be charged by the Government in connection with the administration of the Act.

Mr. MURPHY : The Government will do it for nothing.

Hon. J. TOLMIE : He did not agree with the hon. member, because, up to the present time the Government had done nothing for nothing. The hon. gentleman should state whether there was any provision in the Bill by which the Government was going to increase the taxation which had been placed upon the people. They had had an additional land tax and income tax brought down to-day, and they had super-taxes placed upon those who were fortunate enough to be in a position to pay the taxes.

Hon. J. A. FIBELLY : I can give you my assurance that we do not want to get money or revenue from this measure.

Hon. J. TOLMIE : He would not take the hon. gentleman's assurance on that point, because he knew the Government were absolutely in want of money. He thought it was desirable that they should know if the Bill was introduced for the purpose of raising additional revenue.

* Mr. MURPHY (*Burke*) : The object of the Bill was no doubt a very good one, but it seemed to him that the protection which the Assistant Minister for Justice hoped to give the borrower under the Bill was already open to him. A man could take his case into court at the present time. The reason that the money-lender had been able to squeeze the borrower in the past was because the borrower did not care about going into court. He had lived on a goldfield and he knew that. He knew the case of a public servant up North who owed £9, and he got a "stiff," or, in other words, a summons. He was taken to court and the magistrate gave a verdict for the plaintiff, and said that the money was to be repaid at the rate of 2s. 6d. a month. That was a public servant getting £200 a year, and he had to pay back his debt of £9 at the rate of 2s. 6d. a month. Any man, therefore, could get full protection under the law as it stood to-day, and it was only the fact that they did not want to go into court that the money-lender had been able to squeeze them. At the present time if a man got a note asking him to pay a certain debt, with 5s. added for collection, he generally took no notice of it, but simply tore it up. He would await eventualities. Perhaps a summons would come along. If the debtor's finances were not too good he would go down to the court and ask for time. That was all that the Minister was proposing to give to the borrower in his Bill. The ordinary debt collector charged 5s. for issuing a notice, but a lawyer generally charged 10s. 6d. He had known debt collectors to charge as much as 50 per cent. of the full amount for collecting bad debts. He had lived on a goldfield and he knew that debt collectors sent notices trying to get their money in. When the Bill was put on the statute-book they would talk a lot about it on the public platform, but it would be like a lot more Bills that were passed, and it would not provide any more than the law provided to-day.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*) : He did not see any need for the introduction of the Bill at all, because it did not provide any more than they had in the existing law with regard to money-lenders. He thought the Bill should state what was a legal rate of interest and what would be considered an unconscionable or immoral rate of interest. That feature was missing from the Bill altogether. As the hon. member for Burke pointed out, all the remedies which they were likely to get under the Bill were already in existence. Any court could review an immoral contract or an unconscionable contract. He did not believe in men being allowed to practise usury. He believed in a man getting a fair return for his money, but he had no time for the man who wanted to bleed everybody he lent money to. Perhaps the Government would find it necessary to fix the rate of interest at which they could borrow themselves, because they were so unpopular in the country that they would find that they would have to pay a high rate for the money they borrowed. It was better to put in a maximum rate of interest. They could say that no one was entitled to charge more than 10 per cent. interest or something of that kind. With regard to the hiring system, he did not know what that had to do with a money-lender. When a man lent out goods he had to get a return for it extended over a certain period. They had to take into consideration the depreciation of the goods and the risk of bad debts.

Mr. Vowles.]

and the inconvenience and loss suffered. If they were going to interfere with existing contracts then it would mean that the purchasers would have to pay a higher price. If they interfered with firms like the Massey-Harris Company or those which lent pianos or other articles costing £100 or more, then an increased price would be put on the article if they could not get it in interest. He did not believe in a hirer being able to confiscate all payments made just because the man who bought the goods was not able to pay up his instalment. There should be some protection to the customer in that case. So far as the debt-collecting business was concerned it was too paltry to consider in Parliament. It was suggested that people were being gulled. Would it not be better to let the public know by Act of Parliament that they need not make any of the payments that they were asked for by debt collectors? There were debt-collecting agencies who charged a fee for collecting money and issued a bit of blue paper. That bit of blue paper was only bluff. He knew from experience that if they sent a threatening letter to a man asking him to pay a debt, and putting on a fee as well, then they would not get the money. It was far better to write a reasonable letter to a man asking him to pay the debt. If they approached him in a friendly way they would get the money, but if they threatened him they would get nothing. It was really contempt of court to send a blue paper to a debtor demanding money, because it was done to pretend that it was a process of the court when it was really not so at all.

Hon. J. A. FIELLY: This Bill provides a penalty for that.

Mr. VOWLES: It was not worth arguing about. There was no occasion to introduce legislation to deal with money-lending, because it was the law to-day. It would be better to define what was a reasonable rate of interest. If the Government took that responsibility, they would know where they stood. Suppose they fixed 10 per cent. as the maximum, they would know they could not charge any more. If they did not have the rate fixed, then one magistrate would consider 10 per cent. a fair thing, and another one might allow 12½ per cent. It would simply lead to chaos. At the present time, if a money-lending contract was entered into, and it was iniquitous or usurious, then it could be dealt with by the law.

Mr. BARNES (*Warwick*): The measure might be a very harmless one, indeed, judging by the way it was introduced, but they might find somewhere in some of the clauses that there was something that would be to the detriment of the good and well-being of the people. He thought they should get more information from the Minister, because anyone conversant with debt collecting must know that the first procedure was to send a letter. If that could not be done, then another course would be followed, which would not be so agreeable to the debtor. Frequently letters of the nature referred to by the Minister were sent out of mere kindly feeling and as a reminder. If a charge was made, that was the easiest way to consult the interests of the debtor. The alternative was a summons to the ordinary court.

Hon. J. A. FIELLY: Do you justify making an illegal charge?

[*Mr. Vowles.*]

Mr. BARNES: No, he did not. No doubt, the full intention of the measure would be disclosed later on.

Hon. J. A. FIELLY: Yes, in a few minutes.

Mr. BARNES: Probably the effect of the measure would be for money-lenders to divert their money into other channels. Perhaps that was what was intended. Perhaps it was intended that they should put their money into the Savings Bank. Men were going to be discouraged from lending to the needy. He knew people in times of need had to go to money-lenders to obtain money. If they were going to surround the making of advances to individuals with difficulties, then those moneys would go into banks and lending institutions for investment, or would go into the Savings Bank. Probably the hon. gentleman's idea was that the money should be diverted into that channel, so that the Government may have very much larger sums to advance in their own way. He believed that deep down in the mind of the Minister was a desire to accumulate funds in order that the Government might have an opportunity of making advances.

Hon. J. A. FIELLY: You misjudge us shockingly.

Mr. BARNES: He could only judge them by things that had happened. He believed there was room for some change in connection with the time-payment system. It frequently happened that a man made many payments, and failed with the last payment, and that sometimes that failure led to the forfeiture of the article purchased. There was probably room for some consideration in that connection.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to a resolution.

The resolution was agreed to.

FIRST READING.

On the motion of HON. J. A. FIELLY, the Bill was read a first time, and its second reading made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

FRUIT CASES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL'S AMENDMENT.

(*Mr. Bertram, Maree, in the chair.*)

On clause 4—“*Sale in lots or packages*”—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE moved—That the Council's amendment in this clause be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had agreed to the Council's amendment.

The report was adopted; and the Bill was ordered to be returned to the Council by message in the usual form.

FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): The Bill the second reading of which I am about to move deals mostly with the remedying of imperfections which have been discovered in the present Act in the course of administration. We propose in this measure to abolish the districts which are at present constituted under the Factories and Shops Act. Under the present law certain districts are proclaimed from time to time by the Governor in Council, and the provisions of the Act then come into operation with respect to those districts. It is thought that it will be more convenient if the Act is made to apply to the whole of the State, and the Governor in Council is allowed by proclamation to exempt any district or any class of business from the operation of the measure. Under the existing Act the people concerned in the districts to which the measure applies can take a ballot as to what day they shall observe as a half-holiday in each week. It is considered that it will be a distinct improvement if we adopt a certain day as a universal half-holiday, and the information in the possession of the department proves that the Saturday half-holiday is the one which is the most popular, and which applies to almost all the most important districts. It is believed that it will lead to convenience of administration if Saturday is made a universal half-holiday throughout Queensland, and that such an arrangement will not cause any inconvenience to the people concerned.

This measure further provides for the registration of shops as well as factories. At the present time only factories are registered. If shops are also registered, that will lead to the elimination of certain abuses which have been discovered by officers of the Factories and Shops Department. There are a certain class of shops which are supposed to be exempt shops, but which on inquiry are discovered not to be exempt shops. The idea is that the registration of all shops and factories will conduce to better supervision. Shopkeepers will be asked to furnish returns giving certain information. Those returns are not of a complicated nature, nor will they be difficult to compile, and they will furnish necessary and useful information to the department. This registration of shops was asked for by a deputation from the Grocers' Association which waited upon me a few weeks ago, and I do not think it will be opposed by any shopkeepers.

We are also providing for more satisfactory sanitary arrangements in connection with premises which are subject to the provisions of the Bill. There are entirely new provisions in this measure dealing with the arrangements for sanitation. All the sections in the present Act dealing with that subject are being eliminated, and new provisions are proposed dealing with cleanliness, sanitary conveniences, the overcrowding of factories and shops, ventilation, eating accommodation, and various other matters affecting health, all of which are introduced for the safety and welfare of the employees in factories and shops.

The measure introduces a new feature with regard to closing hours of shops. There has been a strong desire to do away with the

late evening in many parts of Queensland. Some of the shopowners who are members of the Traders' Association appear to be agreeable to do away with the late evening in the week, and so have no late night for their employees. But we do not arbitrarily enforce the provision to do away with the late evening. What we propose is that where shopowners and employees agree to do away with the late evening that agreement may form part of the award of an industrial board or arbitration court, and that it shall then be recognised by all shops of that class, none of them being allowed to keep open during that evening. The owners of one class of shops in Brisbane just after the war broke out arrived at an understanding with their employees to close their premises at 5 o'clock in the evening, but they suspended that arrangement during the operation of the war. If it had not been for the war, that arrangement would have been in operation in Brisbane at the present time. It is considered a proper thing to give the shopowners and their employees an opportunity to make such an arrangement if they wish to do so.

Mr. MACARTNEY: What clause provides for that?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I do not know that I can indicate the clause just at this moment, as I have not got the clauses marked.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: It is clause 17, is it not?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Yes. That clause is an amendment of section 51 of the present Act, and contains this proviso—

"Provided that, in cases where industrial awards provide that the ordinary working hours of employees shall cease at an earlier hour than that prescribed as the closing hour herein, such ceasing time shall be regarded as the closing hour for the shops or classes of shops affected by such awards."

I want members to understand that this provision will only apply with the mutual consent of the people concerned. If the owners of shops and their employees come to an understanding that the shops shall close at an early hour, and that understanding is embodied in an industrial award, then the arrangement will apply to all shops of that class. If that provision were not made, and the shops which employed assistants were required to close at an early hour, then the one-man shops will be able to keep open to the detriment of those closing earlier.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: You are going to crush out the one-man shops.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: No, that is not crushing out the one-man shops. They will have the usual trading hours allowed to their larger competitors.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: It will take away the living from the owners of one-man shops.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: If the hon. gentleman can show me that, I shall be glad to hear what he has to say, but I have gone carefully into the matter, and I consider that the proposed provision will not have any such effect. If some provision like this is not made, then there will be no inducement to the shopowner who employs assistants to do away with the late evening.

Hon. E. G. Theodore.]

If a shop is worked by a man and his family, he will be able to cut into the business of a man who employs assistants, and of course he would never agree to the proposition.

Mr. MACARTNEY : What about Christmas holidays ?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS : There is a provision in clause 17 for keeping open till 10 o'clock on the two days preceding Christmas. This provision of which I have been speaking relates principally to ordinary late closing night in every week, and not to the two particular days before Christmas.

Then there is a new provision dealing with the stamping of Chinese manufactured furniture. The evil of Chinese manufactured furniture has been very pronounced, particularly in Brisbane. I do not know that it affects country towns to any great extent, but those concerned in the furniture trade have been very urgent in endeavouring to get an amendment of the law relating to that particular matter, and we provide for very stringent provisions regarding the stamping of furniture—whether it is manufactured by Europeans or by Chinese labour.

Hon. J. TOLMIE : Would it be necessary that it should be stamped whether it is manufactured by Chinese or European labour ?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS : The regulations will lay down what the nature of the stamping will be. Of course, one can easily see that there might be other labour employed in the manufacture of furniture.

Hon. J. TOLMIE : What do you anticipate ?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS : We anticipate that we will enable people who buy furniture to know by whom it is made. Many people think because they buy furniture in a European shop that it is made by Europeans, whereas it may be made by Chinese, and it is only fair that the purchaser should know whether it is made by Chinese or Europeans. I have not the slightest doubt that many people would rather pay more for furniture the produce of European labour than Chinese labour. Before we get into Committee, I shall get information from the Chief Inspector as to the nature of the stamp that will be used. This provision will also apply to imported furniture, so that the purchaser will know whether it is made by local industry or whether it is imported.

Now there has been a vexed question discussed on a number of occasions in this House since the amendment relating to hairdressers was made in the Factories and Shops Act in 1914. I find it an extremely difficult question to deal with, but the Chief Inspector desires some alteration to be made, because a great deal of hardship accrues to some of the hairdressers in the suburbs, while the public are also put to considerable inconvenience. I quite realise that there is a number of instances where it seems a great hardship to prosecute a man for doing business at practically the only time he can do business at all. To remedy that we are making provision in clause 5 that the Governor in Council may, by Order in Council, exempt in any district, any

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class of shop, and the following provision is added—

“The regulations may authorise the Governor in Council to cause a ballot to be taken amongst a class of persons to be specified in order to obtain additional evidence as to the desirableness of granting any such exemption.”

I do not think it is desirable that the Minister should take on himself to decide whether a ballot should be held in any particular district ; in such cases it would be better to decide it by ballot. I know that hairdressers situated in the metropolitan area consider that they have considerable advantages by the amendment made in 1914, and they consider it would be a distinctly retrograde step to go back on them.

Mr. BARNES : Outside a certain boundary ?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS : Yes. We will probably have to exclude from the amendment the city itself and the suburbs round the city. Outside that area we may have to bring in other large towns. Later on, I hope to finally settle the matter in such a way as to give satisfaction to all concerned. Hon. members will see the difficulty of fixing all these details in a Bill, but power is given to the Governor in Council to make regulations to give effect to the provisions of the measure. I beg to move—That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. J. TOLMIE : It is very difficult to deal with this Bill inasmuch as there are not a great many vital principles affected, but there are a great many small matters that call for consideration, and probably will be fully discussed when we get into Committee. But it is very desirable that on several matters we should have full information. In regard to the provisions dealing with the marking of furniture, in Part VIII., there is no doubt that this is a matter that has agitated the public mind and the mind of those engaged in cabinet work for a very considerable time. The European cabinet-makers have been working at a great disadvantage when they have come into contact with the work that has been carried on by Asiatic labour. I am certain that anything that will give satisfaction to the white manufacturer will meet with the approval of this Chamber—(hear, hear!)—and that in the introduction here of legislation in that direction the Government are, I feel sure, doing the right thing ; but in connection with the matter I want to point out that the clauses dealing with it are by no means as clear as they might be. It provides that furniture made in Queensland shall bear a stamp. It should bear a stamp from the maker, so that people shall have confidence in the furniture they buy. Then we have laid down that all furniture made by Chinese labour shall be stamped. With that we are all heartily in accord, because it clearly denotes to the purchaser whether the furniture has been made by Europeans or whether it has been made by Chinese, and the purchaser who purchases from the Chinese manufacturer will purchase it with his eyes open. But what is not here is the third provision made in regard to the Chinese manufactured furniture, and I would like to know whether it refers to furniture, local or imported ?

Mr. GILDAY : Local or imported.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The honourable member who just interjected stated yesterday that the party on this side of the House were in favour of the introduction of coloured labour.

Mr. GILDAY: I say so now.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I want to point out that this matter I am discussing is a provision to enable aliens to manufacture furniture here in Queensland under the protection that is being given by the Government.

Mr. GILDAY: What has your Government done?

HON. J. TOLMIE: It is not a question of what our Government did. Our Government endeavoured to maintain all the industries of Queensland with white labour, and we know that since the present Government came into power that there has been an increase in the number of Chinese in Queensland, and that they are engaged in avocations that they never engaged in before.

Mr. GILDAY: You would have made it several times worse for us if you had had your way.

HON. J. TOLMIE: That has been done with the full consent and approval of hon. members opposite, so that Asiatic aliens, Indians, or Japanese may come into this State and carry on avocations of this kind. Now, I think that if the Government are quite consistent in this matter they will remove from the public mind any idea that may creep into it in that direction, and I hope that when we come to the consideration of the Bill in Committee we will make it not European and other labour, but European and Chinese labour, so that all furniture that is manufactured in Queensland will be manufactured under those three conditions; first of all, by European labour only; secondly, by Chinese labour bearing a stamp; and, thirdly, as pointed out by the Commissioner, by competent labour—namely, by European and Japanese. If that be so, then it will be clear to the public mind that there is no other labour being introduced into this State that is foreign labour.

Mr. GILDAY: Where would you fetch Maltese labour in?

HON. J. TOLMIE: If it came in let the product bear the imprint of the labour. We asked the Treasurer about this, and he was unable to give us the information, but said that he would make application to the Inspector of Shops and Factories to find out what the true position was. If furniture is to be manufactured by European and other labour it is just as easy to put in the class of labour by which it is manufactured, and everything then will be clear and above board, and not as it is at the present time, absolutely obscure. We know the reason why the provision is put there, but we want the Government to shoulder the responsibility in connection with it. If they are allowing Asiatics or alien labour to manufacture furniture in Queensland they must accept the responsibility and put the imprint upon it. We shall move in that direction, and I trust that we will have the co-operation of the hon. member for Ithaca, because we shall state specifically all classes of labour in connection with which the furniture ought to have the imprint upon it, and we shall give hon. members opposite an opportunity of showing whether they stand up for white Australia, or

whether they are endeavouring to allow alien Asiatic labour to compete with Australian manufactures without any interference.

Mr. GILDAY: Do you want to include the Maltese?

HON. J. TOLMIE: The hon. gentleman can include the Maltese; we have no objection, but he must recollect, first of all, that the Maltese are British subjects. There is another matter in connection with the measure to which I wish to refer, and as it is the most important I will refer to it first. I wish to refer to the annual registration fee in connection with shops and factories. I have alluded on more than one occasion to the practice which the Cabinet has adopted of endeavouring to collect revenue by such measures as this, putting additional burdens upon the people. The Government get money out of the people by one form of taxation, but if they cannot bleed them sufficiently in that direction they then endeavour to bleed them in another, and here in addition to the burdens they are placing upon the people by additional taxation which has been introduced to-day we have this further taxation put upon them, varying from 5s. a year from the unfortunate woman who has got a small-goods shop to £3 a year to persons who are engaged in trade.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Half a crown.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Half a crown for the small fruit shops, and 5s. in other cases. There is this charge, at any rate, of half a crown up to £3 3s., and it is going to be an annual burden on these shopkeepers. If I mistake not, since the Government came into power there has been an amendment in regard to the registration fee paid by firms. I speak subject to correction in that respect.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You will be corrected on that.

HON. J. TOLMIE: At any rate, a firm when they start operations has to pay a fee, and when they cease to operate and a new firm takes their place, or a change takes place in the name of the firm, they have to pay an additional fee, and on the top of that we have here an imposition which is to be an annual one for the purpose of increasing the revenue of the State. It is not fair to our commercial men and those engaged in our industries that this taxation should be imposed on them one after the other in the way which is being done by the Treasurer. I quite agree with the conditions which it is sought to impose with regard to labour. Under existing laws it is possible for a person to take out work from a factory, and then to have it carried out in what is termed a sub-factory; but that is to be obviated through the operation of this measure, and it will consequently meet with my approval. Work should be done in the factory and at the rate of wages prescribed. Whether those wages be low or high, they are prescribed by law, and nothing less than that full standard should be paid. Inasmuch as the measure will obviate or do away with some of the sweating that possibly takes place—I have no personal knowledge that it does take place, but I assume because of the introduction of the amendment here it has been found to exist—it will have my strong support, and I believe the support of all who consider that fair wages should be paid under fair working conditions.

Hon. J. Tolmie.]

I cannot quite agree with the Government in making a change of having one district only. Under the present law each district in Queensland is able to select its own half-holiday. That has operated to the advantage of the State. It is all very well for persons in a large community like Brisbane to have Saturday for the half-holiday, and I believe it should be the half-holiday in a big city, because there is an additional day's rest, following upon it. I know that in most places the Saturday half-holiday prevails, and generally it is wise that that system should be encouraged; but, at the same time, in the country districts a holiday in the middle of the week is of greater advantage to the producers than it is on a Saturday. That very frequently occurs in farming districts, where pig sales are held during the week in a small town in the district. The farmer will come in and sell his pigs and transact his business at the one time, and the half-holiday should be held on that day. I feel that if the Minister were disposed to allow the present arrangement to remain it would be much more satisfactory to those engaged in rural industries, and it need not affect the half-holiday of the people living in large communities. I think it is our duty to try and meet the circumstances of all the people in the State who are engaged in industries. If we can help them in any way, it is beneficial to them and also to the State generally. Even if it would be suitable for 95 per cent. of the people to have a half-holiday on the same day, the other 5 per cent. engaged in vocations far removed, and under conditions altogether different, ought to have an opportunity of saying what will be most conducive to the welfare of themselves and those associated with them in the district; but that power is taken away under the provisions of the Bill. I am sorry that has been done, but it cannot be helped.

A statement has been made by the Minister in introducing this measure that particular attention is being given to the sanitary conditions of shops and factories. I have read through the provisions in this measure, and the conditions provided for in the present Act. I do not know that there is very much difference between the conditions, other than that the Inspector of Shops and Factories has greater powers under the new Bill in some respects than under the Act.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: One difference was that before you had very few female inspectors. That is a very desirable thing.

HON. J. TOLMIE: That can be remedied by the appointment of a few more ladies, but I am not dealing with the principle of inspectors; I am dealing with the operations of inspectors in going into the factories and laying down certain conditions. The Health Act lays down very drastic conditions in connection with the sanitation of premises. We have two classes of inspectors—one class under the Health Act and another under the Shops and Factories Act—and if you set up a dual control it is bound to create a conflict in the administration of the two Acts. We had that experience some time ago in connection with the conditions of inspection laid down in the various Acts. The inspectors under the Agricultural Department were continually coming into conflict with the inspectors of the local authorities and the inspectors under the Shops and Factories Act. There were no less than

three authorities operating in a particular district, and the result was that there was a great deal of confusion, inconvenience, and expense to the people in complying with the demands made upon them by the three different classes of inspectors. If the Health Act is properly administered in regard to sanitation, there is no reason why similar powers should be given to inspectors under this measure, because under the Health Act they deal with the health of the whole community and have ample power to inspect all premises and to see that any improvement they consider necessary shall be carried out; and there is ample power to punish if it is not done. Therefore, I think it is a mistake in this measure to provide an additional inspectorial authority to that which exists under the Health Act.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Was there no provision of that kind under the old Act?

HON. J. TOLMIE: Not to the extent that there is here. I pointed out the anomaly which existed under three Acts, producing a great deal of inconvenience, loss, and expense to the general public, and it would be wise to avert this evil by allowing the fullest administration under the Health Act in this respect. In one of the provisions of the Bill there is provision made that no premium or bonus is to be taken from apprentices in regard to certain businesses. I am not quite certain how that is going to operate, and I will endeavour, when the Bill is in Committee, to get the information that I want.

Then there is another matter that will affect the producing industry to a very great extent—that is, the effect it will have on the butter factories and farm buildings. They should not come under the operation of this Act at all. They are exempt at the present time, and they should remain exempt. There are other means for inspecting dairies and butter factories. That is done by the Agricultural Department at the present time, and done to the fullest possible extent. If there is anything detrimental to the manufacture of butter and cheese in these factories, then the Agricultural Department will step in immediately and see that the thing is rectified. Here again we will have conflict between the Agricultural Department and the inspector under the Shops and Factories Act. The inspector under the Agricultural Department will have full knowledge of how these industries are carried on, and the conditions under which the work is carried out with safety, and he may bring down certain regulations affecting the various factories and farms. Then the inspector under the Shops and Factories Act comes along, and without that practical knowledge possessed by the Agricultural Department, lays down conditions altogether different from those set down by the Agricultural Department inspectors. There again you have a conflict of authority, a dual power operating, and that cannot be for the convenience of those engaged in the industry. I take it that there is a desire on the part of the Government to help the industries in Queensland, and not to harass them. Although it may appear a small matter to some hon. members in this Chamber, there are those who have practical acquaintance with these industries, and they know that this dual control is likely to be a source of considerable trouble. Before the Bill is passed I hope the Minister will

[Hon. J. Tolmie.]

see his way to eliminate from its provisions butter factories and farm buildings, because they really do not come under the operation of the Act at all. I have very little further to say in connection with the measure. It is one which we must necessarily approve of if it is going to be helpful to the persons engaged in shop and factory work. I have always laid it down as a principle that those persons engaged in factories and shops should always receive the fullest consideration.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: A pious platitude.

HON. J. TOLMIE: There is nothing of the pious platitude in regard to that matter, because I have always carried it out in practice, and I do not think anyone can say anything to the contrary. Where a person has been practically engaged in this work, and has tried to meet the convenience of his employees at all times, and has given them the best working conditions possible, I think it is rather unjust for another person to come round and say it is only a pious platitude. In that respect I can always get a certificate of character from the hon. member for Merthyr, because he knows from his official capacity, representing the Typographical Association, that more than once he has been through the office with which I am connected. I am always glad to give him the opportunity to go through at any time he chooses to.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Then he will certify to your piety.

HON. J. TOLMIE: He will certify to my piety in that respect. With such a certificate as that, I trust that the Minister for Agriculture, who apparently appears to be in charge of this Bill, will withdraw the contention he just advanced.

Mr. McLACHLAN: My certificate will be a passport for you anywhere.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Quite right. I have always endeavoured to give practical application to legislation of this kind, and for that reason it certainly meets with my approval. But we are faced with the difficulty that it is going to be detrimental to industrial development, and there should be careful consideration by members on both sides of the House to overcome it. Where matters are obscure I consider it is the province of the Government to make them as plain as possible, so that there will be no misapprehension in the minds of individuals as to what certain clauses mean, or how an industry can be carried on under that clause. The Treasurer, in introducing the Bill, pointed out that it was a measure that would be better dealt with in Committee than with a second-reading speech, but, notwithstanding that, there are principles in it which are necessary to deal with. I trust that when we come to deal with it in Committee that any suggestions made by this side of the Chamber, and coming from men who have practical acquaintance with industries, and who know how they are carried on, will receive consideration from the Government. I trust also that any amendments that are moved will meet with better treatment at the hands of the Minister than is generally accorded to amendments coming from this side of the House.

Question put.

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Mr. MCPHAIL (*Windsor*): I had no intention of speaking at this particular stage, but seeing that the Bill was going through, I thought I might have a word or two on it.

Mr. PETRIE: It is not through yet.

Mr. MCPHAIL: It was nearly through. I would like to say that this measure is a great advance on the Act at present on the statute-book. It removes anomalies and makes conditions a good deal better than they were previously. I am glad to know that the leader of the Opposition heartily approves of these improvements, and that there is a desire on the part of the Opposition, as well as on the Government side, to see that these conditions are improved for those who are catered for under this Bill. In regard to the question of the half-holiday, the leader of the Opposition said he would prefer to see it remain as it was previously—just as each district decided for itself. There have been a number of ballots taken in different districts in connection with the weekly half-holiday, and in almost every case where a fresh ballot was taken, it resulted in the Saturday half-holiday being carried. I think it is better to make a Saturday half-holiday universal, so that every individual engaged in a shop or factory will receive the full benefit of the holiday at the week end. That is better than having a half-day off on Wednesday or Thursday. With the Saturday half-holiday and the Sunday off, it gives a far better holiday for all employees. I admit that in some of the country districts it is a little inconvenient for the farmers coming from some distance into the towns to have the Saturday half-holiday, but in the country they will soon adapt themselves to the Saturday half-holiday the same as the towns have done, and in the end they will find there is very little inconvenience. Personally, I think the farmers coming in on Saturday morning will appreciate the Saturday half-holiday much more than a half-holiday on a Wednesday. I am sorry there is no provision in this Bill for doing away with the night work on Fridays. (Hear, hear!) Of course, there is a provision here whereby those engaged in factories and shops can come to a mutual arrangement, and agree to do away with all work on Friday night. The employers and employees can come to a mutual agreement to close on Friday nights, and it will become the law. Personally, I would like to see it provided for in the Bill itself, so that all night work can be done away with. We have heard the argument that working men are not able to get into town during the day to do their business, and the extra hour or two in the evening gives them an opportunity of transacting any business they have to do. So far as the metropolitan area is concerned—and I suppose the same thing applies to the other large towns like Toowoomba, Townsville, and Rockhampton—the majority of the people that you find in the streets on Friday nights are simply tripping up and down and transacting very little business at all. I believe that in the near future the closing of shops on Friday night will become as universal as the present Saturday half-holiday. I have noticed during the last few days that there is a movement in England to close the shops in the evenings. The reason for that, I understand, is because of the necessity to save the supplies of coal. I sincerely trust,

Mr. McPhail.]

as a result of their experience in England, that the shopkeepers there will adopt the principle which we have in Australia, and do away with as many nights for working as possible. The health of the people is better conserved if there is no night work. There are some shopkeepers who would like their employees to work every night in the week. Before the last curtailment of hours, there were some employers here in Brisbane who did not work their employees at night at all. They felt that it was no advantage to work at night, and they closed their places of business. They did not go out of business because they did that and their profits seem to be just the same. When we consider the advantages that the people in the country can have for sending in their orders to the cities, it all helps the argument for the closing of shops on Friday night. They can use self-measurement forms and other conveniences, and do their shopping by post if necessary. I consider that when a person works from 8 o'clock in the morning to 6 at night, he has done quite sufficient.

Mr. ROBERTS: An agreement has been come to to close on Friday nights six months after the war is over.

Mr. MCPHAIL: I would like to see it made the law now. The trend of public opinion at the present time is that all night work should be done away with, and that people should do their shopping in the daytime. I hope that there will be a mutual arrangement come to at an early date to bring this about. Then there is the

question of the stamping of [7 p.m.] furniture. I think that is an extremely wise provision to put in this Bill. We find that to-day the manufacture of Chinese furniture is still going on, and large quantities of this furniture are being put on the market as English-made furniture. At first sight it appears to be good, substantial furniture, but much of it, after the customer has bought it, is found to be shoddy and made up in the usual Chinese style. Many individuals who are willing to pay a fair price for a good article have Chinese furniture thrust upon them at a price which they would have to pay for an article made by white labour. Therefore, it is a good thing to provide that furniture shall be branded with the brand of the maker, so that the purchaser shall know that the article he is buying has been made by a firm who employ white labour.

Provision is made in this Bill for the registration of shops, the object of that provision being the protection of shopkeepers generally. I introduced to the Minister a deputation representing both employers and employees, and they asked that the registration of shops should take place, so that they would know exactly where they were. This would mean a classification of shops, and would give the department an idea of the number of firms in the town and the nature of the business they are engaged in. We find that exempt shops have been selling articles which are not exempt, and this means that the shopkeepers who are prevented from selling those articles through having to close their shops at a certain hour suffer a loss. Small fruit shops, drink shops, and fish shops are selling a number of articles which the ordinary shopkeeper is not allowed to sell after 6 o'clock. Personally, I think the general storekeeper would be quite prepared to pay the small fee charged for registration,

because it is an almost infinitesimal amount when spread over twelve months. Seeing that they are protected by the provisions of this measure, I feel sure that they will recognise that registration is in their interest.

Clause 5 makes provision for better sanitary arrangements and better ventilation in shops. This is another step in the right direction. The desire is to safeguard the health of the employees, and if an employer realises that by providing proper ventilation and proper sanitary conveniences his employees will not be away so often on account of sickness, I think he will approve of this provision. I have seen shops where the sanitary conditions were absolutely disgraceful, a fact which was only apparent when inspectors were appointed to go round and investigate. It is a wonder to me that there have not been outbreaks of fever in some places in this city as the result of bad ventilation, and I am glad to see that provision is made in this measure for inspectors insisting upon proper sanitary arrangements and ventilation, and upon girls having an opportunity for sitting at times when they are not too busy. A little while ago I read an article dealing with shop life in some of the towns in England, and it showed that the conditions under which the shop assistants worked were indeed vile. The same conditions do not exist in Queensland or Australia, and I hope they will never exist here. Still, we want to prevent the possibility of such a thing happening, and to take care that employees are surrounded with conditions which are necessary for the maintenance of health. When employers observe those conditions, the employees recognise that they possess humanitarian feelings, and know that the maintenance of healthy conditions for the men and women who work for them is conducive not only to the health of their employees but also to their own benefit.

Clause 7 provides for an increase in wages for beginners. Those who are entering into a trade receive 5s. per week to start with under the existing law, but under this measure they will get 7s. 6d. per week. It will be agreed that 7s. 6d. a week is a very small wage for one to start with in these days, but still that is an improvement on the present state of things. Those workers who are over twenty-one years age will have their wages increased from 15s. to 17s. 6d. per week. That is a slight improvement, but I should like to have seen the increase a little more.

Section 8 of the principal Act exempts booksellers' and tobacconists' shops. This Bill does not alter that provision, but I think that those two classes of businesses are not selling things which are absolutely necessary after 6 o'clock in the evening, and I should like to see them brought under the Bill, so that they would not be included among the exempt shops. I do not think that tobacco or books or stationery are necessary after 6 o'clock.

Mr. ROBERTS: Or whisky.

Mr. MCPHAIL: Nor whisky either; and I would be quite willing to assist the Minister to close the hotels at 6 o'clock just the same as any other business.

There is an alteration made in section 65 of the principal Act allowing for a reduction in the number of hours worked from twelve hours to ten hours per day. This is a benefit which the employees are entitled to. Twelve hours constitute a long day. We generally

speak of eight hours as a working day, and I hope that the working hours of these employees will eventually be reduced to eight per day. Taking the Bill as a whole, it furnishes evidence that the Government desire to effect some improvement in the factory and shop life of the State. The proposed amendments will not press heavily on the employers, and they will be a benefit to the employees. The benefit of a universal Saturday half-holiday will be felt by employers and employees alike. I trust that the Bill will receive favourable consideration from this House and from another Chamber, and that it will become law during this session.

Mr. GRAYSON (*Cunningham*): I do not see much in the provisions of this measure to object to. I wish to speak particularly on clause 4, which relates to the weekly half-holiday. In the country districts from time immemorial Saturday has been the day for the weekly half-holiday. When touring my electorate during the past fortnight I embraced the opportunity to ascertain the views of business people with reference to the half-holiday, and I found that the general opinion was that we should have a universal half-holiday throughout Queensland. I am not going to object to that provision in the Bill, though I know it will be a disadvantage to farmers, who look upon Saturday as market day. But if the Saturday half-holiday is more congenial to employees, I shall certainly not oppose it. Of the four principal towns in my electorate, two observe the Saturday half-holiday and two the Wednesday half-holiday. In Clifton they have the half-holiday on Saturday, in Allora on Wednesday, in Yangan on Wednesday, and in Killarney on Saturday. I contend that it will be a benefit not only to business people, but also to employees to have a universal half-holiday throughout the State.

I notice that one clause in this measure provides that employers shall provide proper sanitary conditions for their employees. I do not think there is anything to complain of in the sanitary conditions obtaining in stores on the Darling Downs, but still it is well to provide that proper sanitary conditions shall be observed by those who employ hands to assist them. Personally, I really don't see anything of a contentious nature in this Bill. I also notice that new hands—females and males—are to be given a rise of from 5s. to 7s. 6d. per week. I think that 5s. per week is much too little to give anyone starting in any particular business, and I will support the proposal. However, when the Bill is in Committee I shall have a little more to say upon the matter.

* Mr. PETRIE: I think that both sides of the House regard this as a very necessary measure, because the Factories and Shops Act as it exists was introduced by the late Liberal Government. Of course, they introduced, not only this Act, but also other Acts of a similar nature; at the same time, I will admit that the Hon. Frank McDonnell, who was then member for the Valley, was the father of this Bill. Of course, we can't say a great deal on the second reading of a Bill of this nature, which is more a Bill that we can deal with in Committee, but I would just like to deal with the question of one or two of the amendments proposed. First of all, I wish to refer to the stamping of furniture. I think that is a very necessary amendment, because it applies to furniture of European make or Chinese make or other labour, and the leader of the Opposition tried

to get from the Treasurer what he meant by "other labour." As far as I am personally concerned—and I think as far as most of us are concerned—we would all prefer to buy nothing else but furniture made by white labour. Unfortunately, a lot of furniture has been made by Chinese labour and been sold as having been made by European labour. Of course, all those of us who understand business can pick out a Chinese piece of furniture from that made by ordinary white labour. I myself would prefer, if it can be put in the Bill, that nothing else but white labour should be employed, because I am concerned that alien labour of another nation which does not come under this Bill shall not be used. I do not know what the Minister's opinion is, but we simply pick out "Chinese and other labour." At all events, anybody who buys ordinary furniture made by white labour knows that, although they pay a higher price for it, it is always the cheapest in the end.

In regard to making Saturday a universal half-holiday, generally speaking, I think that is a good thing. But under the present Act a district can take a poll as to whether they will have Saturday afternoon or one other day in the week. It appears to me that the alteration will come very hard to some people. Take Southport, for instance. I know they took a poll recently, and decided by a big majority to have the holiday on a Thursday. In a place like that, where it suits people who keep shops and the small farmers who have to come into the town on the Saturday to do their shopping, it would be unfair to interfere with the will of the people. Personally, I am in favour of a universal half-holiday, because it gives everybody an opportunity of having their week-end for a holiday. I was glad to hear the Treasurer say that some consideration would be shown for the one-man hairdressers in the outside districts. This is a matter that I brought forward in the House before but without success. I understand that it will only apply to the suburbs. I think in the city the shops should be closed, and also, say, within a radius of 5 or 10 miles of the post office, but outside that the one-man shops should be allowed to continue, as it would not affect the hairdressers engaged in the city.

I think also that the amendment with regard to sanitary arrangements is very necessary. Of course, it is desirable, as pointed out by the leader of the Opposition, that there will be no clashing with the Health Department as far as the sanitary arrangements are concerned. Already they are supposed to look after the health arrangements of the city, and I understand that every inspector under the Health Department has to hold a certificate, and if there are inspectors appointed under this Bill, I hope the Minister will see that these men are competent to deal not only with the inspection of shops and factories, but have some practical knowledge of sanitation itself. We all want to see our girls and our men working under healthy conditions in factories or shops, and I think it is up to any Government—whether it be Liberal or Labour—to see that these conditions are carried out to the fullest extent. One hon. member suggested to shut up shops altogether at night. That would be very good, but I think the present arrangement for opening Friday night works very well, although, if it could be avoided, I would like to see the shops closed. There are times when one night a week is necessary, but I always found that

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if you had the shops open every night some people would find an excuse to be there shopping.

With regard to shutting up tobacconists and bookshops—most of these are run by one man or by the man and his family. Take the shops in George street who are selling daily newspapers and in conjunction books or magazines, I think it would be very wrong to interfere with these people. It is not because I smoke that I advocate that the tobacconists' shops should be kept open, but we have to study, not only the public, but also the people who are running these shops.

I am glad to see that the wages for apprentices to start with have been raised 2s. 6d. a week, because 5s. is very little to start a boy on, and even 7s. 6d. will hardly keep him in shoe leather. Then we find in clause 15 this provision—

“No deduction shall be made from the prescribed minimum week's wage on account of any public or other holidays granted to any employee unless such holidays amount to not less than a full week.”

I think this is very fair, but I would like to ask the Minister whether this refers only to the weekly wage and does not interfere with those who are paid by the day. There is some doubt in some people's mind as to what some of these clauses may mean. I take it that this clause only applies to small weekly wages where they are away for a day or two and that their wages should not be stopped. Well, there are very few employers that I know who do not carry out the spirit of the Act, but of course there are some miserable employers who will take advantage of any of the provisions of the Act they can.

In regard to registration of shops, I think it is very necessary for the public safety that registration should take place. We have already in existence an Act requiring firms to be registered, and I think it is advisable, when we are particular about the registration of firms, that we should also have the small shops registered as well. I do not intend to deal at any length with this Bill, because I think it is a matter which we will be better able to deal with when we are in Committee, and I hope that any amendments which may be presented, provided they are reasonable, will be accepted. Very often we pass measures so hastily that it is only when we come to administer an Act that we find out the uncertainty of its power, and that is why we very often have to pass amending Bills to make it possible to carry out the measures satisfactory. I only hope that this Bill will be so amended that it will be accepted by both Houses.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): This is one of the measures which will confer a benefit on town workers, but at the same time will hamper to a considerable extent some of our primary industries, and I submit [7.30 p.m.] that at the present time it is undesirable to do anything to increase the difficulty in any way of those who are, after all, the mainstay of the country.

With regard to the Saturday half-holiday, I may say that in Mackay, under the present Act, where local option is allowed, one or two polls were taken, and the people by a majority decided that the Wednesday half-holiday suited them best, and I think that in a district such as that, that is the

[*Mr. Petrie.*

most suitable method, both to the employees and the employer. The farmer, if he has to go into town, may have to drive 9 or 10 miles, and will have to make preparations on the previous evening. If he goes in on Tuesday he has to break in on his Monday afternoon's work to get ready, and then he probably does not get home till late at night, which means a certain amount of cleaning up and putting away the buggy, etc., on the following morning. By going in and doing his business on Saturday he does that cleaning up work on the Sunday morning. Then, again, by making Saturday the half-holiday, it may lead to people where they are 20 or 30 miles from a town ordering their goods by mail from city stores and not buying at all locally, and it is, therefore, inadvisable to make the Saturday half-holiday a hard-and-fast rule. We know that in country districts where that practice exists it has been detrimental to the shopkeepers themselves, as people do not come to town, but do their business with large houses in Brisbane by mailing their orders, and ploughmen and other employees are debarred from going into the principal towns where they get the best terms. That is not a desirable state of things. We should do all we can to encourage settlement in the country.

Another point is in connection with sugar-mills, and I hope the Treasurer will correct me if I am mistaken in this. So far as I understand, it will not be possible under the Bill to work more than sixteen and a-half shifts in a week instead of eighteen. The Bill says that no work shall be done on the half-holiday. The mills at the present time do eighteen shifts a week from midnight on Sunday to midnight on Saturday, but I take it that under the Bill they will have to knock off at midday on Saturday.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I think you will find the principal Act does not apply to sugar-mills.

Mr. SWAYNE: The principal Act makes certain exceptions regarding factories where agricultural work is carried on. In the principal Act, section 30, it is provided that such provisions shall not apply to agricultural factories such as chaff-cutting establishments and cheese factories. I notice that the Bill also includes butter factories, which are not mentioned in the principal Act. Then another exception is sugar-mills. Under the principal Act, section 30, all those are simply excluded. This Bill repeals that provision, so I take it that sugar-mills will come within the scope of the Bill, and therefore the twelve hours from midday on Saturday, if it is a half-holiday, to 12 o'clock at midnight will be debarred, and that means that from the employers' point of view they would only get sixteen and a-half shifts. In the North quite a common rate for many kinds of work in the mill is 1s. 9d. per hour, so that will mean that we take 14s. a shift from these men's earnings. Engine-drivers earn 2s. an hour, and you will reduce those men's earnings accordingly. Then there is the fact that there is very expensive machinery in the sugar-mills, running into hundreds of thousands of pounds, and they only work through seasonal exigencies five months of the year, and it is necessary in order to get a return for the money invested that the mills should be worked for that time at their fullest capacity not only for the owners but for the sake of the community at large in order

to deal with the crops. In the sugar industry at the present time, through causes which I need not deal with now, it is estimated that only 75 per cent. of the crop will be got off working under certain conditions right up to Christmas. If you are going to restrict the working hours of these mills by a shift and a-half every week, you will still further increase the quantity of cane that will be left standing. It is all very well to apply these hard-and-fast rules to town industries working all the year round, and not dependent on the weather. The sugar-mills, of course, are under cover, but the raw material comes in day by day, and has to be cut subject to weather conditions, and sometimes the whole of the work has to be hung up for a day or two. When they can get a go on, it is desirable that during the season they should not be restricted from getting as much of the crop as possible worked up. From a national point of view it would not be good policy to in any way curtail the working time of sugar-mills. There are other hon. members more conversant with dairying than I am, but I think it will make it very difficult for them if we applied a hard-and-fast half-holiday rule to butter and cheese factories. I would ask the Minister when we get into Committee to accept such amendments as will exclude sugar-mills and agricultural works in that direction.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Queenton*): I desire to make one or two brief observations on the measure before it passes its second reading. On the whole, I rather welcome the advent of this amending Bill. Experience shows us that there is need for some improvement of the principal Act. I certainly think the abolition of the districts is a good feature of the Bill. At the present time there are some districts that would be very much better from the employees' point of view if they were under the control of the Act, and if somebody saw that the Act was better carried out than it is at the present time.

A good deal has been said in regard to the sanitary conveniences at certain places, and something needs to be done to improve those conditions. In some places there are mills that are all that they ought to be, but in other places they are just the reverse, and particularly so where the millowners are not Britons, but belong to some other nation whose ideas of sanitary conveniences are scarcely up to the required standard. In some places they are nothing less than a positive disgrace. Some hon. members have expressed the fear that there will be too many inspectors, but in some cases there is no inspector at all, as if there is a local authority who has a health inspector he, perhaps, fails to do his duty. In some instances there is no shops and factories inspector, and they just drift along as they please.

The whole question has been discussed very largely from the metropolitan point of view, but there are scores of towns in the State which are not so well looked after or carefully inspected as the metropolitan districts, and in this connection it would be a very good thing if an inspector made a visit there occasionally. My opinion about these Acts is that unless they are properly administered they might as well not be on the statute-book at all. In some towns in Queensland they scarcely know there is such an Act on the statute-book as a Factories and Shops Act. Just recently I was in a town where

one particular shop opens the door and takes down the shutters and is prepared for business at 6 o'clock in the morning.

Mr. VOWLES: Why does the inspector not take action?

Mr. WINSTANLEY: That is what I want to find out. The man is doing business two hours before his compeers in the trade, and evidently nothing is said by the inspector. The trouble is that there is not a factories and shops inspector in the ordinary sense of the word in that town. In that particular town men are also worked an hour or an hour and a-half extra a day and they get no pay for overtime. The regulations under the Factories and Shops Act are practically a dead letter. The reason is, I suppose, that the individual who is supposed to do this work has quite a number of other duties to perform, and regards this as practically of no consequence. I do not know whether in those towns a police officer is the acting inspector, but I think that something of that kind obtains, and the consequence is that he is not much concerned about his duties as an inspector, and they are, to a large extent, left undone. It would be an improvement for the employees in these towns if a travelling inspector could visit them, say, once in three months and find out from the employees the state of affairs under which they are working. It is evident there is room for improvement in this matter.

There is another point I would like to draw the attention of the Minister to, and that is in reference to exempted goods. It is one of the difficulties in regard to the administration of the Act that there are so many shops in connection with which the goods that they deal in are for the most part exempt, but there are, perhaps, one or two lines that are not exempt, and the trouble is to prevent them from selling those goods in prohibited hours. For instance, as a most conspicuous sample of the whole lot, people who have fruit and soft drinks shops are exempt, but in a great number of instances those people sell eggs, which are not exempt. I think ever since the Act has been in existence they have been allowed to sell these things, and practically nothing has been said. Quite recently in some towns the inspector came down on these people and told them that unless they stopped selling eggs they would be prosecuted.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Referendum eggs?

Mr. WINSTANLEY: I think the rotten eggs were all used in the hon. gentleman's electorate.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: By your people.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Oh, no! They were saved up by conscriptionists.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: No, we did not use them; you used them.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: In some towns practically no notice is taken of the sale of this commodity, while in others the sale is blocked in some instances. As a matter of fact, in Brisbane you can buy them in any shop along the street. There is room for the better carrying out of the law with regard to these things than has prevailed up to the present time. They should be placed on the exempted lists, or else everybody should be served in the same manner and not be allowed to sell them at all. So far as the inspectors are concerned, it would be a decided advantage if an inspector who knows the provisions of the Act, and who is

Mr. Winstanley.]

thoroughly conversant with the working of the Act, paid a visit to the outside places once in six months. The stamping of furniture has been dealt with very fully. It is one of those things we should deal with, so that honest men who do good work will be paid for their work as they should be and will receive some protection. In many instances there are a large number of people working at this particular trade. A lot of furniture is made by Asiatics. It is jerry-built furniture, and just hangs together. You can just keep it together until you get home, and it is not long before it falls to pieces. When white men have some regard to the materials they put into their work they should be protected. In regard to the half-holiday, everyone knows that Saturday is the best time for a half-holiday, and in a short time it will become universal throughout the State. The time is not far distant either when we will be able to dispense with the work on Friday night. I hope this Act will be passed so that the employees for whose benefit it has been introduced will receive the advantages provided under it.

Mr. VOWLES: While I admit that it is necessary that an amendment should be made in the Factories and Shops Act, still I do not think it is a fair thing that such drastic amendments as are embodied in this proposal should be brought in. Under the old Act, in the definition of "factory," there were several exemptions. I see that two of them are omitted from this Bill. Under section 4 of the original Act it stated that the term "factory" did not include any buildings, premises, or places used for the manufacture of dairy produce. It also stated that it did not include any building, premises, or places used exclusively for *bonâ fide* pastoral or agricultural purposes situated upon a run or farm. If you are going to bring in all classes of places under this Act and make it also apply to buildings where dairy products are manufactured, such as butter factories or cheese factories, then you are making an important departure from the original intention of the Act. I should certainly like to know some reason from the Minister why this alteration is being made. I cannot see from the result of the working of these institutions that it is necessary to class them as factories and bring them under the scope of this Bill. I would like to know why it is proposed to make this alteration. With regard to one portion of the Bill, I know that a good deal of irritation will be caused in the country districts with the one-man barber shops.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: We will meet them.

Mr. VOWLES: Why not put it in the Bill?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: We cannot put it in the Bill without eliminating the districts.

Mr. VOWLES: Make it to include all those outside the metropolitan area. However, as long as we know that the Minister is going to deal with that matter, it is all right. It is causing a lot of irritation at the present time, because these men are placed in an invidious position. They realise, like many other people do, that they are the victims of the unions. The union in Brisbane brought about conditions to suit themselves. Someone brought forward suggestions to the Minister, and he adopted them in all good faith, without knowing what

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effect they would have on the country barbers. While it suits the employees in the towns, it does not suit the men in the country at all. I am glad that the Minister realises that, and that he will alter it in some way. As regards the universal half-holiday, I quite agree that it should be so, but at the same time I point out to the Minister that there are certain districts which had the privilege under the old Act of taking a vote of the people to see which half-holiday they wanted. I always understood that it was one of the principles of the Government that the will of the people should be paramount. Where the people have already expressed their will it seems to be a very funny thing that, after they have accepted the vote, it is to be taken away from them by the Government. That is really undoing what the will of the people decided should be done. Personally, I think that the holiday should extend from Friday night to Monday morning, so that the people can get away to the seaside or somewhere else for a change, which must be for the benefit of their health. Dealing with the question of fees, all the legislation brought in by this Government seems to be money-making legislation. They are after the cash all the time. They are going to penalise the factory-owners according to the capacity of the factory, and they are going to charge fees for registering. It is only a little obnoxious fee of 2s. 6d., but it will cause more trouble than enough. It is one of those little irritating taxes that will cause a lot of trouble. You remember the cow tax, Mr. Speaker, and the trouble there was in connection with it. It was not the amount of the tax, but the fact that they had to register at different times. People do not like irritating taxation of that kind at all, yet here we have another one in this Bill. I strongly resent a principle of that sort because there is no necessity for it. It is bad enough to have to keep registering without having to pay as well. The hon. member for Mirani referred to section 30 of the existing Act, and mentioned the deductions that came under that section. These deductions are only included in the question of sanitation. So far as the repeal of that section is concerned, I think that this Bill is much better than the provision in the original Act, and I have no objection to it at all. There are one or two small matters mentioned here. There is the stamping of furniture. It seems to me to be rather strange that the Government should be exercising their minds in discriminating between Chinese and European made furniture. They must surely know that the Japanese have a hold in this State. Why are they exempt? Why is there an exemption in favour of the Japanese to the exclusion of the Chinese? There is provision for furniture made by Chinese, and for furniture made by European labour, and for other persons besides Chinese. Why include Japanese in "other labour"? It looks to me like a strong desire to father the Japanese.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is out of respect to one of our allies.

Mr. VOWLES: You talk about them as allies. Why not deal with them as Asiatics and deal with them as a class? I see no reason why the Japanese should be excluded at all. There is one section here which strikes me as being very remarkable. The original Act provides for a general provision as to proceedings before justices. This is in connection with the ordinary procedure before

the court. We find now that they are inserting a new principle in this Bill. It says here—

“ Any statutory declaration made by any person before a justice as to any contravention or breach of this Act or the regulations shall be accepted as evidence in any court of such contravention or breach.”

Are we to understand that this Government is going to introduce a principle that a man can lay an information and be an informer? He can make a declaration, but he need not submit himself to cross-examination, and he need not appear at the court at all. Is that what the Minister means?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I don't think so.

Mr. VOWLES: Well, that is what it says here. It can only mean one thing, and that is that an informer can make a charge and after making a declaration he need not appear at the court to substantiate what he says and be cross-examined. There cannot be any other interpretation but that. That is contrary to the whole principle of evidence in our courts. A man who makes a charge should be subject to the court's examination. When this clause comes before us in Committee I shall strenuously oppose it. It is one of those things I have a strong abhorrence to—that is, the encouraging of the informer. Any man who lays a charge should come out into the open. If a man is going to have the privilege of putting his signature to a charge and that is going to be taken as evidence, it is a wrong principle to introduce. Judges have always complained that evidence given by affidavit is unsatisfactory, because the words used are not the words of the individual who signed it, and there is no chance of cross-examining him. Here we have a principle introduced where a man, who, instead of encouraging industry, wishes to dislocate industry by finding out technical breaches of the Act. He will merely be creating dissension. We will have public officers under this Act acting as inspectors. Any public officer can act as inspector or informer, and he need not come forward to substantiate any charge he may make. Penalties are provided for breaches of the Act, and a man's liberty may be at stake. He may not be in a position to pay the penalty, and in a quasi criminal prosecution he may have to go to gaol. Yet an informer can come along and make a declaration without going to court and substantiating it. I hope this Chamber will never agree to such a principle, and I trust that it will be struck out. If any other interpretation can be put on that clause, I would like to hear it. It is very plain what it means, and the Minister cannot deny it. I hope he will delete it from the Bill.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): We are all interested in the conditions of work in factories and shops, but there is also another side of the question to look at, and that is the encouraging of production. We have to look at that side too.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Particularly butter.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: If it were not for the butter production you would not be here, because you have to depend on it for your living. There is one matter I would like to have an explanation of from the Minister. It is in connection with the definition of “factory.” The existing exemption of butter

factories and farm buildings is omitted from this Bill. It shows that the hon. gentleman knows nothing about farm build-

[8 p.m.] ings or how the food he eats is produced. I would ask the Treasurer whether that clause will not bring farm buildings under the Factories Act? Certainly it will, and if farm buildings are brought under the Factories Act work in those buildings will have to be stopped at 6 o'clock, or the employers will have to pay at the rate of time and a-half after that hour. It is quite evident that the framers of this measure knew nothing whatever about the difficulties connected with dairying work. Farmers who send milk to a cheese factory are compelled to milk after the sun has gone down in many cases, because they must deliver their milk pure and fresh at the factory in the morning, and that cannot be done while the sun is up. I should like the Treasurer to give some answer to my question as to whether this amendment of the definition will not mean that when 6 o'clock comes farmers will have to stop milking and stop harvest work, or pay their employees at the rate of time and a-half. I notice that the Treasurer is out of the House at the present moment, and that apparently there is no one on the Treasury bench who understands the matter, and can give an answer to my inquiry. We ought to know what we are doing when we are asked to pass amendments of this kind, and not do things in the dark.

I believe in the branding of furniture, but possibly furniture is not the only thing which should be branded. We are all interested in seeing that workers are employed under healthy conditions. With regard to the closing of shops, I think it is a very good thing that they should close early, because that will make people more businesslike in their habits, and cause them to look around and provide what they require in advance. Some people when they go to feed a horse find that they have got no food to give it, and others when they go to cook a meal find that they have not got something which they need. Early closing will make such people more careful, and cause them to do their business in a more businesslike way. I notice that the Premier is now in the House, and I must ask him whether, under the amended definition of “factory,” farmers will not have to stop work at 6 o'clock, or pay overtime for all time worked after that hour.

The PREMIER: I ask you to give notice of the question. (Laughter.)

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Is it not astonishing that the Premier does not know what is the meaning of this provision in the Bill? (Laughter.) I never saw the Bill until it came into my hands this afternoon, but the Premier has been discussing it for a week, and yet he cannot give me a simple answer as to whether the bringing of farm buildings under the Factories and Shops Act will not mean that work in those buildings will have to be stopped at 6 o'clock.

The PREMIER: That is a matter for the Committee stage.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The hon. gentleman can give the information now if he chooses. With regard to sanitary conditions, it is very important that employees should have a decent place in which to eat their meals. There are plenty of cases in which the

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employees have to bring their "tucker" with them, and they have to eat it where they can. Such a state of things should not exist: they should be provided with a fairly good dining-room. I am not opposed to any reasonable provision in that respect, but I certainly want some explanation of the clause I have referred to.

The PREMIER: What is the clause?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It is the definition clause on page 2, which states that the paragraph exempting butter factories and station and farm buildings is omitted. That evidently brings farm buildings—even a milking-shed—under the Factories Act. We have dairy inspectors at the present time, and they are doing their duty well; and there is no need for factory inspectors to inspect farm buildings. I would ask the Premier to go into this matter very carefully before we go into Committee on the Bill, and if he wants any information on the subject I shall be very glad to give it to him.

Mr. GILDAY (*Uthaca*): From the arguments adduced this afternoon, I judge that members generally welcome this amendment of the Factories and Shops Act. The Act ought to have been amended many years ago. It is a good while now since there was a keen agitation by persons who were not provided with wages boards to have the Act amended in such a way as would give them better conditions than those which prevailed in the industries in which they were working. The hon. member who has just resumed his seat has evidently not read the Bill. The hon. member says he has only just received the measure, and evidently he does not know the contents of the Bill. I think he should read the Bill before he starts to discuss it in the House. The Bill has been in his box for over a fortnight, and he has had sufficient time to peruse it if he was so inclined.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Tell us what that definition means.

Mr. GILDAY: I will tell the hon. member in my own time.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You cannot do it.

Mr. GILDAY: I will endeavour to do it, but before I do that I wish to refer to the provision respecting the stamping of furniture. This is a new provision introduced with the view of enabling purchasers of furniture to discriminate between Chinese-made goods and goods made by European labour, also between imported goods and goods of local manufacture. The leader of the Opposition has endeavoured to show that there is something sinister in the words "and other labour." The hon. member for Dalby, who has legal knowledge, took up the same position; but I think that if those hon. members peruse the provisions on page 12 under the heading of "Stamping of Furniture," they will see that they are fairly broad provisions. One paragraph says—

"Where an article of such furniture has been manufactured or prepared solely by European labour, such stamp shall also set forth in legible type the words 'European labour only.'"

The next paragraph says—

"Where an article of such furniture has been manufactured or prepared solely or partly by the labour of any

Chinese person, or on the premises of any Chinese employer, such stamp shall also set forth in legible type the words 'Chinese labour.'"

Then we come to the provision that hon. members do not seem to be clear about which says—

"Where an article of such furniture has been manufactured or prepared partly by European labour and partly by the labour of persons other than Chinese, such stamp shall also set forth in legible type the words 'European and other labour.'"

I think that answers the query which was asked in regard to that particular matter. It means that if there is other labour employed in a factory besides European labour, the furniture must be stamped with the words "European and other labour." There are three different kinds of stamps set out in this clause.

I think that provision is absolutely essential, because there are a large number of people who believe in getting furniture manufactured by white people, with the result that when they go into some of the shops here they cannot tell whether it is made by Chinese or any other Asiatic labour, and they are very disappointed when they find that they have been dealing with some firm which is selling goods manufactured by Chinese instead of by Britishers. The definition of "bakehouse" is made more comprehensive, and will apply to kitchens, hotels, and every place where foodstuff of any kind is cooked for the public. This was an anomaly which caused considerable annoyance to people working in those places, with the result that the amendment is a good move in that direction. I notice here also that the definition of "factories" seems to be more comprehensive.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: That is what I wanted an explanation of.

Mr. GILDAY: I take it that the omission of the exemption contained in subclauses (b) and (d) of subsection 3 of the principal Act will allow for the inspection of woollscours, dairies, farms, stations, and such places. This clause has nothing to do with the hours of labour; it deals entirely with inspection—gives wider powers in connection with inspection.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You read the Bill. We cannot accept that.

Mr. GILDAY: I have read the Bill. I am merely giving you my reading of the clause.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: And that is not correct.

Mr. GILDAY: Well, you will have an opportunity later on of making it clearer.

The next definition is in regard to the half-holiday. I think the majority of hon. members, by their arguments, recognise that a universal half-holiday is very necessary throughout Queensland, especially as a large majority of towns have adopted Saturday as a half-holiday.

By clause 6, subsection (2) of section 6 of the principal Act is repealed, so that the provision for the appointment of inspectors to particular districts is abolished, and the result is that the State will now be worked as a whole. It is also provided that any State officer may temporarily act as an inspector at any time or place where any

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duly appointed inspector is not available. This provision is one which I think everyone will agree with, because it will give inspectors, who may have other duties to attend to, an opportunity of investigating cases which at present drag along, and in many cases cost employers large sums of money when prosecuted, owing to the time wasted before the complaint can be dealt with. These things can now be settled straight away, and it will give the employer an opportunity of complying with the law of the land. In the past large sums of money have been collected for breaches of awards, but if there was a man on the spot to deal with these matters there would be no necessity for that. I think the definition is one which every honourable member will appreciate.

Now, there has been a great deal made in regard to registration of shops. I do not think any member will say that the amounts stated—which are taken from the Victorian Act—will be a burden on any man who may have a shop. We find that for any factory employing more than sixty persons the fee is £3 3s. Then it runs down to the one-shop employee, where the fee is 2s. 6d. I do not think this could be called a hardship, and I think that the shop people will welcome a provision of that kind.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: More taxation.

Mr. GILDAY: We cannot get on without taxation. If you don't get it one way you have to get it the other way, and I suppose you would be one of those who would squeak if it was passed on to you.

Now, there is another provision to which I do not think any exception can be taken. I think it should have been introduced some three or four years ago, when a request to that effect was made to the late Government—that is in regard to the increase of wages to young workers. As a matter of fact, the young workers in the past did not get sufficient remuneration to pay for boot leather, and after they paid for boots and their tram fares to town their wages were so small that it was impossible to have anything at the end of the week. Well, I would like to see it more than is proposed. Of course, they will be better off under the provisions of the Bill, but I think they should have had more consideration years ago, and the time has arrived when these young workers should have more consideration still.

In regard to the provision dealing with late closing, one hon. member wanted to know if the two late nights in the year preceding Christmas Day are still contained in this Bill. I notice that this is so. Personally, I think one night would have been sufficient. Nevertheless, seeing that that might be too drastic, the condition is there. But there is one provision that I am pleased at, and that is that no young worker, male or female, under the age of sixteen years shall work longer than 8 o'clock, except on those two nights in the year. I think hon. members will agree that a large number of young workers have been working, and do work late at the present time. Young people should not be asked to work longer than 8 o'clock. Personally, I should like to see them made to cease work at 5 o'clock, but at the same time it is a good thing to have it reduced to 8 o'clock as it is in the Bill. This, I think, will be very beneficial, as is also the clause dealing with laundry work. Laundry

work in the past has been exempt under the Act, but under this Bill laundry-workers are included, with the result that a large number of women who have been sweated for years will get the benefit of this provision. And it is very gratifying to know that they are going to get a wages board, which will make their condition much better.

There is also a provision in regard to the hours of the men engaged in the carting industry, so that their time is going to be dealt with in such a manner that they will be treated with fairness. With the men working in the carting trade it does not matter how many miles they have been away from town when their ceasing time comes, they get no consideration for the two or three hours it takes them to return. Under this provision the hours of attending to horses, etc., are considered, and it also provides that on the day of the weekly half-holiday the carter shall cease work at 1 o'clock. The amendment which gives that privilege should be welcomed by the hon. members opposite, because they seem to recognise they should do something on behalf of the carters, and this provision betters their conditions very much.

There is also provision made in regard to overtime. In the principal Act there is no provision made for overtime worked before the usual hour of starting work. There was provision made for overtime worked after the ordinary working hours, but there was no provision made for the man whose starting time was, say, half-past 7 o'clock, but who had to start at 5 or 6. I think hon. members will recognise that if anyone is required to start work before the ordinary time there should be some provision to give him overtime up to the ordinary starting time, and that provision is in the Bill.

There are a large number of young women to-day who are working in factories and dressmaking establishments making military uniforms and many other kinds [8.30 p.m.] of wearing apparel. They have no wages board, and the result is that they only have the protection of the Factories and Shops Act. Under this Bill there is every safeguard provided for the protection of these workers and to make their conditions much better than what they are at the present time.

While the Bill does not go as far as I would like it to go, there is no doubt that it contains good provisions, and has for its object the betterment of those who are working under the various industries concerned, and I feel sure that when the Bill gets into Committee hon. members will see the necessity of making every possible improvement for the benefit of those who have been so much neglected for many years past.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I cannot follow the explanation of the hon. member for Ithaca. He ought to know that cheese factories and butter factories have to register for inspection purposes, and that they are exempt from the Factories and Shops Act. The definition refers to the Act all the way through, and has nothing to do with supervision. I have to register my dairy every year. A dairy has to be registered as a factory when power is used for milking. The hon. member's explanation is most extraordinary. Hon. members opposite have had the Bill before them for weeks, and say they are going to make it clear, and then

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the hon. member for Ithaca says it is only for supervision purposes. Hon. members opposite seem to have the idea that you put the milk in at one end and turn a handle, and cheese comes out at the other. You have to do the work when the milk is in a fit condition; and how are you going to do it under the provisions of the Factories and Shops Act? We cannot knock off on Saturday afternoons, and yet this Bill makes the Saturday half-holiday compulsory. There is another thing I cannot understand. The Government express themselves to be in accord with majority rule, and then they knock out all the provisions with regard to a poll and make the Saturday half-holiday compulsory. Saturday may be a good day for the half-holiday, but if the Government believe in the principle of majority rule in one case they ought to believe in it right through the piece, and allow different districts to have the half-holiday which is most suitable for them.

I do not like the provisions for State officers being appointed as inspectors. I do not object to a policeman being an inspector, but I strongly object to a schoolmaster or a station-master being an inspector. As far as my experience goes, in the country the people generally are quarrelling with the station-master or schoolmaster, and if you are going to put them into a position in which they will be able to vent their spleen on people who will be under their jurisdiction it will be a very unfortunate thing. A policeman will be in a different position.

Then, I do not believe in the small registration fee. I know the trouble which occurred when we had to pay a fee of 3d. a head for cows. This fee will be very irritating in its incidence. It is only 2s. 6d. for small shops, and if you are going to have them registered why not let them register without any fee at all?

Mr. GILDAY: It would be just as hard to register them then. They would forget to do it.

Mr. MOORE: The Government appear to repeal provisions in one clause, and then in the next clause put them in again. The rates of overtime are repealed in one paragraph, and then in the next put in again. It seems to me that that is only just done in order to make the Bill look like a little more complicated. The conditions with regard to overtime and night work are going to increase the cost of everything we have to buy. It will mean extra employees, or else more overtime. The old Act seemed to me to be fairly comprehensive, although there may have been one or two things in it that wanted amending, but there seems to be such a lot of trivial amendments in the Bill. One thing I strongly object to is the new paragraph put in in clause 28, reading—

“Any statutory declaration made by any person before a justice as to any contravention or breach of this Act or the regulations shall be accepted as evidence in any court of such contravention or breach.”

I do not see the object of that. It seems to me that, under that clause, a man may make a declaration as to a breach of the Act, and can then just walk away and he will not be able to be cross-examined. We know that people judge a witness in court by his demeanour in the box, but in this case a man will merely make a declaration and then walk away. We know that declarations are

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very often incorrect. If a man thinks a breach of the award has been made he should state his grievance to the inspector and then be subpoenaed as a witness. I do not see that this provision is going to make for improvement in the working of the Act; it is only making it easier to harass an employer or a factory. I suppose the Treasurer had some reason for inserting the clause, and must have found some defect in the Act, but it seems to me that there was no difficulty in getting an inspector to take cognisance of a breach of the Act. I do not see that this provision makes for justice or fairness.

The furniture provisions of the Bill may be all right, but I did not see much clearness about the explanations which have been made with regard to Chinese and other labour. The point it seems to me which hon. members were driving at was why was not Asiatic labour put in instead of Chinese. There is a Chinese boy at the Gatton College who is very clever, and yet under this Bill he will be excluded, although born in Australia. I do not see why the clause should be put in at all; it may cause hardship to a few unoffending people. There was a good deal said about one day being knocked off—before it used to be Christmas Day.

The SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. member is not going through the Bill in detail.

Mr. MOORE: No. I am not going to deal with the details of the Bill. The chief clause, as far as we are concerned, is the definition of “factory.” I cannot see, if you bring farm buildings and dairy factories under a Bill like this, how you are going to work it. The Minister can exempt them if he likes, so what is the good of putting it in at all if you are going to exempt them? The factories are registered in order that they may be supervised, and this cannot have anything to do with supervision. They will have to be exempted, or else the industries will suffer.

The TREASURER: Do you not think they should be subject to supervision? They are subject to supervision so far as the purity of milk is concerned, but we want to bring them under supervision so far as the health of the employee is concerned.

Mr. MOORE: The sanitary conditions are provided for. I think that these new provisions are not wanted and are going to be extremely harassing and cause a good deal of trouble. I know a factory where the employees, owing to shortage of labour, go to work at 6 o'clock in the morning. Under this Bill that will be counted as overtime, but the employees themselves prefer to start earlier and get through their work earlier, and yet the clause will not allow them to do that without being paid for overtime. If the Minister can show us what the object of this provision is, when supervision and inspection is already provided for, I shall be quite satisfied, but otherwise I think it is wrong to amend the Act by including those provisions from which such factories were specially exempted under the old Act.

Mr. BARNES (Warwick): This amending Bill, at first sight, seems to be an innocent kind of thing, but on being looked into contains a good deal that is bad as well as good, acceptable as well as unacceptable. A great deal has been said this evening regarding the application of this measure to farm-houses, butter factories, and dairies, and places of that kind. It is quite evident that

the Minister in charge of the Bill fails to realise the mighty inconvenience that is going to take place amongst the people engaged in those industries if this Bill is passed. There are also factories in the towns which will be largely inconvenienced. What factory, in any centre, will find it possible to adhere to the conditions of this measure? The great bulk of the factories receive their cream or their milk by rail—by road to some extent, but to a very large extent by rail. Take the case of the Warwick factory. The trains arrive from the Toowoomba side at 11 o'clock, and from the Killarney and Maryvale side at about the same hour, or up to 12 o'clock. What opportunity have these factories of dealing with supplies that come to hand on Saturday in any week? Sunday is a day of rest, and the chances of complying with the Act, as it appears to us to-day, are altogether an impossibility. I am sure that members on this side of the House will have to take a very definite stand in order to avoid a wrong that is going to be passed on to the dairymen on the land. They will simply be unable to comply with it. Here is an Act placed before us. It is supposed it will receive due consideration and attention. It contains amendments that are practically unworkable in this country, and it will kill the industries to which it is intended to apply. Provision should be made in the Bill that the Act should not apply to the dairying industry, nor, indeed, to the man who is working his farm in any way whatsoever.

The half-holiday matter has been referred to. Personally, I believe in a universal half-holiday, but there are many places which elect to close their establishments on a day of the week other than a Saturday. Why should that be departed from? If it suits the people of the country districts to enjoy their half-holiday on Wednesday or Thursday, why should they not have that privilege? Whilst, generally speaking, we should encourage the closing of all shops on Saturday, still, if it is acceptable to others to have another day, they should be allowed to do so.

The clause relating to the registration of dairies is a subtle bit of business. A previous Administration found that the exacting of small charges was exceedingly irritating, and after a good deal of pressure the Government of the day acceded to the request to have this irritating tax removed, and the dairies were exempted from the tax. I am sure that dairymen will find that this imposition of a charge of 2s. 6d. will be very irritating. It also applies to others besides dairymen, and the small storekeepers in town will have to pay it. They might well all be exempted. Then returns have to be made. People who are not engaged in commercial life have no idea of the annoyance which attaches to the ceaseless number of returns which have to be made. This Bill provides for further returns being made. I think we might ask that if returns have to be made they should be simplified in some form or other. So far as the sanitary arrangements are concerned, we quite agree that they should be insisted on wherever they are required. No one can cavil at that.

It was interesting this evening to listen to the easy way in which reference has been

made and explanations given in connection with the marking of furniture. I think it is an exceedingly desirable thing to do, and manufacturers generally will approve of it, but the ingenious way in which explanations have been made as to why the poor Chinese should be singled out as the one individual who shall be named in this Bill is altogether too funny for words. No doubt the hon. member in charge of this Bill, and others, in referring to this matter and the fathering of this Bill, have had to be exceedingly careful, and one can only admire the delicate way in which matters have been referred to. When the furniture is made by labour other than European, in the case of the Chinese it is mentioned, but with regard to other Asiatics it is referred to as other labour. In the case of the Chinese, where they manufacture the furniture, it has to bear a stamp in legible type showing the words "Chinese labour." That is very good; but look at the delicate way the Minister referred to European and other labour.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What would you suggest should go there?

Mr. BARNES: What is in the hon. gentleman's mind? I remember when the hon. gentlemen sat on this side of the House, and some important matters identical with the present Bill were being dealt with, hon. gentlemen opposite were very loud in their protestations.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You are not game to say what you think?

Mr. BARNES: At that time hon. gentlemen opposite called a spade a spade, but they are not calling a spade a spade to-day. Even the hon. member for Ithaca, who is so strong regarding a certain class of labour, was particularly kind in his remarks this evening in connection with this matter. It is just as well that hon. gentlemen opposite who take an interest in matters of this kind should see things to-day as they tried to make other people see them in other days.

No one will very seriously object to the increase in wages for beginners from 5s. to 7s. 6d. Matters of that kind meet with general approval. The matter of providing a place wherein employees can partake of refreshments is certainly good. I hope hon. members on this side will fight right to the last all those matters referring to the dairying industry, because it is an industry which should not be made to comply with unworkable conditions.

Mr. GUNN (*Carnarvon*): I won't delay the House very long in connection with this measure, because it has been thrashed out to a very great extent. It is one of that class of Bills that is taking away some little bit of our liberty. Every Bill that is introduced curtails our liberty in some direction, and it will not be long before we will have no liberty at all, and we will have nothing to fight for so far as liberty is concerned. This Bill will make it more irksome to carry on our rural industries. It will make it much harder for us to make a living. What good will it do? No doubt, the factories in the cities require certain Acts of Parliament to govern them, but this Bill is going to include the rural industries. For instance, at present the country towns have Wednesday for their half-holiday, but under this Bill they will be compelled to

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accept Saturday for their half-holiday. There are only two or three shops in some of these country towns, and they are supported by the surrounding farmers who come into town on Saturday to buy their stores. No one wants to buy goods in the country towns on a Wednesday afternoon, but they do want to buy them on a Saturday afternoon. If this Bill is passed it will mean that the farmers will order their stores from places like T. C. Beirne and other big firms in Brisbane. A Bill like this will work in the interests of the big cities, and will prevent the small shopkeeper in the country town from making a living. The consequence will be that the country shopkeepers will shut up their shops. In little towns such as Goondiwindi, the storekeepers and shopkeepers every now and again close up and go out of business because all their trade is going into the big cities like Brisbane. I am glad to hear the Minister say that he is going to allow the barbers in the outside districts to carry on their business at later hours of the day. That is very good indeed. It is the only bit of liberty that we are likely to get out of this Bill. We will now be able to get our hair cut and have a shave on a Saturday afternoon. The matter of the definition of "factory" is very serious for the country districts. The hon. member for Drayton brought that matter promptly before the House this evening. I hope when we get into Committee that we will thrash that matter out. We should not bring dairies under the provisions of this Act at all, because we have other Acts which govern that industry. The Shearers and Sugar Workers' Accommodation Act also governs the pastoral industry, and there is no need to bring it under this Bill at all. There is every provision made for the accommodation that has to be provided and all that sort of thing. It will mean that if this Bill is passed we will be working under two Acts of Parliament. We erect our

[9 p.m.] buildings according to the conditions laid down by the Shearers and Sugar Workers' Accommodation Act, and now this Bill comes along and tells us that we have to do something else. Again, every little bit of a store has to be registered. It is often necessary for an employee on a station to sell goods out of the store. Employees will come up after tea or at some other time, call at the storekeeper's room, and ask him to serve them with a pound of tobacco or whatever else they may require. But under this measure the store will have to be closed at 6 o'clock. The consequence will be that you will have no stores at stations or at wayside places, and persons who are travelling will have to carry their provisions with them. The Bill seems to me to be a Bill to curtail the liberty of graziers and farmers, and to make it more irksome for them to live on the land.

Mr. STEVENS (*Rosewood*): Like other hon. members who have spoken I should approve of any legislation that is necessary to secure improved conditions for workers, provided that legislation is not arbitrary or harassing, and does not curtail the liberties of the people interested. This Bill appears to me to be largely a measure for increased taxation, and to be introduced principally for the purpose of increasing the cost of living. Whether that is the object the Treasurer has in view I am not prepared to say, but if that is his object I do not think it will find favour with the people

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generally, because the cost of living has already been increased to such an extent that we do not want it to go any higher. The hon. member for Ithaca, who essayed to explain the provisions of this measure, told us that he thought storekeepers and factory-owners would welcome the taxation proposed in the Bill. It occurred to me when the hon. member said that that he must be a humorist, because it was the very first time that I have heard of taxation being welcomed by those upon whom it is imposed. However, it is to be hoped that if this taxation is imposed some other burden will be lightened. Personally, I should welcome a reduction in the land tax if the Treasurer could see his way to make a reduction in that tax after the passing of this Bill.

With reference to the weekly half-holiday, I have never been able to see that any other holiday than the Saturday half-holiday was of very much use to people engaged in any occupation, because Saturday afternoon is a time when sports are generally held. But the principal reason why I have risen to speak is to protest against the elimination of the exemption of butter factories and station and farm buildings from the definition of "factories." The hon. member for Ithaca tried to explain to the House that this was done only for the purposes of inspection. If the Treasurer assures the House that such is the case, and that this amendment will not bring those buildings under the provisions of the Factories and Shops Act with regard to hours of labour and so forth, I shall be perfectly satisfied. But, as other members have pointed out, it appears to me that if that is the object in view the amendment is utterly unnecessary, and therefore superfluous. If it is intended to bring butter factories and the other buildings mentioned under the operation of the Factories and Shops Act so that the industry will have to be carried on under the same fixed and arbitrary rules with regard to the hours of working as are observed in other factories, then I say the provision will be utterly unworkable, and will impose such a burden on the industry that it will be practically wiped out.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You have got the wrong hang of the thing altogether.

Mr. STEVENS: If I have got the wrong hang of the thing, I am perfectly satisfied to sit down, but, as I have already said, if the provision is introduced only for the purposes of inspection, it is absolutely unnecessary, as the hon. gentleman knows, because inspection is already provided for.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I have to complain about one provision in this measure, because it tampers with the dairying industry. If a Saturday half-holiday is to be general in all industries, including the dairying industry, what will happen to the produce of a dairy farm which has to stand over from Saturday till Monday morning?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You have not read the Bill: there is no such intention.

Mr. CORSER: We know that there is an intention to tamper with dairy factories.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is only for inspection and supervision.

Mr. CORSER: Inspection and supervision are fully provided for now by the Agricultural Department, and every dairy and dairy factory is thoroughly inspected.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You are in favour of wiping out factories and shops legislation altogether.

Mr. CORSER: Not at all. That is where the hon. gentleman makes a mistake. Any improvement in the condition of the workers that can be obtained under this Bill could very easily have been brought about by regulations. Generally speaking, most of the important provisions of Bills brought forward by the present Government are always carried out by regulations. This Bill is really padding and a waste of time, as the time of this House could be more fittingly taken up in considering business that desires urgent attention, and this is not the time to come along and waste the time of the country by dealing with stuff that could be dealt with by regulations. The dairying industry, which at the present time has some hope of being a success on account of the beautiful rains we have had, is now included, as the sugar industry has been included, under industrial conditions, and it can be bumped about at the desire of politicians without them considering just what effect their proposals will have on the industry. What is the good of coming along and interfering with the industry when there has been no call for it, and when the people engaged in the industry are protected in all directions? If there is any particular direction in which they desire further protection, then that protection could have been provided by regulations. The dairy factories absolutely must have every opportunity of carrying on on Saturday afternoons. If everyone has a half-holiday on Saturday afternoon, how are the people to be fed?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You do not understand the Bill.

Mr. CORSER: I know perfectly well what the desire of the Secretary for Public Works is, and we know perfectly well that there are many things in this Bill that the hon. gentleman did not want us to know too much about before it is passed, and we know perfectly well power is given to the Minister to exempt certain industries should he desire it. It is a matter of putting the industrial head of the dairy industry on the block, and then saying, "We have given power to the Minister not to use the axe or the guillotine so that you can save yourselves." If the Minister does not intend to enforce the conditions in this Bill, what is the use of bringing the Bill forward at the present time? It is simply filling up the gap so as to satisfy some people—to make the people believe that every body of workers has received some attention, while, as a matter of fact, it is only padding and window-dressing. Then, with regard to the branding of furniture, the hon. member has talked about what benefit that will be to certain people. If a Chinaman makes a piece of furniture he must let it be known to all that it is made by a Chinaman. So it should be. We all know that a Chinaman is not going to make as good an article as a white man; but if there is any necessity for such a provision in regard to furniture, how much more necessary is it in regard to other things? Why not brand our tobacco, and say certain tobacco is grown by Chinamen and have preference given to white-grown tobacco? If the Government want to tamper with anything, why do not they get down to

business; and if it is necessary to brand anything and legislate for such things as furniture at the present time, why cannot we get down to the tobacco industry and other industries, and let the people know whether they are smoking Chinese tobacco or black-grown tobacco, whether it is possible for them to continue eating white-grown sugar, or whether it will be necessary for them to eat black-grown sugar in the future? Why cannot we do something to protect ourselves in those directions as well as in regard to furniture? There has been no great cry for it, and I do not think the workers at the present time are suffering any hardship.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Why not brand vegetables?

Mr. CORSER: It would interfere with the cities if we were to brand vegetables. We know perfectly well that hon. members opposite do not give preference to white-grown vegetables. If anything, preference is given to Chinamen who grow vegetables. They have every privilege given to them to hawk these things round, and as long as the Chinese can sell them a bit cheaper they will get the patronage of a majority of the people of the city. The Government Whip made a great speech about the fact that the Bill made provisions in connection with a man selling newspapers in the bush or soft drinks in the suburbs—whether it would be possible for him to sell eggs. As far as he could see that was the great provision of the Bill, and that is what he made his speech upon.

Mr. GLEDSON: Especially when a meeting is coming on.

Mr. CORSER: There are none of those things now. There is a strike on, and the hens are not laying rotten eggs now. I cannot see why the people in country districts should not be allowed to decide whether they should have their half-holiday on Wednesday, on Saturday, or on Thursday, as has been the case in the past. Why should we not still allow them to say whether it will be possible for them to get to the factory on Saturdays in order to do their business? Members on the Government bench have always advocated that every power should be held by the people, and we should give the people every possible power. Then, why not allow them to continue to have this power? It is a matter of great importance to them. Provision has been made that in the city a one-man barber is to be allowed to continue work on Saturday afternoon. He may leave his "boss" and shave a client in a one-man shop in the suburbs, but that is not going to apply in the country where there might be a couple of chairs. In all our country districts where the people have had an opportunity of expressing their opinions, they have always said that Saturday is the best day for them to do their business, and there is no reason why the Government should step in and try to take it away. I sincerely hope there will be many amendments introduced into the Bill, and, from what I have heard from hon. members opposite, the Government themselves intend to amend the Bill in some particular. Whatever those amendments are directed to, it is to be sincerely hoped that our agriculturists and dairymen are not to be ruled by unnecessary industrial legislation.

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

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

Mr. Corser.]

RABBIT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

POSTPONEMENT OF ORDER.

On the Order of the Day No. 5 being read for "Rabbit Act Amendment Bill, to be considered in Committee"—

The TREASURER moved—That the Order be postponed until after the consideration of Order No. 7.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Is there any special reason for the postponement?

The TREASURER: The Minister in charge is unavoidably absent.

SUGAR EXPERIMENT STATIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Bertram, Maree, in the chair.*)

Clauses 1 to 3, inclusive, put and passed.

On clause 4—"Amendment of section 9"—

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): He had an amendment on the clause. Short as the Bill was, there was a principle involved, and he would very much have liked to have had an opportunity of speaking on the second reading. That privilege was denied to them through the discourtesy of the Government of the day to the Prime Minister of Australia, who on that occasion was speaking in Brisbane on the biggest question they had ever had to deal with. They naturally desired to listen to that gentleman, and he, for one, did so.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I promised you I would hold it over for one night, and I did.

Mr. SWAYNE: The hon. member was evidently speaking under a misapprehension. He would not ask for a favour in such a matter. He thought the Secretary for Agriculture would acknowledge that all that passed was that he asked him if he had any intention of going on with the Committee stages, and he replied that he had not. The principle involved in the clause was whether the charges involved in dealing with pests that threatened the existence of their big national industries were to be thrown entirely on a small section of the producers, or whether they were to be borne by the community at large. He thought it was only a fair thing that in such matters the community should assist. He supposed that, one year with another, they lost fully 10 per cent. of their cane crop, and he thought it was as far back as 1895 that they first received a certain amount of subsidy from the Government. So far as he could ascertain, the whole intention of the Bill was to deprive them of that little help they had been getting. He could not understand how hon. members opposite, representing sugar districts such as Cairns, Herbert, Bowen, Mackay, Musgrave, and Bundaberg, could allow such a proposal to go through without making some protest. His amendment was to omit all the words from the first word to the last word of the clause. He regarded the clause as the first step towards depriving them of the assistance they had been receiving, and it was made quite clear in subclause (4) of clause 5 that—

"No endowment as in section nine of this Act is provided shall be payable on any assessment levied under this section."

[*Hon. E. G. Theodore.*]

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He could explain that the hon. member was wrong. If he would look at the principal Act and read section 7, he would find the following:—

"The Minister may, in each year, make and levy an assessment not exceeding one penny on every ton of sugar-cane received at a sugar works. Such assessment shall be paid to the Minister in the first instance by the owner of every sugar-works upon the actual number of tons of sugar-cane received during the season with respect to which notice of assessment has been given as hereinafter provided.

"But such assessment shall be paid and borne by the owner of the sugar-works and the grower, respectively, in equal proportions of not exceeding one half-penny for every ton of such sugar-cane so received."

Hitherto the contribution had been at the rate of one halfpenny, and that had been subsidised by the Government to the extent of one halfpenny, or equal to the contributions of both. Under section 9 of the Act it was provided—

"In every year there shall be paid by the Treasurer in to the fund from the consolidated revenue, which is hereby appropriated for the purpose, a sum equal to the amount of assessments levied in such year."

That was continued, but subclause (4) of the clause to which the hon. member had referred provided—

"No endowment as in section nine of this Act is provided shall be payable on any assessment levied under this section."

The endowment under the principal Act of the contributions for experiment stations continued, and was not affected at all. The additional assessment was for the purpose of coping with grub and other pests, such as rats, and for that the money contributed by the growers would be used, and no money contributed by the Government. He was assured by the Parliamentary Draftsman that the miller would be called upon to contribute equally with the grower, but there would be no Government subsidy under the new provision.

Mr. SWAYNE: He was pleased to hear the hon. gentleman make the statements which he had done, but he (Mr. Swayne) did not make a statement without [9.30 p.m.] having consulted a member of the legal profession, and it certainly seemed rather ambiguous even after that explanation. As the Minister pointed out, the clause which he wished to remove was included in section 9 of the principal Act. Clause 4 of the Bill provided—

"In section nine of the principal Act after the words 'assessments levied,' the words 'under section seven of this Act' are inserted. The proviso to the said section is repealed."

Section 9 of the Act read—

"In every year there shall be paid by the Treasurer into the fund from the consolidated revenue, which is hereby appropriated for the purpose, a sum equal to the amount of assessments levied in each year."

Section 7 limited the assessments to 1d.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: One says not more than 1d., and this says not less than 1d.

Mr. SWAYNE: This gave power to levy up to 3d.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: At the request of the canegrowers. They are willing to be taxed up to 3d. per ton.

Mr. SWAYNE: He had received correspondence, and he had discussed the matter with the representatives of some of the organisations who had communicated with the Minister, and they had told him that they had distinctly asked for that on the condition that it was to be subsidised.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

Mr. SWAYNE: This was stated in a letter which he had here addressed to the Agricultural Department from the United Canegrowers' Association—the Australian Sugar Producers' Association also advised him to the same effect—that it was to be subsidised £1 for £1.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am not dealing with letters, but with a big deputation of forty odd delegates which waited on me last year.

Mr. SWAYNE: However, the Minister assured him that the subsidy of £1 for £1 was to be continued.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No, not £1 for £1. I told you the growers contributed ¼d. per ton, the millers ¼d. per ton, and the Government subsidised that by ½d. per ton.

Mr. SWAYNE: The Bill provided for a levy of 1d.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, but there is no contribution or subsidy by the Government under this Bill. The subsidy under the Act continues.

Mr. SWAYNE: This Bill provided for an additional levy. Was that additional levy to be subsidised?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

Mr. SWAYNE: Under the principal Act the money was largely devoted to other purposes.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Experimental stations entirely.

Mr. SWAYNE: So far as he understood, this amending Bill was more particularly intended to provide funds for dealing with the grub pest.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, and establishing an experimental bureau, too.

The bell indicated that portion of the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. SWAYNE: He quite understood that the old endowment would be continued as far as the Sugar Experiment Stations Act was concerned, but that the money which was being raised in addition would not be subsidised, and that justified him in the statements he had made.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It does not.

Mr. SWAYNE: The money raised for dealing with this pest would not receive any Government assistance. They were not to get the help they had been receiving for the last twenty-two years.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, you will get that help, and no more.

Mr. SWAYNE: But it would not go to the grub pest.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No, but you say you will get no help, which is not true.

Mr. SWAYNE did not think it was right that the whole of the expense of dealing with the grub pest should be placed on the shoulders of the growers. The last balance of the sugar experiment stations fund showed a credit of over £3,000. They had not found it necessary to levy more than ¼d. per ton on cane for some four years, and where was the need to ask for additional power to levy this additional amount of 2d.? He protested against this burden being imposed on the sugar industry at the present time, in view of the burdens to which it had already been subjected. The Commonwealth Treasurer, in his statement, showed that he was making £500,000 out of his transaction with Queensland sugar, which meant £125 to each of the 4,000 producers in the industry. Even under this measure, inoffensive as it seemed, there was power to levy a sum of £9,000 or more on the basis of the 1913 crop. He did not think it was fair that they should have to pay a tax for this particular purpose without any assistance from the State.

The CHAIRMAN: I would point out to the hon. gentleman that if he desires to move the deletion of the whole clause he will not be in order. He can accomplish his object by voting against the clause.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member for Mirani was evidently determined not to understand the position, and he would explain it himself to the Committee. At the present time the growers and millers contributed ¼d. per ton in connection with the upkeep of the Sugar Experiment Station, and the Government subsidised it by an equal amount. The Bill proposed that the contribution should be increased to 1d. if necessary, but that did not say that it would be necessary. It might be ¼d. or any amount up to 1d. per ton. He had no desire to introduce the measure at all, but he did so at the request of a deputation of canegrowers who thought it necessary in order to deal with the grub pest, and they thought it would be better to systematise it and give the Governor in Council an opportunity to proclaim grub-infested areas.

Mr. SWAYNE: The deputation asked for an endowment.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Whatever they asked for, there was no promise made that an endowment would be granted. He had the notes of the deputation, covering twenty pages of foolscap closely typed, but there was no reference there to a promise of an endowment. He was certain that no promise was made that the Government would subsidise the business at all. The Commonwealth Government had agreed to subsidise it to the extent of £1,000 a year for the first two years, and the Queensland Agricultural Department had been hard at work for the last seven months earnestly endeavouring to put their hands on the most suitable entomologist to take charge of the matter at Cairns. He thought they had succeeded in getting a man, but he cabled out saying he was anxious to get some official information about the rainfall at Cairns, and he would see if it was a suitable place for him to live in or not. So it was quite likely

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that they would not be able to get this man. They were in hopes, however, of getting another man who had been strongly recommended, and who had experience in Fiji. He drew the attention of the hon. member for Mirani to paragraph (3) of clause 5, which read—

“The provisions of section seven of this Act shall, so far as they are applicable, apply to every assessment levied under this section.”

That meant that there should be equal contribution from the millers and growers. The hon. member for Mirani evidently did not take the trouble to read the Bill. Then, the next paragraph read—

“(4) No endowment as in section nine of this Act is provided shall be payable on any assessment levied under this section.”

That made it perfectly clear. They were making the assessment as it was made under the old Act, but there would be no Government subsidy. The hon. member for Mirani could content himself by voting against the clause.

HON. J. TOLMIE: He had listened with interest to the remarks of the hon. member for Mirani and the Minister for Agriculture. The hon. member for Mirani was only anxious to do his best for those engaged in the sugar industry. Those engaged in the sugar industry had imposed a tax upon themselves for the purpose of assisting the development of the industry, and they did so to a greater extent than was ever done by any industry in the history of the State. Governments in the past had subsidised the money raised in this direction, and the Minister said it was not proposed to do away with that subsidy in connection with the sugar experiment stations. There were other pests, and if the sugar industry in Queensland was going to be successful something must be devised for dealing with those pests. He knew the Agricultural Department had been most assiduous in dealing with the pests in the sugar industry.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We are dealing with them in this Bill.

HON. J. TOLMIE: He knew that, and he wanted the Minister to deal with the question in a generous spirit. He knew that the Agricultural Department had been working to counteract the evils in the sugar industry, and they had entomologists at work trying to make a discovery to overcome the pests. He understood the department was going to get an entomologist to work on the spot and make careful observations.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Mr. Jarvis is doing excellent work now.

HON. J. TOLMIE: He agreed with the Minister. The Commonwealth were going to subsidise the industry to the extent of £1,000 a year in order that they might not have recourse to black-grown sugar. At present there was not sufficient sugar grown in Queensland to meet the demand in Australia. If they wanted to increase the sugar production they would have to destroy the pests that attacked the canefields.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We only produced enough for local requirements once.

HON. J. TOLMIE: It was a good thing that they produced it once, and he hoped that under the hon. gentleman's régime they

{*Hon. W. Lennon.*

would produce it twice. That was why he hoped that the hon. gentleman would deal more generously with the sugar-grower than he proposed in the Bill. The hon. gentleman told the Committee that the Commonwealth Government were prepared to contribute £1,000 a year towards the payment of an entomologist, so that, as soon as the hon. gentleman succeeded in finding an entomologist and getting him here, he could apply to the Commonwealth Government for that contribution of £1,000 a year for two years. But he could not claim credit for providing that sum of £1,000. The Bill made provision for the payment of an entomologist, and the money for that payment was to be found by the sugar-growers by means of a special tax imposed on themselves.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: At their request.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Still they asked the Minister to be generous in his treatment of them in this matter. The department was showing no generosity to the growers by their proposals in this Bill, and it was because the sugar industry was being taxed in a way that no other industry was being taxed that the hon. member for Mirani was anxious that the Government should come to the assistance of those men who were prepared to help themselves in this matter of coping with pests in the industry. The hon. member for Mirani said there should be no differentiation between the action of the Government in this matter and their action in regard to the sugar experiment stations. For the work of experimentation the sugar-growers paid into a fund, which was subsidised by the Government. They had been doing that for a considerable number of years, and a great deal of useful work had been done by that means. Now the sugar-growers said, “We are still prepared to tax ourselves, as we have been doing in the past, in order to obtain the necessary intelligence to assist us in coping with the pests which are attacking the industry, but we should like some assistance from the Government.” The industry was of tremendous value to the State, not only from the point of view of the great amount of employment it gave at a remuneration which attracted those engaged in manual labour, but also from the point of view of the commodity it produced. When people whose capital was sunk in the industry—some of it sunk so deeply that they could not get it out without actual loss—offered to tax themselves for the purpose of coping with the pests they had to contend with, it was a fair thing that they should receive some support from the Government. The amount of endowment would not be very much.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We do not know how much it will be.

HON. J. TOLMIE: They had some idea.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No, we have not; as I shall show you presently.

HON. J. TOLMIE: He should be prepared to listen to the hon. gentleman's explanation on that point, but he did not think it would amount to more than £2,000 a year if the levy was 1d. per ton. of cane, and the Government could very easily find that sum, although it would be a considerable amount for the farmers to find. All that was asked was that the Government would display those generous instincts which they claimed to possess in regard to this matter.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE explained that last year the Government paid in subsidy in support of the Sugar Experiment Stations a sum of £2,257 and also contributed towards the destruction of beetles a sum of over £300, so that they really gave a subsidy of between £2,000 and £3,000. The existing Act provided that the subsidy should not exceed 1d. per ton, but under the Bill it was provided that the levy should not be less than 1d. per ton, so that it was impossible for him to say whether it would be 1d., 2d., or 3d. per ton, and therefore it was not possible to gauge how much the subsidy would amount to; but, as he had already explained twice, the Government had no intention of further increasing the subsidy.

Question—That clause 4, as read, stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided:—

	AYES, 29.
Mr. Armfield	Mr. May
„ Barber	„ McLachlan
„ Carter	„ McMinn
„ Collins	„ McPhail
„ Coyne	„ O'Sullivan
„ Dunstan	„ Payne
„ Fihelly	„ Peterson
„ Foley	„ Ryan, D.
„ Gilday	„ Ryan, H. J.
„ Hardacre	„ Ryan, T. J.
„ Hartley, H. L.	„ Smith
„ Huxham	„ Theodore
„ Land	„ Wilson
„ Lacombe	„ Winstanley
„ Lennon	

Tellers: Mr. H. J. Ryan and Mr. Smith.

	NOES, 12.
Mr. Barnes	Mr. Petrie
„ Bayley	„ Roberts
„ Corser	„ Stevens
„ Gunn	„ Swayne
„ Hodge	„ Tolmie
„ Moore	„ Vowles

Tellers: Mr. Corser and Mr. Swayne.

Resolved in the affirmative.

On clause 5—“*Grub infested areas*”—

Mr. SWAYNE said he was pleased to hear from the Minister that the millers would have to contribute half the levy; at the same time, he thought it would have been better if the Minister could have raised the money by a levy on land instead of a levy on cane.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You will make a lot of enemies if you advocate that.

Mr. SWAYNE said he was not troubling himself about making enemies, he was thinking of what was right. He was secretary of the fund some time ago, and in the district where the pest was worst there was a lot of unoccupied land, and while they could get the money from those actively engaged in the industry, they could not get any assistance from the holders of those lands—banks and others holding them as securities—and seeing that the value of those lands largely depended upon their success in regard to the destruction of the pest, it would be a good idea if the Minister made those landowners assist in combating the pest.

Question put and passed.

Clause 6—“*Amendment of section 10*”—put and passed.

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

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

The House adjourned at twelve minutes past 10 o'clock till the following day.