

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 11 SEPTEMBER 1917**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

TUESDAY, 11 SEPTEMBER, 1917.

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

## PAPER.

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

Additional regulations under the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Act of 1917.

## QUESTIONS.

## HOURS AND RATES OF PAY OF RAILWAY ENGINE-DRIVERS.

Mr. ARMFIELD (*Musgrave*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. What are the number of hours worked by the railway engine-drivers at each of the following centres:—Bundaberg, Maryborough, and Gympie, from the 1st July to the 26th August of this year?"

"2. What were the number of hours paid at overtime rates at each of the centres named?"

"3. What was the cost of such overtime at each centre?"

"4. What were the hours of overtime worked by the guards stationed at the centres named; and the cost of such overtime?"

"5. What number of drivers and guards are stationed at each of these centres named?"

"6. How many shunters have passed their necessary examination and waiting to be promoted to the position of guard?"

"7. How many of these shunters have been engaged shunting for three years?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

"1. Bundaberg, 11,328½ hours; Maryborough, 23,780 hours; Gympie, 11,554½ hours.

"2. Bundaberg, 2,107½ hours; Maryborough, 4,377 hours; Gympie, 1,858 hours.

"3. Bundaberg, £286 12s. 4d.; Maryborough, £622 0s. 3d.; Gympie, £260 3s. 8d.

"4. Bundaberg—(a) 1,023¼ hours; (b) £118 15s. 5d. Maryborough—(a) 772¼ hours; (b) £97 17s. 3d. Gympie—(a) 538¾ hours; (b) £66 18s. 5d.

"5. Bundaberg—Drivers, 22; guards, 16. Maryborough—Drivers, 62; guards, 17. Gympie—Drivers, 29; guards, 23.

"6. Bundaberg, 3; Maryborough, 8; Gympie, 2.

"7. Bundaberg, 3; Maryborough, 8; Gympie, 2."

[Hon. A. J. Jones.

## DISTRESS IN MACKAY.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*) asked the Chief Secretary—

"If he will take immediate steps to relieve the distress in Mackay, where, through the stoppage of water-borne traffic, they are becoming short of the necessities of life?"

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

"I have already taken such steps, and I have been informed by the hon. member for Mackay (Mr. Forgan Smith), that he is in receipt of the following telegram to-day from the mayor of Mackay, viz.:—

Thanks Premier's offer bring supplies from Rockhampton two boats arriving from Townsville to-morrow will relieve position somewhat. Have handed your telegram Traders' Association for action."

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: After notice of this question was given. (Government laughter.)

MR. DASH AND PROSERPINE MILL DISPUTE.

Mr. SWAYNE asked the Chief Secretary—

"Who and what is the Mr. Dash to whom the manager of the Proserpine Mill states the Government has referred the matter of the industrial dispute there?"

The PREMIER replied—

"This question is evidently based on false information."

## DISMISSAL AND REAPPOINTMENT OF MR. EASTCRAB.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. Has a gentleman, by name Mr. Eastcrab, been dismissed from the Queensland Railways by the Commissioner, since the last general conference of the Railway Union, for failing to report for duty or for other causes?"

"2. Who is responsible for his reappointment?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

"1. No. Mr. Eastcrab has not been dismissed. He applied for extended leave without pay, which was not granted, and as he had taken up duties outside the department, his name was removed from the books.

"2. He has not been reappointed."

## ADVANCES ON SUGAR HELD IN STORES.

Mr. SMITH (*Mackay*) asked the Chief Secretary, without notice—

"If he has received any reply from the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth to the telegram sent last week about advances payable on sugar held in stores and mills?"

The PREMIER replied: I may inform the hon. gentleman that I have received a telegram from the Prime Minister to-day, reading as follows:—

"Your telegram 6th. Have arranged with Colonial Sugar Refining Company make advances against sugar prior to shipment so as to give necessary accommodation to enable millers to continue crushing operations and to pay for cane and wages."

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

## AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT.

HON. J. TOLMIE (*Toowoomba*) asked the Chief Secretary, without notice—

"When the Auditor-General's report is likely to be presented, as we were told about three weeks ago that it would be ready in a day or two?"

The PREMIER replied—

"I understand that the Auditor-General's report will be ready early in October."

## MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

## STOPPAGE OF PRODUCING INDUSTRIES IN NORTH QUEENSLAND.

The SPEAKER: I have to report to the House that I have received the following letter from the hon. member for Mirani, Mr. E. B. Swayne—

11th September, 1917.

"The Speaker, Legislative Assembly, Queensland.

"Dear Mr. Speaker,—I desire to give you notice, in accordance with Standing Order No. 135, when the House meets this afternoon for the conduct of public business, I shall move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of debating a definite matter of urgent public importance.—viz., the distress occasioned by the stoppage of producing industries in North Queensland during the operations of the seamen's strike.

"I am, dear Mr. Speaker,

"Yours sincerely,

"E. B. SWAYNE."

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): In accordance with the notice you have just received, I beg to move—That the House do now adjourn.

More than five members having risen in their places in support of the motion,

Mr. SWAYNE said: In moving this motion I am not doing it with any desire to embarrass the Government. (Loud Government laughter.) I may point out that through the industrial deadlocks that have lately obtained the Opposition has treated the Government with the utmost forbearance. So long as we were satisfied or had any reason to think that they intended to deal with the crisis on constitutional lines, we refrained from any criticism, and did not do anything to hamper them by word or deed. I think it is only right to impress that upon the House, in order that it may be embodied in "Hansard." It shows the manner in which the Opposition dealt with the position, as they carefully refrained from any criticism that is likely to make the Government's work harder in dealing with these matters. However, the matter has now become so acute that in justice to those whom I represent—in fact I may say in justice to the whole State—I think it now my duty to give Parliament an opportunity of discussing the position that has arisen in the hope that through our united advice and through the debate that will ensue some satisfactory solution of it will be offered. The position is this—not only is the North in absolute need of the necessaries of life in many instances—we know of towns that are short of flour at the present time—not only has that obtained, but it has gone further: the big industries on which they depend for

their ability to buy food, and upon which Australia depends for the supply of these necessaries of life, are on the verge of being hung up. As showing what the position is, I would like to read some telegrams verifying all that I say in regard to the stress that there obtains. I may say that last week I received a telegram from one of the mills pointing out that the farmers had been called together and asked if they would accept half the award prices for their cane. They are also out of sacks, which threatens a total stoppage in the near future. On the strength of that, I asked the Premier a question without notice last Thursday. At that time the Government seemed to be quite without purpose in dealing with the matter. I asked the Premier whether he would do anything to relieve the position, and really I think that that question might have been answered last Thursday without keeping me waiting four days for a reply as to whether he would do anything to relieve the position or not. Then again, since Thursday last, I received a telegram from the Secretary of the Traders' Association at Mackay, reading—

"Get steamer despatched with food supplies for Mackay. Position very serious."

Then again, on Saturday night I received an urgent wire from one of the mills here reading—

"Marian mill out of sugar sacks; none procurable in Queensland. Will have to close down five days from date. Urge you endeavour to arrange transit of sacks from Sydney to Gladstone, prevent wholesale unemployment of men and serious loss to farmers during most profitable month year. All mills district similarly affected.—S. Watt, Secy."

As accentuating the position that has now arisen, I find the Premier has wired to the Prime Minister quoting Mr. Watt's telegram. That shows that he had begun to realise the seriousness of the position. Further down in the same column there is this statement—

"Mr. Ryan also referred to the question of advances against sugar stored in a mill, and said that on June 27 he had telegraphed to the Prime Minister as follows:—'Deputation of sugar-growers at Mackay urges speedy completion of arrangement to ship raw sugar from Mackay. They also urge that advances be made against sugar stored in mills and in shipping sheds. Position is very acute. I strongly urge you to accede to their requests.'"

The report also states that Mr. Ryan sent an additional wire dealing with the subject, urging that the Commonwealth Government should consider the advisability of making advances against sugar stored in the mill to enable crushing to be continued. Those wires amply confirm my contention that the position in the North is most severe. When the Premier sent that telegram to Mr. Hughes, the time was more than past when something should be done to meet the difficulty which compelled mills to break awards and pay their cane suppliers only 10s. in the £1. although at the time perfectly solvent, as is shown by the Auditor-General, in his last annual report. Referring to the Plane Creek Mill, he said, "The financial position of the company is sound." That is what the Auditor-General said about a mill which has

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been reduced to the position of being able to pay its growers only 10s. in the £1. The State Government which allowed such a condition of things to obtain have certainly been lacking in their duty. In many instances the employees will, no doubt, be reduced to a similar condition to that occupied by the growers, and it goes without saying that the position has become so acute that a total stoppage of the supply of cane for the year may result. After all that has been done with regard to food supplies, and with regard to advances on sugar stored in the mills, the position has not been half met. With reference to the food supply, I, in company with a number of the Upper House, waited on the Premier as far back as Friday last, and the hon. gentleman then told us that a small Government steamer capable of carrying 50 or 60 tons of food supplies would be sent from Rockhampton. In the meantime, we find that private enterprise stepped into the breach, and that two firms—Messrs. Burns, Philp, and Company and Messrs. Cummins and Campbell—sent two small steamers with supplies to Mackay, and thus alleviated the position as far as food supplies are concerned. But these things are only palliated; the root of the evil has not been touched, and that is, the transport of sugar from the producing districts to the Southern States. This opens up a wider question than the needs of the North; it opens up the wider question of the needs of Australia. Not only are the sugar producers hampered by present conditions, but we shall find very soon, unless some solution of the difficulty is found, that the people of the South will be short of one of the absolute necessities of life. The producers and the mills in the North will shortly have to close down, in spite of the financial help given them, because they are short of sacks to put their sugar in; and even if they receive a supply within a few days there will still be a difficulty, because they have reached the limit of their storage. I made inquiries this morning, and I found that alongside one wharf in Brisbane there were 7,000 tons of shipping tied up—empty, idle, lying there without being used. The North is blocked up, and the people down South are wanting that sugar, and yet we have 7,000 tons of shipping lying useless alongside the wharf. Can anyone give any good reason why such a state of things should exist? We know that our civilisation of today depends upon our transport facilities—upon the means of intercourse between this State and other States, and between different parts of the world. What has happened in Queensland, in spite of the fact that our transport workers are the most highly paid of such workers in any part of the world? This has happened, that the people in the centre of Queensland are on the verge of starvation owing to shipping being tied up. Surely it is time that something was done to remedy such a state of things. I know that when such a matter as this is brought forward the Government take refuge in the pretext or the subterfuge that we should go to Mr. Hughes or to the National Government. This is no time, when we are fighting for our very existence, for any Government to stand upon their rights in that manner. This is a time when party feeling should not obtain. I do not care whether the State Government belonged to one party and the Commonwealth Government belonged to another party, I contend that it is not right for them to shelter themselves beneath the

[*Mr. Swayne.*

plea that this is a matter which belongs to the functions of another Government, and say, "This is the other fellow's work." It is the duty of the State Government to see that the shipping lying useless in Queensland ports, at a time when the whole world is so short of shipping, that every ton of shipping we have at our disposal is properly utilised, and not left lying here week after week unused. I have opened the subject up. Unfortunately, I am the only member on this side of the House representing the North, but I say that it is up to the unlucky thirteen members opposite who represent Northern electorates to give some indication that they realise the seriousness of the position of their constituents at the present time, and to show that they are prepared to do something to relieve that position—if necessary to break the trammels of party feeling and party discipline in order to see that something is done to relieve the North in its time of dire distress. This is not a matter affecting one town only; it affects the whole of the North, and will shortly affect the whole of Australia as far as one of the necessities of life is concerned, if something is not done to relieve the present deadlock—or blockade—if I may call it such, to which the North is subjected. It is about up to those men to sink all party feeling and to unite in offering a solution of the difficulty. If that solution involves the breaking away from some of their party ties and party feelings, still it is their duty to take whatever action is necessary.

Mr. FOLEY: In the same way as you break away from your party ties.

Mr. SWAYNE: I never allow party feeling to tie my hands. (Government laughter.) No; I do not. Time after time, when I have considered it my duty to those I represent, I have voted against my party. I have never allowed my sympathies to be gagged by party feeling. It is up to some members on the other side to show that they can subordinate party feeling when occasion requires it. At any rate, I think it will be admitted that I have opened up a most important question and have shown that the position in the North is most acute, and, further, that the whole of Australia will suffer shortly if something is not done to see that the shipping on the Australian coast is utilised. I move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing this subject.

HON. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): Just a few words in seconding the motion moved by the hon. member for Mirani. I think the thanks of the community are due to the hon. member for the action which he has taken this afternoon. There is no question about it, that this particular industry which has been affected, and is being affected at the present time, by the dislocation which the hon. member has spoken about is one of the most important industries of Queensland, and one of the most important of the primary industries of the Commonwealth. That it has been deleteriously affected by the present industrial disturbances is unquestionable, and the cause is, as has been stated by the hon. member for Mirani, that a certain section of the community, who are amongst the highest paid of the workers of the community, have disregarded an award which has been made in their favour, and are breaking the law, and thus injuring this most important industry and affecting a large number of the

members of the community. Owing to those breaches of the law by that section of the community, many of our people have been unable to obtain the necessary stores to enable them to live, and this great industry, whose working season is now on, is being affected by the fact that they are unable to obtain mill stores. That that is so is known to every member of the community, and yet the Premier and hon. gentlemen who sit with him on the Treasury bench have by their lack of action contributed to this state of affairs, and that should, to my mind, hold them up to the reprobation of the general body of the electors of Queensland.

Mr. COLLINS: More window-dressing.

HON. J. G. APPEL: It is useless for hon. members on that side of the House to talk about window-dressing. We have legislation upon the statute-book dealing with conciliation and arbitration, and awards

[4 p.m.] have been made, and, despite the fact that the legislation itself is of the special brand of hon. members opposite, breaches of those awards are being daily made; but the Government, which should insist that, so far as every section of the community is concerned, the law should be obeyed, is sitting idly and calmly by taking no action, and allowing these things to occur.

Mr. BOOKER: Why?

HON. J. G. APPEL: Why? I do not think the reason is far to seek. Unfortunately, as I have repeatedly said in this House, it is because they are not free to act as they choose, because they have to obey the instructions which are given to them. It is because they are representing—and some of their members openly say that that is the fact—only a section of the community; they are only prepared to administer and to cause the law to be carried into effect so far as that particular section of the community is concerned, and are not prepared to carry into effect the law of the land when that section become law-breakers. They then sit idly by and permit those breaches of the law to take place, notwithstanding that great loss, suffering, and deprivation is being caused to a section of the community consisting of the primary producers, who above all others should receive the care of the Administration; who above all others are subject to all the pests that nature can inflict upon them, and who to-day are suffering from all the pests that a political Government, owing to their non-recognition of the rights of this particular section of the community, are prepared to inflict upon them. I say that advisedly, because it is not alone the inaction of the Government, but the fact that they are not taking the action that they should take, which is causing all this trouble. The hon. member for Mirani has specifically stated that in connection with certain mill supplies the position is serious, and that unless those supplies are furnished some of the large mills at present in operation will have to close down, inflicting, in the first instance, damage and loss to those who have produced the cane; then upon those who are employed in connection with the industry, and upon the community generally. As we all know, Queensland is the great supplier of this particular article to the Commonwealth of Australia, and if anything interferes with the production and manufacture of sugar it will not only inflict an injury, financial and otherwise, upon the people of Queensland,

but it will also affect the people of the whole of the community of the Commonwealth. We know that at the present time there is a large section of the people of the Commonwealth who look somewhat askance at Queensland in connection with this industry. They are continually crying out that they require cheaper sugar.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order in debating that matter on this motion.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I am endeavouring to point out the effect of the dislocation upon the community generally, and the fact that, owing to this dislocation, sugar will not be supplied to members of the community in the Southern States, with the result that it will have a far-reaching effect, as, if there is a failure on the part of Queensland to produce this necessary article, we shall have the cry that sugar must be imported, and that will be sugar grown by black labour. But apparently that does not affect hon. members opposite, who are continually using the parrot cry of "White Australia," and yet stigmatised everything they object to as "black." They will have no hesitation in doing this injury to Queensland. If they can get cheaper sugar grown by black labour, they will have no hesitation in consuming it. That is the position that we have to fear. Every member of the House, no matter what side he is sitting upon, has always advocated conciliation and arbitration. But when we see an absolute breakdown of the legislation in connection with that particular method of settling our trade disputes; when we, furthermore, see that the awards which have been made, which should be in every way satisfactory to those engaged in the industry, and yet this dislocation is taking place, it makes one ponder and think as to whether hon. members on the Treasury benches are *bonâ fide* in their protestations. Then, again, we have the fact that was touched upon by the hon. member who moved the motion: is this the time when any Government should sit idly by, when the Empire is in such great straits, and our boys are risking their lives and shedding their blood at the front? Is this the time when these trade disputes should take place with all this dislocation? I am very glad indeed that the hon. member for Mirani has brought this matter before the House, and in doing so he has brought it before the electors of Queensland. I trust that every member on this side who has the matter at heart, if only in a few words, will voice his disapprobation of the lack of action which has signalised and stigmatised the Premier and hon. members sitting with him on the Treasury bench. I have much pleasure in seconding the motion.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): Before this matter goes through I would like to support the hon. member for Mirani. No one intimately connected with the affairs of the North, on reading the newspapers, can help coming to the conclusion that things must be in a desperate position. When you find that the produce of the whole season's work is being jeopardised by the action of the Government in not finding the means of transport for the necessary material, and for the carrying away of the crop from the sugar-mills, when we know that there are boats lying here in the Brisbane River that could be utilised by the Government, if they were so inclined and prepared to carry out the honourable functions

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of a Government, which they do not appear to be, then we must come to the conclusion that we have arrived at a lamentable state of affairs in the history of Queensland, and, as we said the other night, such a thing as responsible government ceases to exist. If we are going to allow any section of the community to defy the law, if we are going to allow them to use force in the way they are doing to cripple and jeopardise an industry, then a Government which will sit by in apathy or in fear is not carrying out the functions which they were placed on the Treasury benches to perform. That is the position, and it has been the position for some time past with regard to the Government in Queensland.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: What rot!

Mr. VOWLES: To my mind, it is criminal on their part, and I am astonished to find that there are men representing the producers in the North who will by interjection now acclaim the doings of the Government in this respect. We have got to the stage now that the Government have shown that they are mere tools in the hands of an outside organisation.

Mr. DUNSTAN: They knew how to handle the position better than the Government in New South Wales.

Mr. VOWLES: They have sat by idly, wondering which way the cat was going to jump, afraid to move, afraid that they would fall out with their political friends; or, in the alternative, load themselves with infamy. They have done that for weeks. The Premier, since the time this matter was brought forcibly before him by the hon. member for Mirani, has been prepared to sit by, and at the dictation of his political bosses in the Trades Hall to allow production to be destroyed, and the whole of the fortunes of these unfortunate men in the North to be jeopardised, and he would never have attempted to interfere had not the hon. member for Mirani brought forward this motion, which he gave notice of some few days ago. The Premier now steps into the breach in a sort of way, and turns round and tells us, in answer to a question put to him in the House, that it is his intention to take action, and that he did so seemingly without any intervention on the part of the hon. member for Mirani. Where is this sort of thing going to finish? What applies in the North will apply in other directions in the future. Can we have any confidence in a Government which is going to sit idly by and allow these things to happen? Are we going to have our laws flouted, as has happened in the past, and are we going to have the Government falling back on the excuse that there is a higher authority which should be appealed to? Are they always going to fall back upon the Commonwealth Government, and not going to accept their own responsibilities? If they are not going to accept their responsibilities, I wonder how they can have the courage to remain on the Treasury benches; for, when all is said and done, the functions of the Government are to carry out the laws. These are not laws that the Government disapprove of; they are laws which were brought forward as part of their platform, brought forward by themselves and carried by force of numbers through this House. They are laws which it is admitted now contain great weaknesses, and weaknesses which were sought to be obviated by hon. members on this side when they were

under discussion. But when we pointed out those weaknesses the Government would not accept amendments whereby the difficulty in the North would have been overcome.

Mr. COLLINS: The weakness of your case.

Mr. VOWLES: It is not the weakness of our case; it is the weakness of the Government through their want of ordinary courage. The weakness I was referring to was in connection with the Arbitration Act. If the Premier had taken advantage of the suggestions of the Opposition, and included the right of appeal to the court, he would have been in a happy position to-day. Another thing, if he had accepted the suggestions of the Opposition—

The SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. member explain how this has anything to do with the seamen's strike?

Mr. VOWLES: The seamen's strike?

The SPEAKER: Yes. That is what the motion relates to.

Mr. VOWLES: I am dealing with the law and the defiance of the law.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must connect his remarks with the motion.

Mr. VOWLES: I am connecting them in this way: that the law is broken, and if the Government had handled the case as they should have done, they could have amended their former legislation; but sooner than do that, admit their incapacity, and alter the law to meet emergencies such as these, they are prepared to sit by and wait and let the inevitable happen. It appears that the seamen refused to handle goods or to carry on their ordinary avocations, simply because they are out on strike in sympathy with something that is going on in New South Wales. I have here a paragraph from the "Courier" of to-day giving the remarks of Judge Heydon in the New South Wales court, in which he deals very particularly with the case. He said—

"The case illustrates well how the 'black' doctrine causes a strike to run through the whole community. With the actual operation of the doctrine, however, we see a certain inconsistency. Strikers eat 'black' meat, ride on 'black' trams, and work alongside 'black' labour to help the strike. This sacred principle of 'black' doctrine, so holy as to justify the tearing away of Australia's shield that Germany may stab her, dwindles down to mere expediency, to be used or not as occasion seems to call for it. This holy principle shrinks into a commonplace desire to beat the Government. Let us, therefore, hear no more appeals to the great principles of unionism as justifying the infliction of widespread destruction, even starvation, and death, as coming before even loyalty to Australia, to the Empire, and to our brothers in the trenches."

Those are the words of a disinterested person—not a politician, but a judge—who is giving a decision in connection with the Pyrmont Sugar Workers' Employees' Union, which he fined £100 for aiding and abetting a strike. That is what is going on in the North. We have the same men who have for their battle cry at election times the question of black labour acting inconsistently;

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we have their representatives acting inconsistently; and we have their Government acting inconsistently. By the way this sort of thing is going on, these matters want ventilating; the general public wants to be brought face to face with them; the actions of the Government want dealing with now that the public is hot, so that the public will know the real strength of it; we don't want to have these matters brought forward at election time and slumped over and misrepresented. Who is at fault in not seeing that foodstuffs go to the people in the North requires to be stated. The Premier should explain why he has held back in such a callous manner where the fortunes of the Northern people were concerned, and why a big industry like the sugar industry is in the precarious position it is in to-day, losses being suffered by very many supporters of his own Cabinet through his not interfering and looking after their interests. I have very great pleasure in supporting the motion, and trust that every member on this side of the House will ventilate his grievances, because it is not a little grievance; it is not a party grievance; it is a National one. (Government laughter.)

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): I wish to support the hon. member for Mirani on this motion. I think he deserves not only the thanks of the House, but the thanks of the whole of the producers of the State, for bringing this matter forward, because the sugar producers—or the sugar-growers—who are suffering this serious loss are not the only portion of the community who have suffered so much of late. In fact, we have it that a case is now proceeding outside this State, where evidence was brought forward in the court that there was a plan—or, shall we say, a collusion, with men in this State and the other State—to cut our railway communication at Stanthorpe; and the same, no doubt, applied to the North. In fact, this hold-up of foodstuffs is not confined to shipping. I have it on the best of authority that certain portions of railway engines were removed at Atherton, in order to prevent the Farmers' Union taking possession of engines and supplying the people with food. Now, these are things which are practically permitted by the present Government.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We were removing temptation from their way.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The reason is that the present Government are part and parcel, by association, of the men who are holding up the State. (Government dissent.) You are part and parcel, by association and company, of the men who are holding up the resources of the State and ruining the producers of the State; and that is the reason that the State is suffering so much to-day. (Government dissent.) This position in the North reminds us that it is one of the results of socialism rule and origin, and if it were not for other powers outside Australia—if it had been left to socialism, which is causing all this destruction—Australia to-day would have been in the very same position as Russia—occupied by a foreign power. There is no getting away from that. If matters had been left to the socialists, who are the cause of all this trouble, foreign troops would have been occupying Brisbane to-day. (Government laughter and dissent.) If people like you had your way, you would not have been receiving your parliamentary salary

to-day, nor would you have been permitted to be in this House, because other powers would have been in occupation. You would have had no power for making the speeches which you are making now. We regret very much that people who have no control of things—people, perhaps, who are dependent upon their daily wages, as thousands of them are in the North—cannot even buy their food. And all this waste and destruction of industry is going on for the reason that the Government are part and parcel, by association, of the men who are on strike, and they dare not lift their finger to alter anything at all or to get the ships unloaded. Now, there are other places outside the North, and I can tell the Premier that, unless things alter very quickly, the communications that are going on between people outside and the men who are controlling things in the public service are going to cause the people of this State to rise up against them, and it will practically be a case of who is the strongest. I can assure the Premier that the people in this State are rising up, and they are very angry with the action of the public service and the men who have tried to seize the Government and wreck the industries of this State. I say that the people are getting angry at this starving-of the people.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member to read the Standing Order governing this debate. Standing Order No. 135 distinctly states that "every member making or debating any such motion shall confine himself to the single matter in respect of which the motion is made." I don't want to continually call the hon. member to order, but I ask him to keep to the motion.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The whole question is the shortage of food, and we want to get at who is responsible for practically starving the people, destroying our industries, and holding up the trade and commerce of our State, and we cannot get away from the fact that the present Government is responsible, purely and solely, for the reason that they are part and parcel of the strikers.

Mr. STEVENS (*Rosewood*): I was surprised to notice that, apparently, the Premier and his followers were going to allow this question to go to a vote without replying in any shape or form to the serious charges made by the hon. member for Mirani in his motion. I presume, however, that the Premier was engaged in framing one of his usual puerile amendments with which he meets any motion that comes from this side of the House, and that, possibly, accounted for the fact that he did not rise after the motion had been seconded. Well, Sir, I think you will agree with me that the country by this time has formed its own opinion of the tactics of the Hon. the Premier in dealing with such questions as this, and I think the people of this State will be able to draw their own conclusions in the matter when they see some foolish amendment moved in order to draw a red herring across the trail. Now, I have very much pleasure in supporting the motion so ably moved by the hon. member for Mirani, because I think we must all agree that the most serious situation has arisen, and that the Government's inaction with regard to the matter is such as to call for the severest reprobation that can be levelled against

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them. I think that you, Sir, representing a Northern constituency, must feel that the inaction of the Government, and their callous indifference to the welfare of the people in the North particularly, and the welfare of the whole of Australia in general, are such as calls for the most severe reprobation; and I am sure you, were you in a position, would be only too pleased to support the motion of the hon. member for Mirani, knowing that the inaction of the Government has caused severe distress amongst your own constituents. Now, the facts of the position are clearly that, on account of a so-called sympathetic strike with men in another State, the whole of the business of this State is being held up; and I am very pleased to notice that, even if our Government will not take the action which they should take in such a matter as this, the judges of the Arbitration Courts are taking action in such matters, and that even Mr. Justice Higgins has laid down the rule that he will not arbitrate in connection with any unions that go on strike. Now, there is no doubt that in the action which the seamen's and other unions have taken they are absolutely flouting the law which was passed for their benefit. As the hon. member for Mirani stated, they are enjoying the highest wages for the class of work in which they are engaged of anyone in any country in the world, and yet they deliberately hold up the commerce of the State in sympathy with the matter with which they have no personal concern. I have very much pleasure in supporting the motion, and I trust that the Premier will not deal with this question in the puerile fashion in which he usually does deal with such motions coming from this side of the House; but that he will, if possible, give an honest and straightforward reply to the motion.

The PREMIER: He always does.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You are an authority on puerility.

The PREMIER: I think that the hon. member for Mirani, in deciding to move this motion, might have adopted the ordinary courteous course which usually is adopted, by notifying me of his intention to do so. However, his lack of courtesy in that respect does not prevent me from being able to furnish the necessary documents from the department which will entirely disprove the assertions which he has made. Now, in the first place, this motion is confined to the question of the seamen's strike.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: No; the distress in North Queensland.

The PREMIER: Arising out of the seamen's strike; I am following the words of the motion. Now, as you are aware, Mr. Speaker, the award dealing with seamen is a Commonwealth award—an award of the Commonwealth court—and is a matter entirely within the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth Government. Notwithstanding that, I conceive it to be the duty of any State Government to do all that it can to assist in having business carried on as usual; to keep things going; and as far as this Government has been able, we have endeavoured to do that. I agree with the hon. member for Mirani that the Commonwealth should endeavour to assist the State, and the State to assist the Commonwealth; but, unfortunately, we have had a recent instance—a

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most striking instance—of where the Commonwealth utterly failed to assist the State when it was only a matter of having their formal assent obtained to Mr. Justice Higgins acting in the Northern railway dispute.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Has that anything to do with the seamen's strike?

The PREMIER: It is an answer to the suggestion that this State is not doing all that it can to have interstate trade carried on in a normal way.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: It is a case of the State sulking.

The PREMIER: No, it is not a case of the State sulking. Before I sit down I will be able to show you that we have done all we could; everything has been done in order to relieve any distress which may at present exist in North Queensland, or which was threatened in North Queensland. The hon. member has referred to the fact [4.30 p.m.] that there are a large number of steamers in Brisbane which are hung up because of the strike. Now, it may be of some information to hon. members to know that these ships can be loaded by men and manned with crews, every one of them, to take provisions to North Queensland, but the shipping companies refuse to allow these ships to be moved from Brisbane.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: That is something the public are not aware of.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Can they get freight back?

The PREMIER: We know that they can get freight back to Brisbane. There is no difficulty about that. I think I can guarantee that they will get freight through to Brisbane, but the shipping companies refuse to let their steamers go.

Hon. W. D. ARMSTRONG: They only want you to guarantee it.

The PREMIER: It has been suggested by hon. members that the trouble is due to the waterside workers. It is not due to the waterside workers at all, because they are prepared to load the ships. It is due to the action of the shipping companies. Why was it that there was no ship sent to relieve the people who required food in the Gulf ports?

Mr. CORSER: Because you did not send any.

The PREMIER: It was not within our power to send any ships. When we made representations to the shipping companies, the Australasian United Steam Navigation Company agreed to despatch the "Wodonga."

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Who did it? Who despatched the "Wodonga"?

The PREMIER: This Government made representations to the Australasian United Steam Navigation Company's head office in Brisbane and they agreed to do it. (Hear, hear!) That is for the information of the leader of the Opposition. The office in Melbourne was informed of the arrangement that was made, and they then informed me of the arrangements which I myself had made with the shipping company here.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: The Australasian United Steam Navigation Company agreed to send the "Wodonga" to the Gulf ports if men

were provided for loading, and if a crew were also provided. There was no difficulty whatever in providing men to load the boat or in providing a crew, because the waterside workers and the seamen have always been, and still are, prepared to load and man ships from Brisbane to North Queensland, but the shipping companies are refusing to send any steamers to North Queensland at all.

Mr. MACARTNEY: They do what they like, and no more.

The PREMIER: I am glad to have the opportunity this afternoon, in consequence of the motion moved by the hon. member for Mirani, of explaining what the real position is with regard to the lack of provisions in North Queensland. The speaker, in supporting his motion, dealt with three specific aspects of the matter. He dealt with the shortage of food supplies, he dealt with the supply of bags in some of the mills in the Mackay district, and also with the question of advances against the sugar held in store in North Queensland. I propose to deal with these three things separately. With regard to the question of food supply, I say that the short supply at Mackay is due to the fact that the shipping companies failed to send their ships there in the ordinary way. That may be on account of the strike there, or on account of being unable to get return freight. The question of the strike of the seamen is a question for the Commonwealth Government and not for this Government. As soon as I was apprised of the situation at Mackay by the hon. member for Mackay (Mr. Forgan Smith), and subsequently by the hon. member for Mirani (Mr. Swayne), and the Hon. T. C. Beirne, I immediately took steps to see what the Government might do with its own steamers in order to send supplies there. A suggestion was made from Mackay that the little steamer "Relief," which was at Mackay, should be sent to Rockhampton in order to take provisions from there, but I suggested, through the harbour master, that it would be more advisable to send the "Llewellyn," which is at Rockhampton, and which can be despatched at a moment's notice. This afternoon I read in the House a telegram which Mr. Forgan Smith received from the mayor of Mackay, thanking me for the offer which had been made with regard to the supplies from Rockhampton, and intimating that two boats would arrive from Townsville to-morrow and would relieve the position somewhat. So far as that is concerned the Government did all that they could. The Government were prepared to make the Government's steamers either at Mackay or Rockhampton available for the carrying of provisions. Now, with regard to the question of bags. As you are aware, Mr. Speaker, an arrangement with regard to the supply of bags for sugar and for the purpose of taking sugar from the mills is in the hands either of the Commonwealth Government or the Colonial Sugar Refining Company under their agreement with the Commonwealth Government. It also is not a matter for the State. Although it is entirely a matter for the Commonwealth Government or the Colonial Sugar Refining Company under their agreement, long ago this Government anticipated that there might be some trouble with regard to bags. As far back as May last, we communicated with the Commonwealth Government to the effect that it was necessary to make arrangements for the supply of bags in North Queensland, even

before the sugar agreement was finalised. Two or three days ago I received a telegram from Mr. Watt, the secretary of the Marian Mill, telling me of the shortage of bags.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Did you anticipate this trouble when you asked the Commonwealth Government to make this arrangement about the bags?

The PREMIER: In May last we anticipated that it would be necessary for the Commonwealth Government to see that either they—or the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, with whom they made an agreement—supplied sacks for taking away the sugar, even before the agreement was finalised for taking over the crop. We drew their attention to it as far back as May of this year.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: You did not answer my question. Did you anticipate this trouble then?

The PREMIER: I am not a prophet, but if it had been my duty, or the duty of this Government, to see that bags were supplied, we would have seen there was no difficulty with regard to North Queensland. (Hear, hear!) I say that to-day, if there are ships sailing, the waterside workers will load them and the seamen are willing to man them. They are willing to load bags on to these ships and send them to Mackay immediately to relieve the situation.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Hon. J. TOLMIE: That shows the bags are coming forward in the usual business channels.

The PREMIER: If there is a shortage of bags at the Marian Mill, someone is responsible, and the person who is responsible is either the Commonwealth Government or the company upon whom the responsibility devolves of supplying these bags. However, it did not devolve upon this Government to do it, but we were quite prepared to do all we could, whether it was our responsibility or not, to facilitate the supply of bags to that mill. I have taken steps in that direction. I received the following telegram from Mr. Watt, secretary of the Marian Mill, dated 8th September:—

"Marian Mill out of sugar sacks. None procurable in Queensland. Will have to close down five days from date. Urge you endeavour to arrange transit of sacks from Sydney to Gladstone prevent wholesale unemployment of men and serious loss to farmers during most profitable month year. All mills district similarly affected.

"S. WATT,

"Secretary."

I immediately telegraphed to the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth as follows:—

"I am in receipt of following telegram from Watts, secretary of Marian Mill at Mackay:—

Marian Mill out of sugar sacks. None procurable in Queensland. Will have to close down five days from date. Urge you endeavour to arrange transit of sacks from Sydney to Gladstone prevent wholesale unemployment of men and serious loss to farmers during most profitable month year. All mills district similarly affected.

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"I wish to draw your attention to that portion of my telegram to you of 9th May last, which refers to the supply of bags, viz.—

As season is commencing it is imperative that sacks be delivered forthwith to mills. Refiners should arrange this pending settlement of agreement.

"Strongly urge you to take steps to relieve situation re bags. I see nothing to prevent carriage of bags by rail from Sydney to Gladstone or Port Alma. Mr. Forgan Smith, M.L.A. for Mackay, impresses me that unless you arrange for providing of bags it will lead to serious losses to sugar-growers.

"RYAN,  
"Premier."

I also sent the following telegram to Mr. Watt, secretary Marian Mill, Mackay:—

"Your telegram received. Mr. Forgan Smith, M.L.A., has also represented to me this and other matters re sugar situation at Mackay. I am communicating immediately with Prime Minister of Commonwealth on matter and urging prompt action. I see no reason why bags should not be railed from Sydney to Gladstone or Port Alma.

"RYAN,  
"Premier."

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Were the sacks supplied after your telegram of 9th May?

The PREMIER: The sacks came all right, but I would like the Mackay sugar-growers to know that as far back as 9th May I drew the attention of the Prime Minister to the fact that sacks must be provided, and the language is clear and cannot be misunderstood—"It is imperative that sacks be delivered forthwith to mills." I did all I could in guaranteeing that, so far as Queensland was concerned, we would see that the bags were carried from Wallangarra to either Gladstone or Port Alma. Indeed, we were prepared to put on a special train. I was willing, as Mr. Swayne knows, to make arrangements with the New South Wales Government to endeavour to make arrangements to run a special train from Sydney direct to Gladstone carrying these bags. (Hear, hear!) Mr. Swayne did not refer to that this afternoon, although he was informed a couple of days ago. He conveniently suppressed that.

Mr. PAYNE: He should have referred to it, if only for fair play.

The PREMIER: That is the situation with regard to the bags. I think I have made it perfectly clear that the responsibility was not upon this Government, but was equally upon the Colonial Sugar Refining Company and the Commonwealth Government. Immediately I received word of the situation, I took all the steps to relieve it.

With regard to the question of advances on the stocks of sugar which are being held at Mackay in consequence of the lack of shipping to take it South, I might say that I was in Mackay in June last.

Mr. SWAYNE: Why have not the ships been able to take it away? Why is there a lack of shipping?

The PREMIER: Because the Commonwealth Government are unable to arrange

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the matter, apparently. (Hear, hear!) I am able to guarantee that the waterside workers and seamen will take the steamers from Brisbane to the North and back to Brisbane again.

Mr. SWAYNE: But they will not take them to Sydney.

The PREMIER: I will guarantee that the interstate trade from Brisbane north and back to Brisbane will be carried on. When it goes outside that, it is then within the province of the Commonwealth Government. When I was in Mackay in June last, a deputation waited upon me with regard to obtaining advances on sugar before it was shipped. Without waiting, I there and then telegraphed to the Prime Minister from Mackay on 27th June—

"Deputation of sugar manufacturers Mackay urge speedy completion of arrangement to ship raw sugar from Mackay. They also urge that advances be made against sugar stored in mills and in shipping sheds, position is very acute, I strongly urge you see to their request."

I did not get any reply to that.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Because it was a matter for the State.

The PREMIER: No, not because it was a matter for the State, because the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth has since done it. I mentioned a telegram this afternoon, in reply to a question by Mr. Forgan Smith, in which the Prime Minister stated that he had arranged with the Colonial Sugar Refining Company to make certain advances. They may not be the full advances that are desired by the sugar-growers. I am unable to ascertain that from the text of his telegram, but one thing is certain, and that is, that in pursuance of my representation some arrangement was made with regard to advances in respect of sugar held in those Northern ports. I wired Mr. Hughes again on 6th September, as follows:—

"Owing suspension interstate shipping, several mills unable to ship raw sugar and obtain payment for same, bankers in some instances declining to give necessary accommodation to enable mills to continue crushing operations and to pay for cane and wages: strongly urge you to consider advisability of making sufficient advances against sugar stored at mills to enable crushing to be continued."

Then I received the telegram from the Prime Minister which I read out this afternoon, in reply to Mr. Forgan Smith, namely—

"Your telegram sixth. Have arranged with Colonial Sugar Refining Company make advances against sugar prior to shipment so as to give necessary accommodation to enable millers to continue crushing operations and to pay for cane and wages."

I have now dealt with the three issues that have been raised by the hon. member for Mirani, and I have, I think, shown clearly that, as far as this Government are concerned, they have done all that they possibly could do, and that they are doing all that they can do. The hon. member for Mirani has brought up this motion to endeavour to gain political capital. (Government cheers.) I am satisfied that when the people in North Queensland read the full statement of the case they will see how hollow are the preten-

sions of the hon. member for Mirani. He is too late again. After the Northern railway strike the Opposition moved a vote of want of confidence in the Government. After the interstate traffic had been restored, the leader of the Opposition held a meeting at Toowoomba to formulate an ultimatum to this Government that if they did not do a certain thing by the 6th September he would wire to Mr. Hughes. The interstate traffic had been resumed two days before that meeting was held.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Nothing was done until that meeting was advertised.

The PREMIER: A meeting was held at Warwick the other night, when certain things were threatened with regard to the interstate trade five days after that trade had been resumed. (Government cheers.) To-day the hon. member for Mirani moves the adjournment of the House to consider a matter that I have already dealt with—(Government cheers)—and after the mayor of Mackay has assured me that the people there are pleased with our offer.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: No; he says the position is somewhat relieved.

The PREMIER: The position is relieved as far as this Government can relieve it. In order to secure further relief it will be necessary for the shipping companies to discontinue the lockout, because it is no more nor less than a lockout which is going on in Brisbane at the present time with regard to the trade between this port and the Northern ports of Queensland.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: What were the two crews called out for yesterday if there is a lock-out?

The PREMIER: Now, I invite the attention of the people of Queensland to the inactivity of hon. members opposite and their friends in the South. Can any telegram be produced that has passed between the Opposition or the hon. member for Mirani and the Commonwealth Government, asking them to take steps to relieve the situation? The relief is in the hands of the Commonwealth Government, and it is their duty to relieve the situation. I challenge hon. members opposite to show a single communication between them and the Commonwealth Government in which they ask the Commonwealth Government to do their duty. On the other hand, I have produced telegrams showing that on every occasion I immediately reminded the Commonwealth Government of what their duty was, and offered them what assistance I could with a view to bringing about a solution of the difficulty. Can members opposite refer to Federal "Hansard" and show that Senator Reid, or Senator Foll, or Senator Crawford, or that Mr. Bamford, M.H.R., asked the Federal Government to do their duty towards North Queensland? These are the things that the people want to wake up to: they want to realise that the people who are failing to stir up the Commonwealth Government are their friends who represent them in the Federal Parliament, and who, having failed in their duty in the Commonwealth Parliament, get their friends in this House to bring it before the Assembly and to suggest that it is the State Government of Queensland who are to blame. This thing is developing into an absolute farce, and I would advise hon. members opposite not to be so ready in taking the advice of their friends outside who are running their

campaign for them. We know that the Opposition are being told that they do not fight enough, and that they are too slow. They have had their chief sitting out in the lobby and giving them directions in this matter—directions that every member should say a few words. And we had the spectacle of members standing up on the opposite side of the House—and certainly you, Sir, were very indulgent to them, and allowed them a very large latitude, which I do not complain of, as it is a case of giving them rope enough to hang themselves—and making speeches without really discussing the question under consideration. The hon. member for Albert said practically nothing about the case. I have put the position fully as far as it bears on the situation in the North, and I think I have succeeded in exposing the folly and ineptitude of the attack made by the hon. member for Mirani. (Government cheers.)

Mr. FORSYTH (*Murrumba*): This is not a political question. What we want to do is to help the people in the North. It is a question of doing something to help those people to deal with their sugar production. According to the Premier, we cannot get food there now because there is no shipping. That being so, the hon. gentleman should endeavour to get the wharf labourers to load supplies and crews to man the vessels. We have not got sugar-bags here; they are not in Brisbane; and all the talk of the hon. gentleman on that particular aspect of the question is so much froth.

The PREMIER: Why are they not in Brisbane? That is not my fault.

Mr. FORSYTH: I do not say it is the hon. gentleman's fault, but I say that the suggestion was made by Mr. Watts, of Mackay, that if you could not get men to load a steamer you might bring the bags from Sydney by train.

The PREMIER: I have offered to do that.

Mr. FORSYTH: Then why don't you do it? If the hon. gentleman can get the bags from Sydney, why does he not do so? I do not care who gets the credit in the matter.

The PREMIER: I have offered to have them brought by train from Sydney.

Mr. FORSYTH: It is no use promising bags unless you get them. There is a large quantity of sugar lying in the sheds in the North, and unless vessels can be got to bring that sugar from Mackay and Bowen the present congestion in the business will continue. The hon. gentleman knows as well as I do that the workers at Mackay and Bowen will not load sugar for the South.

Mr. SMITH: They will.

Mr. FORSYTH: They will not.

Mr. SMITH: They will for South Queensland.

Mr. FORSYTH: They will take goods from Brisbane to the North, but they will not bring back sugar which is going to Sydney. That is no good. A ship will go up there with a general cargo, but the men will not take sugar from Bowen or Mackay and bring it to Brisbane if it is to be sent on to Sydney. Unless you can relieve the congestion at the sugar-mills, where there are huge stocks of sugar, you will not deal with this difficulty in a satisfactory way, and in order to relieve that congestion it is necessary to supply the millers with bags. What we have to consider is how we can help those people

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in their difficulties. They want the Government to take a hand and see the thing through. I am not going to say whether Mr. Hughes, or Mr. Ryan, or anybody else is to blame, but I say that this congestion should be relieved. The steamers will not handle the stuff, and the wharf labourers will not load it because they say that free labour is employed on the wharves down South. If the Premier will see that the sugar is brought from Bowen and Mackay to Brisbane, he will have done his duty. To take the sugar beyond Brisbane is beyond his jurisdiction. The hon. gentleman blames the shipping companies for not taking the sugar when he knows quite well that if a vessel takes cargo to the Northern ports she will have to come back empty.

The PREMIER: No; I do not know that they will have to come down empty.

Mr. FORSYTH: What cargo would the shipping companies get from Bowen and Mackay? They will get a little fruit from Bowen, but the bulk of the cargo that they get from Mackay is sugar.

Mr. SMITH: You agree that this Government has no jurisdiction outside our own State.

Mr. FORSYTH: If they have no jurisdiction on the matter, why do they not try to get the wharf labourers to load the sugar and the seamen to man the vessels to take it away? If they did that the congestion would be done away with. But the Premier will not do that. If the hon. gentleman wants to do anything—

The PREMIER: If Mr. Hughes will leave it to me to deal with, I will settle it in forty-eight hours.

Mr. FORSYTH: What we want to do now is to relieve the congestion and help those people in their trouble, and you cannot relieve the congestion unless you take that sugar from Bowen and Mackay.

Mr. SMITH: Do you object to my making representations to the Premier?

Mr. FORSYTH: Why does not the hon. member get the seamen and wharf labourers at Mackay to handle that sugar and enable it to be taken down South? Will he do that?

He is not game to do it, because [5 p.m.] he knows that when it comes to relieving the congestion and bringing the sugar from there the men won't handle it. I told the hon. gentleman that I got that reply, to the effect that the men will not touch the sugar.

The PREMIER: That is not my fault.

Mr. FORSYTH: I do not say that it is the hon. gentleman's fault. If he has got any influence with the wharf labourers and with the Seamen's Union, why did he not get these men to relieve the congestion?

The PREMIER: Who said I was not trying to do that?

Mr. FORSYTH: I have not the slightest doubt that the hon. gentleman is trying to do it. Will the hon. gentleman try to get the wharf labourers to load that sugar at Mackay, and will he try to get the seamen to handle it on the ship?

The PREMIER: I usually do things, and then announce that they are done.

Mr. FORSYTH: If the hon. gentleman does that he will do some good. The hon.

gentleman knows that these men want some relief. But with all the big talk of the hon. gentleman and his loud voice, he practically has not touched the point at issue—that is, to try and get away that sugar from the North. He must try and get the sugar out of the road.

The PREMIER: Will you say that this Government is to blame for the situation?

Mr. FORSYTH: I am not saying that the hon. gentleman is to blame for the situation.

The PREMIER: Why this motion?

Mr. FORSYTH: What I say is that you should try to solve the situation.

The PREMIER: The place for you to see me is in the office. You should not take action by motion in the House.

Mr. FORSYTH: If the hon. gentleman can get the men to load that sugar, thousands of tons will be taken away during the next week, and the congestion will be relieved, and he will do some good. The hon. gentleman knows that the wharf labourers and the seamen have broken their award. The shipping trade of the country is in a terrible state. This condition not only applies to Mackay. I have wires from Cairns showing that the same conditions apply to that port. They are in want of the necessaries of life, but they cannot get vessels to go there. The point is this: you cannot get these vessels to go up the coast if they are to come back empty, as it does not pay the shipping companies to send them. They cannot increase the rates, as they are bound under their agreement with the Federal Government. Therefore, if a vessel goes up with supplies for Mackay and Bowen, and has to come back empty, it simply means that it will run at a heavy loss. The hon. gentleman referred to the "Wodonga." She was a full ship going up to the Gulf ports, and could have taken 100 tons more if she had had the room, yet, although that ship leaves Brisbane full, if she comes back to Brisbane empty there will be a heavy loss. It is all right to say we will get the seamen and wharf labourers to work, but the men say they will only handle the goods they want to handle. Unless you can get the men to agree to abide by the award and to handle the cargo at any port where these ships go to, you cannot expect the shipping companies to run the ships. If you can get a little vessel to do it it will be all right, but if you want to relieve the congestion which exists at the present time, you should endeavour to get both the seamen and the wharf labourers to handle sugar at Mackay and Bowen, so that it can be taken down South, where it is wanted. So far, the Premier has talked a great deal, but he has not done very much yet.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): In dealing with the motion for adjournment, I would like to reply to one statement of the Premier; that is, that the shipping companies were responsible for the fact that boats are not leaving ports to-day. If the Premier conscientiously makes that statement, he, in effect, says that he is not prepared to abide by an arbitration award, because the wharf lumpers and the seamen who are manning the boats which are idle to-day are responsible for breaking an award—an agreement which they made with the Federal Arbitration Court. Those

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men broke the agreement, and now want to go back without observing the conditions to which they were bound. They have appealed to the companies, and said they would go back to their boats. The Premier may be right in saying that these men are prepared to go back and man their boats, but they want to infringe the conditions under which they previously agreed to work the boats. They signed on under the Arbitration Court award, and agreed that in the case of going on strike they should lose any right to the wages accruing to them. These men left the boats and went on strike, and thus broke their award, and they have, therefore, lost all right to any wages due to them. The Premier claims that although the shipping companies are carrying out the terms of the agreement under the award they are wrong. That comes very well from a Premier who is leading a Government which claims to believe in arbitration. Can the Premier deny that these men have broken the arbitration award? Can he deny the fact that the shipping companies are observing faithfully the award? They have not broken the award, and are determined that they are not going to break it. The workmen have broken the award, but the Premier tries to make the country believe that it is the shipping companies that are to blame. Even to-day the shipping companies endeavoured to get the steamer "Chillagoe" to take cargo away South, but they could not get the crew or men to load her. In the face of that how is it possible for the Premier to persist in saying that the shipping companies are responsible for the present state of affairs?

The PREMIER: I expressed no opinion as far as inter-state traffic is concerned. As far as I have been told it is normal on the railways.

Mr. CORSER: Yes, because you have been compelled to do so by threats. (Government laughter.) The Premier cannot but admit that that is the state of affairs which exists on our coast to-day, and that the shipping companies are carrying out the awards of the court. If the directors of the shipping companies were not carrying out the award the Premier would be very pleased to explain what he was going to do to them, or advise the Federal Court to do to them. He would have made it clear to the country just where these people were wrong. But they are carrying out the award, and they are going to insist on carrying it out, and that the men go back under the agreement, and that they must lose some privileges by breaking the agreement. If the Premier is going to back up the men in breaking agreements I do not know what good his pledges are to the country either at election time or any other time. The Premier let loose a lot of blank cartridges and fired all over the place; he used every little weapon it was possible to use in trying to point out, not that the Government had done its duty, but that the Opposition were late in doing their duty. The Opposition has given the Government every opportunity to deal with industrial troubles in the State, and, unfortunately, the Government have abused the stand which the Opposition has taken up, with the result that Queensland has been discredited industrially amongst the States of the Commonwealth which are holding up constitutional government to-day and carrying produce to people

and the wives of absent soldiers in their States, despite the opposition of a section of industrial workers. The trouble in North Queensland to-day is due to the fact that during the railway strike there the State Government took no action to supply food to the people west of the coastline, in consequence of which some of the people are at the point of starvation.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is getting away from the question before the House.

Mr. CORSER: I was replying to the Premier. I think it will be agreed that the hon. gentleman fired all round the country. He looked in all directions to try and confuse the issue at stake. He knows that his Government is guilty of taking no hand in trying to better the conditions of the Northern people who are suffering through the attempts of the Premier to "smooge" to a section of the community instead of considering the great majority of the people and doing what is right. The Government should do what is right for the people generally, but he has not looked in that direction; he has acted on the assumption that he must not offend his political friends, no matter what the great majority of the people of the State may suffer as a consequence.

Mr. PETERSON: You wanted to see the strike spread like it did in New South Wales, didn't you?

Mr. MACARTNEY (*Toowong*): As an ordinary member of this House, I think it is very extraordinary that members representing Northern parts of Queensland are so callous to the condition of things existing up there that they do not raise their voices in suggesting some remedy, or in suggesting that the Government should take some action at any rate, to endeavour to relieve that particular distress. (Hear, hear!) We have the Treasurer representing a Northern constituency; we have the Minister for Agriculture representing a Northern constituency; and there are a number of other hon. members who are taking no interest in this very serious business that affects North Queensland. Well, whoever is to blame, the hon. member for Mirani has done a service in calling specifically the attention of the country to the position of things in North Queensland and in calling attention to the fact that the Government are so apathetic in that direction that they are not prepared to do their best to relieve the people in the North; because that is the position.

The TREASURER: You have not made yourself familiar with it.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Hon. gentlemen on the other side must admit that they are directly allied with the men who are causing the trouble in North Queensland to-day; they must admit that they have sympathy with them; and they must also admit that by reason of their connection and sympathy they are unable to do that which they ought to do—to endeavour to rectify the conditions existing; that is to say, they are unfit to hold the responsibility which is theirs as the Government of Queensland. So closely allied are they with the defaulting people that they are unable to stretch out their hands in the interests of the general public. It is time the interests of the general public, as distinguished from the interests of any

particular class, should receive some notice. The general interest seems to me on most occasions, to be sunk while these class interests are at stake. Now, it is only the other day that the Premier was struggling in the paper to obtain credit for having sent the "Wodonga" North in relief of a condition caused by another strike. The question was whether he or the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth succeeded in sending the "Wodonga" along. The hon. gentleman spread himself in order to show that his was the relieving hand. If his was the relieving hand on that occasion, why is his not the relieving hand now? Not only is there a want of the necessaries of life in the North, but what is a greater want still is the ability to get away the products of the North in order that the growers might receive that remuneration which is necessary to enable them to pay the wage-earner and provide the necessaries of life. The hon. gentleman says "Yes, the wharf lumpers are willing to load the ship for the North, and the seamen are prepared to work the ship North." He goes as far as saying that they would be prepared to carry returned cargo. But the hon. gentleman does not say that returned cargo could be obtained to go further south than Brisbane. He knows perfectly well in connection with the strike that exists to-day that the seamen would not carry the sugar further south than Brisbane, and he endeavours, in what I might term a contemptible, mean sort of fashion, to fix some of their responsibilities upon the shipping companies.

The TREASURER: You are only showing that it is an interstate dispute, over which this Government has no jurisdiction.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The shipping companies had nothing whatever to do with this present strike; it does not rest with the shipping companies at all. Hon. gentlemen on the other side know perfectly well that the trouble rests with the unions, who are defying the award. Why has it been necessary to wipe out the provision of preference to unionists, if it has not been because of that fact?

The TREASURER: It has not been done in respect of the Queensland wharf labourers.

Mr. MACARTNEY: No: that is in suspense, and the hon. gentleman knows it. There is the evidence in this morning's paper; Mr. Justice Higgins held his hand. What is the necessity for that if the employees are not responsible for the present position? Now the hon. gentleman says it is beyond the jurisdiction of the Government. What has been the position here for many years past? Our friends on the other side have been trying to hand over State rights to the Commonwealth, so that we would not have jurisdiction over our own affairs. (Hear, hear!) They have taken up that position: their actions have always been in that direction; and all these situations with regard to interstate disputes have been situations of the Labour party's making. (Hear, hear! and Government dissent.) Look at it as we will, our friends on the other side in regard to the position of Queensland in the present struggle stand condemned. They stand condemned in regard to the present Labour legislation; and more particularly do they stand condemned for that callousness which prevents their taking some urgent action in relief of the people in the North. I say again, that the hon. member for Mirani is

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to be congratulated on having brought the subject up and disclosed the position as it is.

Mr. SMITH (*Mackay*): I think it is somewhat interesting to go over the various attempts that have been made, both by members of the Opposition in Queensland and the interests which they represent, to spread the industrial disturbance of the South to the State of Queensland. The Premier, in his speech, pointed out that so far as this State was concerned there was no difficulty in handling traffic and trade within Queensland could be maintained were it not for the action of the shipping companies tying up their ships. We also find that in Toowoomba, later on at Warwick, and through the Press, every attempt was made to spread to Queensland the strike in New South Wales.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: No.

Mr. SMITH: Now, I think that instead of condemning this Government for taking the action they have taken, everyone who has the best interests of this State and of the citizens of the State at heart must see that in a very trying time this Government have acted in a statesmanlike manner and conserved those interests which any Government are elected to conserve. Now, it is worthy of note in regard to this question, and it is very apropos to the situation, to quote from the Melbourne "Age" of 1st August last. You will bear in mind that this paper is not attached to the Labour party at all, but it has some ideas of decent journalism and is prepared to lay the facts of the situation clearly before the public. I want to quote from the leading article of the Melbourne "Age" of 1st August last. It says in one place—

"The time is steadily approaching when the Government of the Commonwealth will have to choose between continuing its present policy (which is intrinsically a policy of strike promotion and the creation of general tumult and disorder) and adopting a policy scientifically calculated to banish discontent."

Then, again, in another part of the article, it goes on to say—

"Despite the increased wages won by fifteen years of continuous agitation, the average Australian worker is 11.1 per cent. worse off to-day in the matter of purchasing power than in 1901; and that section of the consuming public whose earning power has rested stationary during the same period is not less than 50.7 per cent. worse off. We see, then, that the employing class has not only succeeded in positively sterilising the apparently victorious efforts of the workers to improve their circumstances; it has outwitted them all along the line, and put them in a much worse position. Assuming the accuracy of the statist's figures and deductions, what is it but downright humbug for any person to disparage the prevailing industrial discontent and to hold up the Australian worker to special execration as a type of insatiable greed?"

Here we find a Tory paper that usually supports the party opposite dealing with the whole question in a straightforward and enlightened manner; and the writer has been able to point out what really is the true state of affairs. Now, we know that immediately the National party secured the control of the

Commonwealth and the same party secured the control of New South Wales, they deliberately attempted to foment strife and discontent with a view to destroying the Labour movement. We know that a disturbance was provoked in New South Wales, which has given rise to the motion to-day. We know that the men were prepared, long before the strike happened, to submit the whole of the points in dispute to arbitration. We also know that attempts have been made by both the Commonwealth and the State Government of New South Wales to cancel the registration of various unions from time to time with a view to provoking industrial strife. Now, I am one of those who believe in conciliation and arbitration; I don't believe in strikes at all; but we know that so long as men are men, if they feel that certain methods which have been adopted inflict an intolerable wrong on them, rightly or wrongly they will go on strike. That is the position to-day. Those men felt in New South Wales that an intolerable wrong was being thrust upon them, and as a result the trouble took place. We have seen, later on, the tactics of men like the hon. member for Mirani, like the hon. member for Toowoomba, and various others, who have used every effort in their power to act as provocative agents to spread the general disturbance and discontent to Queensland. Now we know that one of the chief causes of the Opposition's trouble, and one of the chief causes of the motion which has been moved by the hon. member for Mirani, is the fact that, so far, their attempts have miserably failed. We know, in addition, that the Premier used every effort in his power to mitigate and relieve the situation so far back as 9th May, and later on 27th June; and on Thursday last he made representations to the Commonwealth Government to relieve the situation which have been a success up to the present time. He also pointed out that he was prepared to take certain action with a view to getting bags. We know that the whole position has been bungled by the Commonwealth Government, under whose Arbitration Act the men who are referred to this afternoon work. I honestly believe that this is an attempt to throw back into the hands of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company the full control of the sugar industry. Now, in that connection, it is very interesting to note that while I was interviewing the Premier and receiving telegrams from Mackay and districts dealing with the situation, the hon. member for Mirani was taking his instructions from, and going about with, Mr. Pritchard, who, we know, is the leader of the National Political Council as its president, and who, we also know, is the chief barracker in Queensland for the Colonial Sugar Refining Company; yet we find the hon. member for Mirani, who claims to be greatly taken up with the industrial strife prevalent in Australia to-day, acting the part of an agent provocateur, and taking his instructions from the agents of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, and bringing along a motion of this kind to-day. Why, we saw him going out into the lobby behind the Speaker's gallery consulting his guardian angel—consulting his political boss. His political boss did not come into the lobby; he had to save the face of the hon. member for Mirani and get in behind the Speaker's gallery, so that he would not be seen in the Chamber. Now, there is very little in the case put forward either by the hon. member

for Mirani or by the various speakers who followed him. We know that their chief trouble is that under very difficult circumstances—under circumstances which, I think, no Government have ever had to cope with before—this party has prevented the spreading of industrial strife, and all the suffering that that entails to the State of Queensland.

Now, the hon. member for Murrumbidgee [5.30 p.m.] had a good deal to say about why doesn't the Premier order the waterside workers and order the Seamen's Union to carry their goods to Sydney and wherever else the shipping companies might desire so to do. No one knows better than the hon. member himself, because he is interested in shipping, that the Seamen's Union and the waterside workers work under an award of the Federal Arbitration Court, and that the trouble is a matter which is outside the scope of this Government altogether.

Mr. FORSYTH: They don't work at all. They decline to work.

Mr. SMITH: We heard the hon. member for Murrumbidgee get up and use a lot of canting humbug about the waterside workers. The hon. member knows as well as anyone else that these men have been in the habit, when they felt inclined, to go on strike from time to time ever since the federation of the Waterside Workers' Union was brought about, and he also referred to the greatness of Mr. Hughes, the very man who taught them to take advantage of every situation for their own benefit and on their own behalf. The Premier has quoted a good deal of the correspondence showing the activities he has been engaged in during the last few days, and it is due to that fact that he has been successful, in a large measure. Now we have the hon. member for Mirani coming along with this motion to-day. The Premier read a telegram from the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth, stating that he had arranged with the Colonial Sugar Refining Company to make advances against sugar prior to shipment so as to give the necessary accommodation and enable the millers to continue crushing operations. On the 27th June, in accordance with a request from a deputation of sugar-growers which waited on him at Mackay, the Premier telegraphed to the Prime Minister, urging him to make advances against sugar stored in mills and shipping sheds. On 6th September, in consequence of representations made to him by myself and the mills in the Mackay district, the Premier again wired to Mr. Hughes, pointing out that, owing to the suspension of the interstate shipping, several mills were unable to ship sugar and receive payment for it. They were therefore unable to pay for the cane and to pay the wages of the men. The Premier strongly urged Mr. Hughes to deal with the matter at once. Last evening the Premier received the reply from Mr. Hughes, which he read to the House this afternoon, saying that he had arranged for advances to be made against sugar prior to shipment, so as to give the necessary accommodation to enable millers to continue crushing operations and pay for cane and wages. I had better quote the whole matter as it appears in to-day's "Standard"—

"MACKAY AND SUGAR.

"ARRANGEMENTS FOR ADVANCES.

"On 27th June, in accordance with a request of a deputation of sugar-growers, which waited on him at Mackay, Mr.

Mr. Smith.]

Ryan telegraphed to the Prime Minister, urging him to make advances against sugar stored in mills and shipping sheds. On 6th September, in consequence of representations made to him by Mr. Forgan Smith, M.L.A., and the mills in the Mackay district, Mr. Ryan again wired to Mr. Hughes, pointing out that, owing to the suspension of interstate shipping, several mills were unable to ship sugar and receive payment for it. They were, therefore, unable to pay for the cane and to pay the wages of the men. Mr. Ryan strongly urged Mr. Hughes to deal with the matter at once.

"Last evening the Premier received the following reply from Mr. Hughes:—

Your telegram 6th. Have arranged with the Colonial Sugar Refining Company to make advances against sugar, prior to shipment, so as to give necessary accommodation enable millers continue crushing operations, and pay for cane and wages."

I may say that I consistently agitated on the floor of the House for that to be done when the negotiations were pending with regard to the sugar crop. We also know that, so far as distress existing in Mackay is concerned, the Government offered to make available the "Llewellyn," lying at Rockhampton, which could be sent at a moment's notice with supplies. The Premier was requested to allow the portmaster at Mackay to send the "Relief," but the "Relief" would have had to go to Rockhampton and return again to Mackay. It shows how promptly the situation was dealt with when the Premier stated that the "Llewellyn" was at Rockhampton, and could get up steam at a moment's notice, and could be loaded quickly and despatched to Mackay. We know that Mackay suffers more than any port in the North so far as dislocation of shipping is concerned, due chiefly to the bad harbour and lack of railway communication.

Mr. SWAYNE: Caused by your friends, the waterside workers.

Mr. SMITH: We also know that, that being so, the various storekeepers in Mackay ought to hold larger stocks than they do. According to a wire which I received this afternoon from Mr. Moule, the mayor of Mackay, arrangements have been made to relieve the situation at least temporarily. Mr. Moule wired as follows:—

"Thanks Premier's offer bring supplies from Rockhampton. Two boats arriving from Townsville to-morrow will relieve position somewhat. Have handed your telegram Traders' Association for action."

That is his reply to my telegram setting out the situation to him. There is one point I want to make. While I was busily engaged in dealing with the situation in Mackay, making representations to the Premier, and through various other channels, we find that the Traders' Association in Mackay never communicated with me in any manner whatever. We find that this association is composed of the leading storekeepers, who are Liberal supporters, and some are political aspirants in the Liberal interests, but they failed in their duty to notify me in any way whatsoever. That does not worry me. I have other sources of information that keep me au fait with the situation in Mackay to such an extent that I have been able to make representations to the Premier, and through the prompt action of the Premier the situation

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has been relieved considerably. (Hear, hear!) I said at the beginning that this was a motion moved by the hon. member for Mirani, and supported by members opposite, for the purpose of scoring a little political capital. (Hear, hear!) It also shows their spleen and their regret that the position has been dealt with so successfully up to the present time. I also said at the beginning, and I think I have proved it, that the chief trouble of members opposite, and the party of which they are very poor representatives throughout Australia, is to try and embroil Queensland in a disastrous strike, which would not only have affected the workers, but it would have brought things to a standstill, and brought about a good deal of starvation. We can easily understand how hon. members opposite want to bring about strikes. They want to get the opportunity of doing what they have done on many occasions before. They would have liked to see the introduction of what they call loyalists and free labourers. They desire to bring about strikes in order to destroy the Labour movement and embarrass the Government. I do not think their actions will meet with the success which they anticipated. I believe that the common sense of Queensland citizens generally will be able to see through the paucity of arguments used by hon. members opposite, and will agree with the actions of the Ryan Government, and maintain Queensland free, as far as possible, from the interecine strife which has caused so much suffering in other States.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Colonel RANKIN (*Burrumbidgee*): I think the Premier is singularly unfortunate in the choice of his apologists, if I may so describe the hon. member who has just resumed his seat. I can imagine the feeling of soreness that exists in the mind of the hon. member for Mackay when he sees the energetic and active attitude of the hon. member for Mirani in looking after the welfare of his constituency. I do not blame the hon. member for Mackay for being annoyed with this, because of the position in which he found himself.

Mr. SMITH: I was acting while other people were talking.

Colonel RANKIN: It was necessary that something should be done, but owing to the fact that he was a Government supporter, bound hand and foot to his masters on the other side, he was unable to do anything, although he recognised the need for something being accomplished.

Mr. SMITH: I was able to do a lot of things.

Colonel RANKIN: The hon. member for Mirani, however, recognised the seriousness of the position, and even a week ago brought the matter before the Premier when he pointed out the necessity for some action being taken. It was only then that we find the Government bestirred themselves, recognising the need for something to be done in the North—recognising the dangerous position which had been created, but which they did not raise a finger to prevent. However, they bestirred themselves and did something. Now, we come along this afternoon, and when the hon. member for Mirani brings forward this motion we have a great batch of correspondence tabled by the Premier pointing out that he has done this and that he has done that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: You are barking up the wrong tree.

Colonel RANKIN: I am not barking up any tree at the present time. I am making a plain statement of facts. We know very well that the hon. member for Mackay feels sore about this. Anyone who looks at the morning paper and sees the trouble that the Premier himself went to to whitewash the hon. member for Mackay in the eyes of his constituents must recognise the soreness he feels. Anyone who looks at this morning's paper will see that in almost every sentence the Premier used the words, "Mr. Forgan Smith, M.L.A., has told me," or, "Mr. Forgan Smith, M.L.A., brought under my notice," or some such remark. Right through the whole column you will find the same expressions. It seems to me that they lose their value from the fact that the hon. gentleman protesteth too much.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That is just what you are doing.

Colonel RANKIN: I am not protesting at all. I am not a member for the North at all. I am just pointing out that Mr. Smith, the hon. member for Mackay, did nothing until the hon. member for Mirani moved, and then the Premier endeavoured to whitewash him.

The SPEAKER: Order! I point out to the hon. member that this has nothing to do with the motion before the House.

Colonel RANKIN: The hon. member for Mackay, in his reply, referred to quotations in the Melbourne "Age," and continued right up to the Mackay strike, and I think I am quite justified in replying along the same lines. I am pointing out that he is chagrined at the action of the hon. member for Mirani, while he himself was indifferent to the welfare of his constituents.

Mr. SMITH: That is untrue.

Colonel RANKIN: We had the hon. gentleman reading quotations from a paper which he chose to call the Tory Melbourne "Age." That statement is quite sufficient in itself to condemn the whole of the hon. gentleman's remarks without using any stronger words. No one who reads the Melbourne "Age" would suggest that it is a Tory paper.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It always supports you.

Colonel RANKIN: It never does support me. The Treasurer laughs at the idea of anyone calling the Melbourne "Age" a Tory paper.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What would you call it?

Colonel RANKIN: It certainly leans in its politics towards hon. gentlemen sitting opposite. The hon. gentleman dealt with the action of the National Government in Mackay a few months ago. We are not dealing with the actions of the National Government. We are dealing with the indifference displayed by the State Government, and the hon. gentleman replies by making another charge. He levels a charge which is absolutely unwarranted, absolutely unjustifiable, and absolutely untrue, to the effect that we, on this side, have been endeavouring to provoke industrial strife.

Mr. FOLEY: Hear, hear!

Colonel RANKIN: I ask if the hon. gentleman can place his finger on any state-

ment or any action coming from this side that will support him in that direction?

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Colonel RANKIN: The hon. gentleman knows as well as I do that we have consistently throughout the turmoil that has taken place in the North endeavoured to strengthen the hands of the Government so long as they were taking action along what we conceived to be constitutional lines. (Hear, hear!) That is the duty of any Opposition towards the Government. In that, as in many other things, they have been a disappointment, and now they are trying to raise an Aunt Sally that they might knock it down again themselves. Nothing would give them greater pleasure than to be able to go to the country during this turmoil and say that while they were trying to bring about industrial peace we were trying to increase industrial strife. While the hon. member who has just spoken, and other members on that side of the House, make a general statement of that kind, they know perfectly well in their hearts that it has no foundation in fact—that it is absolutely untrue. Hon. members opposite have endeavoured to make the House believe that they wish to prevent industrial strife, and that the members on this side provoke industrial strife. If that is so, how comes it that during the last year of the Liberal Administration we had only seventeen strikes, while during the last year of the present Administration they have had sixty-four strikes? Who is it that fosters industrial unrest?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It is Mr. Hughes.

Colonel RANKIN: It is the Minister for Public Instruction and his colleagues who are responsible for what has taken place. What has Mr. Hughes to do with Queensland? What has he to do with the railways of Queensland? It is the Government who are to blame for the trouble we have recently gone through. They are to blame for permitting such a thing to happen, and for not raising a finger to prevent it. At the Central Station in Brisbane the other day I witnessed a widow woman who was travelling by train trying to carry her own belongings to the carriage, and not a porter would put out a hand to help her with her luggage.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It is twenty times worse in New South Wales.

Colonel RANKIN: This woman was unable to carry her luggage to the train, and not a porter on the platform would give her any assistance.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member, is digressing from the question before the House.

Colonel RANKIN: If the hon. member who has just resumed his seat was justified in raising this matter, surely I am justified in replying to his remarks. We have had an industrial upheaval, and it is quite clear that hon. members opposite were with the strikers. With regard to the widow woman who was unable to move her things herself, I wish to point out that the porters who are in the employ of the Government and were receiving their pay with certain privileges and advantages—

*Colonel Rankin.*]

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order in continuing to discuss the matter which I have pointed out has no relation to the question before the House.

Colonel RANKIN: I have no desire to go against your ruling Mr. Speaker, but I submit I am in order in replying to the remarks of the hon. member who last addressed the House.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is in order in referring to the matter, but he is not in order in going into details.

Colonel RANKIN: It is necessary in matters of this kind to refer to details. The attitude of the porters towards the widow woman I have referred to is just an indication of that cold-blooded indifference that has been displayed by the Premier towards the people who have been suffering in North Queensland. The hon. gentleman has been masterly inactive.

The TREASURER: Do you mean us to infer that you walked away and allowed that unfortunate woman to carry her own luggage to the train?

Colonel RANKIN: No. As soon as I saw the position, I, with another man, assisted her to take her luggage to the carriage.

Mr. POLLOCK: And you were not even introduced to her. (Laughter.)

Colonel RANKIN: I am not like hon. members opposite. In doing a good turn of that kind one does not ask for an introduction, as it might be thought that one is wanting a vote. The hon. member for Mackay dwelt very strongly on his standing for arbitration and conciliation, and said that he was a believer in it, and that if the Federal Government and the New South Wales Government had submitted the questions in dispute to arbitration all this trouble would have been avoided. What does the hon. member mean by arbitration? Does he mean that he believes in arbitration when an award suits him or his party? The word "arbitration," of which in days gone by we heard so much, has been made an absolute farce and a laughing-stock by hon. members opposite. They know quite well what has been the result of arbitration. We were told in bygone times that if we placed on the statute-book an Arbitration and Conciliation Act they would show us how to handle industrial difficulties and how to prevent industrial unrest for all time. Well, we passed an Arbitration and Conciliation Act, and what has been the result? Instead of its being a cure for these evils, it has accentuated them. Never has industrial unrest and industrial strife been so rife as it is at the present time. The Government servants were brought under a Conciliation and Arbitration Act for the first time under the regime of the present Government, and I would ask any hon. member to say whether the public service has ever been more discontented than it is at present?

The SPEAKER: Order! I would point out to the hon. member that this is not a motion for the discussion of the whole matter of arbitration.

Colonel RANKIN: I take it that if an hon. member makes a certain number of assertions it is reasonable that I should reply to those assertions.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot digress from the subject-matter of the

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motion. I would remind him that he has only another minute and a-half in which to conclude his speech.

Colonel RANKIN: I think I should be allowed an extension of time, because I have had a number of interruptions from hon. members opposite, but I am not going to ask for an extension. I say that the attitude of the Government towards those unfortunate people in the North is one which should be resented. I would have liked to point out how the producing industries are treated by the Government, and how difficult it has been for people to carry on. I submit that instead of the Government waiting to be moved by the action of the hon. member for Mirani, they should have moved in this matter long ago and should have prevented the trouble which has arisen. After all, it is to prevent such things that a Government is in existence, and not merely to control them after they have arisen. The thanks of this House and of the people of Queensland are due to the hon. member for Mirani for bringing forward this motion.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: And the thanks of the Empire.

Colonel RANKIN: I do not say that, though the Empire is to a certain extent interested in the matter. We have promised to assist in safeguarding the interests of the Empire, and to that extent the Empire is interested in this particular matter.

HON. J. TOLMIE (*Toowoomba*): I desire to say a word or two in connection with the motion before it is put to the House. In common with other hon. members, I desire to congratulate the hon. member for Mirani on his action in bringing forward this motion in the interest of the whole of the people of Northern Queensland. The people of North Queensland have suffered through the action of certain individuals who have failed to carry out the obligations which rested upon them, and it is a distressing fact that the Government stood idly by while that was being done. The Premier tried to justify the attitude which he and the Government have taken up in this matter, but I do not think that any impartial individual will feel that the Premier justified his position. The arguments he put forward were absolutely unconvincing, not only to members on this side of the Chamber but also to the outside public, and even to members on his own side of the House. The hon. gentleman also told us that the Opposition stood by and did nothing whilst the Government were strenuously endeavouring to save the country. He made reference to the attitude taken up by members on this side of the House during the strike that arose through the arbitration failure in connection with the railway men in North Queensland, and said that we moved a vote of censure on the Government after they had settled the strike. We did not move a vote of censure on the Government after they had settled the strike; we moved a vote of censure on men who had not the courage to administer the law which they themselves had framed. We moved a vote of censure on a Government who ran away from their responsibilities, and whose courage oozed out at their finger-tips and toe-tips, and who followed the course laid down by the unions. I noticed in the Press the other day a statement to the effect that the Premier, being nonplussed through his failure to get Mr. Justice Higgins to come to

Queensland, had again sent to North Queensland to bring down some of the late strikers to help him to solve the problem. Notwithstanding the fact that the law now on the statute-book says that the award of the Arbitration Court shall be filed, the hon. gentleman was afraid to exercise the power given him, and see that the law was carried out, and the Government stood idly by while the people of North Queensland were suffering privation and their industries were being destroyed. The Government had the

fullest knowledge that not only [7 p.m.] the Opposition, but the whole of the country, stood behind them in the recent strike, so long as they intended to carry on the government of the country in a constitutional way, but when they hoisted the white flag to the strikers—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: When they adopted a conciliatory spirit.

HON. J. TOLMIE: When they showed the white feather—

Mr. GLEDSON: That is about four times you have made that speech this session.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Yes; and I am going to make it again as it is of distinct advantage. The country is charging the Government with an absolute want of courage in carrying out constitutional government. Then the Premier charged me personally with having attended a meeting at Toowoomba which passed certain resolutions deprecating the want of action on the part of the Government with regard to the hold-up at Wallangarra, and said that when that meeting took place the strike at Wallangarra had been ended for two days. That may be so, and I am not going to question the accuracy of the Premier's statement, but it is a patent fact that the Government took no action in making known to the public that the strike had terminated until subsequently. Further than that, the Premier and those associated with him were well aware of the public meeting being held that day at Toowoomba, and of the resolutions to be moved, as they were published in the "Courier" on the Saturday. The Government, naturally becoming alarmed at the idea of the people taking the matter into their own hands in order to see that justice was done and to force the Government to carry on the administration of the railways, took action and on the Saturday night an intimation was flashed over the wires that the game was up and that the Wallangarra strikers had better return to their duties. (Government laughter.)

Mr. FREE: Do you really mean it?

HON. J. TOLMIE: I really mean it, and I am speaking seriously. No amount of hilarity on the part of members sitting behind the Government—of would-be commissioners or ex-commissioners—in regard to this matter will relieve the Government from the dishonourable position in which they were forced by the strike at Wallangarra, and the pusillanimous manner in which they submitted to the dictation of a few porters in the railway service. Again, the hon. gentleman has tried to cover the unfortunate position in which he finds himself by saying that in connection with the matter which is now under discussion hon. members on this side did not take over the reins of government in regard to it; that they did not take out of the hands of the present Government the administration of the affairs of this

State. The Government say that there is wanting in the newspapers any evidence that the Opposition as a whole, or the members of the Opposition individually, communicated with the Prime Minister of Australia in regard to this matter. It was not our business to communicate with the Prime Minister of Australia. It was the duty of the present Government.

The PREMIER: Will you admit that you approved of what we did?

HON. J. TOLMIE: It was the duty of the present Government to administer the laws of the State, and to see that the King's subjects in Queensland are just as free as the King's subjects are in any other parts of the British dominions to go about their business. The Government sat supinely by and made no effort to bring about improved conditions in Northern Queensland, where they knew destitution was prevailing and that industry was being demoralised. No action was taken on their part, and they sat still, hoping that somebody else would intervene. We are told in Æsop's Fables about a farmer and his son who were absolutely dependent upon their own labours for the carrying on of the ordinary duties of the farm, but if they could get anyone else to do the work for them they would not do it themselves, and it is just the same with the Premier and those associated with him in the administration of the affairs of this State. If they can get somebody else to take up the responsibility of doing the country's work, if it is a difficult work the Government will sit by and do nothing; but all the same they declaim to the public that they are doing all that it is possible for men to do. Have not the newspapers of Brisbane been saturated with statements made by the Premier as to the great efforts made by him in order to satisfactorily settle this strike? When the Northern strike was settled the Premier said, "Alone I did it, and the people of Queensland must be grateful to me, and must stand behind the Government because of the great things we have done." The people of Queensland laughed them to scorn. (Government laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member is very sorry that the settlement was brought about.

HON. J. TOLMIE: That is the manner in which they have treated the whole subject from the beginning; it has been to them a theme of amusement. They have laughed over the whole matter. They say that the Opposition are sorry that the strike has been settled. Is it not a travesty upon their own misconduct for a statement of that kind to be made? Hon. members on this side have done everything possible to bring about a settlement of that strike. (Loud Government laughter.) We have done all that was possible for us to do in the position we found ourselves. We did not obstruct the Government.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member debated this question on a motion brought forward last week, and I do not intend to allow him to go over the same ground again.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Did you not hear the Chief Secretary charge me directly with failing to do anything in regard to this matter?

The PREMIER: I did not.

The SPEAKER: Order!

*Hon. J. Tolmie.]*

HON. J. TOLMIE: I will obey your ruling, Mr. Speaker, if you tell me that the Chief Secretary has a right to make a distinct charge against me.

The SPEAKER: The Chief Secretary is out of order in interjecting.

HON. J. TOLMIE: It was not an interjection; it was in the course of his speech that he made the statement. If it was an interjection I would allow it to pass by as the idle wind. This was a direct charge made by the hon. gentleman from his place on the opposite side of the House, and I am certain that your sense of justice will not allow him to make a direct charge against me without allowing the right of reply. I am quite willing to admit that the statement was not heard by you, Mr. Speaker, otherwise you would not prevent me from making a reply to it. These are the charges that have been made by the Premier with a view to covering up the want of action of the Government in regard to the question that is now before the House. What is the issue? It is a clear-cut issue that everyone can understand. The hon. member for Mirani says there is distress in North Queensland; that people are suffering.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: He says a lot more than his prayers.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Well, if you say your prayers, it is not a case of "righteousness availing much."

The PREMIER: There is much distress in the Opposition; that is what it amounts to.

HON. J. TOLMIE: He says that there has been hunger, because the people have not been supplied with the necessaries of life. The Premier gets up in this Chamber and reads a telegram that came from the mayor of Mackay, addressed to the hon. member for Mackay, in which he expresses thanks that there had been a temporary relief granted to the people. By whom? By private enterprise. (Hear, hear!) Private enterprise having brought about this relief, the Premier stood up in his place in the Assembly and asked the whole world to bear witness to what he had done towards giving that relief. Two steamers came from Townsville for the purpose of relieving the people of Mackay; that is the substance of the telegram which was read by the Premier and subsequently by the hon. member for Mackay. Where the Government had stood supinely by knowing the people were starving, and took no action, private enterprise came to the rescue; and when the Government was shamed into doing something, they said "We will send a steamer from Rockhampton." With that measure of relief no doubt the people of Mackay will be fairly well satisfied.

The PREMIER: What would you have done?

HON. J. TOLMIE: What would I have done? What would any honourable man do that had the courage to do things—instituted relief immediately.

The PREMIER: How?

HON. J. TOLMIE: By the means that are being taken now in supplying the necessities to the people.

Now we come again to another question. The sugar-mills are ceasing to crush. Why? They have not got sufficient bags to carry on their operations; and we have the Premier saying that he took steps in May last to warn those millers to lay in large stocks of bags.

[Hon. J. Tolmie.

The PREMIER: No; I warned the Prime Minister.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I asked the hon. gentleman then, and I ask him now—when he issued that warning to them to lay in large stocks of bags, did he know of the shadow under which the industry lay at that particular time; did he know there was going to be this strike that has taken place, when there was that necessity for it? Would not they, as ordinary careful business men, lay in a sufficiency of bags to tide them over from time to time? Why should they be called upon to invest largely in a stock of material that would mean capital lying idle for several weeks without being utilised? Would they not, as ordinary business men, make arrangements to get their stocks of bags week by week, fortnight by fortnight, or month by month as the case might be, and thereby save the capital which otherwise would be lying idle? That is what ordinary business men would do, and that is what these men have been doing right up to the present time; and because this strike intervened and the Government took no means to assist the producers and the manufacturers—as they might have done—they have been landed in the position in which they are now.

The PREMIER: Can you tell me what you would have done to relieve the situation?

HON. J. TOLMIE: It is not a question of what we would do; it is a question of what the Government has failed to do. That is the question which is troubling the Government. And why? Not because of the sufferings of the people who are primarily interested in the Mackay district, but because of the fact that the people throughout the whole of Australia are recognising the failure of this Government to administer the affairs of this State in the way in which they ought to be administered. It is for that reason that when any action of condemnation is brought against the Government the Premier gets up in his place here, and pounces upon every newspaper reporter who comes within his reach. I am told that when the newspaper reporters see him in the distance they hurry round the corners; for the reason that they are tired of listening to the saying "All this is due to some machination on the part of the Opposition in order to bring us into disrepute."

The SPEAKER: Order!

HON. J. TOLMIE: I understand, Mr. Speaker, that my time has expired. I am very sorry I cannot complete my indictment of the Government. I would very much like to do so, because they have signally failed in their discharge of a public duty in this matter.

Mr. MURPHY (*Burke*): There is no doubt that the matter which has been brought before the Chamber by the hon. member for Mirani is a matter of urgent public importance. Now, during this debate we have had the State Government criticised and we have had the Commonwealth Government criticised; but, in my opinion, the people who are deserving of most criticism are the people of Australia, who permit industries to be closed down, such as the sugar industry has been closed down at the present time, just because a section of the community says that no ships shall run and no trains shall run, and no business shall be conducted. It is no good Parliament considering these matters and filling up pages of newspapers and pages of "Hansard" in connection with

the matter. The people will have to trust themselves; they will have to step in and say "The public business must be permitted to continue." We have heard a lot about the shipping companies. Now, we will take the case of the steamer "Musgrave" that runs between Brisbane and the Gulf, and never passes Brisbane. On its last trip from the North, as soon as it arrived in Brisbane all the crew were called out.

The TREASURER: Three weeks ago the crew offered to re-sign on.

Mr. MURPHY: I met some of the members of the crew and they never told me that.

The TREASURER: Well, they told me that.

Mr. MURPHY: I met some of the officers of the ship and they never told me that; and there was nothing said in connection with that particular matter when the Premier and myself discussed the position in the Gulf.

The TREASURER: Three weeks ago they offered to sign on again; and the wharf labourers offered to load her.

Mr. MURPHY: Well, that may be true; the Treasurer may have more reliable information than I obtained. I obtained my information from officers of the boat and from members of the crew. The fact remains, anyhow, that the "Musgrave" did not run up to the Gulf. Now, it is a matter of perfect indifference to me whether it was the Premier or the Prime Minister who arranged with the shipping company to send the "Wodonga" there. What Parliament has to consider is why these people in the far North, why the people in the inland centres, should be placed in the position that they have to starve because railway employees won't run the trains or because shipping employees or shipowners refuse to run ships. The time is rapidly approaching in Australia when the great body of the people will have to tell these unionists that they are not going to permit them to compel them to starve. That is the position right through. Now, take the shipping position to-day. There was no dispute between the Seamen's Union and the shipping companies. All the arrangements between those two have been ratified, even to preference to unionists. There was no dispute, but because some railway men in New South Wales had a dispute with the Government they were in a position, through the representatives of the Trades and Labour Council in New South Wales, to close down the whole of the shipping of Australia, and the people in the outside centres have got to go without provisions just in order that the Seamen's Union and the Waterside Union may have a strike in sympathy with some railway and tramway men in New South Wales.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Ridiculous!

Mr. MURPHY: Absolutely absurd.

Mr. H. RYAN: You are giving yourself away to-night.

Mr. MURPHY: I am not frightened to give myself away. I am not frightened to stand up and say what I think in connection with these matters. I am not giving myself away. But the poor, unfortunate people in North Queensland, out in the Western country, and the people in Mackay, and Bowen, and those places, what about them?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is the right track now; keep to the North.

Mr. MURPHY: You never see the Secretary for Public Lands getting off the right track. That is the position in Australia to-day. These people are starving in North Queensland and in other parts of Australia because some dispute has happened in which they are not particularly interested, and both the State Parliament and the Federal Parliament are being continually adjourned in order that hon. members may discuss the position. A discussion of the position does not alter it at all. The strike still goes on, and nobody in this Chamber can tell us when a boat is likely to go to Mackay, or when the sugar milled in the Northern districts will be shipped South. Nobody can tell us when the Proserpine strike will end.

The TREASURER: I can tell you when the Proserpine strike will end.

Mr. GLEDSON: Why don't you wake up?

Mr. MURPHY: A man would have to be pretty sleepy if he was not more wide awake than the hon. member. I do not want to enter into a controversy with the hon. member on the question of wakefulness. Probably he will want to wake up a bit when he meets some of the Ipswich railway men to discuss the position which has arisen there—not because of any question in dispute between themselves and this Government, but because they are in sympathy with some strikers over in New South Wales. The time has passed in Australia for the people of Australia to have sympathy with any body of strikers.

Mr. GLEDSON: You are still asleep.

Mr. MURPHY: Probably I do sleep more than the hon. member, because I get into bed without saying my prayers, and get to sleep as quickly as I can. (Laughter.) The time has passed in Australia for the general community to be continually begging some section of the community to go back to work and knock off starving other sections of the people. In every State we have arbitration laws under which every grievance suffered by workmen can be dealt with by an impartial tribunal and the matter settled up, and that being so it seems to me absurd that we should have to be continually asking permission to adjourn the House in order to discuss some strike question.

Mr. GLEDSON: After the strike is over you do that.

Mr. MURPHY: The shipping strike is not settled.

Mr. GLEDSON: The shipping strike is settled so far as the men are concerned, but the shipping companies are standing out.

Mr. MURPHY: I believe the coalminers in Australia got everything they asked for. The Government appointed a special tribunal, which gave them 3s. a day extra on the condition that there was to be no dislocation of trade during the period of the war.

The SPEAKER: Order! I suggest to the hon. member that he get back to the seamen's strike.

Mr. MURPHY: I am dealing with the seamen, and I am dealing with the trouble in New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is dealing with the coal strike that took place some months ago.

Mr. MURPHY: I want to connect my remarks in this way.

Hon. J. A. FIBELLY: "Hansard" is listening.

Mr. MURPHY: "Hansard" listens to me just as well as it does to the hon. gentleman. That is one consolation for being a member of Parliament; "Hansard" deals with the

*Mr. Murphy.]*

common garden variety member just as well as with the Minister who can drive about the streets in his motor-car. (Laughter.)

Hon. J. A. FHELLY: You must be very sour to-night.

Mr. MURPHY: Getting back to the subject. Mr. Speaker has claimed that I have no right to deal with any strike under this motion, except with that relating—

The SPEAKER: I did not say that. I said the hon. member had no right to discuss the settlement of the coal strike that took place six months ago.

Mr. MURPHY: That strike took place considerably longer ago than that.

Mr. GLEDSON: It was only eight months ago, so that it was not considerably longer ago.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MURPHY: I was just quoting a settlement of the coal strike for the purpose of showing members of the Chamber, as well as the people of the country, that there was no justification nowadays for strikes at all.

Mr. COLLINS: There is no justification for war, but we have a war.

The SPEAKER: If the hon. member proceeded under this motion to deal with every strike that took place during the last five years, the debate would be considerably out of order.

Mr. MURPHY: Very well. I will leave the coal strike and leave the railway strike.

Mr. COOPER interjected.

Mr. MURPHY: Because I am obeying the ruling of the Chair. That is a gentlemanly thing to do, and probably that is the difference between the hon. member and myself. The question that has been brought up by the hon. member for Mirani cannot, the Premier assures us, be settled by this Government, and that being so, it will be the duty of the people of Queensland to pass over the Queensland Government and submit the matter in dispute to the Commonwealth Government. If the State Government can do nothing for the people of Mackay and Bowen and other places who are being starved at the present time because the seamen will not man the ships or because the shipping companies will not run their ships, then the Commonwealth Government will have to step in and see that these people are supplied with provisions, and see that the industries are allowed to continue. We know at the present time that the sugar industry is being hung up for want of ships, because the millowners are unable to send their raw sugar to the refinery. I sincerely trust that, so far as the Premier is concerned, if he finds he is unable to do anything to assist these people that he will get into communication with the Prime Minister in order that the seamen's strike may be brought to a conclusion as speedily as possible.

Mr. FOLEY: He has been in communication with him for the last month.

Mr. SWAYNE (in reply): Before the question is put I should like to say a few words in reply to what has been said on the other side. I notice that the [7.30 p.m.] Premier, as usual, evaded the main issues that I raised. When I rose, I pointed out that, as far as the food problem was concerned, it had been partially met, and met chiefly by private enterprise from Townsville. I referred to the firms of Burns, Philp, and Co. and

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Cummins and Campbell, who had sent boats. Then, as regards the sacks, I also pointed out that there was a possibility of that difficulty being met within the next few days. After all, the most important question of all was that of getting away the sugar from the districts where it is produced, and, so far as that is concerned, the Premier utterly failed to make any satisfactory reply. He said it was a Commonwealth duty. I would like to draw his attention to a statement he made the other day, when I waited on him in company with a member of the Upper House. I may say that I wished, so far as possible, to divest this matter of a party colour, and I got a gentleman who has interests in Mackay and who belongs to a non-party House to accompany me.

The PREMIER: I give you permission to use everything I said.

Mr. SWAYNE: At that interview I stressed this matter of the export of sugar from the North, and he then said, as he says now, that it is a Commonwealth matter, but he also said this—

"He would use his best endeavours to bring about a general resumption of trade, but the carriage of sugar was a Commonwealth matter in which he was also assisting."

Has he during this afternoon given us the slightest indication of any assistance or any willingness to assist? No, he has not even said so much as he said last Thursday.

The PREMIER: You say all I said.

Mr. SWAYNE: Let the hon. member tell the House straight away in what way he is assisting. He is doing nothing. And yet he tries to make it better for himself by saying he is assisting. I suppose that if the Commonwealth did step into the arena and take a hand he would fall back on the statement that he assisted them.

The PREMIER: You might tell what the gentleman with you said about the settlement of the Northern strike; I am sure it would be very interesting to the public.

Mr. SWAYNE: I said nothing about the Northern strike, and gave the Government no credit whatever for their action in regard to it.

The PREMIER: Congratulated the Government on doing well.

Mr. SWAYNE: And I should not refer to this matter unless it was a public telegram which was sent with the knowledge of the hon. member himself. However, if he says that I in any way gave the Government credit for anything that they did, he says what is not true. I gave him no credit whatever. It is a very petty plan of action to bring in little things like that. (Government laughter.) The hon. member should be above that sort of thing. I say that, considering things in the North, it is his duty to help the Commonwealth Government. We know that they have a very heavy task on their shoulders; they have the conduct of the war on their shoulders so far as Australia is concerned, and they are entitled to the sympathetic assistance of the State Government, especially seeing how Queensland itself is concerned. The Government Statistician has published the figures relating to the sugar industry for the last year. I see that out of 169,000 acres of cane only 75,000 acres were harvested, less than half. Of course, we all know that every year a certain amount is not harvested because it represents the growing crop, but as a rule it is only one-third or one-fourth. There was a heavy

loss to Queensland last year and some of the Queensland producers were ruined through the inaction of the Government. Is that to be repeated? Are we again to lose thousands upon thousands of pounds; are Queensland producers again to be ruined because of this Government's inaction? There is a 4,000-ton ship alongside the wharf here. Let them man her and send her up North with supplies and bring sugar back to Sydney in her.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Why not bring it to Brisbane?

Mr. SWAYNE: Does the hon. member not know better than that? Hon. members on the other side who represent sugar districts know that there is no room in the sugar stores or the refineries for a single ton of sugar. They know that talking like that is simply hot air. The sugar may as well stop up North as be brought to Brisbane. The Queensland refinery is fully occupied with sugar from around Bundaberg. The question of the bags is one in connection with which the hon. member has boasted of his foresight. Yet a Government mill, the Babinda Mill, had to borrow bags from the Queensland refinery. Yet he boasts that so long ago as May he foresaw this difficulty. Did he do anything in regard to it? I warned him in June about this financial business. I did not know that there were any strikes or anything of that kind coming, but, after the experience we had last year, I knew it was quite possible, and I asked him then if he would make the same arrangements as had previously been made and have the sugar paid for.

The PREMIER: Where and when did you want that?

Mr. SWAYNE: In June. I asked the hon. member then to arrange this matter which he boasted as having attended to within the last few days.

The PREMIER: Where?

Mr. SWAYNE: When I moved this motion I kept away from the small personal aspect of it. I did not say what I had done or any other member had done, but if it comes to that I would like to point out that we had every reason for believing that nothing whatever was done until last Thursday. I asked this question without notice last Thursday—

"Will he take immediate steps to relieve the distress in Mackay, where, through the stoppage of water-borne traffic, they are becoming short of the necessaries of life?"

It was a simple question, and the hon. member would surely not say "No." Surely he could have answered "Yes" to that. If at that time he was doing anything, that was an excellent opportunity to say what he was doing. No, he was not doing anything then. Otherwise he could very well have got up and said that he was doing his best to relieve the distress, and he was also doing something about bags. If he had been doing anything, that was a friendly question. No, he was doing nothing at the time. Of course, it is a very very old adage that when you have no argument abuse your adversary.

The PREMIER: That is what you are doing.

Mr. SWAYNE: Members on the other side are indulging in personalities and accusing us of fomenting strikes and that sort of thing.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. SWAYNE: I have here a "Daily Standard" of 3rd September, containing a report of a meeting held in the Gardens here. I find that it was addressed by two members sitting on that side of the House, and Mr. Kirwan, the hon. member for Brisbane, said—

"In conclusion, the speaker urged the workers not to scab on their own party but to keep their industrial organisations powerful, and when the next election came round to return the Ryan Government—the party that would safeguard the interests of the people and preserve industrial peace by tact and sympathy instead of using the baton, the bludgeon, and the machine gun."

Is that not calculated to appeal to men's worst passions, particularly in a country where we have Arbitration Courts and every facility to settle disputes by peaceful means? The hon. member did not tell them it was unconstitutional and advise them to refer it to the courts. Another speaker was reported as follows:—

"Proceeding to discuss the strike in the South, he said that behind the effort to crush industrial organisation, was the sinister motive to introduce conscription."

Only fancy bringing up a question of conscription in this crisis. Is that the way to bring about sweet reasonableness?

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: The shipping companies themselves went on strike.

Mr. SWAYNE: Mr. Kirwan, continuing, also said—

"They must see to it that the work so nobly begun by William Lane and continued by others was not destroyed."

Is not that only inflaming their passions? Is not that inciting them to strike? Then the hon. member for Mackay, instead of asking them to get steamers to take supplies to his constituents and relieve them of the sugar stored there, addressed the meeting of strikers. This is a motion moved by the hon. member for Mackay—

"That this public meeting of Brisbane citizens send hearty greetings to the brave men now on strike in New South Wales, and expresses its unbounded admiration of their splendid solidarity and wonderful orderliness under protest and most wilful provocation."

Is that advising conciliation? Yet they have the effrontery to come here and say that they prevent strikes. This is a most serious matter, and we should endeavour to take a broad national view of it. The hon. member for Burke took the debate on a high plane when he stated what the general effect of strikes would be and the attitude of a certain section of the community. If this sort of thing is going to happen, it will mean the depopulation of the North. It will mean that the North will be deserted. It will mean the depopulation of the most fruitful part of Queensland. I think this is a question that might be discussed without party feeling; just because there has been some dispute in Melbourne and Sydney, and because some Government employees object to the management in their workshops, why should the people of Bowen and Mackay be starved? If they cannot get their produce away, they will have to suffer. They could not get it away last year, and the same thing will happen again. The people cannot live up there unless they can pay

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their way. How can they pay for the food doled out to them now unless they get their sugar away? Apparently, so far as members on the other side are concerned, this state of things can continue for months, and they will do nothing.

The PREMIER: I invite you to mention everything that occurred between us in the office.

Mr. SWAYNE: All the industries in the North are dependent one on the other, and the moment you cease to keep things going and stop transit between the different districts, that moment our civilisation ceases. We will be going back to the old cattle station days, when they were visited by a bullock dray once in twelve months. All our transport facilities have been hung up when there was no excuse for it. They have their Arbitration Court to refer to, and they are treated with every fairness. If this sort of thing continues, it will mean depopulating the North, and it will lead to unemployment. It is a disgraceful state of things when a Government takes refuge under the paltry plea that it is some other Government's duty to do it.

The PREMIER: What would you do to get the sugar down?

Mr. SWAYNE: I would put the "Wyandra" into commission.

The PREMIER: How would you do it?

Mr. SWAYNE: I would put the "Wyandra" into commission straight away.

The PREMIER: But how would you do it?

Mr. SWAYNE: If you try you can get plenty of volunteers to man her, and she will bring down £34,000 worth of sugar in one load.

The PREMIER: Why don't you do it?

Mr. SWAYNE: What an admission of weakness! The hon. gentleman always tries to blame someone else. He throws the blame on to the shipping companies. These boats cost £200 a day to run, and because they cannot see their way to send boats up and bring them back empty, he says that it is their fault. The only way to get over the difficulty is to send the boats with cargo and bring the sugar down. The whole of the trouble arose with this Government. It is caused by their friends and the system they themselves brought about—the system of solidarity. Just because a paltry dispute occurs 1,000 miles away every place has got to suffer. It is all brought about by the propaganda work of members opposite. They are making individual class distinctions.

The SPEAKER: Order! I would point out to the hon. member that I allowed him a very great deal of latitude in moving this motion. The hon. member brought the motion forward as a matter of "urgent public importance," and it has been discussed by most members on both sides of the House, who have taken the opportunity to discuss a number of other subjects as well. I might say at this stage that in future I shall be careful about accepting any motion that is proposed for the purpose of discussing a matter of "urgent public importance" if members take advantage of the opportunity to have a full dress debate on almost every subject connected with it.

Mr. SWAYNE: I am replying to the statements made on the other side, and I was not aware that I was going outside the scope of those statements.

[*Mr. Swayne.*]

The SPEAKER: The hon. gentleman must know that in a debate of this kind opportunity is given to an hon. member to call special attention to an important subject—to a matter of "urgent public importance"—but he is not allowed to talk on every matter that might be brought into such a subject.

Mr. SWAYNE: I have no intention of transgressing. All I wish to do is to draw attention to the distressful state of the North, and I was pointing out the results that will follow from the present attitude of the Government. I was stating that all these things were brought about by the gentlemen now in office, but I will not proceed with that subject any longer. I will give the Premier another opportunity of showing whether he is willing to do something in this matter. When I opened this debate I read a telegram which I received from a Northern mill, and the same telegram was sent to the Premier. It concerned the question of sacks. I don't want to boast of anything that I did, but I may say that when I got that telegram on Saturday night it struck me that there was one omission, and that was that there was no mention of the quantity required. I wired up straight away on Saturday night asking what quantity was required. I also rung up the traffic superintendent and got a quotation for a special train on Monday. I also got a quotation for a special train from Sydney to Gladstone. We found out what it would cost, and wired that information up to Mackay. I may say that I had to interview Mr. Pritchard, the secretary of the Australian Sugar Producers' Association.

Mr. COLLINS: He is your boss. He has been in the lobby all night.

Mr. SWAYNE: I naturally went to him as being secretary of the organisation which embraces all the mills, and anyone will admit that he was more likely to possess the necessary knowledge regarding sacks and mill supplies than anyone else. What was more natural than that I should go and consult with him?

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman has exhausted the twenty minutes allowed him by the Standing Orders to speak in reply to his motion.

Mr. SWAYNE: I just want to read a telegram.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Question—That this House do now adjourn—put and negatived.

## STATE PRODUCE AGENCY BILL.

### SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. GUNN (*Carwarroo*): This Bill has been talked of for a considerable time and thought of a good deal, and I do not know why it was not brought in long ago by the present Government, because it is a measure which was in the forefront of their manifesto when they went to the country. The Minister who introduced the Bill the other night, said—

"The desire of the Bill mainly is to bring the producer and consumer into closer touch, and to dispense with, as far as possible, the services of the middleman. We hope by this means to acquire for the producer a better price for his

product, and to afford the consumer the ordinary necessities of life at a much lower price than he has been having to pay. One has only to read the reports of the prices obtained for fruit in our local markets—that is the first item on which I shall touch—to realise how difficult it is for a man to make a living out of fruit at all."

These sentiments are very fine, and I do not think anybody can disagree with them. No one in Queensland can have any fault to find with such sentiments. The Minister states, in effect, that if this Bill becomes law the farmers will get more for their produce and the people will get that produce at a cheaper price. We have seen Bills of this sort brought before the House previously. We have the Sugar Acquisition Bill brought before us, and the very same sentiments could be expressed with regard to that measure. It was to give the sugar producer an equitable price for his product, and to give the people of Queensland all the sugar they required, and not allow it to go out of the State during a time of war. The sentiment of that Bill was just like the sentiment of this Bill, but when that Bill became law we found that our sheep were commandeered under it, that our cattle were commandeered under it, that our galvanised iron was commandeered under it, and that an unfortunate woman living in the West had the whole of her property taken from her under it. The farmer is becoming very suspicious of such Bills. I have here a telegram from one of the principal fruit-growing centres in my electorate, which reads as follows:—

"Last night Applethorpe Fruitgrowers' Association protested against State Produce Agency Bill. Please use this.

"LONGHURST.

"Chairman."

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Did you inspire that?

Mr. GUNN: No, I did not inspire the telegram. I have no interest in the matter. It is nothing to me whether a State Produce Agency Bill is brought into operation or not. I am not a middleman, I am a grazing farmer, and want to do what is right in the interests of the State; but I have to take notice of the wishes of the people in my electorate. Many of them have spoken to me in the same strain. Why are they suspicious of this Government? Because they were "had" before, and they are afraid that they may be "had" again. Their butter was taken from them under the Sugar Acquisition Act, and they are afraid of this Bill. I do not object to the principle of the Bill; I do not object to the Government buying farm produce and retailing it again in Brisbane, but I am afraid that if the Government take up this matter more public servants will be required, that the Government will exercise patronage in allotting new billets, and that the farmers will have to pay more for the sale of their produce through the Government agency than they would have to pay for its sale by a private agency. I am afraid also that there will be more inspectors and further taxation. I do not know how it is, but it is a fact that whenever the Government undertake anything of this kind they carry out the business in a more extravagant manner than private individuals do. The

fact is that corporations cannot carry on such businesses as well as private individuals. It seems to me that this measure is a sort of decoy held out to the farmer. I remember that when I was a youngster it was my duty to look after some horses. We had what was called a "night" horse. When I went to catch that night horse in the morning I managed very successfully for the first two or three mornings, but after a time I found I had to take a bit of bread in one hand and the bridle in the other, and to hold the bridle behind my back, because if the horse saw the bridle I had on chance of catching him. I might hold out the bread and call "Coop, coop, coop," but I would not get the horse. (Laughter.) So it seems to me that the Government present this measure to the farmers, but are carrying the bridle behind their back and saying "Coop, coop, coop" to the farmer, who is not there. (Laughter.) They have started State stations, State hotels, State sawmills, State butchers' shops, and State coalmines, and they have also started dealing in butter. Why did they not start a State produce agency? There was nothing to prevent them doing so. All the agencies I have referred to were started without a Bill of this kind, and they do not need this Bill to start a State produce agency. If it was legal to start all those other enterprises, it is legal to start a State produce agency. If those other industries were started illegally, then the best thing the Government can do is to legalise them before they start a new business. The Minister for Agriculture, in the course of his second reading speech on this Bill, said—

"Under this Bill the Governor in Council will have power, by proclamation, to declare that this, that, or the other item comes within the scope of this measure."

That means that he can do anything and everything under this measure, that he can both buy and sell, and yet we have another Bill coming along—a Bill to license produce agents; but in that Bill the agent [8 p.m.] is not allowed both to buy and sell. The Government, however, under this Bill are allowed both to buy and sell. Under the Bill there is nothing to prevent the Government from starting two-up schools, joy shops down in Albert street, or anything else they like. It is brought forward, I think, principally as a way of abusing the middleman. I do not know why it is that it is popular always to say something nasty about the middleman.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Did I abuse the middleman?

Mr. GUNN: No, you did not abuse him; but I think this method of legislation is brought in on a plank of the red book which is the Bible of the Labour party, and it there talks about the perquisites of the middleman. The middleman in many walks of life is a very useful man. I am not a middleman myself, and I can see that some credit is due to the middleman. Is not the storekeeper a middleman, and a useful member of society? We could not do without the storekeeper. Then there is the hotel-keeper. Some people think that hotels are not wanted at all; but I think that the hotel-keeper sometimes is a very useful middleman. Then there are the bakers. How could

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we do without bakers to bake our bread? They are middlemen. Then there is another class of middlemen, which I think my hon. friends opposite will agree with me are very useful men, and they are the union organisers. The union organisers are nothing else but middlemen, and they are like other middlemen. The union organisers often have better positions and salaries, and freedom from the worry of buying or selling or tilling the soil, and do better than the real producers. In the same way, the produce agent in many cases does better than the farmer; so that if it is right in one case it is right in the other. If you can abolish all union organisers and all middlemen, and carry on without them, well and good, but I do not think you can. The middleman is a very useful man in society.

Instead of bringing forward a Bill like this, which is only window-dressing, there is plenty of scope for the Government to help the farmer. We have had a surplus crop of maize this year. If a private individual conserves a lot of the maize in tanks and seals it down, when the next drought comes along and he sells the maize at a profit he is called a profiteer, and is described as a man who is a sort of parasite on society. If the Government want to help the farmer, why do they not buy corn at the current low value, and keep it and distribute it in the next drought?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Do you want to make the Government parasites also?

Mr. GUNN: This Bill will make them parasites. The Labour party always abuse anybody who conserves corn or wheat until it is required, and then gets a bigger price for it. Somebody has to do it, and why do the Government not take the matter up? They need not make much money out of it; they can sell it at cost price if they like; and they would be doing a great thing for the people of Queensland. Lucerne hay is often very cheap, and then a drought may come round; and if the Government conserved it until a dry time came along and sold it at cost price to the people they would be doing a good thing for the country, instead of bringing in Bills that are of no use.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They can do it under the Bill if they choose.

Mr. GUNN: Then I notice that on page 1002 of "Hansard" the Secretary for Agriculture says—

"We shall want an up-to-date canning factory, which will cost a very considerable sum indeed. It would be futile to start a canning factory unless it was so up to date in all respects as to enable this State to put on the market goods equal to those produced in Hawaii, which I believe has the best character in the world for canned pineapples."

If that was taken up by the individual, he would go in a humble way, spend a few hundred pounds in simple machinery, and gradually build up the undertaking from day to day until the industry flourished.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What will become of all the pineapples the soldiers will raise?

Mr. GUNN: I will come to that directly. The Government could start in a humble way

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like private people; but no, they are going to spend a lot of public money in up-to-date machinery. What are they going to do when they get soldiers growing pineapples at Beerburum and fruit in the Stanthorpe district? Where are they going to sell the pineapples? They have to compete with the world.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, and our pineapples are the best in the world.

Mr. GUNN: Our pineapples may be the best in the world, but they are not put up the cheapest in the world. We have to compete with Honolulu and other countries which employ black labour at a low rate of pay, and we shall find that our pineapples grown at Beerburum and other places, if we get the Government canning factory established, will not be able to compete with those in other parts of the world. After the Australian market is supplied there will be no market outside, because we cannot compete with pines conserved with black labour in other countries.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You think Australia a poor country, then.

Mr. GUNN: I do not think Australia is a poor country, but I think that Australia at the present time cannot compete in the manufacture of goods of any sort with black labour in other countries, if our goods are to be exported from Australia. We have had an example of these national undertakings in Western Australia, where they have failed; and they failed in South Australia and New South Wales. In Victoria they have State coalmines, and they have a strike about seven days a week there.

Mr. CARTER: Nine out of every thirteen industries are paying in New South Wales.

Mr. GUNN: I know that a great number are closing down in New South Wales.

Mr. POLLOCK: Give us the proof.

Mr. GUNN: You will see it when the report of the Auditor-General of New South Wales comes out. I will read it in the debate on the Financial Statement. This Bill is, in my opinion, only an election dodge. My electors are afraid that if this State market comes into vogue it will mean that it will kill their co-operative concern. They are very proud of their co-operative company, and of the jam factory which they have started. They are afraid that there is not room for the lot of them, and that if the State starts this undertaking with its expensive machinery, and comes into competition with them, their concern will go down. Co-operation, as far as the farmers are concerned, is the best method of dealing with produce sales, because they get the profits the agent gets. If the Government carry it on they will have to pay public servants. The farmers can do better under co-operation than the Government can do. I am not going to vote against the second reading of the Bill, as it may be knocked into some sort of shape in Committee; but at present there is nothing in it. If the Government wanted to carry on an agency, there was no occasion for the introduction of this Bill. If they had power to do all the other things I have mentioned, they have plenty of power to carry on a State agency without this Bill. They have been in power two and a-half

years and have done nothing at all, although it was on the forefront of their platform when they went to the country. I would like to point out in conclusion that—

“The cocky stirred  
Is an angry bird,  
And the cocky scared  
Can't be snared  
By Produce Bill  
Or any other Bill.”

(Laughter.)

Mr. LAND (*Balonne*): A big section of the public, especially the farming section, have been looking forward to a measure of this kind for a number of years. It is a well-known fact in this business that the producer has always had to suffer. He does not get the price, or anything like the price, he should get, especially when you take into consideration the price which the consumer has to pay for his produce. My principal reason for speaking on this measure is to make reference to meat. Under this Bill, if it becomes an Act, it could be applied to anything, and I think it is about time that something was done in connection with controlling the price of meat. I think it is a very great shame indeed that the people of Queensland should be paying the price they are paying in a country like this, where meat is so largely produced. I suppose there are more cattle in Queensland, in proportion to its population, than there are in any other State, and there are quite enough sheep to supply the people of Queensland with mutton at a fair price, leaving any amount of sheep to export.

Mr. MORGAN: Is not meat a lot cheaper in this State than in any other State in Australia?

Mr. LAND: That is only for the reason I have just stated. Meat produced in Queensland is nothing like as cheap as it ought to be. If the price of beef in Queensland to-day was a fair one, it ought to be four or five times as cheap as it is in other parts of Australia. I have pointed out before, and I will point out again, that it is not a fair thing at all for Queensland to be supplying the British Government with meat at 4½d. when they are charging twice as much, or more, for the same article in Queensland—not as good an article, in fact, because the best meat leaves our country and the worst meat remains here.

Mr. MORGAN: The State shops are getting the meat for 3d. upwards.

Mr. LAND: There are only 12,000 tons of meat arranged for in Queensland at 3d.

Hon. W. D. ARMSTRONG: Then you could not use it all.

Mr. LAND: If I had my way, the whole of the meat used in Queensland would be sold at very little more than 3d., and everybody would get it at a fair price. Queensland has built up the pastoral industry successfully, and the price has never been anything like it has been during the last two or three years.

Mr. MORGAN: The expenses are greater.

Mr. LAND: The rents are no more to-day than over they were.

Mr. MORGAN: The workers are getting more money.

Mr. LAND: An ordinary knockabout man used to get £1 10s. per week, and in 1874-5 wool brought 4d. and 4½d. per lb. To-day, under the award, that same workman gets £2 8s. per week, and the wool to-day is bringing four, five, and six times as much as it did then. It is all bunkum; it is not correct to say that the pastoral industry suffers to-day, or ever did suffer, from the amount of rental for land or wages paid to the worker. Now, there is something wrong that could be put right. The State Government cannot put it right, and the Federal Government won't put it right. I am going to quote a price list—the last price list fixed by the Federal Government for beef and mutton in Queensland. I am also going to quote the price list of the State shops.

Mr. MORGAN: Oh, yes; but they get their meat for 3d. It is not fair.

Mr. LAND: They don't do anything of the kind. There were only 12,000 tons of meat arranged for at 3d. in Queensland.

Mr. MORGAN: Well, they are using that.

Mr. LAND: I can assure you they don't get their meat for 3d. What is the use of saying they get it for 3d. when they don't? They have had to buy cattle. That is no argument at all. The financial institutions in Brisbane to-day are responsible. They rigged this market; anybody can see that; you can go out to Enoggera any time you like, and you will never see a surplus of cattle or sheep there—you will never see that market glutted.

Mr. MORGAN: Why did the Government send Mrs. Duncan's cattle over to South Australia a few weeks ago instead of to Brisbane?

Mr. LAND: I say that with the price of cattle and sheep in the Brisbane market, the private butcher cannot make money out of it; I know that. You cannot make money out of mutton if you pay 6½d. per lb. for it. But there is no logical reason why that should be, if the market was not rigged. Look at the reports; look at the dividends and the profits which are made by the financial institutions in Brisbane, who run everything, and the pastoral companies. It does not matter what anybody says about it to the contrary. I will quote this, and I will show what an unfair thing it is, and how it is a thing which nobody should favour. You send soldiers away and leave their dependents here. Look at the price you charge his wife and children, and the people of Queensland, who own the stock! Yet the financial institutions claim to be patriotic! They are nothing of the kind. They are not even loyal. (Government hear, hears!) Could the Germans do anything worse? Not a bit. Now, I intend to read this price list to show the public of Queensland the prices fixed in Queensland—the latest proclaimed price of meat by the Commonwealth of Australia.

“The maximum retail cash prices at which the undermentioned goods may be sold ‘over the block’ throughout Queensland shall, until further notice, be as follows:—

“Brisbane and suburbs, within a radius of 10 miles from General Post Office and within the town of Ayr, Charters Towers, Blackbutt, Esk, Fassi-

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fern, Ipswich, Mount Morgan, Rockhampton, Sandgate, Toogoolawah, Townsville, and Wynnum:—

Now I want to quote the State prices, which are as follows:—

QUEENSLAND STATE BUTCHERY.  
(RETAIL DEPARTMENT.)

Head Shop—Roma street, Brisbane.  
Branches—King Edward Chambers,  
Wickham street, Valley, Fiveways,  
Woolloongabba, Latrobe terrace,  
Paddington.

Beef (fresh or chilled)—

- Roast, sirloin, 8d. per lb.
- Roast, prime rib, 6½d. per lb.
- Roast, chuck rib, 5d. per lb.
- Steak, fillet, 10d. per lb.
- Steak, rump, 9d. per lb.
- Steak, beef, 7d. per lb.
- Topside, 7d. per lb.
- Corned round, 7d. per lb.
- Corned brisket, bone in, 4½d. per lb.; boned, 5½d. per lb.
- Corned ox tongue, 6d. per lb.
- Sausages, 6d. per lb.
- Mince, 5d. per lb.
- Shin beef, 4½d. per lb.
- Ox kidneys, 6d. each.
- Ox tails, 10d. and 1s. each.
- Ox skirts, 4d. per lb.
- Ox cheeks, 4d. per lb.
- Ox hearts, 2d. per lb.
- Suet, 8d. per lb.
- Gravy beef, 6d. per lb.

Mutton (fresh or chilled)—

- Legs, 7½d. per lb.
- Shoulders, 5½d. per lb.
- Hindquarters, 6½d. per lb.
- Forequarters, 5d. per lb.
- Loins with kidney suet, 7d. per lb.
- Loins without kidney suet, 8d. per lb.
- Breast, 4d. per lb.
- Corned breast, 4½d. per lb.
- Necks, whole 6d., necks prime end 7½d. per lb.
- Shoulder chops, 6½d. per lb.
- Loin chops, 8½d. per lb.
- Cutlets, 8d. per lb.
- Sheep kidneys, 1d. each.
- Sheep tongues, 2½d. each.

“In addition to the above prices ½d. per lb. may be charged for delivery and an additional ½d. per lb. for booking.”

That sends beef up to 11d. and mutton up to 9d.

“At all other places outside the areas mentioned above, where, prior to the date of this order, local conditions in regard to freight on stock, and charges for droving, etc., rendered it necessary that prices higher than above prices should be charged for these goods, such charges may be added to the above prices; such increase not to exceed one penny per pound.”

That brings it up to 1s. per lb in some parts of Queensland.

“The above prices have been fixed for beef by the 15th, 23rd, and 38th orders under the Queensland Control of Trade Act of 1914 and for mutton by the Commonwealth prices order No. 38 of 14th September, 1916.”

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<i>Price List.</i>		Per lb.
Beef—		<i>d.</i>
Roast, sirloin ... ..	6½	
Roast, prime rib ... ..	4½	
Roast, chuck rib ... ..	3½	
Steak, fillet ... ..	8	
Steak, rump ... ..	7½	
Steak, beef ... ..	5½	
Topside (in piece) ... ..	5	
Corned round ... ..	5½	
Corned brisket ... ..	3½	
Corned ox tongues ... ..	6	
Gravy meat ... ..	5½	
Sausages ... ..	5	
Mince ... ..	4	
Shin beef ... ..	4	
Ox skirts ... ..	4	
Ox cheeks ... ..	3	
Suet ... ..	6	
Ox kidneys ... ..	5	
Ox tails ... ..	10	
Ox hearts ... ..	6	
Mutton—		
Legs ... ..	7	
Shoulders ... ..	4½	
Hinquarters ... ..	6½	
Forequarters ... ..	4	
Loins ... ..	7	
Breasts ... ..	3½	
Cutlets ... ..	6	
Chops, loin ... ..	7	
Stewing chops ... ..	5½	
Sheep tongues ... ..	2½	

Now, I will give the latest price list that I have received from Cunnamulla—

		<i>s. d.</i>
Beef—		
Fillet steak ... ..	0 7	per lb.
Rump steak ... ..	0 5	“
Beef steak ... ..	0 4	“
Sausages ... ..	0 4	“
Mince-meat ... ..	0 4	“
Corn round ... ..	0 5	“
Corn beef ... ..	0 3	“
Rib roast ... ..	0 4	“
Sirloin roast ... ..	0 5	“
Ox tongue ... ..	0 6	“
Ox tails ... ..	1 0	each
Ox kidneys ... ..	0 6	“
Brains ... ..	0 6	set
Mutton—		
Loin chops ... ..	0 4	per lb.
Rib chops ... ..	0 4	“
Leg mutton ... ..	0 4	“
Shoulder ... ..	0 4	“
Corn mutton ... ..	0 4	“
Sheep heads ... ..	0 6	each
Sheep kidneys ... ..	1 0	dozen
Sheep tongues ... ..	2 0	“

If everything was fairly and squarely arranged in Queensland to-day, we could get beef and mutton at a fair price, and, after reserving what we required for our own use, we could supply the rest of the States and Great Britain. In Cunnamulla there are two

butchers who have been selling at the above prices for some time, but under present conditions they are losing, and I only wish the State Government was able to go into this matter in such a way that the people of Queensland would be enabled to get meat at a reasonable price. In reference to the question of cold storage for farm produce, the same thing could apply on our railways, which would enable the people to get meat in any part of Queensland at a fair price. There are some places in my electorate where they have had no meat for the last year or two, but I am glad to say that the Minister is giving relief in that direction by enabling butchers to start business under the old Act in places where there is no butcher shop at the present time. That is to say, any man who makes application for a slaughtering yard in a place where there is no butcher shop at the present time, can get a license to slaughter and sell under the conditions that existed before the present Act was in force. I hope in that way the people in the outside districts who have been suffering so long will get relief.

Mr. GRAYSON (*Cunningham*):

Mr. COLLINS: Another middleman.

Mr. GRAYSON: The hon. member for Bowen interjects "Another middleman." I should like to inform the House that I have not one penny invested in any business in Queensland.

Mr. PETERSON: Have you any shares in a mill?

Mr. GRAYSON: Not even in a mill, and I think that should satisfy the hon. member for Bowen and the hon. member for Normanby.

Mr. PETERSON: One of my constituents who came from Cunningham told me that he dealt with you.

Mr. GRAYSON: Fifteen years ago I was in business in Warwick.

Mr. COLLINS: And made your fortune in it and retired.

Mr. GRAYSON: As a member representing a farming constituency, I am inclined to view this Bill with suspicion. I am out every time to assist the farmer to get an easy market for his produce, and not only an easy market but a market where he will be able to realise the full price of the article that he offers for sale. The Minister for Agriculture, when introducing the Bill, explained it most fully, but at the same time he stated that the intention of the Bill was to secure for the producer a better price for his produce and also enable the consumer to get it at a lower rate. I do not know whom the

hon. member refers to as the [8.30 p.m.] middlemen—whether he refers to the old-established firms in Brisbane for the last forty years. I know firms who have been dealing in produce for the last forty years, and I have never heard farmers saying that they have been ill-treated. They have never been brought up before the court for trying to defraud farmers.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They will not be debarred under this Bill from dealing in produce.

Mr. GRAYSON: So that, in my opinion, the middlemen, if those are the middlemen to whom the hon. member refers, have nothing whatever to fear from the passing of this Bill. My opinion, as an old business man, is that the Government are entering

into one of the most difficult businesses to manage upon which any Government or any individual could enter. Their difficulty will be in securing a suitable man to manage the business. It has been the difficulty of co-operative companies which have been started in Queensland—of getting a man of proper business acumen to manage an intricate business like that.

This Bill was promised during last election. I know that on nearly every platform Labour members promised that this would be one of the first Bills the Labour party would introduce when they assumed office. We find that after two and a-half years they are introducing this Bill. What is the object of introducing it in the last session of the present Parliament? It is that when they appear before the electors they will be able to tell them that they have passed a Bill to enable them to get higher prices and eliminate the middleman.

If the Government are in earnest, there are much better ways than this of assisting the primary producer. One way in which they can benefit the fruitgrower is by establishing canning and fruit preserving works. If the Government are in earnest in assisting the fruitgrower—as they have stated on several occasions on the floor of this House—would it not have been better business on their part to expend the £19,000 they spent in building a State hotel upon a fruit canning and preserving works here in Brisbane, which would save thousands of pounds to the fruitgrowers annually in Queensland? Had the Government been in earnest, that is one of the very first establishments they might have started. They have had ample opportunity of doing so. They have been two and a-half years in office and they have done absolutely nothing by way of assisting the primary producers. This Bill, in my opinion, is only window dressing. There is absolutely no business meant in it. There is one member who sits on the front Treasury benches, and is not in his place now, who knows there is no business in it.

Mr. FOLEY: That is nasty.

Mr. GRAYSON: It is not nasty, it is absolutely true. The Minister for Agriculture, or any man with any business capacity, reading this Bill, will at once admit that there is no business in it, because it is absolutely impossible for one Government, or any one firm to cope with the great volume of produce in Brisbane. They have already stated that they do not intend to make it a monopoly. Certainly not, because I am certain they would not have the business capacity to manage the business. Talking of assisting the farmer! I should like to know in what way the Government have assisted the maizegrower in Queensland. We all know that maize production in Queensland is very great and that more maize is produced in Queensland and New South Wales than in all the other States of Australia. In my opinion, if the Government wish to assist the primary producer, particularly the maizegrower, they should fix the price for maize in Queensland. It would be a very easy matter for the Minister for Agriculture and the Minister for Agriculture in New South Wales to fix the price at, say, 3s. 6d. to 4s. per bushel.

Mr. PETERSON: Supposing they would not agree. Why did not Hughes do it?

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Mr. GRAYSON: Mr. Hughes had absolutely nothing whatever to do with it.

Mr. PETERSON: Why did you oppose the wheat pool?

Mr. GRAYSON: When this cockatoo stops talking I will proceed with my speech. I think it is just as well for parrots on the Government side to keep quiet instead of interjecting about matters they know absolutely nothing about. Some hon. members know more about how to plane a board or erect a skillion kitchen than to talk about agricultural produce. I am speaking about maize production, and we must all admit that it is a very important item. When we have a failure of the wheat crop, many thousands of acres are planted with maize in excess of what is planted in ordinary years. I believe the Minister for Agriculture would be in sympathy with the views I express, and there is nothing to hinder him and the Minister in New South Wales from fixing a price of 3s. 6d. to 4s. for all maize produced in those States. In my opinion, too, the duty on maize into Australia is too low. It is 10½d. per bushel, and the maize that is imported into Australia comes principally from the Islands, where it is grown by black labour which costs from 1s. to 2s. per week. Representations should be made by the Government to the Commonwealth Government with a view to inducing them to increase the tariff on imported maize to 1s. 6d. a bushel.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Why do you not ask Littleton Groom to do that? He is your favourite representative.

Mr. GRAYSON: I really believe that Mr. Groom is in agreement with the views I express, but it would be better for the Queensland Government to approach the Federal Government than for him to do it.

Mr. COLLINS: You do not believe in price-fixing.

Mr. GRAYSON: I do believe in price-fixing; that is to protect the maize-growers of Queensland. I say that that is an industry that should receive every consideration. Several members opposite have asked me about the wheat pool. I am prepared to stand by the action I took in connection with that wheat pool. I opposed the creating of the wheat pool in Queensland, and I am still opposed to it, and the position I took up on that matter has been confirmed by the condition of the wheat market to-day. To-day there are very few farmers who have got wheat who are not able to dispose of it.

The PREMIER: We made an arrangement with the millers.

Mr. GRAYSON: I admit that on several occasions the Premier has shown himself to be in entire sympathy with the wheat-growers, and I have never hesitated to give the Premier credit for that.

The PREMIER: You admit that our recent arrangement with the millers greatly assisted the wheatgrower.

Mr. GRAYSON: I do not say that. (Government laughter.) I do not think that any action the Premier took with the millers had the slightest effect, because the millers did not take any notice of him. (Government laughter.)

The PREMIER: Didn't they arrange to buy the wheat immediately afterwards?

Mr. GRAYSON: I can give the reason for that. The reason was that the millers

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saw there was going to be a complete failure of the incoming wheat crop in Queensland, and they are anxious to secure all the wheat that is left on the hands of the farmers.

The PREMIER: It was a striking coincidence that that happened at the same time as my interview with the millers.

Mr. GRAYSON: I do not think that the Premier's interview with the millers had anything to do with it. Members opposite asked me about the wheat pool. I acted under instructions from my electors in the Cunningham electorate in connection with the matter.

Mr. CARTER: Not all of them.

Mr. GRAYSON: I am certain that 95 per cent. of the wheatgrowers in the Cunningham electorate are opposed to a pool, and it is my duty to do as they ask. What does the hon. member for Port Curtis know about wheat? I have been living amongst the wheatgrowers all my life, and I know their wishes. If we had a record wheat crop in Queensland, then it would, perhaps, be beneficial to enter into a wheat pool. The Minister, when speaking, said the farmers could get better prices under this Bill for their produce and the consumer would get cheaper food.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Don't you believe that?

Mr. GRAYSON: I am surprised to hear the hon. gentleman make an interjection like that. I would like to know how the consumer is going to get his produce cheaper.

The PREMIER: By abolishing the middleman.

Mr. GRAYSON: Hon. members opposite are assuming that the produce agents in Brisbane are making immense fortunes out of the farmers. Ninety per cent. of the produce consigned to Brisbane is sold by public auction in the markets, and amongst those is a co-operative firm known as the Farmers' Distributing Company. That company is doing a large business in selling the farmers' produce in the market. Would anyone think a reputable firm like that would try to take the farmers down when his produce is sent down for sale by auction? With regard to the maize crop, does the Government think they are going to get any of the maize from the farmers in Queensland? Very little of the maize grown on the Darling Downs, in the Burnett district, or in the Cairns district comes to Brisbane. It is shipped direct to Sydney or Melbourne. We know that 75 per cent. of the maize grown in Queensland is exported to the Southern States.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We found the market in Melbourne for them.

Mr. GRAYSON: I did business with Melbourne thirty-five years ago. I sold produce to Melbourne, Ballarat, Sydney, Newcastle, and Armidale thirty-five years ago, long before a Labour Government in Queensland was thought of. I have no intention of opposing the second reading of the Bill. If it is likely to assist the primary producer, I am pleased to support it.

Mr. CARTER: You are not game to oppose it.

Mr. GRAYSON: How much produce is grown in the hon. member's electorate? Very little. There is more produce grown in one acre in my electorate than on 100 acres of the hon. member's electorate. I would like

to know from the Minister if he intends to commandeered farm produce.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No, certainly not.

At twelve minutes to 9 o'clock,

Mr. BERTRAM relieved the Speaker in the chair.

Mr. GRAYSON: There is a feeling abroad that the Minister for Agriculture may take the same steps with regard to farm produce as he did when he commandeered the butter.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I bought the butter straight out and paid them, and also gave them a surplus.

Mr. GRAYSON: The less the Minister says about his business over the butter the better. The Minister for Public Lands knows how the farmers were dealt with over the wheat business. He knows that 7,000 bags were returned to the Farmers' Milling Company at 1s. 6d. per bushel less than the market price. That was no assistance to the farmers, and I have my doubts as to whether this measure will render any assistance to the farmers. At the same time I do not intend to oppose the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. GILLIES (*Eacham*): Unlike the hon. member who has just resumed his seat, I am an ardent supporter of this Bill. (Hear, hear!) The measure is introduced at an opportune time, because if there is any question which is seriously affecting the people of the country at the present time, it is the question of the increased cost of living, which is causing industrial unrest. We had the spectacle this afternoon of members opposite trying to make political capital out of the trouble existing at Bowen and Mackay, when every earnest and thoughtful man is trying to find out the cause of such troubles, and provide a remedy. The Government desire to secure to the farmer the full result of his industry, and I am quite satisfied that this Bill, though it may not do all that the Minister anticipates it will, is a step in the right direction. It will bring the producer and the consumer together.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: How?

Mr. GILLIES: By doing away with the middleman and providing State markets. If the hon. member who interjects reads the Bill, he will see that its outstanding features are contained in clause 3, which provides that the Governor in Council may, firstly, establish a State produce agency; secondly, may carry on the business of receiving, storing, sale, and distribution of produce, and establish and control cold stores, markets, grain silos, factories, preserving and canning works, etc; and thirdly, may make advances to consignors against warrants or other documents covering produce stored in cold stores or elsewhere. Those are the three outstanding features of the Bill, and they should command the support of members opposite who claim to be the friends of the man on the land. But, unfortunately, they are so much in the hands of the middleman, the financier, and the speculator that when they get up to speak they speak with their tongues in their cheek, like the two previous speakers on the opposite side, who, after speaking against the Bill, said they would not vote against it. As a member on this side said, they will not vote against it because they are not game to do so. In 1913, Mr. White, who was Minister for Agriculture at that time, introduced a measure called the "Stock and Farm Produce Agents Bill." We know what happened to that measure. Although it was supported

by members who are now sitting on the Opposition side of the House, they knew what was going to happen to it when the Bill reached the Upper Chamber. There the Bill was thrown out, because its object was to deal with the profits of the middleman. I remember that when the measure was before this House the hon. member for Paddington—the present Assistant Minister for Justice—speaking to an amendment moved by Mr. Hunter, which if carried would have made the Bill a useful measure, quoted from a law which was brought into force some 700 years ago in the reign of Henry III. That quotation, which is, I think, apropos to this question, reads as follows:—

“ ‘Especially be it commanded that no forestaller be suffered to dwell in any town.’ It defines a forestaller as ‘a man who, seeking his own evil gain, goes to meet corn, fish, herrings, or other articles for sale as they are being brought by land or water, carries them off, and contrives that they shall be sold at a dearer rate.’ Such a man, the statute declares, ‘is the public enemy of the whole community and country. He that is convict thereof the first time shall lose the things so bought; the second time he shall have judgment of the pillory; the third time he shall be imprisoned and make fine. And this judgment shall be given upon all manner of forestallers: likewise upon those who have given them counsel, help, or favour.’ ”

The hon. member for Paddington pointed out that the hon. member for Toowoong would come under the charge of having given them “counsel, help, or favour.” Of course, Mr. White, the Minister for Agriculture, and the Denham Government knew very well what would happen that Bill in the other Chamber. The Labour party, then in opposition, gave the Bill their ardent support. The present Minister for Agriculture has brought in something which will do more than that measure to assist the farmer. The ever increasing cost of living is one of the reasons for the industrial unrest which prevails throughout the world to-day, and any action that tends to bring consumer and producer together must be in the direction of saving to those parties the middleman's profits. Mr. H. M. Murphy, an official of the Victorian Government, gave a lecture on “National Efficiency” a few months ago, in the course of which he said that during the last fifteen years—and he took Knibbs as his authority—while wages had advanced 39.5 per cent., the cost of living had advanced 50.7 per cent. Thoughtful and earnest men are at this time looking for the reasons for industrial unrest with a view to prevent it, and we as a party are endeavouring to discover the real cause for the increased cost of living with a view to remedying it as far as possible. And in doing that, we are going to make an attempt to give the farmer the full results of his industry, because the increased cost of living affects the farmer to a greater extent than it does other persons in the community. The farmer has to pay greatly increased freight on his machinery, and the machinery man is robbing him to such an extent that I often feel inclined to take advantage of my parliamentary privilege to expose some of those gentlemen. I know that he is robbing the farmer of from 50 per cent. to 300 per cent. on machinery, roofing iron, and barbed wire for fencing purposes. It is, therefore, a very wise thing for this

*Mr. Gillies* ]

Government to attempt to do away with the commissions of agents, and try to bring the producer and consumer together.

I have just pointed out, on the authority of an official in Victoria, that while wages during the last fifteen years advanced by 39.5 per cent., the cost of living advanced over 50 per cent. Just as wages advance so does the cost of living keep about 10 per cent. or 11 per cent. in front of the advance in wages. It is not to be wondered at that industrial unrest continues throughout the world; industrial legislation has

[9 p.m.] been introduced and arbitration courts established, but the cost of living is going up all the time. The worker—and in the term “worker” I include the farmer, who is one of the hardest workers in the country—is suffering from the increased cost of living. I believe this Bill will accomplish something good. The hon. member for Normanby the other night quoted what the “Melbourne Age,” the Liberal organ in Victoria, said about the farmer being fleeced by the middleman there. While apples were sold at 2s. a case by a grower, the consumer paid from 16s. to 18s. The Minister for Agriculture, in moving the second reading of the Bill, cited the case of the banana-growers in Queensland, who were compelled to take from 1½d. downwards for their bananas, while they were sold at from 6d. to 8d. per dozen to the consumer. We desire to bring the producer and consumer together, and to give the farmer the full result of his labour, and at the same time ensure the consumer getting his produce at a reasonable price. One of the provisions in the Bill which appeals to me is the provision which deals with grain silos. The hon. member for Normanby and myself, as representatives of farming constituencies, had, of course, something to do with the framing of that clause. The provision for the establishment of grain silos is one that will benefit the farmers in the Atherton district, which, by the way, is the greatest maize-growing district in Australia. It has the record of producing the greatest crop per acre of any district in Australia. A few months ago, when I was up there, there were about 40,000 tons of maize, for which it was impossible to get a decent market. On account of the rainfall it is difficult to harvest the maize and to place it on the market in good condition. The Atherton maize has a reputation in the South for not keeping well, but I do not think it deserves that reputation. A man in Townsville, who buys large quantities, told me that the Atherton maize is just as good in that respect as other maize; but the Chinese handled maize and sometimes put it on the market in a bad condition, and that has got the Atherton maize a bad name. The use of silos will very largely obviate that difficulty, because the maize can be stored when it is at a low price, and placed on the market when the price improves, which will ensure the farmer getting a fair price. Further than that, provision is made for an advance. The Minister has power to make an advance on the produce while it is stored in the silos, so that I cannot see why any man who has the welfare of the farmer at heart can be opposed to this measure. Now, Mr. Hughes is now associated with some of the so-called Farmers’ party in the Federal Parliament, and I notice, from the “Standard” of Thursday, 6th September last, that a deputation waited on Mr.

Hughes and urged him to do something for the maizegrowers of Australia. The telegram says—

“Replying to a deputation of members of the Federal Parliament representing the maizegrowers of Australia, who wanted an assured market for their product, Mr. Hughes said it was impossible to form a maize pool. He also thought that the starch-making proposition was unattractive, and advised pig-raising or other methods of creating a market for maize.”

What is the use of telling a farmer at Atherton to go in for pig-raising? Every practical man knows that you cannot breed pigs in twenty-four hours. It will take years to get the pig industry established at Atherton—

“Mr. Corser stated that a firm in Victoria was prepared to take up 1,200,000 bushels of maize at 4s. per bushel for three years, on condition that the importation of black-grown rice for starch was prohibited.”

Of course, one would think that Mr. Hughes, as a member of the National Government, having a desire to build up a white Australia, and to assist the farmers, would give the support asked for by the deputation and endeavour to form a maize pool to give the necessary protection. But, no; they are evidently not built that way. I am thankful to say that I am associated with a party in Queensland who are determined to see that the farmer in future gets a fair deal, so far as it can be accomplished by passing legislation of this character.

Some hon. members opposite object to the Bill because it is quite a new thing. It is quite a new thing, as the Minister said, so far as Australia is concerned, and I am very pleased to know that Queensland is leading the way in this respect. The principle is not new, though, as far as some countries in the world are concerned. In Belgium a commission has been appointed since the war to deal with the food problem. In dealing with the wheat question there I find that while wheat, as the result of the war, has increased by 100 per cent., bread, in consequence of State action, has only increased by 27 per cent. That shows that while the farmer has got more for his wheat by 100 per cent., the consumer has only been called upon to pay an advance of 27 per cent. for his bread, proving that Government action can accomplish something in war time, and if it can do that in war time it can certainly do it in a more successful way in time of peace. The Russian people as a nation are supposed to be behind the times, but it appears to me that they are very much abreast of the times in some respects. The Russian Government have built over 200 large grain warehouses for the storage of grain, to assist the 20,000 co-operative societies in Russia. If we take Germany—and we may be able to take some lessons from our enemies, although it is difficult to take any lessons from our political opponents—I find that Mr. Frederick C. Howe, one of the ablest of America’s writers upon economic matters, states—

“Outside the city (Frankfort) was a great municipal slaughter-house, in which all meat used in the city was killed. There are no private slaughter-houses in Germany. They are not permitted. The food of the people is too

important to be exploited by monopoly packing-houses that kill cattle with no concern for public health, and that charge all that the traffic will bear. . . . I learned how the previous year there had been an industrial depression in Germany, how many more people than usual were out of work. To meet the situation hundreds of town councils had purchased great quantities of meat, fresh vegetables, and other supplies at wholesale prices, and sold them to the people directly or through co-operative associations that made no profit. In this way the middleman was cut out, and the consumer was brought face to face with the producer. Carloads of apples, potatoes, and other products are not left to rot in the fields. They were not destroyed at the docks and railroad terminals by warehousemen in order to keep up a monopoly price."

That is a lesson that people in Australia even may take from our enemies. State enterprise has been successful in other countries. I do not intend to speak at any length. I just wanted to make these few observations and to say that the Bill has my best support, and I believe that it will certainly be a benefit to the farmers of Queensland. The establishment of canning works to can the pineapples grown by returned soldiers and other farmers, the establishment of cold stores to store up the products of the farm, the establishment of granaries and silos to store maize, wheat, etc., will, I am satisfied, be a step in the right direction, and one that will be appreciated by the *bonâ fide* farmer. I am sure that the experiment will prove successful. I suppose the Bill, like most other Bills that are introduced, will require amendment from time to time, but I think the Secretary for Agriculture is to be commended for introducing this important measure.

Mr. STEVENS (*Rosewood*): Like some other hon. members who have spoken during this debate, I look upon this Bill as largely window-dressing, and believe that it is introduced at the present time in the hope of catching farmers' votes.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We have them already.

Mr. STEVENS: We are learning something.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: All the Northern farmers vote Labour. You surely know that?

Mr. STEVENS: The Minister tells us they have the farmers' votes already, and he tells us that this Bill is introduced for the benefit of the farmer and to eliminate the middleman. In speaking on the motion for the introduction of the Bill, I said that it appeared to me that, if the Government were eliminating the present middlemen, they intended to become middlemen themselves; and now that we have the Bill my opinion that that would be the case is confirmed and emphasised. Not only do they intend to become middlemen, but they intend to become dealers, and, besides buying produce, they intend to "get" it. They provide that they "may carry on the business of getting, receiving, buying, storing, sale, supply, and distribution of produce." I would like to know from the Minister, or from the Premier if his colleague's legal knowledge is not sufficient to answer the question, what the

meaning of that word "getting" in the Bill is.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What is the meaning of "timber-getting"?

Mr. STEVENS: If "receiving" and "buying" are not sufficient, what does the word "getting" mean? Does it mean that, as they have commandeered meat at a low price to supply the State butchers' shops, they are going to commandeer the farmers' produce in order that they may distribute it at a low price in the cities? Is that what the word "getting" is put in there for? That is the only reason that I can see why the word should be introduced in that sub-clause. Then what utter inconsistency is shown in the Bill. In 1913 we had a Bill introduced that has already been quoted from—the Stock and Farm Produce Agents Bill. When that was introduced, hon. members opposite, who were then sitting on this side, said that it did not go far enough, and the hon. member for Maranoa proposed an amendment providing that an agent should not also be a dealer in the produce that he sold as an agent. But here we find the Government providing that, while they deny to a dealer already established the right to buy as well as sell as agent, yet, when they become middlemen they are to be at liberty to do the very thing that they prohibit the private agent from doing. Could inconsistency go further?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What we propose to do is to prevent the employees of agents from buying from their employers.

Mr. STEVENS: It is proposed that agents shall not be allowed to buy produce placed in their hands for sale, and that is perfectly right. That has been the great evil in the past.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We are going to stop that.

Mr. STEVENS: They are going to stop agents already established doing that, but the Minister, by this Bill, is going to take upon himself the very power that he denies to others.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. STEVENS: That is absolutely inconsistent, and, if it is wrong in the case of agents already established, it is wrong for the Government. I notice that the Secretary for Agriculture, in moving the second reading of the Bill, said that he anticipated dealing with £3,000,000 of dairy produce annually.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I was quoting a supposititious case. I said that, if we had been handling all the butter, we would have saved £37,000 in commission. I did not say that I anticipated doing anything of the kind, nor do I. Quote me correctly, please.

Mr. STEVENS: The hon. gentleman said that this business could be done on a commission of 1½ per cent. I think he will find, if he gets the business established, that he will not be able to carry on on the basis of 1½ per cent.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That was supposing I handled the lot, which I do not suppose is possible.

Mr. STEVENS: Further on the hon. gentleman said—

"Not only that, but an instance came under my notice quite recently—in fact

*Mr. Stevens.]*

similar instances have occurred frequently that I have a knowledge of by reason of my connection with the Department of Agriculture—where parcels of butter have changed hands no less than four or five times in the one week, on each occasion the butter being resold at a profit. All that goes into the pockets of the middleman at the present time.”

I cannot credit that such a state of affairs does exist.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is an absolutely true statement.

Mr. STEVENS: The only case I know of where such a thing has taken place was when the hon. gentleman himself started dealing in butter, and sold a large parcel of butter to a firm of middlemen in Melbourne. I have mentioned this several times before.

The PREMIER: It is a case of tedious repetition.

Mr. STEVENS: The hon. gentleman allowed that firm to make a profit of £13 per ton on that parcel of butter. On another occasion he sold a parcel of butter to a firm of speculators, who made a profit of at least £3,000 on that one parcel. This is the sort of work that the farmers may expect if the Government go into this business. I would be the last to oppose anything that I thought for one moment would benefit the man on the land.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am quite satisfied that a large number of farmers in Rosewood favour this Bill.

Mr. STEVENS: I am not aware that they do, and I think I have a better knowledge of the farmers of Rosewood than the hon. gentleman has. Now, I think, if the Government wish to benefit the farmers—the men on the land—they should have taken example by what is done in Denmark and similar countries where the farming industry has become such a pronounced success and is of such great value to the country. Had they done that, and encouraged the farmers in the conduct of their co-operative companies, then they would have secured to the farmers the full profits of their industry. I pointed out the other night how they might well assist the farmers in that direction by making them advances from the Savings Bank under the Savings Bank Act.

The PREMIER: Why didn't your party do that when they were in power?

Mr. STEVENS: They could assist them also with advances to build grain silos—

The PREMIER: You had an opportunity and you did not do it.

Mr. STEVENS: And by making advances against their produce in times of plenty, when there was no market for their product, in order to enable them to hold it and carry on until a fair market existed for the sale of their produce. Had they done that, they certainly would have been doing something which would have assisted the farmers. But we find that, instead of doing something practicable and something that they might know from experience would be of benefit to the producers, and which has been of benefit in other countries, they bring in this measure which, as the hon. member for Carnarvon pointed out, it was quite unnecessary for them to bring in; because they might have gone into this business, had they wished, without the trouble of passing this Bill.

[Mr. Stevens.

They bring this measure in just as a blind to gull the farmers, in order to try and make them believe that they are doing something for them.

The PREMIER: Your party never did anything, anyhow; they know that; not even this window-dressing.

Mr. STEVENS: The experience the farmers have had of the Government's interference in the conduct of their business in the enterprises upon which they have entered is not of such a nature as to warrant them in hoping for any benefit to accrue from this venture, should it ever assume concrete form—which I very much doubt. They have not taken the means which were open to them of showing in a practical manner their interest in the primary producers by assisting them in their own efforts—through co-operation—to obtain the full result of their labour; but they come down with this measure—which is of an experimental character and the utility of which is extremely doubtful—in the last session of Parliament, merely in the hope of trying to make the farmers believe that they are in earnest in attempting to do something for them.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You would rather they postponed it.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I opposed this measure in its introductory stages because I viewed it with a considerable amount of suspicion, and I may go further and say with a considerable amount of alarm.

The PREMIER: You have altered your opinion.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I have not. It is but a short measure, but, since I have had the opportunity of studying it, I am more than ever impressed with the necessity of opposing it by every means in my power, feeling that it would have a very serious effect indeed upon the future destinies of the primary producer. I propose, as shortly as possible, to give the reason why I am offering opposition to it. As the Minister stated, it embodies one of the planks of the socialistic Labour platform; that is, the control of the production and the distribution of the same.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Are you quoting me?

HON. J. G. APPEL: Yes.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I did not say so.

HON. J. G. APPEL: You might not have used those particular terms, but you stated that this embodies one of the planks of the Labour socialistic platform; and so it does, because the effect of it would be to place the control of the production, and the distribution of that production, in the hands of the State.

Mr. PETERSON: It does nothing of the kind.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I am of opinion that it does. The hon. member who has interjected may be of a contrary opinion, and he will act accordingly. According to my mind, and following out the statement which was made by the hon. gentleman who has charge of the measure, I have arrived at the opinion that it would be a very great danger to the future of the primary producer.

Mr. COLLINS: You have parted from your State socialism.

HON. J. G. APPEL: It is not a matter of State socialism. I will point out what State socialism would have embodied so far as the assistance of the primary producer is concerned, in connection with the encouragement to him to have the handling of his produce. There is no doubt that the principle embodied in the Bill, in place of individualism—which, I say, should be fostered and encouraged—would substitute the policy of collectivism, which is the policy of the socialist party. The policy of the democratic party, the policy of the farmers' party and the primary producers of the State, is that individualism—encouragement by the State to the individual, or a collection of individuals, by assisting them to get the best reward for their labour—is the true democratic policy. The substitution of a policy of collectivism is one of the reasons why I propose to offer strenuous opposition to this particular measure.

The PREMIER: You are an individualist?

HON. J. G. APPEL: I am. I encourage the individual to improve his position on every occasion. I don't believe in a policy which would tend to reduce every member of the community to the same standard. I say that if a man has the ability, thrift, and the industry, let the State assist him to improve his condition. That is the policy of the party which I represent, and it is the true policy of democracy. One of the reasons why I regarded this measure with a considerable amount of suspicion was the fact that practically every measure—and particularly when it happened to be an innocent-looking measure—introduced by the present Administration invariably is loaded. (Hear, hear!) When we come to examine this measure, we find that in the definition clause the first loading appears, in the definition of produce, which is as follows:—

“Cereals, grain, vegetables, potatoes, and other edible roots and tubers, fruit, hay, and chaff, and all dairy produce: the term includes live or dead poultry and game, and eggs, and—”

Here is the loading, Mr. Speaker,

“any other article or class of articles which the Governor in Council, by Order in Council, may from time to time declare to be produce for the purposes of this Act.”

We have had a practical experience of these harmless terms, and under this definition alone anything could be included by a Proclamation of the Governor in Council, which, as we all know, means by the [9.30 p.m.] authority of the Executive of the State. The very definition of “produce” proves that it would be a very unwise thing indeed for the primary producer to accept this proposition, which I repeat, as distinct from co-operation, is of no value to him.

Mr. GILLIES: For your primary producers.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The hon. member for Facham talks about my primary producers. They have entered into the spirit of co-operation.

Mr. CARTER: They are individualists there.

HON. J. G. APPEL: They are individualists just as the hon. member who interjected is, although he may profess to be otherwise for election purposes. This little

Bill which appears so harmless contains the greatest possibilities to include practically every article that may be considered an article of primary produce of the State. Take the clause which follows: it gives a limitless scope to the State in connection with these particular markets, and an unlimited power of acquisition. The clause reads as follows:—

“For the purposes of this Act, the Minister may carry on the business of getting, receiving, buying, storing, sale, supply, and distribution of produce, and may establish, provide, maintain, regulate, and control cold stores, markets, depôts, grain silos, shops, factories, preserving and canning works, and other works, with all necessary or proper buildings, machinery, plant, conveyances, vehicles, and equipment, and may, under and subject to the Public Works Land Resumption Act of 1906, purchase, take, contract for the use of, or otherwise provide lands and other property real or personal required for the purposes of this Act.”

Here again you find in very innocent words the real sting of this clause. Under that clause there is no doubt that the power of the State would be limitless. If a co-operative concern had been brought to perfection by the farmers, the State could step in and under the powers conferred by that clause practically confiscate the property which had taken so much trouble, so much experience, and so much care on the part of those co-operators to bring to its state of perfection.

Mr. COLLINS: In what portion of the Bill do you find the word “confiscation”?

HON. J. G. APPEL: We know from experience that every measure introduced by the present Administration makes for confiscation so far as the primary producer is concerned, because on every occasion where taxation has been levied it has been on the primary producer that the bulk of that taxation has invariably fallen; and having in view the powers which are contained in this Bill, I have no hesitation in saying that once more upon the primary producer would the whole of this burden fall, and instead of giving him encouragement, he would actually lose that which has taken him so much time and so much trouble to bring to perfection. We all know how co-operative concerns are managed. The members of the co-operative associations are the directors of that concern. As a rule, the chairman is a man of the greatest possible experience. The directors themselves are continually in attendance, supervising the business, which is run at a moderate cost, and which enables a moderate return to be made by way of profit, and any profit realised is returned to the members of the association. We all know the experience of the different State markets which have been established. One particular market to which I refer is the fish market, which may be taken as an object-lesson. Prior to the State taking over the handling of fish, three men were sufficient to handle that market under the control of the local authorities. What do we find to-day? An army of men. Do we find that the primary producer in that instance is getting a greater return for his product? No. Do we find that the consumer is able to purchase that commodity at a decreased rate? On the contrary, we find that he is not. Has the effect been to do away with

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what was termed "the fish ring," whereby the retailers of the large cities were able to regulate the price? No. We find on the contrary that no benefit has accrued either to the producer or to the consumer. The only benefit that has resulted has been to the friends of the Administration who have secured snug billets. They are tumbling over one another in place of doing work which the taxpayers apparently think they are doing. We find in connection with this matter, too, that the men of experience would be lacking so far as the marketing of primary produce was concerned. Experience would not be an essential. It would be his standing at the Trades Hall, as a caucusite or organiser that would be the best qualification to possess, from the head of the concern to the understrappers engaged therein. What would it concern those engaged in the markets whether they were making a profit or not? Then the greatest danger would be the danger that we experienced quite recently. There might be a sympathetic strike, and whereas in co-operative concerns the primary producer is enabled to go into his own business and deal with his produce, if it is a Government concern and a sympathetic strike takes place, what is the result? His cream or his other produce may sour or rot so far as the Government, as at present constituted, or the employees of the Government, are concerned. What do they care for the primary producer, or the loss of his reward for his toil, which is evidenced by the amount of the produce which might be in the market? It is nothing whatever to them, and I say that under those conditions, with the knowledge we have of the unconcern, of the indifference, of the present Administration—and, I am sorry to say, of a section of the employees of the State so far as the interests of the primary producers are concerned—it would be a very fatal thing if the primary producer, as represented in this House, gave any encouragement to the establishment of a market of this kind.

**THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE:** When this market is working properly you will regret these remarks.

**HON. J. G. APPEL:** It will be too late then. The best encouragement the primary producer can get from the State is to extend the system of co-operation. If a Bill had been introduced dealing with that particular phase of assistance to the primary producer I should have given it every possible support.

**THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE:** That can be done under existing legislation.

**HON. J. G. APPEL:** Then why is it not carried into effect, instead of occupying the time of the Legislature at this particular moment with a Bill of this kind?

**THE PREMIER:** Are you opposing the second reading?

**HON. J. G. APPEL:** I am. And I want, furthermore, to know where the funds are to come from for this socialistic enterprise. We all know that legitimate funds must have been depleted to enable the Administration to engage in wild-cat socialistic schemes which, I venture to say, will prove a dead loss to the taxpayers and the State generally. We all know that, so far as local authorities are concerned, they cannot get any loans.

**THE TREASURER:** Yes, they can.

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**HON. J. G. APPEL:** Then why are they not getting them?

**THE TREASURER:** They are getting them.

**HON. J. G. APPEL:** From one end of the State to the other applications are being refused. There is a certain return to the Treasury every year of interest and redemption paid by local authorities on their loans. During the year before last they actually paid, approximately, £89,000, whilst arrears—which are practically as good, which will be paid—amount approximately to £16,000. Yet we find that during that year only about £5,000 in addition to that was loaned by the Treasury to local authorities.

**THE TREASURER:** Wrong. Quite wrong.

**HON. J. G. APPEL:** I have got the figures from the Treasury.

**THE TREASURER:** Over half a million was loaned.

**HON. J. G. APPEL:** Oh! I am not talking about the Water and Sewerage Board. I am talking of local authorities—shire and town councils—and that is the whole of the amount advanced to them. I cannot get the figures for the last financial year from the Treasury, and I know why I cannot get them. Because the amount is so small that the Treasury is ashamed to produce them at the present moment. But we have this fact before us: that practically every local authority which has made application for a loan has been refused.

**THE TREASURER:** No.

**HON. J. G. APPEL:** It is quite possible that, in electorates represented by hon. members supporting the Government, advances may have been made, but I know that in connection with my own they have been turned down. I will instance one application made by the Tambourine Shire Council—for a road to the top of Tambourine Mountain—

**THE TREASURER:** For sight-seeing purposes.

**HON. J. G. APPEL:** From the terminus of the railway at Canungra.

**MR. CARTER:** For settlement?

**HON. J. G. APPEL:** For settlement. That is the object.

**THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE:** Joy rides.

**HON. J. G. APPEL:** A district where there are very large dairy farms; where there are large orchards. They are unable to get the full returns for their produce owing to the lack of means of communication.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Will the hon. member connect his remarks with the State Produce Agency Bill?

**HON. J. G. APPEL:** I am simply giving reasons why we regard this measure with suspicion, and I want to know what trust or other account is to be depleted for the purpose of providing the necessary funds. We find that the amount of advances for last year under the Workers' Dwellings Board has diminished by nearly two-thirds on that of the previous year, and I want to know how the money is to be provided. Knowing, as I do, where it is to come from—that is, out of the pockets of the primary producer, practically the only man—to the extent of something like 90 per cent.—among the taxpayers of the State who

pays direct taxation—I say one must regard this measure with a very considerable amount of suspicion and alarm, and it behoves every man who is a representative of the primary producer or who has their interests at heart to offer the most obstinate opposition to its becoming an Act of the Legislature. I have already said what the effect might be if we had a sympathetic strike. How would the primary producer pay? He has been hit by the land taxation, by the proposal to extend the franchise, by the proposal to take off the limit of rating which the local authority may levy, by the proposed Valuation of Land Bill, and by this particular measure—all measures which are aimed at the primary producer.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: This is for his benefit.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The whole aim and object is to introduce on the statute-book these socialistic planks of the Labour party, which, I venture to say, are not for the benefit of the primary producer, which seek to smother that individualism which seeks to improve itself and which the State should do everything in its power to foster. All the Government's policy, as we know, is the policy of socialism.

The PREMIER: Then it is not collectivism?

HON. J. G. APPEL: It may be window-dressing, but it will be a sorry day for the unfortunate primary producer if all the legislation of the present Administration appears on the statute-book, because he will be liable to the effects of the administration of that legislation and the consequent taxation. I say that I will support any measure which will assist the co-operative movement, and I would like to quote from an article in the "Encyclopædia Britannica," the latest edition, volume 7, page 82—

"Co-operation: A term used particularly both for a theory of life and for a system of business, with the general sense of 'working together.' In its narrowest usage it means a combination of individuals to economise by buying in common, or increase their profits by selling in common. In its widest usage it means the creed that life may best be ordered, not by the competition of individuals, where each seeks the interest of himself and his family, but by mutual help; by each individual consciously striving for the good of the social body of which he forms part, and the social body in turn caring for each individual: 'each for all, and all for each' is its accepted motto. Thus it proposes to replace among rational and moral beings the struggle for existence by voluntary combination for life. More or less imperfectly embodying this theory, we have co-operation in the concrete or 'the co-operative movement,' meaning those forms of voluntary association where individuals unite for mutual aid in the production of wealth, which they will devote to common purposes or share among them upon principles of equity, reason, and the common good, agreed upon beforehand. Not that a co-operative society can begin by saying absolutely what those principles in their purity would dictate. It begins with current prices, current rates of wages, and interest, current hours of labour, and modifies them as soon as it can

wherever they seem least conformable to equity, reason, and the common good."

Mr. COLLINS: That article is dead against you.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I am sorry for the mental capacity of the hon. gentleman if he thinks that that article is dead against my argument. I point out that the benefit of co-operation is this—that if there is a profit made, that profit is distributed amongst those who produced it. Under this measure—judging by the result of any businesses that the State has entered into hitherto—no profit will be made at all; but, allowing that there is a profit, it will not be shared amongst those who produced it.

Mr. COLLINS: It will increase the price paid to the producer.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The hon. gentleman and other hon. members opposite are always calling out that the prices of commodities which have to be consumed are too high, and is it likely that the primary producer is going to get an increased price for his commodities? I fail to see how he is going to get it.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: The middleman gets it.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I am not discussing the question of middlemen just now, but the question of co-operation. The benefit of co-operation has been to secure to the producer the highest price possible as some reward for his labour. We have to realise that the primary producer is in a very different position to the men engaged in our secondary industries. In our secondary industries, if there is an increase, it is passed on to the consumer; but the primary producer is not able to do that. It is only by means of scientific cultivation, marketing, and preparation that he is able to get the highest price he can for the products which have cost him so much to produce. Why should he not receive the full value of his labour?

Mr. COLLINS: No one objects to that.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The hon. gentleman is continually stating that the price of commodities is too high. We know that in many cases the primary producer does not reap what he sows. We know that he loses on his dairy cattle, if there is a drought, and in many other ways. It is, therefore, only a fair thing that by co-operation—non-interference by the State—he should gain some reward for what he is able to produce. It is contrary to the principles of hon. members opposite—perhaps not contrary to their personal opinions—but it is contrary to the principles of those who command them, and who have issued their ultimatum. "That is the policy you have to carry out; whether it is statesmanlike or not, it is the policy you have to place before the Legislature and carry into effect." We know what the effect is—that hon. members opposite have to obey the commands issued from outside, and if they do not, when an election comes along, they are turned down themselves. According to report, some of the hon. members opposite have become too ancient in their seats, and as the younger ones want a turn they are also to be turned out. I draw the attention of hon. members to the article I have just quoted, and they will discover that co-operation always produces some benefits for the producer without any State interference.

The PREMIER: Does it refer to State interference in that article? You put that in yourself.

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HON. J. G. APPEL: It has been proved over and over again that when the State interferes in matters of which it has no knowledge, then it is not for the benefit of the primary producer. Hon. members opposite may think that they know more than men engaged in primary industries, but I am not prepared to give them credit for those statements. I have endeavoured to give reasons why I am opposed to this measure. The primary producers have built up some excellent co-operative organisations—butter factories, cheese factories, bacon factories, and produce markets—all being for the benefit of the primary producers. In the first session, when members opposite appeared on the Treasury benches in the House, I, as leader of the Farmers' party, said that I was prepared to support any legislation from the Government side that was for the encouragement and support of the primary producer, as anything that was for his benefit and encouragement would be for the prosperity of the State, and the party to which I belonged would give it hearty support.

The PREMIER: That was so much talk.

HON. J. G. APPEL: From that time every Act of administration and every Act of legislation by the present Government has been aimed at that particular section of the community. Why, I do not know, because the Premier must realise that you cannot put the burden of taxation always on one section of the community. You cannot permit another section always to escape taxation. If one section of the community is [10 p.m.] continually laden with direct taxation, the result must be failure and disaster. And I say that is the object of all the legislation which has been introduced, and that it is the object of this particular piece of legislation. It is a piece of legislation which, even if it goes into Committee, as it undoubtedly will, because the Government have a sufficient majority for that purpose, is not susceptible to amendment. It is bad from root to branch, and I trust it will never be placed on the statute-book of the State. I propose to oppose it at every stage while it is before the Assembly.

Mr. BRIDGES (*Yundah*): This seems to be a very small and innocent little Bill.

The PREMIER: Innocent, but useful.

Mr. BRIDGES: It is certainly only a 'little Bill, but we are rather suspicious of these little Bills.

Mr. McMINN: You are built that way.

Mr. BRIDGES: My name is Thomas, "otherwise Didymus," and I cannot help being suspicious of these measures. We previously had before us a Sugar Acquisition Bill, which contained a dragnet clause, and this measure may have a dragnet clause in it.

The PREMIER: It will drag some of you people out of Parliament.

Mr. BRIDGES: The hon. gentleman may be dragged out with me.

The PREMIER: We will chance that.

Mr. BRIDGES: We chance a good many things, but they do not always come off. One reason why I view this measure with a good deal of suspicion is that there is a great deal which is left to regulation. When we were on that side of the House we were told that matters were left to regulation which

ought to be dealt with in the Bill. If it was right at that time that matters should be dealt with in the Bill itself, it is right now.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Minister may want to establish a fruit canning factory.

Mr. BRIDGES: I am glad the Minister has made that interjection, because it reminds me that there is a suggestion that the department should establish a factory to can pines for the soldiers' settlement at Beerburum. I am afraid they will not do a great deal of pine canning for any place outside the local market.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We are getting different reports from the commissioners who have gone abroad.

Mr. BRIDGES: I do not want to go into the question of the commissioners to-night. I repeat that I view with a great deal of suspicion this little Bill, and that I do not think it is necessary.

At seven minutes past 10 o'clock,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. BRIDGES: The Government did not require any Act of Parliament to carry out State butchers' shops or to purchase stations, and they do not require an Act of Parliament to establish a State produce agency. The Minister has told us that this is an experiment. The Government can make an experiment without passing this Bill, and if they do so and find that it is successful, they can then ask the House to pass the measure. We cannot help being suspicious of it at the present time. The Government commandeered our butter, and they may commandeer our cabbages. I am not going to labour the question, but I would advise the Minister to withdraw the Bill. If he wants to experiment in this matter, let him rent a shop, just as the Government rent shops for butchering purposes, carry on the business in a small way, and then, if they show that they are doing fairly by the producer and the consumer, such a measure as this will have our support. Let the Minister start in a humble way, and when he has got our confidence he can introduce a comprehensive measure dealing with the whole subject. But at present I am afraid that he wants cheap cabbages from the farmer in order to provide cheap food for the consumer in the town. I believe the Minister is sympathetic with the farmer, but I think he is sympathetic with the consumer to the extent of 3d. and sympathetic with the farmer to the extent of 2d. If I was sure that there was no fear of the Government establishing a monopoly and getting the whole of the farmers' produce and selling it cheap, not caring how much it cost the farmer to produce it, I would be more favourably disposed towards the Bill, but at present I would advise the Minister to withdraw the measure.

Mr. PETRIE (*Toombul*): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

The PREMIER: That is not in accordance with the arrangement.

Mr. BRIDGES: Yes, ten minutes past 10 o'clock.

The PREMIER: Don't do it again.

Question put and passed.

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

The House adjourned at ten minutes past 10 o'clock.

[Hon. J. G. Appel.]