

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 29 NOVEMBER 1917

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

THURSDAY, 29 NOVEMBER, 1917.

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

QUESTION.

COST OF REDBANK PLAINS STATE SCHOOL.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*) asked the Secretary for Public Instruction—

“1. What was the cost of erection and addition to the Redbank Plains State School?”

“2. What was the estimated cost by departmental officers?”

“3. What was the actual cost?”

“4. Was it contract or day labour?”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. H. F. Hardacre, *Leichhardt*) replied—

“1. Total cost of State school and residence, including extra works, £1,399 3s. 9d.

“2. £1,392 17s.

“3. See answer to question 1.

“4. Day labour.”

PAPER.

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

Award, as of twentieth day of November, 1917, relating to engineers in the employ of the Treasurer of Queensland engaged in the dredge service at Brisbane.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

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

AGRICULTURE AND STOCK.

CHIEF OFFICE.

Question again stated—That £21,511 be granted for “Agriculture and Stock—Chief Office.”

HON. J. TOLMIE (*Toowoomba*): He desired to congratulate the Minister on the very excellent report made by his department. One of the features of the department was that each year a report was submitted that was practically as good as a text book in regard to a great many subjects. The amount of information given to the public was of real merit, and he felt certain that those who kept the annual reports and went through them would find that their time was well spent. The general summary in the introductory part, prepared by the Under Secretary, was of very great value indeed. He had taken the trouble to go through the reports, and he felt that the work of the department was being carried on in an efficient manner with the amount of money at their disposal. Although he did not always agree with everything that was being done, nevertheless he found that there was an endeavour to maintain a high standard with the amount of money provided. The department had not been over-supplied with money during the regime of this or any other Government.

The Agricultural Department, to a very great extent, was a losing department, because a very large amount of experimental work was carried on, which was dear work immediately, but beneficial to the community as a whole.

Mr. Bailey, who had gone to take charge of the gardens in South Australia, was certainly a big loss to Queensland. (Hear, hear!) He was regarded throughout the whole of the Commonwealth as an officer of very great value. He remembered talking with the curator of the Adelaide gardens—Mr. Holtze, a botanist of high attainments, who told him that the Government had asked him to name his successor, because he was getting to that age when he might have to retire or might die. He told them that there was only one person he would like to see succeed him in South Australia, and that was Mr. J. F. Bailey, of Brisbane. He considered him the most efficient botanist in the Commonwealth. There were certain attractions in South Australia to Mr. Bailey, because his grandfather laid out the botanic gardens there, and his father—he did not know whether Mr. Bailey himself was born in South Australia—had much to do with the Adelaide gardens, just as he had much to do with the gardens here. To some extent, therefore, South Australia was like home to him. They had lost a very good officer, but he went through the gardens very frequently, and he believed that Mr. Bick, who was filling his place, was doing good work and was a very good officer.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They have never looked so well at any time in their history.

HON. J. TOLMIE: He had never known the gardens look so well as they were at the present time, but that was largely due to the seasons. He did not mean to depreciate Mr. Bick's services when he said that. He noticed that there had been some subdivision of the work of instruction in the department. An officer had been sent to take charge of the Central district, and experimental stations had been started at Townsville, where the Government hoped to make an agricultural area.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We shall encourage them to try it.

HON. J. TOLMIE: He hoped the efforts would be successful. Unfortunately, people in the North had not taken very much to agricultural pursuits, except where they devoted their attention in the coastal districts to sugar, although in the highlands about Charters Towers there was a tendency to go in for maizegrowing and dairying. He believed that just as Gympie had been transformed, so would Charters Towers be transformed, although, perhaps, not to the same extent. Another innovation was the appointment of a poultry expert. Some years ago a poultry expert was tried, and for a number of years went about most assiduously endeavouring to lay the foundation of a great industry, but the people did not seem to place much confidence in it, and his efforts were not a great success. They sent home two or three shipments of birds, but the Queensland farmers would not grow the bird that was required for the English market, and consequently did not get the price that was paid even for a bird not so weighty as the one sent home.

Mr. MAY: What bird do you recommend?

HON. J. TOLMIE: In the English market they required birds with white flesh and legs, unless they had changed in the last year or two. It was not the fault of the expert that the industry did not go ahead.

Perhaps some members who were more interested—practically interested—would take up the question of the wheat pool. He noticed that the Minister was not getting back an amount of the money which he advanced to the farmers, and when reading over the report it occurred to him that if the Government would allow the farmers to finance themselves as the Government financed themselves, it would probably be mutually satisfactory. Why not allow the farmers to issue ten years' debentures? It was a good way of financing, and was used by the Government in buying their stations and other things.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Surely you must recognise that there is a difference between the poor farmer and the Government!

HON. J. TOLMIE: There was a difference. That was why the farmers should have the advantage of issuing debentures. He would allow the butter business to be dealt with by the hon. member for Drayton; there was only one point he would like to stress. It seemed to him that the Agricultural Department—he hoped the Minister would take it in good part—had not shown the same degree of smartness in dealing with the Imperial Department as the meat people. It was pointed out in evidence the other day that those who had charge of the meat business had the British Government to the tune of something like £19,000. He noticed that there had been some dealings between the department and the British Government, and whether they had been able to have the British Government to the tune of £19,000 or any part thereof he was not prepared to say. Perhaps the hon. member for Aubigny would be able to enlighten them. One matter he was much interested in was that part of the report dealing with prickly-pear. He noticed the Government went in for some elaborate experiments, dealing with the feeding of stock on prickly-pear. They dealt with the dairy cow to see if it would produce milk or butter fat. They dealt with sheep, and they dealt with the calves. After all their work they had to report a great failure. It appeared that the animals that were fed upon prickly-pear were very much like the Government's customers at their various railway stations. When people went into the refreshment-rooms at the railway stations to get a cup of tea they had to disguise the taste of the tea by putting in a superabundance of sugar. It was the same with the prickly-pear. They had to mix it with other foods in order to make it palatable to the animals which fed on it. It was particularly distasteful to the dairy stock and the young stock. If they looked at the illustrations in the report showing the cattle which were fed on prickly-pear they would see that the pear had not been a success. If they looked at the illustration of the sheep they would see that the sheep presented a bold front at first, but after feeding for seven months on prickly-pear they seemed to be somewhat downcast in appearance. Anyone looking at pictures 2, 3, and 4 would bear out what he said. There was some valuable information

Hon. J. Tolmie.]

given in the report by the various instructors. There was one good article in the report which his limited time prevented him from reading to the Committee. He referred to the article on "Co-operation" on page 24 of the report. It indicated that during the past twelve months co-operation had been a signal failure in the department. The Queensland farmers must go in for co-operation if they were going to succeed. He trusted if the present Minister was in charge during next year that he would be able to report that he had overcome the difficulties with regard to co-operation, and that the farmers were taking more kindly to it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What are the difficulties, in your opinion?

HON. J. TOLMIE: He was not there to give a dissertation on the difficulties. He was there to point out the strong points and the weak points in the administration of the department.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There are no weak points.

HON. J. TOLMIE: He had endeavoured to deal generously in regard to the administration of the department. With regard to native bears, he thought he could leave that matter to the hon. member for Carnarvon to deal with. There was some interesting references in the report to horses and also to fruit culture. They were both well worth reading. They had an enthusiast at the head of the Fruit Department, and if it were possible for things to be improved they would be improved under the direction of the fruit expert. Some years ago, instead of being allowed only twenty-five minutes to deal with the Agricultural report, they used to take the whole day over it. Excellent work was done for Queensland by the experts of the department. Good work was done by the dairy expert, entomologist, wool expert, and others in the Stock Department.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): He was sorry he could not compliment the Minister on an increased vote. They were always of the opinion that the vote for Agriculture could be increased considerably. There was no branch of industry in Queensland, with the exception, perhaps, of the Mines Department, which required more assistance from the Government than the Agricultural and Stock Department. They should give every assistance they could to the men on the land to make their conditions comfortable. A lot of assistance could be given them by imparting the scientific knowledge to be found in the department. The heads of the various branches should be sent round the country to instruct the people, and their services should be made available in the freest possible manner. He knew that the instructors had been moving about more than they had done for years. If they wanted to develop the agricultural industries on scientific lines, they could only do it by increasing the possibility of production where there was production to-day. They should encourage the improvement of stock, particularly the dairy herds, and teach the farmers that there was something in pedigree. Pedigree to the stockbreeder was like the signboards on the country road which showed the travellers which way to go. In all production there were two ways of doing a thing, a right way and a wrong, and it was only by scientific knowledge that the producer could be directed along the

[Hon. J. Tolmie.]

right lines. He noticed that the instructors in cheesemaking, and the dairy instructors, had been making tests right throughout the dairying districts. They had examined many dairy herds on the farms, and were teaching the dairymen how to use the Babcock tester. They found that in many districts in the southern part of Queensland which were previously devoted to canegrowing had now reverted to dairy farming. North Dillarnil was one place that was mentioned in the report, and they were successfully producing cream in that district at the present time and supplying the factories, and the conditions of the people there were much better and more comfortable than they had been in the past. They had also at their disposal a very eminent professional man in the person of the Government Entomologist, and also the Vegetable Pathologist, but he did not think the services of those gentlemen were availed of to the fullest extent.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They are overworked.

Mr. CORSER: Probably they were overworked in a technical way, because they were kept in the vaults of the Agricultural Department, surrounded by all the microbes that had been imported into Queensland. He did not know whether the services of those gentlemen could be availed of, as if they could they should be allowed to lecture in the rural communities on various diseases.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Mr. Pound is out on that mission now.

Mr. CORSER: Mr. Pound was out on a different line altogether. He was referring to the diseases of plants and pests, and if the experts were allowed to go out and lecture on them, it would be interesting and beneficial to the State. Mr. Pound was looking after another institution, but his services could best be availed of if he were at his post.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Suppose an application comes from your district for Mr. Pound to lecture there, and I refuse on the grounds you mention, what will you say?

Mr. CORSER: If an application came from his district for Mr. Pound's services it would be to get some information for the prevention of the loss of stock through blackleg. The only stuff they could get at present was from the late Carl Zoeller Company. One would have thought that the Government would certainly have something to prevent blackleg. At the Yeerongpilly institution they had a man whose qualifications should enable him to carry on that branch of scientific knowledge.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: So he does.

Mr. CORSER: To no degree of use. He did not have the confidence of the stockowner. They should receive more assistance from the State institutions, and they should be able to get all the vaccines they wanted for inoculation purposes. Some time ago they had an eminent man—Mr. Dodds—at the head of that branch, but he had gone now, not through any fault of the present Government, but through the

[4 p.m.] late Government. He did not want to say anything against Mr. Pound, but he could say that as far as the other gentleman was concerned, when he left the State, Queensland lost an opportunity of getting the services of one of the world's

most eminent men in that direction. He established the Yeerongpilly experiment station, and started the propagation of all vaccines that were necessary. He also started a scientific method of dealing with diseases in stock right throughout the State. When he left, this business went down to zero. He suggested that the Minister should give his attention to that branch of his department, as with stock at the huge price they were fetching, there was a wide field for his best endeavours, and he hoped that the hon. gentleman would be successful in preventing the losses which had previously occurred through the absence of antidotes or vaccines when they were necessary.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I think we have all the vaccines we want.

Mr. CORSER: Not all. The Minister and officers of the department had not the confidence of the people which would enable them to use these vaccines.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Oh yes, we have; full confidence.

Mr. CORSER: Unfortunately, they disagreed in that. Then there was another important matter in this branch of the department—that was tuberculosis in stock. When stock were so valuable as they were to-day it was a difficult thing to tackle, but there was no reason why they should not bring about an approved system of dairy stock, and see that disease was not disseminated. He did not mean that they were going to victimise people by killing their valuable stock, but they had means at their disposal to assist farmers to propagate healthy herds. He understood that they had a healthy herd at the college to-day, having brought it up-to-date. He sincerely hoped that the Minister during the short time at his disposal would do something in the direction of increasing the possibilities of the Agricultural Department. There were plenty of settlers in the back blocks who would be pleased to receive any tuition which the paid experts of the State could give them. He hoped the Minister would take them off the old beaten tracks.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I have taken them off the old beaten track, and you know it.

Mr. CORSER: To a greater extent than he had, and that he would arrange for the experts to visit the newer settlers.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The very thing we are doing—the experimental plots.

Mr. CORSER: The experimental plots in a number of districts have been of use to the farmers, but there were many outlying areas in which the experts could visit the settlers and instruct them. The State would have everything to gain from that work, as production would increase, and the railways would benefit. The further out the people in the bush were situated the greater attention they should have. He hoped the Minister would take his remarks in the spirit they were offered, and see that improvement was made in the directions he had indicated.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): The honour board of the department containing seventy-three names was certainly a credit to the department, showing that many good men had left the department to do their duty in the defence of Australia. The Agricultural Departments were the most important

food-producing departments in Australia. If they took the Agricultural Departments out of the Australian primary productions there would not be very much left. That was why this department was entitled to more consideration than what was usually given to it, either by this or previous Governments. He contended that no Government in Queensland had ever given the attention which it ought to have done to the Agricultural Department. Probably through the war more than anything else prices were now on what might be called a fair basis for the dairymen, and to-day they were able to make a living wage. They were not getting war prices.

Mr. CARTER: You are getting less than you were getting last year.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The hon. member was talking about something he knew nothing about. Butter was fixed at 151s. a cwt. or something like that. The highest price that the Government took butter at was 140s., but the price ruling at that time in London was 230s. That butter was all graded very nicely by their agricultural experts, but unfortunately, for some reason or other—perhaps the Minister could tell them—the butter was not sold according to grade, but all in a heap, as if they were glad to get rid of it.

Mr. CARTER: Not true.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He was not going to say it was not true, but there it was. If the Minister said that that butter was sold on its grade, he should take the Minister's word, but he was quite sure that the butter was graded by their dairy experts before it left here, and apparently the returns seemed to show that it was all sold at one price.

Mr. JONES: It was sold on trial. You know that the butter producers in Queensland would prefer the butter being sold that way.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He knew plenty which had been graded second class here and sold as first class in England. Perhaps the flavour might alter in two or three months. The hon. member was an expert and could give them some valuable information with regard to butter. Butter in the old country went up to 500s. a cwt about six weeks ago.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Why didn't you get that price for it? You are asking me why I didn't get it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Unfortunately, while it was at that price in London they had none in the market. When Danish butter sold at £25 a cwt. that showed what the condition was in England. There was one thing he disagreed with in the Minister's report—that was with regard to the distribution of the profits. He hoped that the Minister would admit that he took that butter on trust.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No: I bought it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The Minister compelled the people to sell butter to him at 149s. which was worth 220s. in London.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It was not worth anything of the sort.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The Minister admitted that he bought the butter. He was going to give the Minister the credit for having taken it on trust; that he had taken the butter and held it in trust for the

Mr. Bebbington.]

factories, giving them an advance on it and agreeing to pay them the balance when the butter was sold to the best advantage. The Minister now admitted that he bought it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Bought it and paid for it on the spot.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: They knew that not a single factory in Queensland sold that butter willingly. Would managers of factories be foolish enough to sell butter at 149s. to the Minister which was worth 220s. in England, and which only cost 21s. to send forward? If they carried on business in that way they would soon get to bankruptcy. They had business men in the factories who had been in the industry for many years and had a grip of the conditions. They objected to butter being taken over by men who knew nothing whatever about the business. There was this much to be said, that owing to good seasons they could produce butter at one-tenth of the cost at which it was produced when the Queensland Government seized it. At the time the Minister seized the first lot of butter, he would guarantee that plenty of it cost 8s. or 9s. a lb. to produce.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That discounts all your statements.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Let them buy feed at £15 per ton, which he had to do, and they would see what it cost to produce butter. With labour and everything else that butter was costing practically 10s. per lb. to produce. The dairymen in Brisbane admitted that the cost of producing milk was 7d. per quart, which would be 2s. 4d. per gallon, and it took $2\frac{1}{2}$ gallons of milk to produce 1 lb. of butter. Then, there were the taxes and other things to consider. He was only giving the food cost. The Minister knew perfectly well that the farmers paid him on the average about £10 per ton for feed.

Mr. WEIR: You said £15 before.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He had paid £15 and £16. Now that they had a good season and were able to produce more cheaply, the Federal Government was paying the same price for the butter as the Queensland Government did in the drought. In those times the farmer did not get 50 per cent. of the cost of production, and now he was only getting a fair living wage. The Minister said he bought the butter. If he did, he bought it compulsorily, and it was a forced profit. Then, they talked about British freedom. Yet they compulsorily took half a man's living. The Minister admitted that he took it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I don't admit it. I positively deny that I took it. I bought it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: When a man came, with the power of the State behind him, and said that a thing which a person had worth £200 he was going to take for £149, what was it but highway robbery? They might just as well say to a man who had £200 in the bank that they were going to take it and give him £150. It was the very same thing as to take a farmer's produce at two-thirds its price. He objected to that word "profit." It was not profit. Their factories always paid a certain amount and left a small surplus, which was carried forward as a deferred payment. If the Minister had put "deferred payment" instead of "profit" in his report he would have been correct. It was merely a deferred payment. Referring

[Mr. Bebbington.

to the prickly-pear experiments, they knew just as much now as when they started. There was no doubt that if the department, before they experimented, knew what other people knew, they would not have asked the people to spend so much money.

Then there was the cattle tick question. He wanted to congratulate the inspector—Mr. Foley—who had done a lot of valuable and very difficult work. He was one of those who believed that the tick stopped in a certain district only so long as people would let it. He was quite positive that when the people made up their mind to get rid of the tick out of the district it had to go. He was certain that if a district was quarantined and no ticky stock was allowed to go into that district, and all the cattle owners in that district were compelled to dip their cattle for a certain time, the ticks would very soon be extinct in that district. He had watched it very carefully, and had seen a district in the beginning of those experiments. There was too much red tape altogether among the inspectors until Mr. Cory came along. Men in isolated places had been compelled to drive their ticky stock through thickly inhabited and clean places to a dip; to dip them there and then take them back. Anybody who knew anything about ticks in cattle knew perfectly well that when the cattle began to get heated and perspiration set in, the ticks dropped off. He had always advocated that instead of quarantining the whole district, that one particular farm where the outbreak was should be quarantined, and they should not allow a beast to go off that place, but should compel the owner to clean them to the satisfaction of the inspector before he was allowed to move any stock. He believed that those were the means which Mr. Cory had adopted. Those who had met Mr. Cory believed that the department had that question very much at heart, and in Mr. Cory they had a really first-class officer and a man who understood his business.

He noticed in the report some remarks about wheat. He believed that co-operative pools or joint stock co-operative companies were the only means which they had at hand for the farmers to get a reasonable price for their produce. If the farmers were all poor and in need of money, and they sent their stuff down to market and sold it at half price, they were always going to be poor. One thing that had done a lot of good was the Queensland Cheese Manufacturers' Association. He did not say that the agent who got his percentage for selling did not earn it. Very often, where they paid him up to 5 per cent., it would cost them more if they had to do it themselves. He was entitled to a certain amount so long as there was no gambling and dealing in produce. The merchant helped them to get rid of their stock, and they welcomed him. When the Queensland Cheese Manufacturers' Association was formed there were about fourteen co-operative cheese factories in Queensland, and they were nearly all on the starving point; they could not sell their stock, and their stores were filled. Twenty-five per cent. of their stuff was ruined through there being no markets. Now there was no such thing. He believed that there were now between eighty and ninety co-operative factories in Queensland. Just as the worker and everyone else had done—just as the storekeeper did—the producers had to join together and set a living wage upon their produce, and he had

to hold it until he got it. That was the only way in which he was going to get a living. He knew that members on the other side wanted cheap food. Even members representing farming districts, like the hon. member for Port Curtis, who would sell his electors any time, and had sold them over and over again.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. COLLINS: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member in order in saying that the hon. member for Port Curtis would sell his electors at any time?

The CHAIRMAN: He is not in order. I ask him to withdraw the expression.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He would withdraw that, and he would say that that member was always quite willing to hand over his farmers' labour cheaply to the cities. He was always taking the side of the cities.

Mr. CARTER: That is not true.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: There was one thing he wanted to say in regard to tuberculosis. He was very pleased that the Minister had not gone any further in that matter, because he thought that the city councils and the city authorities should use every means to clear up their own back yards before they allowed the slaughter of their cattle. He had seen back yards in the city which were kept disgracefully, and where many horses, practically speaking, were living, if not under the house, very near it. Until their own back yards were cleaned up it was unreasonable to slaughter cattle because they thought they had tuberculosis. He was glad to say that the Queensland cattle were the healthiest cattle in the world, chiefly on account of the outdoor life which they led. (Ironical Government laughter.) Members on the other side did not seem to know that the milking cows in the old countries spent seven months of the year in the stable. Those things seemed to be a revelation to them. That was the kind of ignorance with which they had to put up.

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

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): He wanted to refer to the assistance given by the Agricultural Department to farmers for the purpose of encouraging the growth of wheat in Queensland. During the past twelve months it had not been equal to that given by the Agricultural Department during the previous twelve months, and, in fact, by the previous Government.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is not true.

Mr. MORGAN: He thought it was absolutely correct, and he thought he would be able to prove it before he sat down.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We are selling more wheat; and we gave fodder, which they did not give at all.

Mr. MORGAN: When the war first broke out the Denham Government decided to encourage the growth of wheat and foodstuffs so that their own requirements would be fulfilled as well as having a surplus with which to supply the British Empire if necessary. At that time a drought did not exist. The Denham Government decided to give assistance to the wheatgrowers, and they devised a scheme which was very

satisfactory so far as it went at that particular period. Unfortunately, after the farmers had received that assistance and that seed

wheat from the Denham Government, [4.30 p.m.] a drought occurred and the 1915 crop was a complete failure.

In the ploughing season of 1916, the present Government decided to follow in the footsteps of the Denham Government, but unfortunately they discontinued that assistance at a time when it would have enabled the farmers to grow wheat which would have been harvesting at the present moment. He had interviewed the Minister and presented a petition, signed by a number of farmers in his district desirous of continuing wheat-growing, but unfortunately the Minister decided to turn them down and refused to give them any help or assistance whatever. The excuse made by the Minister would not bear the light of day, if they analysed it. He said that in his belief, owing to the season, it was inadvisable for the Government to advance seed wheat because the farmer should be able to buy for himself. He also stated that it was not advisable that the wheatgrowers of Queensland should grow a great deal of wheat during the coming year, owing to the fact that a glut existed in other parts of Australia, and if Queensland went in for extensive cultivation of wheat she would be only adding to the glut. He thought the Minister and those representing farming electorates who supported him must agree that he was on wrong ground when he practically gave out to the farmers of Queensland that it was not advisable to grow wheat.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I said that in view of the quantity of wheat that was stacked and rotting it was time for me to take a stand and not distribute wheat in the face of those conditions.

Mr. MORGAN: Notwithstanding that members on the other side were standing on the public platform and telling the people that they could better afford to grow wheat and foodstuffs than send men to the front, the Minister told the farmers that it was not advisable for them to grow wheat.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There are millions of bushels stacked in New South Wales that they cannot shift.

Mr. MORGAN: And yet the Minister would get up on the public platform during the next week and tell the people of Australia to vote "No." because they could be better employed in sending foodstuffs. They knew that, so far as Queensland was concerned, they had not yet grown more than one-third of their requirements.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We have grown more than one-third—one half.

Mr. MORGAN: Very little more than one-third; one-half if the wheat had been milled, but last year a great quantity was spoiled by the weather and was not fit for human consumption. Notwithstanding that, the Minister would sooner see the money go out of the State into other portions of Australia for the purpose of bringing wheat back here for our own people. The Minister and his farming supporters might admit that he made a bloomer when he gave that advice.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: What did your leader, Mr. Hughes, tell the apple-growers in Tasmania?

Mr. Morgan.]

Mr. MORGAN: That did not concern him; what he was concerned about was what the Minister, in his official capacity, told the people of Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I said I was not going to distribute seed, and I am glad I did not.

Mr. MORGAN: He thought the whole State would admit that he made a silly mistake by not supplying that wheat, because at the present time they were having what might be termed a fine season in some localities in Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: A bad season for wheat.

Mr. MORGAN: That remark showed that the Minister was not kept advised as to the conditions. He could speak for his own district, where, had the Minister given those poor farmers the wheat they asked for, they would have had a bumper crop. If nothing happened in the next fortnight they were going to strip the best crop they had had. He himself had wheat in and his crop was the best he had grown in ten years' experience. They admitted that the rain was generally late, but owing to the falls since then the crops had gone ahead by leaps and bounds, and if the Minister was posted as to what was really happening he would know that there was going to be a considerable quantity harvested this year. In fact they would most likely have more wheat stripped this year than last. At any rate, the Minister failed in his obligation to the settler. He asked him (Mr. Morgan) to supply him with the names of those who required wheat, and the official reply was as follows:—

"Sir,—Relative to the petition forwarded by you and other settlers in the Tara district, asking that a quantity of seed wheat be set against the names of those who signed the petition may be supplied by this department for the coming season, the Minister has desired me to inform you that the Government, having considered the matter, has decided that the distribution of seed wheat for this planting cannot be entertained. The season is so good that it is thought arrangements can be made by the growers themselves.

"Be good enough to inform the other signatories to the petition accordingly."

That letter was signed by the Under Secretary, and was dated the 28th March, 1917. After the drought had broken, a few weeks or months as the case might be, when every farmer lost every bit of stock he possessed, when he had no means of making money, when he had any amount of grass but no stock, the Minister said, "Owing to the good season the farmer ought to be able to find the money to buy seed wheat." That after a drought, when the farmer had become indebted to the storekeeper as far as he would let him! When the Denham Government initiated the scheme they did not trouble whether the farmer could buy it or not. They adopted a scheme for the purpose of assisting the cultivation of wheat with a view to making Queensland a self-contained State so far as wheat was concerned, and also with a view to having a surplus which might be shipped to other parts of the world. The report of the department told them that, with the exception of Tasmania, Queensland was capable of growing a larger quantity to the acre than any other State in Australia. Had the Minister followed the scheme, on which

he agreed the first year he was in office, at the present time they would be most likely carting into Brisbane and other places large quantities of wheat, which would have assisted the Railway Department to make itself a profitable concern, done away with the necessity of bringing wheat from the Southern States, and in every way added considerably to the prosperity of the State. The Minister said, in the first place, that owing to the good season the farmer should be able to finance himself. He went further, and in an interview with the representatives of the Press was reported as follows:—

"The Minister for Agriculture (Mr. Lennon) stated yesterday that many letters had been received by the department inquiring whether it was its intention to discontinue the system of distributing seed wheat. 'In view of the fact,' he said, 'that there is already a glut of wheat in the Southern market, which wheat cannot possibly be shipped owing to the disruption of shipping facilities caused by the war, it would appear that the present is an inopportune time to distribute wheat in this State and thereby add to the surplus in the market. Moreover, the abnormal season that we are experiencing should render it unnecessary for wheatgrowers to apply for Government assistance, which in the past has been accorded only in bad seasons caused by drought or other adverse circumstances. The high prices being maintained for sugar, butter, cheese, beef, mutton, and wool—the primary products of the State—should enable the man on the land to get through the present year without special Government assistance, particularly as such assistance may only add to the congestion of the wheat supplies already existing in Australia.'"

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I repeat every word of that now.

Mr. MORGAN: He was very glad the Minister did not deny it, because the farmers would be able to judge, and likewise those interested in farming. He stated—which was an absolute misstatement, as it could be proved—

"Moreover, the abnormal season that we are experiencing should render it unnecessary for wheatgrowers to apply for Government assistance which in the past had been accorded only in bad seasons caused by drought or other adverse circumstances."

He knew that that was not so, because the year 1914, when the Denham Government instituted the scheme for the purpose of encouraging wheatgrowing, was not a drought year. When the Government then decided to allow up to £1 per acre for the cultivation of land, as well as seed wheat—that was, in 1914—there was no drought; and yet the Minister in an official statement to the Press, said it was only the work of the Government to supply wheat during a time of drought or under other adverse circumstances. He thought that in that matter the Government had failed in its duty to the farmer and to the State. They had not shown the foresight the Minister should have shown had he been desirous—more especially in a time of war—of encouraging the wheatgrowing industry in Queensland, and also doing all he possibly could to promote the growth of foodstuffs in order to assist the British Empire in the struggle it was engaged in.

Mr. Morgan

He also wanted to deal with another important matter, and that was in connection with the dipping of stock. He would give the Minister credit to a certain extent for endeavouring to clean up certain areas of land in Queensland and perpetually having that land free of ticks, and, as long as he did those things judiciously and after a thorough examination, he would be doing a good thing for the State. But, unfortunately, owing to carelessness on the part of some of the men who had the supervision of the dips in Queensland, considerable loss of life had occurred and the department had suffered accordingly. They had had in the Press during the past eight or nine months notifications where enormous losses had occurred through stock having been dipped, and, unfortunately, the cause had been proved to be a lack of supervision on the part of the men in charge of the dips and the strength of the fluid being greater than was necessary for the purpose. He wanted to refer to the accident that occurred at Chinchilla, because he thought it a matter of public importance. The Auditor-General's report for the year 1916-17 said—

“ On the 5th December, 1916, 445 heifers belonging to Mr. D. A. Cameron, of Woodlands, Mitchell, were dipped at Chinchilla, and, from the effects of improper dipping carried out under the supervision of an acting inspector of stock, 409 of the heifers died.”

The Minister would admit that was a very serious loss to the State of Queensland with the shortage of stock and the high price of cattle. The report went on—

“ An inquiry was held, and it was found that the main reason for the loss was the excessive strength of the dip fluid.

“ A claim for compensation, at the rate of £8 10s. per head, was made against the Government by the owner on account of the cattle that died. This claim was settled by the payment of £3,000 in full discharge of all liability.”

That mistake on the part of the official supervising that dip cost the Government £3,000. He admired the Government for settling the claim for that stock without going to the court. The claim was justified, and the Government met it without unnecessary legal expenditure; and, with the exception of the fact that the cattle were a loss to the State and to the Government, the matter was, generally speaking, settled in a satisfactory manner. But the point he wanted to make was that, unfortunately, the Government had not yet devised some means by which the fluid used in the dips could be kept at sufficient strength to do the work of destroying the tick without destroying the beast. Other cases had occurred. Perhaps the loss was not so great as in the instance he had quoted, still great losses had occurred through the dipping of stock, and the result was the Minister now found himself opposed by a great number of stockowners and others who were trying to shirk their dipping responsibilities as much as possible, because they recognised if they did dip in some of these places they ran the risk of losing, not hundreds, but thousands of pounds. All sorts of devices were therefore engineered by stockowners and others with the view of defeating the tick dipping regulations, and

possibly running the cattle through a weak solution which was not sufficiently strong enough to destroy the tick. He would think it would be the duty of the Minister to meet his officers engaged in that matter and arrange for some more satisfactory solution of the difficulty.

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

Mr. MORGAN (continuing): At the present time the dips were charged in a reckless manner, without knowing the strength. The officer would come along and empty a drum of dip mixture into the receptacle, and, without knowing whether it was the proper strength or not, it was used. It might be too strong and take the hair and eyes off a beast, or it might be too weak, and that was the system in progress at the present moment. There seemed to be nothing to indicate that the dips in the different localities were always kept at sufficient strength to do the work desired without destroying the animal. The system in force of sending a pot of fluid down to be examined was not a good one. In his opinion, something could be arranged that would give more satisfactory results all round, and would place more confidence in the people who had to dip their stock. His opinion was that the average man who owned stock was not afraid of dipping his stock in a proper solution, but, owing to the fact that he had no experience and the man in charge of the dip had very little experience, he knew he ran the risk of ruining himself if he allowed his cattle to go through the dip. If the Minister would take those matters into consideration, he felt sure he would be doing considerable work in the interests of the State and helping in the work he was doing to clear some portions of Queensland of the tick pest.

With regard to seed inspection, he noticed they had only one seed inspector to look after the seeds distributed throughout the length and breadth of Queensland. During the past six or eight months there had been more inferior seed distributed in Queensland than, perhaps, during any other period.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Do not forget there was never a prosecution until I took charge of that department.

Mr. MORGAN: There were never more reasons for prosecutions than there had been during the past three months, owing to the fact that the merchants who had been getting seeds from Germany had had to look for fresh fields for their seeds; and, unfortunately, a great number of those merchants who had seed in stock for one or two years, whereas before the war they used to destroy that seed, now they had been selling to the farmer seeds which were three or four years old.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Have you proof of that?

Mr. MORGAN: He had proof in the fact that when he bought seed—and he had tried more than one seed merchant in Brisbane—he got a very poor percentage to germinate, and, in talking to the merchants, they said it was difficult to get good seed. If the merchants had not good seed that would germinate, well, why should they be allowed to sell it? Why should the farmer go to the trouble of cultivating his soil and planting seed that would not grow? It was far better for the department to take charge of that

Mr. Morgan.]

seed and have it destroyed. It was better to have no seed and save their money than to have bad seed and spend their money. The seed to-day was worse than it ever had been. He admitted that it was owing to the war, and owing to the fact that the seeds were not coming in, but he did say the seedsmen should not be allowed to sell an article that was not satisfactory to the man who cultivated the soil.

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

Mr. CARTER (*Port Curtis*) said he was very interested and amused listening to the hon. member for Drayton. The hon. member seemed to regard himself somewhat as an authority on handling commodities.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I know the difference between cream and butter, which you don't.

Mr. CARTER: But when the hon. gentleman said the price of a commodity should be fixed at what it costs to produce under most adverse conditions, he was talking a deliberate absurdity. One might as well say the price of pineapples should be fixed at the cost of production at the South Pole, as to say the price of butter should be fixed at the cost of production when fodder was £15 per ton. There could be no greater absurdity. Other countries were not labouring under the same disabilities, and the world's markets were fixed on the cost of production in the cheapest place.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You would not allow us to get the world's markets.

Mr. CARTER: He thought the hon. member had made his speech, but he seemed to feed on other speeches, the same as he fed on the labour of others. There was no period in the history of Queensland when the dairy farmers had been so well off as under the Administration of this State. He would quote some figures he had gone to the trouble of compiling. He had collected the figures for a period of four years, from July, 1913, to June, 1917. That period covered two years of the Denham Administration, and two years of the Labour Administration, and three years of that period was covered by the war. Under the Denham Administration in 1913-14, the farmer received for the butter contents of his cream, 10½d. per lb.; in 1914-15, 1s. 1½d.; in 1915-16 under the Labour Administration he received 1s. 2½d. per lb.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: What are you dealing with?

Mr. CARTER: He was dealing with the butter contents of the cream.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You don't know the difference.

Mr. CARTER: He knew the difference between a brickbat and a pound of butter, and he questioned whether the hon. member did. In 1915-16 the price was 1s. 2½d., and the profits on the butter sold by the Hon. the Minister for Agriculture on behalf of the farmers was distributed amongst the factories. In 1916-17 the price paid to the producer of cream was 1s. 4½d., and on top of that a sum of £30,000—equivalent to nearly 2d. per lb.—was distributed amongst the various butter factories. He had made a comparison with New South Wales, a State just over the border, within a few miles from here, and where the butter was comparatively free from State handling. During the last two years, when butter was handled

by the State of Queensland, the price in New South Wales of the butter contents of cream was 1s. 2½d. as against 1s. 2½d. in Queensland.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: What factory was that?

Mr. CARTER: The biggest factory in Australia, the Byron Bay Butter Factory. That was a ½d. per lb. less for the whole year than the average paid in Queensland under a Labour Government, and for the year 1916-17, the price paid in New South Wales for the product of the farmer was 1s. 2½d. as against 1s. 4½d. under the Labour Administration.

Mr. COSER: What are you quoting from?

Mr. CARTER: Those were the prices, 1s. 2½d. in New South Wales, and in Queensland the farmer got 1s. 4½d., and the distribution of profits equal to

[5 p.m.] another 2d. for the butter contents of their cream. He wanted

to make a comparison between the price in the two States, the one State comparatively free from State control, and the other State control. He had made it clear that in this State the farmer got 2d. per lb. more for his commodity than the farmer in the neighbouring State of New South Wales, and on top of that a distribution of 2d. per lb. making the price for this State 4d. per lb. more. Then hon. members opposite had the effrontery to come into the Chamber and attempt to mislead the farmers by trying to make out that the Government were not doing their best to assist these people who were so badly in need of assistance at the time the Labour party came into power.

Mr. COSER: Have you not boasted that you have reduced the price of foodstuffs?

Mr. CARTER: Despite the fact that an increased price had been got for the commodity, the price of butter had been reduced, because they had eliminated the middleman who had been living on both the producer and the consumer. (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Tell that to the school children.

Mr. CARTER: He wanted to point out that, despite the fact that butter was bringing a higher price in the old country, and that the price was fixed in London at 229s., the farmers' butter in Queensland was being sold by the Nationalist Government of the Commonwealth at 146s. per cwt.—15s. less 3½ per cent., which reduced it to 146s. The cost of overseas transport would be equivalent to about 25s., making the commodity 176s. Who was getting the difference?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: And your Minister gave 149s.

Mr. CARTER: Who was getting the difference between 176s., the cost in London, and 229s.? Yet hon. members opposite—who professed to be studying the farmers' interests—had nothing to say when the National Federal Government, which they had returned to power, took their butter at 151s., less 3½ per cent., or equivalent to 146s. per cwt., and sent it to England, where it was sold at 229s.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: And you took it at 149s., which is 2s. worse.

Mr. CARTER: The farmer in this State during the Labour Administration had been getting a better price for his product than the farmer in any other part of Australia or New Zealand. He challenged hon. members opposite to bring figures to show the

[Mr. Morgan.

contrary. They knew it was absolutely true, but it did not suit their book, and they had nothing to say now that the National Government was taking over the commodity and selling it at nearly half of what it was fetching on the London market. Only a little while ago the Danish butter producers complained. This is what appeared in the "Courier" on 9th November instant. It was stated—

"The Copenhagen correspondent of the 'Morning Post' states that the fixing of a maximum price of 22s. per cwt. has caused a panic in the butter market. Many exporters shipped quantities at 45s., and this butter, if it does not arrive to time, will make a heavy loss. Exporters are inclined to discontinue sending butter to England, especially as the Danes are unable to obtain enough for their own use."

In Denmark butter was worth 45s., but in England it was fixed at 22s. The farmers here got 14s., and they were satisfied. They were satisfied to get a price which would yield them about 1s. 2d. per lb. for the butter contents of their cream, when there never was such a high price in the world's market before.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Fancy a rumseller discussing butter!

Mr. CARTER: When their friend, the rumseller's son—the hon. member for Burnett—talked, his friend should not twit him. (Laughter.) He wanted to quote what the Agent-General for New Zealand had to say about the matter at a meeting of the Cold Storage Association in London. The report in the "Courier" stated—

"Sir Thomas Mackenzie, High Commissioner for New Zealand, who presided, said that it seemed strange that in the sale of produce the New Zealand dairymen got 17d. per lb. for butter, and the Irish nearly double. The overseas people were willing to sell at low prices if the consumer got the benefit, but were indisposed to see the profit going to those who were not consumers."

Sir Thomas Mackenzie was adverse to food exploiters getting the profit. He was prepared to take part in selling New Zealand butter at 17d. per lb., but he objected to the middleman coming in. Hon. members opposite, who appeared to be so solicitous for the welfare of the farmer, were prepared, in spite of the fact that butter was fetching the highest price it ever fetched in the world's market, to let the product go at 14s. net at the factory. There seemed to be a gross absurdity about this. He wanted to know who was getting the difference here between 17s., the cost in London, and 22s. there. If hon. members opposite had the fixing of the price here and the handling of the butter through the factories, then the farmer was not getting a fair deal. He, for one, would like to see the handling of the butter revert to the hands of the State, whereby the farmer would get a fair deal, as they did before. He was full of the action of hon. members opposite in endeavouring to mislead the public. They talked about hon. members on the Government side being prepared to take the product of the farmer for the benefit of the consumer. He had been faithful to his constituents, and had supported a Government which was out in the interests of the people of Queensland to endeavour to give a fair deal both to producer and consumer. Although the

consumer was getting a fair deal in regard to butter, the producer was getting a better price than ever he did, because of the elimination of the unscrupulous exploiter.

He had a little to say about wheat. He heard the hon. member for Warwick chipping in, "What about the consumer getting wheat too cheap?" It cost 10d. per bushel to transport wheat to the old country, and it fetched 10s. there, and only 5s. here. Wheat could be transported for about 10d. a bushel.

Mr. CORSE: No; you are wrong; it is 4s. 6d.

Mr. CARTER: He wanted to know who was getting the difference. The farmers were asking, through him, why the Nationalist Government were not giving a fair deal. Even in New Zealand they were given 5s. 10d. for their wheat, while here they were getting 5s. He understood that in the wheat-growing districts of the State the wheat exploiters refused to have a pool formed, in order that the farmers might get a better price for their wheat. They were in a position to exploit the farmers, and bought their wheat at under 5s. a bushel.

Mr. VOWLES: Why did the Government not move in the matter?

Mr. CARTER: The Premier and the Minister for Agriculture offered them a pool to protect themselves.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I say "No."

Mr. CARTER: Yes. The Minister for Agriculture went so far as to circularise the wheatgrowers of Queensland about this time last year, asking them for an expression of opinion as to whether they were desirous of having a pool or not, and the hon. member for Warwick, the hon. member for Cunningham, and the hon. member for Drayton took an active part in preventing the farmers from joining in to make a wheat pool.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: That is a deliberate untruth.

Mr. GILLIES rose to a point of order. The hon. member for Drayton said the statement of the hon. member for Port Curtis was a deliberate untruth, and he should withdraw the statement.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member for Drayton to withdraw the expression, "That is a deliberate untruth?"

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I withdraw it, but the hon. member—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. CARTER: The hon. member for Drayton had spoken about wheat, and he would quote what that hon. member had written to the "Toowoomba Chronicle" of 27th November, 1916—

"Mr. W. Bebbington, M.L.A., writes as follows:—Sir.—The attached letter is a copy of letter from the Agricultural Department, re wheat pool (as already appeared in 'The Chronicle'). These are only the principal conditions. Other matters, I presume, will be in the hands of the representatives of the board controlling the pool.

"I congratulate 'The Chronicle,' Mr. C. Roberts, and those who have worked for that purpose. You can be sure it has placed thousands of pounds in the wheatgrowers' pockets, even if the pool is not formed. The fact of farmers making a united effort has had a good effect.

Mr. Carter.]

"The wheat board will prevent the grower being fleeced, either by the State or the miller. The bungle and losses to dairymen were caused through having no representatives on a prices board.

"In this State wheat pool, the credit of the State will be used to finance the farmer, his own wheat being the security. In the South, I believe, the Commonwealth Bank and other banks have found the money.

"The State is required as a guarantor to secure the market at a fair price, and to secure the Queensland market for Queensland wheat. The banks making the advances need this security."

That confirmed what he said. The hon. member for Drayton, who had the audacity to say that what he (Mr. Carter) had said was a deliberate untruth, had by his own pen confirmed what he had said.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Did I go against the wheat pool?

Mr. CARTER: The hon. member was one of those who could twist his conscience, because he knew that when it suited him he could go to the penitent form and get absolution. The Government, with an ardent desire to assist the farmers, had held out this kind offer, and the farmers realised their folly in listening to their tempters, because they had since waited on the Premier and the Minister for Agriculture, and again asked the Government to form a wheat pool, and to form a trust for their butter, despite the fact that some of their alleged representatives in this Chamber had never ceased to hurl the epithet of "robber" at the Minister for Agriculture. If there was anything that should create distrust and disgust in the minds of the electors, it should be the action of hon. members opposite when they were dealing with the excellent administration of the present Labour Government.

Mr. CORSER: He would like to correct some misstatements of the hon. member for Port Curtis. That member tried to deceive the House and the country by statements with regard to the butter position of the farmer to-day. He claimed that on the other side the Danes and the Irish people could secure about 22s. per cwt.

Mr. CARTER: They are securing it.

Mr. CORSER: And he complained that the farmers of Queensland could only receive 15s. through the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. GILLIES: That is the exact position.

Mr. CORSER: He did not say that the farmers of Queensland were responsible for that; that it was the dairymen of Queensland, through their associations, that arranged that price; that under the Federal control the farmers of Queensland had representation on the board; and that when the Queensland Labour Government handled the butter position in Queensland during the big drought of 1915 they had a board here for the fixation of price and no farmers' representative was allowed on that board. They were refused representation on the board. During the time the farmer was doing all he could to keep his cattle alive, the report of the Queensland Agricultural College in the "Agricultural Journal" stated that the Government themselves at the college were producing butter at a cost of 2s. 6d. per lb.;

[Mr. Carter.

yet the Government of Queensland fixed a price of 1s. 3d. per lb. to the farmers who had to struggle for themselves.

Mr. GILLIES: 1s. 3d.?

Mr. CORSER: 1s. 3d. was about what it worked out at.

Mr. GILLIES: No.

Mr. CORSER: That was what it worked out at—practically one-half the price that it cost the farmers to produce butter, as was proved by the Agricultural Department's own statement in their own journal. What did the farmers do for that 15s.? They provided to the Imperial authorities that butter for the troops. It did not get into other people's hands. There was no 22s. about it; it was a direct sale to the Imperial Government for the troops, arranged by the farmers of Queensland.

Mr. MOORE: They did not rob them of £19,000, either; you can be sure of that.

Mr. CORSER: They robbed them of nothing. They gave them butter for the troops at a price which paid them. The farmers had been satisfied with the position ever since the Commonwealth Government took over the management and the fixation of price. The Queensland dairymen remembered the time when the Queensland Labour Government handled the fixation of prices. The hon. member did not tell them what he read from. There was another statement made by the hon. member for Port Curtis, through "Hansard," to the country.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order! The hon. member is not in order in reading a speech delivered during this session.

Mr. CORSER: He would not read it, but he would quote from it. The hon. member stated that the Labour party, since they got into power, increased the price to the farmer. He said the average price to June, 1916, was 1s. 2½d., and he went on to say that the average price of cream increased to 1s. 4½d. at that time. An interjection had come across the floor then as to what the hon. gentleman meant, and the member for Port Curtis stated that the farmer was receiving 1s. 4½d. per lb. for his cream under a Labour Administration. (Opposition laughter.) That was to be found on page 373 of "Hansard" of this year. What he meant was the price of butter ex cream: that is what he was talking about. (Opposition laughter.) No farmer in Queensland, up to the time he made that statement, had received more than one-half the price which he stated he had received.

Mr. CARTER: I say that they received 1s. 4½d. for butter contents. Everyone knows it means the butter contents.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. member stated now that he meant the butter contents of a pound of cream. He was just as much wrong in that as he was in his first statement.

Mr. CARTER: I did not say so.

Mr. CORSER: It was very clear that the hon. gentleman was quite out of his latitude when he tried to talk for the farmer. If the hon. gentleman wanted to do something for the farmer, he had better get on to lines he knew something about. When he tried to tell the people of Queensland that this Labour Government had given the farmer 1s. 4½d. per lb. for their cream, he was telling

them something which the farmers were not going to believe. The farmers were satisfied with their condition to-day.

He wished to protest against the regulation of the Minister for Agriculture with regard to his tick-cleaning experiments. It came pretty hard on the district that he was attacking at the present time.

Mr. GILLIES: The Liberal party were responsible for the ticks and the prickly-pear.

Mr. CORSER: They were not responsible for those things; and they were not responsible, either, for the regulations which the Minister had drawn up to compel people who were dairying in settled districts to dip or spray their cattle every three weeks during the summer which was before them. Those districts that had gone through their trouble, and had lost the ticks and had a natural immunity, should be given consideration. Before the Minister touched those things he should take into consideration the view of all practical men; not only those who lived out of those tick districts, but those who lived in the tick districts; so that he would see that he was not doing an injustice to them.

Mr. FORDE (*Rockhampton*): He desired to touch briefly on a subject to which he referred when speaking on the Educational Estimates, and that was the protection of their native birds. It was a matter of much greater importance to Queensland than was generally conceded, and he was pleased to see that the present Minister for Agriculture had manifested a lively interest in the protection of our native birds. But he regretted that the Act, as it was now administered, was not of as much use as it might be if it were more rigidly enforced. They must all admit that there had been great apathy with regard to the protection of those beautiful birds which they had in Queensland. One had only to go to some of the swamps—or, in fact, anywhere in the bush—to find boys between the ages of fourteen and seventeen wantonly shooting some of our most beautiful birds. The department should have inspectors to check that sort of thing. He understood that the apathy to a very great extent was due to the fact that under the present Act there was no provision for any appropriation for the appointment of inspectors to see that the Act was observed. He had no doubt that the Minister would look into the matter and do something to remedy it, because he had proved himself to be a most progressive and sympathetic Minister. He had consulted ornithologists on the question, and he was assured that while this State had a good Birds Protection Act there was still a good deal of destruction going on. He had seen it himself, and they must all have seen it, everywhere; one would have to be blind to miss it. The Secretary for Agriculture, in reply to a question he had put to him a few days ago, informed him that there were fifty-two Crown land areas and nineteen privately-owned areas proclaimed as sanctuaries for native birds. That latter number should be vastly increased. If landowners generally were clear-sighted enough to apply to the department for the reservation of their properties, that could easily be done, and they would be doing a beneficial act for Queensland. In regard to Crown lands the area reserved was pleasingly large, but from what he could gather very much of the good

effect was lost by the indifference of the department in the matter of placing notices on the reserves. The amending Act of 1884, in giving the Governor in Council power to proclaim areas as reserves for native birds, required that there should be set up at intervals of not more than half a mile notices clearly stating the purpose and area of the reservation. Those notices were not to be found on many Government reserves at the present time; and, possibly, many private ones, too, had not got them. He had never seen them, and he had been about a good deal. Clause 2 of the Native Birds Protection Act reads—

“There shall be set up at convenient and conspicuous places on the boundaries of every such reserve, not more than half a mile apart, notices legibly written or printed, stating that the reserve has been so proclaimed, and indicating in a concise manner the extent of the reserve.”

That clause had not been put into effect as it should have been. He hoped that the interest manifested by the Minister for Agriculture in all suggested improvements in his department would be long sustained, and that he would take the suggestions now made to him into consideration. He knew quite well that after so many years of Liberal Administration he had quite a lot of improvements to make. He did not reprimand him for not having cleaned everything up. They knew that he had done a good deal; and he was pleased to hear hon. members opposite admit that that afternoon. He hoped that would be one of the next improvements that he would make. He recognised that it was difficult to have the Act properly administered when there was no power to pay inspectors and other officers to administer it, but he thought much good could be done by appointing honorary inspectors. He would urge that it be put under some definite control in the department. In every part of the world there was a distinct department or subdepartment in charge of native birds; but in Queensland, he regretted to say, that was not so. A great deal of good could be done right away by prohibiting boys under eighteen from using pea rifles. Most hon. members knew how irreplaceable the majority of boys were under that age.

One thing that would have to be prevented was the trade in birds' eggs. They found that the eggs of some of their most beautiful and valuable birds were being sold as ornaments. That was a shame, [5.30 p.m.] because all those birds were rendering a great service to the State, and would, by the Government allowing such a practice to continue, be greatly reduced in numbers. Perhaps it would be only after they had had the same bitter experience as other countries, after all their valuable birds had been destroyed, that they would realise their great value. He would suggest to the Minister that he secure the services of an honorary ornithologist. Later he could be paid and instruct the children of their schools regarding the nature of the birds and their services to the country. Every State in America had a professional ornithologist attached to the Agricultural Department to give advice on those matters. He knew that the Minister was greatly hampered for want of funds, but in the meantime he might make some improvement, and

Mr. Forde.]

afterwards adopt the practice of the American States. He could without difficulty get some gentlemen to give their services in an honorary capacity in the meantime, and later on employ a man permanently. He noticed that Mr. Colclough, of the Queensland Museum, had been lent to Dr. Harvey Johnston for two years to assist in research work in connection with ticks, and his departure left the Museum without an ornithologist. It was regrettable that they were so short of professional men as to leave such a place as the Queensland Museum without an ornithologist. He wanted to give hon. members an eloquent instance bearing on the necessity to have such an officer in the department in Brisbane. During the last few days, he understood, there had been on view at the Belle Vue Hotel a display of the feathers of some of their beautiful wild birds made up in the form of flowers, and, from what he was told, their Governor and several of their Ministers had visited the display. They had been very pleased with it, and said that it was very beautiful—that it was all that could be desired from an artistic viewpoint; but he regretted to hear, on the authority of two birdmen who inspected the exhibition, that much of its effect was secured only by the sacrifice of the lives of many of Queensland's best birds—birds which were presumed to enjoy the protection of the law. He understood that those feather flowers had been placed with a big city firm, which was to act as the agent for the owner, who proposed to carry on an industry. He trusted, however, that the Government would secure advice and act firmly and quickly in putting a stop to the traffic, because it would be a serious menace to Queensland if they did not take a firm stand at once. Those beautiful creatures were doing a great work in protecting their sheep, cattle, and vegetation from the insect pests of the State. One had only to go through sheep or cattle runs to see the work that was being done by many of the birds so carelessly destroyed by irresponsible people. Such an industry as the manufacture of fancy hatpins and hairpins for society ladies at the expense of the lives of the beautiful native birds of Queensland was not by any means a necessity, and if those feathers on view at the Belle Vue Hotel were to be made into such articles for the adornment of hatpins and other headgear for some of their society ladies, and an industry be allowed to develop on those lines, it would be a disgrace to the Government of Queensland. Such ladies should not be allowed to wear beautiful headgear at the expense of Queensland's native birds, the loss of which would in time mean the loss of all vegetation. People did not realise the great benefit such birds were in destroying insects, which in time would destroy all vegetation if it were not that their ravages were stopped by their birds. He appealed to the Minister for Agriculture not to rest content with the mere proclamation of sanctuaries for birds; but to place the Act under proper supervision, and try in every way to safeguard these natural police. Let them learn from the experience of other countries, which had awakened too late to the extraordinary value of their birds; had awakened to find that the country was being overrun with insects; that sheep, for instance, were being destroyed by insect life, whereas they would have been protected if native birds had themselves been protected

[Mr. Forde.

from destruction—from irresponsible people who were after pleasure and the almighty dollar all the time, and had not the interests of their country at heart.

When speaking on the Financial Statement he said he was most interested in the cotton industry, and hoped that under the sympathetic guidance of the Minister for Agriculture the farmers of Queensland would take up the matter in a proper manner. He was pleased to know that the Minister was encouraging them in every way he possibly could. The history of the cotton industry was as old as Australia, and in view of the past reverses its progress must necessarily be slow. As he had dealt very fully with the early growth of the industry in Queensland whilst speaking on the Financial Statement, he did not propose to traverse the same ground now, but he would like farmers to understand that cotton could be grown in nearly all parts of the State, and that it could be grown anywhere in the Central district, particularly between Barcaldine and Rockhampton; that at one time the product equalled 2,500,000 lb. for a season, whereas the total quantity of cotton received for ginning for the present season amounted to only 118,000 lb., although there never was a greater demand for cotton than at the present time. It was regrettable that the apathy of the Queensland farmers, and to some extent the lack of sympathetic administration by past Ministers, had been responsible for allowing the cotton industry to go back, whereas it should have grown. America produced two-thirds of the cotton in the world. Why should not Australia, particularly Queensland, emulate America? He found that the price per lb. of seed cotton awarded to the growers was 3.58d., a little over 1d. more than was realised for last season's cotton. On that basis the net returns had been from £7 to as high as £24 net per acre. An area of 8 acres in the Central district realised £153 17s., at Forest Hill 3 acres gave £63 14s. 10d., and 3 acres in the Burnett district £73 11s. 8d.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: How much does it cost to pick it?

Mr. FORDE: The cost of picking was very small, being about 1½d. per lb. when picked by adult male labour, and if a machine now in process of construction came on to the market shortly—as he hoped it would—the labour problem would be solved for all time. He found, too, that one grower averred that 2 acres of cotton received no tillage after sowing, and his cheque for that neglected crop was £10 17s. 10d. A satisfactory feature was that scarcely any growers complained of the cost or absence of labour. Several planters had stated that 100 lb. of fibre could easily be gathered in a day. On that basis a juvenile picker could earn for the family treasury £1 5s. a day over the cost of growing the fibre; hence as a family occupation the crop had no peer. Over 118,000 lb. of fibre passed through the ginnery during the present season, as against 30,000 lb. for the 1916 season, which indicated that the industry was coming into its own at last. As a factor in the repatriation of soldiers, particularly if success could be obtained with the mechanical cotton-picker now being constructed, he thought the cotton industry would be of great advantage to Queensland. The war councils and the repatriation councils should examine the merits of the cotton industry, and then

he felt it would receive preference to other industries, which they were endeavouring to make returned soldiers take up. There would be no difficulty in finding a market. When the home consumption was fully supplied, the surplus could be exported to Liverpool, or handled in the same manner as its ally, wool. Cotton was one of the easiest crops to grow and harvest. It could be grown in conjunction with other industries, such as wheatgrowing and sheepraising to the west of the range, and with sugar, maize, flax, linseed, and fruits nearer the coast. Probably it dovetailed in with sheep as well as any other industry. He might well quote an instance. The fibre grew very well in the Capella district some years ago, and after a dry spell of about twelve months, when all the grass had entirely disappeared, the farmer who had grown the crop turned in his sheep, who fed on the green foliage. Not only did he have his sheep next year, but he also had a good cotton crop, and the farmers of that district followed his example, and it proved admirable fodder for their sheep. Farmers throughout Queensland should realise that. It rested with the farmers to make cotton the third, if not the second, of their primary and secondary industries, and it was to be borne in mind that production was the factor that would liquidate the war debt so far as Australia was concerned, and he sincerely hoped that they would not be lacking in that respect, but that they would take up the matter with that enthusiasm which had characterised the self-sacrificing pioneer farmers of the State for the last twenty-five years.

Mr. BARNES (*Warwick*): He noticed that the vote was about the same as it was last year, although there was a reduction of about £1,400 spread over the whole department. There was evidence that the department was alive in some directions. One was that referred to by the hon. member for Rockhampton—in connection with cotton. But whilst cotton might pay to-day, and possibly for a few years, it was very doubtful, unless they could arrive at some means of harvesting the crop, whether it was likely to be a payable crop in Australia under their native conditions. It was fairly costly to harvest. Years ago it was grown pretty well all over the West Moreton, and the Chairman might remember that the Spreadboroughs in the Rosenthal Valley, in the Warwick district, also grew it. But it became a non-payable crop, and no party was responsible for the downfall of the industry.

He noticed in the report that a poultry expert had been appointed; a very wise departure. For some years they were without one, and he thought the department was showing wisdom in paying attention to what could be made a great industry. The report which had been presented by the department was a very fine one indeed, and, as had been pointed out by the hon. member for Drayton, it was graced by the honour board of the department. He did not know anything that was so encouraging in these days when they were hearing so much about recruiting, and one thing and another, as to find that in a small department like the Department of Agriculture, because the total expenditure in that department was only some £70,000 odd, no less than seventy-three men had offered their services to their country. Yesterday they were discussing the Education Department, and found that some 348 men from that department had given their

services in the same righteous cause. He thought the department should be congratulated on that fact. The report in itself was extremely full. He had just one objection to make in regard to it. If they took wheat, for instance, they would find it referred to in no less than three places apart from the tables. It would be very much better if wheat were dealt with under one head. Some very severe strictures had been passed that afternoon regarding wheat by the hon. member for Port Curtis.

Mr. COLLINS: I thought you were going to say the hon. member for Drayton.

Mr. BARNES: He was content to leave the hon. member for Drayton to the hon. member for Bowen. (Laughter.) He (Mr. Barnes) would deal with the hon. member for Port Curtis.

Mr. CARTER: You will not make any war profits out of me.

Mr. BARNES: Very likely anything he might say would be very considerably discounted, and, therefore, regarding the pooling of wheat, on which very strong expressions were made by the hon. member for Port Curtis, he preferred to rely upon the report presented. On page 4 the report stated—and the report was perfectly true from beginning to end regarding wheat matters—

“The large harvest and the varying quality of the grain received, owing to the heavy rains at or near the time of maturity, in conjunction with the wheat pool established in the Southern States has placed the wheatgrowers in an unenviable position this year. The mills were able to generally buy only a portion of the first quality for flour purposes, and made up the balance of their requirements by purchases from the South. But there was a large quantity remaining that could have been used for other purposes, and the exporter was confronted by the wheat pool regulations, which required a permit from the State board interested before a consignment could be sent to that State.”

That was referring to wheat and the quality produced. He found later on in the report the following:—

“Excluding the Warwick-Killarney-Allora-Pittsworth district, which covers two-thirds of the wheat area of the Downs, and where the growers were emphatic in their opposition to a wheat pool for the 1916 crop, the replies to the inquiries made as to the opinions of the growers upon the question numbered forty-two.”

Hon. members would notice that in the criticism that had been made, the members for Cunningham and Drayton and he had been accused of being opposed to the formation of a wheat pool. In the report they had the direct statement made by their own department, and he took it the hon. member for Port Curtis would accept it as correct and acknowledge that he was completely in error in coming to the conclusion he did. He (Mr. Barnes) had quoted the statement made in the report, which stated that in the districts where two-thirds of the wheat was grown in Queensland the growers were not in favour of a wheat pool. The report went on—

“of which twenty-two branch unions or associations were in favour of a pool, seven gave an undecided reply, eight

Mr. Barnes.]

were in favour of an open market or were opposed to a pool, and five gave no definite answer. Thus, twenty-two associations out of the whole wheat-growing area of the Downs were in favour, and the whole, with the remaining twenty-two indefinite or decisive objections added, represented but about one-third of the whole, and several of these, as the correspondence shows, did not take the interest they should have done."

There they had a full explanation as to why no wheat pool was formed in Queensland. If hon. members turned to page 18 of the report, they would find a further reference to that matter under the heading of "Wheat"—

"For many years past, Queensland upon the average for a decade has come next to Tasmania, and for the decade just concluded it has been beaten by Victoria by a few points only, the figures for the three States being: Tasmania 20.77 bushels, Victoria 11.67 bushels, Queensland 11.43 bushels, and the reduction is to be accounted for by the disasters of 1915, when all the other States succeeded in gathering in good returns to the acre, but this State had to be content with a harvest of 4.42 bushels to the acre, the lowest return for ten years.

"The harvest of 1916—viz., 2,048,703 bushels—was the highest ever gained, but as explained elsewhere in this report, the grain won was by no means satisfactory. What could be classed as prime wheat was of excellent quality, but owing to heavy rains at a critical time, much of it was spoiled in quality. The return on the whole only amounted to 10.81 bushels to the acre, instead of at least approaching the return of 1912, when 15.81 bushels to the acre were recovered."

The whole of that was so exceedingly interesting and explanatory that he thought it should go forward to Queensland as a correct statement of the exact position of wheatgrowing in Queensland, wheat pool matters, and the wheat situation generally. Then, on page 74, in the third place, they had the following:—

"THE WHEAT SITUATION.

"The whole question of production is so intimately associated with weather conditions that it is to be viewed from this aspect.

"Last year's returns for all kinds of agricultural produce were adversely affected by the drought, and it is patent that an enforced period of fallow of this character, followed as it was by continuous rains after the break-up of the drought, was responsible for the extraordinary growth and development of the 1916 wheat crop—a circumstance which subsequently caused unprecedented damage through rust and crop-lodgment. Up till early in October last year, prospects were of the brightest. A record area—227,778 acres—had been put under crop, yielding 2,463,181 bushels (10.81 bushels per acre), and it looked as if the effort made by wheatgrowers to raise sufficient breadstuff to meet the State's requirements would be accomplished. Continuous rains, however, were experienced, and the harvest proved the wettest

on record, resulting in much inconvenience and loss. The quality of Queensland-grown grain has hitherto left very little to be desired: this season's, however, was irregular; the amount of weathered and pinched grain proved out of all proportion to that of sound, prime quality.

"The position which the Queensland wheatgrower found himself placed in after harvest proved an anomalous one. Efforts to establish a State wheat pool were abortive through lack of unanimity. No difficulty seems to have been experienced in disposing of prime wheat to millers, but the sale of 'weathered' or slightly inferior lines at anything like a satisfactory valuation to the vendors seemed out of the question."

He was quoting at length from the several pages of the report, because it cleared up the whole matter, and was a perfect answer to anything which might have been said by hon. members on the opposite side as regards the attitude of millers on the one hand, and the question of a wheat pool. It dealt also with the difficulties experienced on account of the quality of the grain. There was another aspect which should be considered in connection with wheatgrowing, or rather the result of the last three years in particular. He wanted to say that in Queensland the price realised for wheat had been in excess of what had been paid elsewhere. In 1914-15, in New South Wales, 5s. was paid for wheat, whilst the average price paid in Queensland—he was speaking of his own firm's dealings in Warwick—the average price paid for that period, delivered at the mills, was 5s. 11d. per bushel. For the season 1915-16 the price paid for wheat delivered at the mill was 4s. 9d., and the price received in New South Wales was made up by a first advance of 2s. 6d., a second advance of 1s., a third advance of 6d., and a fourth advance of a further 6d., totalling altogether 4s. 6d., but from that a deduction of 7d. per bushel was made by the wheat board, bringing the actual price received by the New South Wales wheatgrower for his 1915-16 crop to 3s. 11d. per bushel as against 4s. 9d. paid by the Queensland miller.

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

Mr. BARNES (continuing) said he knew, of course, the quantity was exceedingly small, but that did not alter the point that Queensland growers got a better price than the New South Wales farmers were able to get. Last season the position was that the average cost price for milling wheat, calculated on a 4s. 5d. basis, with a decidedly falling quality, was 4s. 3½d. per bushel. That had been the experience of his company, and he believed it was the experience of the Warwick Farmers' Milling Company, and consequently the general experience throughout Queensland. New South Wales so far had made two payments, one of 2s. 6d. and another of 6d. All that the wheatgrowers of New South Wales had received, and probably right through the other States, up to the present time, amounted to 3s., and hon. members who had had long dealings with the farmer would know that the farmer would infinitely prefer a certain value of 4s. 3½d. for his wheat as against receiving by instalments up to the present the sum of 3s. per bushel. The hon. member for Port Curtis had made certain statements with regard to the price

[Mr. Barnes.]

of wheat in Queensland as compared with the price in London and as to the [7 p.m.] cost of shipping, which he stated was 10d. per bushel. He (Mr. Barnes) believed that the cost of conveying wheat to Great Britain just now, if they could get it conveyed at all, was somewhere about 4s. a bushel. In addition to that, the hon. member should be again reminded of the advice given by the Secretary for Agriculture, that on account of the very big crops still available in the South the growth of wheat to any extent was not advisable. He thought that in giving such advice the Secretary for Agriculture was committing a big error, because they were yet a long way from supplying their own requirements. On Monday he had returned from the districts of Yangan, Killarney, and Warwick, and he was glad to say that if the present weather continued there was a prospect of a good yield of wheat. Since he left home he had received confirmatory news regarding the good prospects of the coming wheat crop.

The hon. member for Port Curtis had challenged proof with regard to other matters. He did not like repeating evidence which had been given in other days, but he would just repeat what he had said in the House regarding the disability which the farmers of Queensland suffered in consequence of price fixing by the present Government. The following table covered the period from the 7th July, 1915, to the 11th May, 1916, and showed the prices which ruled for butter in Brisbane and Melbourne:—

MELBOURNE.		BRISBANE.		Difference between Brisbane and Melbourne quotations. Per 100.	
Date.	Quota- tion.	Date.	Quota- tion.	£	s. d.
1915—	s. d.	1915—	s. d.	£ <td>s. d.</td>	s. d.
5th July	231 6	5th July	193 0	35	10 6
16th August	154 0	21st August	112 0	12	0 0
6th Dec.	138 6	31st December	149 10	...	11 6 8
8th January	129 6	10th January	125 0	3	13 0
1st February	112 4	7th February	129 0	13	6 8
20th March	142 4	16th March	130 8	11	13 4
1st May	172 6	11th May	139 6	33	0 0

Allowing for the one period in which Queensland had the advantage, the average difference given amounted to no less a sum than £13 18s. 4d. per ton, and the quantity of butter produced in Queensland during that period was 10,688 tons 4 cwt. 1 qr. 15 lb., to give the exact figures supplied to him by the department. The loss, therefore, to the dairymen of Queensland during that price-fixing period at £13 18s. 4d. a ton amounted

to £148,716 11s. That was how the Queensland dairymen suffered in consequence of the price-fixing by the Department of Agriculture during the period he had named. But that by no means covered the loss which was sustained by the dairymen in Queensland. The hon. member for Port Curtis referred to some £30,000 as having been distributed. That simply meant that the butter was acquired at £30,000 under its market value, and if all the butter in Queensland had been sold at its market value there would have been a very much greater sum than £30,000 for distribution amongst them. Altogether, the sum lost as the result of the dairymen of Queensland not being able to realise the full value of their product must have run into pretty well £250,000. He believed there would be no difficulty in proving that statement. When members like the hon. member for Port Curtis challenged the Opposition side of the House to produce evidence contrary to the statements he was making, it was as well that one who was fortified with facts such as he had given, and was able to produce them beyond any question, should settle once and for all a controversy of this kind. In any case, the dairymen of Queensland were alive to the extreme loss they had had to suffer in consequence of price fixing by the present Government.

Mr. GUNN (*Carnarvon*): He did not know that the time had not come when this big Department of Agriculture and Stock should not be divided into two branches. Most of their wealth came from grazing, which was almost worthy of a branch of its own, and so was agriculture, which was increasing every day. That portion of the department which concerned his district was in connection with the fruit industry. The fruit industry had been flourishing in the Stanthorpe district for a long time, and he knew the department was sympathetic towards the fruitgrowers, but he was rather afraid that they had lately been inducing too many men to go in for fruitgrowing, particularly the returned soldiers at Beerburum and Pike-dale. They had only got Australia for a market. They could not export too much in the form of jam. It was necessary to consider the question well before they urged people to go in for further fruitgrowing, at any rate, until the war was over. It would be better to let the present fruitgrowers, who had borne the heat and burden of the day, make a living price for their fruit than to put a lot more into the industry and let them be starved. Then there was the question of the cases to pack the fruit in. He had had several interviews with the Minister and the Under Secretary on the subject. There was no doubt a great waste going on in connection with fruit cases. In districts proclaimed under the Act they were not allowed to use cases a second time; new cases had to be used every time, and consequently there was a great destruction of timber going on, as the cases were only used for firewood afterwards. If they were properly fumigated and steamed they could be used a second time. The department was sympathetic, and he had no fault to find with them, but he hoped some method would be devised by which the cases would be able to be used a second time. When the war was over he did not see why they should not have perforated iron collapsible cases that could be used over and over again, and be disinfected by fire and boiling

water, which would result in a great saving to fruitgrowers and prevent the denudation of the forests for some years longer.

Then, at the other end of his district, grazing was another industry, which was subject to pests, and the great pest for many years had been the blowfly, which had become a very serious menace to Queensland. There were flocks now infected so much with the blowfly that the owners were getting rid of their sheep and going in for cattle. The sheep found no end of work. There was always somebody doing something in connection with the sheep which grew the wool; first of all, there was the shepherd and boundary rider, then the shearer and the carrier and the wharf lumper; somebody was always getting something from the breeding of the sheep. Cattle were grown without any great labour, and when they were slaughtered they did not give much labour. He thought it would be better for Queensland to go in more for sheep than for cattle, from a labour point of view. When the present Government was in opposition, it was always saying that the Liberal Government thought more of animals than of human beings. When they got into power they nationalised the industry that required the least labour of any in Australia. If they wanted to nationalise an industry of some value to Australia, it would be far better to go in for sheep instead of cattle.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am quite sure they won't go in for sheep.

Mr. GUNN: He hoped they would go in for sheep, not that he thought they were going to make a fortune at it; far from it. He did not believe in nationalising anything. If they went in for it, they would find out the trials and troubles which the sheep man had to put up with. He noticed, on page 5 of the report, some remarks about the experiment in respect to the blowfly. Some traps had been used with good effect to catch blowflies. The report stated—

“The three mentioned traps did not cover the whole of the experiments. A proof of its work is to be found in a catch of a fortnight, which is estimated, on the reliable authority of the assistant entomologist, to be 64,000 flies.”

He did not know how they counted the flies. He thought that in a fortnight they would be able to catch more than 64,000. In connection with that he would like to point out that one of the best methods to fight all those pests was to try and preserve the balance of nature which was in existence when this continent was handed over to the white race. One of the principal things which would help to keep down the blowfly would be the birds. He thought a few old crows would catch as many as 64,000 blowflies in a fortnight. They should try to keep their birds from being destroyed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I thought those flies were counted by the millions, not thousands.

Mr. GUNN: He thought so too; but he was only going by their own entomologist, who said that in a fortnight they caught 64,000; and it seemed to him a very poor catch. There was no doubt that their birds killed the blowflies. It was in South Africa he thought that there were certain birds that

got on the animal and took off the cattle-tick with which they had so much bother here. He had seen birds riding on the top of a beast and picking off insects. Then again, the birds would help to keep down some of the fruitflies which were a trouble all over Queensland. There were other things besides birds that wanted protecting, such as the bears and opossums. What had those unfortunate animals done to the people of Queensland? He noticed that even the department was waking up to the fact that they were fast being exterminated. He noticed on page 24 the report stated—

“Native Animals Protection Act and the prolongation of the close season for opossums and native bears has done much towards preventing—or at all events, postponing—the extinction of these animals, but the greater danger towards that end does not lie with the trapper who obeys the law, but through the dishonest man who lays poison and destroys many thousands of young animals of no use to the trapper or to the buyer. The baits that are distributed throughout the bush are also a danger to cattle owners in so far that, when laid in their cattle tracks the stock have taken the baits and have died. The Act is peremptory in prohibiting the use of poison, but from the vastness of the area and the ease with which the poison can be obtained—cyanide of potassium—it is very difficult to control the trade. Prosecutions are, from time to time, undertaken and are generally successful, but the profits are considerable and the risk is taken. Every help is given to the police, but they cannot be everywhere, and the remedy seems to be to abolish the fine, which is readily paid, and to substitute imprisonment.”

He agreed with that. There was no doubt that one way in which those unfortunate animals were becoming exterminated was by cyanide. They made it up in a sort of dough, put it in a can, fastened it with a bit of stick on the side of the gumtree; and every bear or opossum that went up that gumtree was killed—young and old, those which had good skins, and those which had bad skins. Not only that, but the birds took the poison and they also were killed. That wholesale destruction of animal life was not fair at all. The Minister said something to the effect that, no doubt, they would soon become exterminated. He was assisting to exterminate them. He had done his best to get the Denham Government to make a close season for bears and opossums. He was glad to say that it was a close season all the year round for two or three years. When this Government came into power they thought they were going to forge ahead and do wonderful things. He supposed this was going to go towards throwing off the national debt. They threw off the opossum and bear season at certain times of the year and those that were beginning to breed up in his district were now exterminated. In a great portion there was not a single bear to be found. He remembered the time when nearly every other tree had a bear, the skins of which were of some value.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: How would you get the skins—pull them off while alive?

[Mr. Gunn.]

Mr. GUNN: There were certain districts in Queensland, he believed, where there were plenty of bears. In those districts where they were a curse they could be thrown open to slaughter, but where there were only one or two bears they should be preserved. There was no doubt that there were many districts in which there would not be a bear left very soon. It would be a pity to see Australia denuded of its beautiful bird life and all the other animals they had been so fond of. When he was talking about the destruction of insects he forgot to mention that there were some insects which were very valuable. He wished they could bring in the birds to distinguish which insects were harmful and which were not. When the white people came to Australia first they had no lantana, prickly-pear, rabbits, foxes, sida retusa; they had no sparrows; they had no Labour party; they had no taxation factory, and it was a lovely country. His idea was that they ought to have State forests where they could go in for reforestation. Those forests could be a sanctuary for all bird and animal life; such as bears, opossums, and their beautiful native animals, flying-mice, and kangaroos. When the kangaroos became too numerous and became a pest, they could be killed off. He noticed there was a reference in the report to feeding sheep on prickly-pear. He had had a little experience of prickly-pear and it was no good. The Government, after going to a lot of trouble, discovered the same thing. The report stated—

"The total cost of adequately supplementing prickly-pear in sheep rations does not promise (basing the estimate upon the normal market price of purchased feed) to exceed 2d. to 3d. per head per week. . . . There appears to be no question after a period of sixty days continuous administration of prickly-pear as to its being an essentially wholesome sheep feed."

He disagreed with that. Later on, the report went on to say—

"The board are cognisant of the fact that sheep which have access to pear in its natural state, and consume quantities of the fruit, rapidly become emaciated, and if not removed to more congenial surroundings, soon die."

That was quite right. As to the first part, at 2d. it would be 8s. 4d., and at 3d. 13s. a year, and would never pay to raise sheep with those prices. He noticed that the Premier the other day was talking about the meat industry, and went on to say that in Queensland they went right down to bedrock and started to grow cattle, and slaughtered the cattle and exhibited them at the meat shops and gave the people cheap meat. They did nothing of the sort.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. GUNN: If they wanted to start at bedrock there was an industry in which they could start right away. They had opened a "pub" at Babinda. Why did they not start with some prickly-pear, some molasses, some bluestone, and tobacco from Texas, and produce their own spirit to keep their own State "pub" going without buying those combustibles from the profiteering agency in Brisbane? (Opposition laughter.) The Government talked about going down to bedrock. They had always started at

the place where everyone else had made a success of the thing, and had carried it on from that point. They never initiated any industry worth anything, and they never would; they were only following in the lines that had been marked by the pioneers before them.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. GUNN: If they wanted to start something new, why did not they start with sheep, or put the black soil into a machine, turn a handle, have two spouts—one for butter and the other for milk. Chemistry appeared to be the cure-all for [7.30 p.m.] all these things. Instead of experimenting in that way, they let the unfortunate settler go into the back-blocks and live on the smell of an oil rag, and pave the way for the Government to follow. Why did not the Government lead and let the people follow? No, they had only the brains of a blowfly. (Laughter.)

HON. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): On this occasion he had to commend the Secretary for Agriculture for the action he had taken in connection with the preservation of the bird life of the State. In the district in which he lived the Agricultural Department was good enough to proclaim a reservation extending from the south head of the Nerang River to the Tweed Heads, and proclaim the properties which he possessed there also to be reservation for birds. It was marvellous, since that reservation had been effected, to notice the increase in bird life. There were very few birds there which one might call edible birds. They were insectivorous birds, and some of them very beautiful birds. Since the reservation had been made you could see cock regent birds, satin birds, and other birds of different characters which even he—although he had been living there for twenty-nine years—knew nothing about. At one time—not that he wanted to discourage the boys from learning to shoot with a pea rifle—at one time the boys went round and shot everything, including the birds that dealt with insect pests, with the result that you would find poor little birds lying here and there on the ground.

Mr. COLLINS: Keep cool.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The hon. member was not cool on a previous night when he was talking about those 3,000 cane-cutters in the Bowen electorate. He had gone to hear him in Market Square. (Laughter.) Somebody interjected, and said, "Germans," and an old lady—he could see from her actions what her nationality was—said, "Well, I will vote 'No.'" (Laughter.) He simply got up for the purpose of commending the action of the Agricultural Department, following on the action of the department under the previous Administration. The birds deserved to be preserved, as anybody would agree who lived in the country as he did and heard them at dawn.

The TREASURER: Did you ever hear them at dawn?

HON. J. G. APPEL: He was up before dawn, and that was more than the hon. member was.

The TREASURER: You must stay up pretty late.

HON. J. G. APPEL: At any rate, the hon. member generally got the worm. (Laughter.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. J. G. Appel.]

HON. J. G. APPEL: The hon. member for Carnarvon had been talking about native bears, one of the most interesting of their fauna, and it also should be protected. At one time round his house on the Lower Nerang and on the Upper Nerang you could see them almost every day. Now they could hardly see one. They should be absolutely protected.

Mr. CORSER: Make it a criminal offence to sell a skin.

HON. J. G. APPEL: That should be done. As a native of the State, he liked to see the native birds and bears. He believed the Minister was sympathetic, and he hoped he would carry out the policy of the protection of the flora and fauna of the State. They only had a small population after all was said and done, and their aboriginal population was fast dying out. Where, on Bribie Island a few years ago, there were 500 or 400 aboriginals, to-day there was not one. He did his best, when he was at the department, to preserve human life in that respect, as he thought was admitted by hon. members opposite. On this occasion he could commend the Minister for what he had done, and he had even been able at times to compliment the Treasurer when he did a public action worthy of a Minister sitting on the Treasury bench.

The TREASURER: You are mistaking this for a valedictory.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Oh, no, he was not, although he believed he could shake hands with the hon. member when they parted. He would be sorry to leave the House with ill-feeling against any member.

Mr. WEIR: Do you think you are going to leave?

HON. J. G. APPEL: There were only two things certain in this life—death and taxes—and they got enough of taxes. (Loud laughter.)

Mr. FREE: There is no tax on the war loan.

HON. J. G. APPEL: That was a Federal matter, although he had had to pay a tax for the upkeep of the navy since the tax was levied, and although hon. members talked about the poll tax, he was glad to say he had paid more than £100 a year for the upkeep of the Australian navy, which had done such splendid work. He was proud of his contribution to it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Pay it; there is no need to brag about it.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The hon. member never paid anything to it. He was interested in the Australian navy. He was proud, as an Australian, that they had a navy which had done the work it had, and he was proud to have contributed to that navy. The Treasurer had been good enough to be a bit sarcastic over a few remarks he had made, and he was sorry for it, because he had a measure of admiration for the Treasurer, for he thought he was a very fine specimen of an Australian native, and his only regret was that, being a fine specimen of an Australian native, he did not carry out the traditions of an Australian native.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Some Australian natives will have no vote at this election.

[Hon. J. G. Appel.]

HON. J. G. APPEL: Well, perhaps it would be just as well that they did not. He knew that he was going to have his vote.

The TREASURER: Do you support that policy of robbing those Australian natives of votes?

HON. J. G. APPEL: No, he did not; he thought it was a mistaken policy.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. J. G. APPEL: He had no hesitation in saying that no matter how an Australian native may vote, it was a mistaken policy for a native of Australia to be deprived of his vote, whether he voted "Aye" or "Nay," because he was a man born under the British flag, and the freedom of the flag was that you could vote and do as you liked within the law.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order! The hon. member will not be in order in dealing with that matter on this vote.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Hon. members led him astray. Returning to bird life, he hoped the policy of the Government would be that which was pursued by the late Government, and that was to preserve the bird life, and he did not think any penalty was great enough for those who contravened the law in connection with that matter. Of course, they knew that hon. gentlemen on that side of the House, when it suited them, contravened any law, as they did last night when they bundled "Hansards" over the fence, and he hoped those men would be suitably punished, and if the Prime Minister did not do that he would be held up in contempt by every man who was an upholder of law and order.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

HON. J. G. APPEL: Any number of that pink document in great big black type was floating round, and who was going to pay for it? He rang the Prime Minister up at a quarter past 12, and he sent it in to the censor the first thing in the morning, and he hoped he was going to take action, and if he did not—

Mr. CORSER: You will. (Loud laughter.)

HON. J. G. APPEL: No. It was not his business, but men who contravened the law ought to be punished. He commended the Minister for the action he had taken in connection with the protection of the flora and fauna of Queensland.

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

Mr. MAY (*Flinders*): The few remarks he had to make on the vote were brought about by the department's exhibit at the time of the annual show, and he could not let the vote pass without giving a commendation to the department for the splendid display they had at the Exhibition. Each year it seemed to him they must have men, very strong and earnest, in the department to bring forward such a show at the Exhibition. There was one matter he wished to go into. He had been at it formerly, and it might be a bit of a chestnut, but it was with regard to the seed which was provided for the farmers by the seed merchants. He was not eulogising anybody in particular, but they had to report that certain prosecutions had taken place over the sale by private merchants of adulterated seeds, where

only a small portion of the seeds would germinate. There was no way in which they could take the farmer down worse than by selling bad seed. There were farmers on the Opposition side as well as on the Government side, and they knew that no matter how a farmer tilled the soil and went in for the best of manures, artificial or otherwise, if he did not have a germinating seed the whole of his labour was cast on one side. Therefore, wherever any seed was dispensed to farmers which was of a bad nature, if they could find it out the seedsman should be prosecuted to the very highest degree and made to pay the highest penalty they could enforce. He was very glad to see that the department was now going into the idea of bringing forward pedigree seed, which was just as valuable to the community as pedigree stock. He had been engaged in agriculture many years ago, and he remembered at the time they used to get their pedigree seed from a Major Hallett, of Brighton, and they used to pay up to £1 ls. a bushel for his pedigree wheat, barley, and oats. They were all selected and brought to the highest perfection they could possibly have, and, although they used to get a certain quantity each year, the first year they did not get the best returns, because it was on a change of soil, and the seed had to become acclimatised. Although he was only about 70 miles from Brighton, they used to get the best returns on the second year, after the seed got acclimatised. With regard to potato culture, that was a matter that ought to be gone into more thoroughly in Queensland than it was. In the South of England they used to get a change of seed potatoes from the North, from Scotland, and they used to reciprocate by sending seed back, but they never got the best results on the first crop, but on the second and third crops when the different seeds they were planting became acclimatised to the conditions in the South. At the present time they had only one seed inspector throughout the whole of Queensland, and although he was doing good work, he (Mr. May) thought there was room for another. He knew the seed inspector and had a very high appreciation of him, because he was sure he thoroughly understood the business. He was not in the habit of throwing bouquets about, but he heard only yesterday or the day before two gentlemen talking belonging to the Agricultural Department whose names hon. members could not drag out of him with a team of bullocks. He happened to hear a conversation between those two gentlemen, and they said "Billy Lennon is the man for us; he takes notice of his officers, and if we advise him he will consult with us and he takes notice of what we say. A good many of the previous administrators of the Agricultural Department, when they were advised by their officers, used to say, 'No, they know nothing at all about it.'" Those men said, "If we do say anything to 'Billy' Lennon he takes notice of it."

Mr. VOWLES: Who was telling you that?

Mr. MAY: Did the hon. member think he was going to tell? They were two officers, and two good officers. He was only too pleased that he had heard that conversation going on. He was not going to prolong the debate, but it was a pet subject of his, having had a vast experience with regard to seed, and any man selling bad seed should be prosecuted to the highest degree, because a man could cultivate the soil and manure it,

but if the seed would not germinate, the whole of his year was lost and he had to wait another year for his return.

Mr. STEVENS (*Rosewood*): Like other non-members, he would like to congratulate the Department of Agriculture and Stock on the very fine report that had been printed on last year's work. The first item on the report he wished to refer to was the fact that a poultry instructor had been appointed, and it was considered that that appointment had already been justified. He was sure every right-thinking person in the community would be pleased to know that the keeping of poultry as a business proposition was being encouraged by the department. There was no doubt whatever that, properly conducted, the poultry business was a very valuable adjunct to the wealth of the country. He well remembered the late Professor Shelton always said he felt inclined to take his hat off when he met a hen. He (Mr. Stevens) felt like that too, because the hen was producing a large amount of wealth in the country. He was pleased to know that the poultry instructor had been appointed. There was a rather curious manner in which information was jumbled up in the report. After speaking of poultry, they went on, without any break whatever, to say—

"The advance of the tick southwards and the outbreak upon the Downs, an area from which it has been kept for so long, has caused an addition to the staff of stock inspectors, not only in that area but in the avenues leading thereto."

He did not know whether the Minister noticed the way in which that was sandwiched in with the poultry business.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It may be a misprint, but that does not impair the value of the report.

Mr. STEVENS: He was not insinuating that it did, but merely quoting it in order to refer briefly to the question. There was no doubt that the advent of the [8 p.m.] tick into the country had caused very serious losses indeed, and he was afraid that it was quite possible that they might still have those losses, unless proper steps were taken to cope with the pest. He understood that the department had started to work in an area up in the South Burnett district in order to commence clearing the country of ticks.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There are several buffer areas.

Mr. STEVENS: It appeared to him that the proper place to start would be their Southern border, and then to work gradually North, taking care at the same time to keep areas that had not so far been infested absolutely clear. On page 3 of the report there was a reference to the Government's transactions with regard to butter. They were told how many thousand boxes the Government took from the dairymen of Queensland, and what money was obtained for it. Unfortunately, they had no figures given to show them what amount had been kept out of the pockets of the dairymen on account of the Government's action with regard to seizure of butter. They knew that a very considerable amount had been diverted from the pockets of the dairymen into the pockets of middlemen, speculators, and other people who had no interest whatever in the industry beyond making money out of it. He trusted that the experience which the Minister had

Mr. Stevens.]

gained with regard to that transaction would be such as to convince him that it was far wiser for him, if he wished to do anything to assist the dairymen, to encourage them in their co-operative efforts, rather than to go in for business he had no knowledge of, and which must result in very serious losses to men who had a right to every penny in the industry beyond the actual expenses of marketing. He would like to refer briefly to the subject of co-operation, on page 24 of the report, where mention was made of the Co-operative Agricultural Production Act. From the remarks made concerning it, it did not appear that the Act had been of any considerable benefit to the people on whose behalf it was passed, which it appeared to him was largely caused by the fact that they had an unsympathetic Government administering the affairs of the country. It was owing to that fact greater advantage had not been taken of the Act, or further efforts made to extend the co-operative principle, which had proved of such great benefit to the dairymen of Queensland through their own initiative. During the last general election campaign the farmer was told by the party now in power "hat—

"The farmer must be a business man and conduct his farm upon a businesslike basis. He must be sufficiently alert to prevent exploitation of his labour by middlemen. He must, by co-operating with his fellows, market his own products and thus eliminate the large and unnecessary army of commission agents, clerks, etc., who are employed by rival firms for no other purpose than to gain profit by coming between the producer and the consumer."

That was a very excellent piece of advice; but, unfortunately, the farmer had found to his cost that the Government, while preaching that upon the hustings, has gone directly in the opposite direction since they had had control of the reins of government. Instead of assisting co-operation, they had interfered with it. Further than that, after making no active effort for two and a-half years, they had now come down with a Bill framed for the purpose of enabling them, instead of assisting the co-operative farmers, to take over the successful businesses which the farmers had established under the co-operative principle; or, if not sweeping them out of existence altogether, to become active competitors with the farmers in their co-operative businesses. He was certain that the farmer would not soon forget the treatment he had received from the present Administration, when he had an opportunity of showing in a practical manner what he thought about it. There was one thing further in connection with the butter transaction. After waiting for about twelve months, after the last consignment of butter was sent away to the old country, the dairymen received as a surplus over and above what they had already been paid a sum of £23,000 for distribution. That money was not distributed amongst the dairymen only who had produced the butter, but over the whole of the State, irrespective of whether all the dairymen had contributed by their labour to the production of the butter. It was very unfair that men carrying on the dairy industry on proprietary lines, and who had not contributed any portion of the butter made on the co-operative principle by certain dairymen, and which was seized by the Government, should participate in the profits of

[Mr. Stevens.

the sale. He noticed that there was still a balance of some £9,000 to be distributed as a result of this transaction. Possibly they might get that some time during the coming year, but if not, there was no doubt that the next Administration which came into power would see that it was distributed as early as possible.

He wished to make a passing reference to the blowfly pest. Although he had no practical experience of sheep, he noticed a paragraph on page 5 of the report which appeared rather strange. It said—

"It appears from the experiments carried out by Mr. Brown up to the present, practical immunity can be obtained from the use of traps and the regular dipping of sheep, and this is proved by the freedom of the sheep on Gindie. Of the 700 head, only 400 are dipped or dressed and the whole flock is in good health."

It appeared rather strange that the dipping of half a flock would clean the whole. This was a matter which required some little explanation, in order to show how that result was brought about. He was pleased to see that the Government was alive to the necessity of taking what action they could to cope with this dreadful pest, which he understood had reduced the value of their flocks in Queensland by fully 25 per cent. He was pleased to know that the Government was encouraging the production of cotton as far as they possibly could. That was a matter upon which he would like to compliment the Minister and his staff. This industry at one time was of considerable value to the State, and should again become valuable as population increased.

At fifteen minutes past 8 o'clock p.m.,

Mr. FOLEY took the chair as Temporary Chairman.

Mr. STEVENS: With regard to State farms, he would like to draw attention to the danger, when bringing stock on to a farm, of introducing disease. He was sure the officers would be fully alive to the necessity of taking every possible precaution to keep disease away. Too much care could not possibly be taken in that regard. Only recently, when he was in the Atherton district, an outbreak of disease occurred among the pigs there. He met one gentleman who had lost a dozen valuable pigs, and he said he could only trace the disease amongst his pigs to the introduction of two pigs that he bought from the State farm in that district. He trusted the Minister would give instructions that every care should be taken to ascertain that no diseased stock was introduced on the farms, and that they should be kept there a sufficient time before they were distributed in any district, so as to ensure their freedom from disease. In connection with that same subject he would like to bring under the notice of the Minister the necessity for having a veterinary officer further north than Townsville. At the outbreak of that disease amongst the pigs, the people naturally communicated with his department, and they were informed that an officer would be sent from Townsville. Townsville was too far away to adequately cope with an outbreak of disease in districts in the far North. It might take him at least three or four days before he could reach those places, even if he happened to be immediately available.

There was one other matter to which he wanted to refer, and that was the establishment of public abattoirs, which came under

the jurisdiction of that department, about which they heard very much some three years or a little more ago, during the last year or two of the late Parliament's existence. They were then told that it was absolutely essential for the health of the people, especially the people of the cities, and more particularly of Brisbane, that public abattoirs should be established without delay. The late Government took immediate action to secure a site to that end. If the party which at present was in power was sincere in its statements that it was absolutely necessary in order to preserve the health of the people of Brisbane that those public abattoirs should be established, they should certainly have done more than they had done to that end. They had cleared, at an extravagant cost, a few acres of land; and they had fenced it in, at a still more extravagant cost. That was the total length to which they had gone. During the late election this town was placarded with announcements such as "Vote for Lloyd and Cheap Meat," "Vote for Gilday and Public Abattoirs," "Vote for Fihelly and Abattoirs."

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Your placards were, "Vote for Herr Stevens"; don't forget that.

Mr. STEVENS: Since those gentlemen were returned to power they had been as dumb as an oyster with regard to the necessity for establishing public abattoirs to preserve the health of the people of this State.

Mr. VOWLES: In dealing with the Estimates of that department, he regretted to find that the vote—which in the past was too small—was gradually becoming smaller still. When they considered that the future of Queensland was so wrapped up in its Agricultural Department and all the various offices which came within its jurisdiction, and when they realised that particularly in the Western country, where rainfalls were doubtful, the future of the State could only be made certain by experimenting, he thought that a progressive Government—such as this claimed to be—should, at any rate, be prepared to launch out to some extent and supply the necessary money so that the department should have the opportunity of carrying out the functions for which it was established. What he said in respect to the department at present existed in the past. He was always one of those who believed that, as far as the Agricultural Department was concerned, it had always been strangled, and it never would be able to do any material good for the State until such time as a beneficent Government came along and found the wherewithal by which its officers could carry out its work. He would have thought that a Government such as this, which claimed that it was going to revolutionise Queensland, would have appreciated the unfortunate position in which that department had always been, and would have given it the opportunity it richly deserved.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We have revolutionised Queensland; we had a military raid at the Printing Office the other night.

Mr. VOWLES: They had revolutionised Queensland, but not in the direction which was good for the State. With regard to the report, there was no doubt that it was a beautiful compilation. It was instructive and gave a good deal of material information to the general public, and incidentally to members of Parliament; but when one came to analyse it and looked at the large

number of subject-matters which were worthy of consideration, he must realise that in the five minutes which were given to them for discussion on the Estimates they had very little time to deal adequately with any subject. He wanted to deal with matters which came within his own district. In doing so he did not want the Minister or his officers to take umbrage at what he said, because it would be said in good faith, with the hope that some misunderstandings and difficulties that existed at present might be rectified. One of the subjects to which he wished to refer particularly was that of cattle dips in general. He happened to live in an area which was a buffer area, and it was necessary for stockowners to dip. They had had some tremendous losses of cattle as a result. The Minister would remember, at Chinchilla some little while ago, there was a tremendous smash. He saw by the Auditor-General's report that the Government had been pleased to pay £3,000 compensation.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: "Pleased to pay it!" Oh, no. Not at all pleased to pay it.

Mr. VOWLES: Well, they should have been more than pleased to pay when they knew that the owners of those cattle lost them either through the carelessness or negligence of the officers who dipped the stock, or by reason of the fact that the material supplied to the dip was of such a poisonous nature that the cattle were lost. Now, that was only one of many instances.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Name the other instances.

Mr. VOWLES: He would give him one instance he knew of. The Wonga shire in Dalby only last week had a claim made upon it for £86, being damage caused to stock through dipping at Bell. The dip was a shire dip, but he understood—and he could be corrected if he was wrong—that the material for charging that dip was supplied by the department.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We don't supply any dip. All we do is to gazette the number and the kind of dip we approve.

Mr. VOWLES: Some dips that had been recommended by the department had been the cause of the loss of a lot of valuable stock. When the material in that dip was sent down to Brisbane for analysis it was found that, instead of having the necessary amount of poison that there should be in it for dipping purposes, it had double the amount.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Unfortunately, it is not of the homogeneous nature that we insist upon.

Mr. VOWLES: He did not know if the hon. gentleman knew it, but it was going to be the subject-matter of litigation. It had only occurred during the last few weeks. Now, that was an unfortunate state of affairs. He was only instancing that so that the department might take the opportunity of remedying those troubles. There were dozens of other instances that never came to light, perhaps. The hon. gentleman would remember the smash that occurred in Sarma, just beyond Bell, where a large number of stock perished as the result of dipping. It was stated that they were overdriven after being dipped, but they were not. They had the same trouble as they had at Chinchilla; the whole of their skins became blistered. Goodness only knew what tortures they suffered

Mr. Vowles.]

before they died. In dealing with dumb animals one did not seem to consider that aspect; all one looked at was the pecuniary loss which the owner suffered. It was in respect of that pecuniary loss, and the loss of those animals that would be reproductive to the State, that he desired the department to take that matter into earnest consideration.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We have taken it into consideration.

Mr. VOWLES: Losses had happened in the Warwick district; he knew they had happened down at Helidon.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We are giving it far more consideration than anybody is aware of.

Mr. VOWLES: He hoped they had. It was for that purpose he was bringing the matter forward; so that the department would realise what had happened and make them alive to the necessity for preventing, as far as they could, a recurrence of that sort of thing.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: If people are negligent and careless, you cannot prevent these accidents happening.

Mr. VOWLES: He understood that in the last case he mentioned it was not because of carelessness; if anything, it was in the specific, or the poison, or the charge—whatever they liked to describe it. The dip was cleaned out and recharged; and the cattle perished. Who was responsible—the shire, or the Government that recommended a certain dip?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Government is not responsible at all.

Mr. VOWLES: He knew they were not; unfortunately the ratepayers had to suffer.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: When we are responsible we pay; when we are not, we don't.

Mr. VOWLES: It happened that it was not a Government dip. It happened to be a shire dip; and that was the only reason why the hon. gentleman and his department were not called upon to pay; because it was under their advice and instructions that the dip was charged with material which was used. Getting on to another subject that affected country districts—the subject of waybills and the Brands Act—they had a large number of prosecutions lately in country districts, all of which had been sanctioned by the Department of Agriculture he presumed.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: All initiated by me, on proper grounds.

Mr. VOWLES: The following question was asked by the member for Stanley (Mr. Somerset) the other day:—

“Does the department insist on the insertion in waybills of all brands imprinted on travelling stock? If so, and in view of the impossibility of securing those particulars during the winter months, when the hair on stock is long, will the department in future insist only on the entry of the last brand on the waybill?”

The reply of the Minister to that was—

“Yes, the department insists on all brands being imprinted. If stockowners observed the provisions of the Brands Act of 1915 and the regulations relative

[*Mr. Vowles.*

to the use of second or subsequent brands, the insertion of the last brand would be sufficient.”

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They don't observe it, unfortunately.

Mr. VOWLES: He had always contended in technical cases—and they were all technical cases that came into their courts—that all that was necessary in law was [8.30 p.m.] that, as long as the last brand was in its proper position, the purchaser was entitled to put his brand beneath that brand. All he had to do was to aver that a certain brand, with other brands, as well as his own, were on it. Magistrates would not hold that that was correct. The Minister said that he had not only sanctioned but brought about prosecutions in cases like that.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They may not be made without my approval.

Mr. VOWLES: They had case after case against reputable persons. He knew a man who came down from Warwick to see a doctor. He heard of a live stock sale, and went and bought some. He went back in in the train and the agent consigned them. The waybill was given to the guard, and they were taken off the train and put in the station trucking-yard at Warwick. When the owner came to inspect them, he discovered that they were not strictly in accordance with the waybill. He sent for the village policeman, who referred the matter to Brisbane, and the hon. member prosecuted the agent. That was his offence—he told the policeman. That was only one of many cases. In every instance the police, who were representatives of the department, were prepared to tell the bench that there was no suspicious circumstances, that they did not for one moment wish to cast any slur on the gentleman who was brought forward to answer the charge, but there was a technical breach of the regulation, and they were convicted. The Chairman must know, as an Australian, that in the winter time it was an absolute impossibility, without shaving clean every beast, to get the brands on it. He had appeared for such persons and the bench had expressed regret that they were cases which should have been thrown out of court, and that because of the instructions coming from the department they had no other course but to convict persons who were no more guilty of an offence than the Chairman.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not want innocent people to be convicted.

Mr. VOWLES: The Minister was convicting them every day. He might come within the law himself one of these days if he happened to own stock. He must know that if he had a station mob bearing an even brand, it was the easiest thing in the world to describe it—so many cows or steers—and then give the brand, but when he got into a district which was not a breeding district, where there was a tremendous lot of dealing, so that a man might have 50 per cent. different brands, it was an impossibility to have all those brands correct. He sincerely hoped that the Minister would observe what he had promised in that reply, and that if the purchaser's brand was on the beast in a certain position after the owner's brand, it would be sufficient to say that there was on it a certain brand and your own brand, “and other brands.” If that were

done it would get over a lot of vexatious and annoying prosecutions, by which men in his district were brought 50 miles and wasted a couple of days—all to answer a technical charge and be fined 1s. with 3s. 6d. costs.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Our action is to prevent cattle-duffing, and you know it.

Mr. VOWLES: If the hon. member would carry out what he had promised the hon. member for Stanley, he would be in a better position, because he would have recourse not only on the owner in possession but the owner of the previous brand, and in future purchasers would be able to say, "I buy this beast if you previously put your brand on it." So soon as that man put his brand on the beast he took the onus of the previous brands, and as long as his brand was a recognised brand, then the bonâ fide owner who put his brand in the next position would be absolutely secure, because there was the record of the previous brand as to where he got the stock. It would not be a premium to cattle-duffing but a means of preventing it, because the person who bought would see that the seller's brand was on it.

He had commenced speaking about cattle ticks. There was another class of tick which the hon. member and his department should pay some attention—that was, the fowl tick. They were the cause of very serious losses in his district. Poultry breeders did not seem to know anything about them, but the fact remained that they were there.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not know anything about it.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. member ought to, as the head of the department. The report of the department stated—

"The appointment of a poultry instructor has already been justified by the demands upon his services and the evidence of awakening interest in this valuable by-product of the farm."

Surely to goodness the gentleman who could talk so loudly of the cattle tick, who could tell them all about nodules in beef, who could talk about the market price of butter, and discuss other subjects in his capacity as Minister for Agriculture, must know of the existence of that fowl tick! It was a perfect curse. He had it in his own fowl run. It bred in millions, and he did not know how they were going to get rid of it. Young fowls died wholesale. The tick got into the hollow of trees and old wood, and you could not get rid of it. It was going to be a serious menace to the poultry industry, and the department needed to get alive before it spread.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We are not half dead, you know.

Mr. VOWLES: He knew they were not, but it was time the department made some research into this trouble. The hon. member for Port Curtis had been laying down the law with reference to cream and butter, and talked about London parity. He went on to tell them that Danish and Irish butter was selling at something over 220s. per cwt., whereas Queensland butter was only selling at 15s. He did not tell them that the price the producers were getting in Queensland was a price upon which they agreed themselves. He did not tell them that, notwithstanding the fact that they were living in normal times, so far as the production of

butter was concerned, the price was 2s. better than the hon. member and his department got when they commandeered and sold butter in the worst drought times the producers ever had. Nor did he tell them that they had an assured market, because the Imperial Government paid for every pound within seven days of delivery; nor did he tell them that it was going for the use of their soldiers. The Minister knew that if a consignment of butter were lost the butter merchants and the producers would be paid. He knew also that the only means they had of getting a market was by making arrangements with the Imperial Government, who took all the risk. They were also told that the agriculturist was getting 10s. a bushel for his wheat, whereas the unfortunate "cocky" was only getting 5s. He had the effrontery to tell a lot of intelligent men, who were supposed to understand market prices, that you could get wheat home for 10d.

Mr. CORSER: 4s.

Mr. VOWLES: It was 4s. 7d. on top of the 5s. cash, and 5d. for handling. Where was the difference between the amount the agriculturist in England was getting and what the Australian got? The whole of their crop was purchased by the Imperial Government, and the only way they were able to get it away was through the Imperial Government. There was an assured market and an assured price. So far as prices were concerned, just compare the action of the Federal Government in the fixation of prices and the general dealing with the producers with the tremendous fiasco of the hon. member and his department when they were dealing with it. On page 22 of the report—and this was misleading—they were told—

"There are 39,727 owners of cattle, of whom 36,015 own 300 head or less, consequently of the entire herd of 4,765,657 head, some 3,488,540 head are owned by 3,708 persons. Of sheep, there are in all 3,986 owners, of whom 2,428 possess 1,000 head or less, 1,189 own from 1,000 to 10,000, 360 persons own from 10,000 to 100,000, and nine people more than the latter number."

Why should not they say, instead of nine persons, nine institutions, comprising, perhaps, 100 or 200 individuals in each instance? Like the hon. member for Bowen, when he was talking about the wealth of Australia, they referred to the owners as private individuals: they classed the biggest company in Australia as an individual, and took no consideration of the component parts of it. Then, again, they found a comparative table of the prices obtained for stock. They were told that in 1917 fat bullocks ranged from £18 7s. 3d. to £24 2s. 1d. The report went on to say—

"It is not likely that prices will be much reduced in the future, and it is possible that the time has arrived when the smaller farmer can profitably follow the example of his brother in Europe, and by stall-feeding fatten off a few steers each year to add to his income."

That was the statement of the Government which was purchasing stations and cattle for the purpose of bringing down the price of beef! It was a very nice indictment. Here they had the Minister tell them plainly and distinctly that it was not likely that prices

Mr. Vowles.]

would be reduced, and advising everybody who raised a beast to do it for the profit he would get out of it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What do you think?

Mr. VOWLES: He was not there to give his opinion on those matters. He was merely criticising the opinions and statements of hon. gentlemen opposite.

Mr. WEIR: You gave your opinion on the Wando Vale case.

Mr. VOWLES: If he told the hon. member what he was, he would probably be charged with a breach of the Standing Orders. He would like to refer briefly to co-operative factories. They were told in the report that the Government, although it had legislation in that respect, it was not being availed of. The advances for the year amounted to £1,000,000, and were entirely for the dairying industry, and no company owing money was in arrear with its engagements. While the Hon. the Minister or his department were lamenting the fact that people were not taking advantage of that department, they were introducing legislation that was going to have the effect of killing co-operation.

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

Mr. FORSYTH (*Murrumba*) said he thought the Department of Agriculture and Stock was one which should be carefully considered by every member of the House. Agriculture and stock were the principal industries in Queensland, and, therefore, any report which gave information in regard to them was something they should all study. The report of the Department of Agriculture and the experts of that department contained an enormous amount of information, and was well worth the study of every hon. member. The hon. member for Carnarvon referred to the blowfly. Although the Government were endeavouring to do something in regard to that, practically nothing had been done yet to find a solution for that terrible scourge, which was affecting their flocks to such a great extent.

Mr. CARTER: You want to get fine wire-netting to catch it.

Mr. FORSYTH: It was a pity they could not catch the hon. member in and keep him in.

Mr. CARTER: I pay for my netting.

Mr. FORSYTH: It was quite well known that this menace was going to be a very serious question in Queensland. At the present time thousands of sheep died from the blowfly, and during the last twelve months things had been particularly bad, and while the Government was doing what it could to find a solution to do away with the blowfly, yet there was nothing so far that had been done of any special importance. They were told that traps were a good thing. He knew people who had gone in for hundreds of traps, and while they might assist to a certain extent, there must be something else found to block that curse which was devastating, in many cases, the flocks of Queensland. He knew one man who lost 25 per cent. of his breeding ewes through blowflies, and that man had gone to enormous expense in connection with traps and other things to get over the difficulty. Everybody knew the reason why the blowflies were so bad last

[*Mr. Vowles.*

year was on account of the great amount of wet weather. It was particularly bad in the St. George district, but it was all over Queensland, and he hoped that the expert the Government had got in connection with the matter would continue his investigations, and endeavour some way or other to help those who were in the position that they could find no cure. The only cure for blowflies so far was to crutch and dip. That, no doubt, was a very great help; but, as a matter of fact, he had known of cases where within a fortnight or three weeks of a sheep being shorn or crutched, the blowfly was back again. Hon. members would see from that that it was a difficult matter to deal with, and he hoped the Government would try to assist those in the industry, so that the terrible scourge might be got rid of. In small areas, perhaps, they could handle it much better than in large areas, but at the same time it was something that required carefully looking into, and he hoped the Government would do their utmost to get over the scourge.

With regard to ticks, they were just as bad as ever, and it was mentioned on the very first page of the report. They were particularly bad in North Queensland. He could understand the necessity for dipping coming through a clean area—it was sometimes necessary to dip twice—but, at the same time, dipping, more especially with weak cattle, was particularly injurious, and was the means of an enormous number of losses, particularly with those who had to dip twice. They were another terrible scourge, and a menace to cattle, and every effort should be made to keep them down.

With regard to slaughtering female cattle the report stated that the only solution they could make of it was in connection with the quantity of stock that came into the New-market yards. It stated about 26 per cent. of the stock sent there were cows, but it was a well-known fact that nobody wanted to slaughter female cattle if they would breed, and the whole of the cattle sold in the yards were cattle that would not breed, and they were fattened up and sold just the same as bullocks. That was the principal reason why a considerable quantity came into the markets in Brisbane, but he did not think there were many female cattle being killed right throughout the length and breadth of Queensland, because, at the present time, anyone who had cattle that would breed would keep them, because the price of cattle was a fairly good one and it was to the interests of those who were in the industry to keep the cows that would breed and thus increase their stock. Therefore, he did not look upon that matter as being a very serious one.

With regard to the killing of dingoes and foxes, he noticed in the report that last year the number of dingoes and foxes killed in Queensland was the largest in any one year. He found that no less than 26,525 were killed in Queensland. The year before was 25,924. Dingoes were another curse to people in the pastoral industry, because they were most destructive animals, and foxes also. He did not know the best cure for that. The department, in writing about the matter, spoke about the boards who had the matter in hand not taking the interest they should, and it also referred to the cost of administration. The cost of administration was not a very great deal, because the people in the

district were paying very large bonuses to the people who killed the dingoes. As a matter of fact, a good many of the boards pay 5s. and some pay even as much as 10s. a head, and in certain districts the people who were troubled with dingoes were giving a bonus of £1, apart altogether from the fact that the board gave their 5s. or 10s. a head. The argument raised on page 25 was one of the reasons—namely, that the cattle-owner, by his inaction, preserved the dingo. The trouble was that people who kept sheep adjoining cattle found that the dingoes came from the cattle country, and the people who owned the cattle did not trouble about the dingoes, because they did not kill many calves; but they were a menace to others, and something should be done to enforce the provisions of the Act so that those who were keeping breeding-grounds for dingoes should be forced to kill them. With regard to bringing down the price of meat, the Government were under the impression that by bringing cattle into the Newmarket yard they were going to keep the market low, but, as a matter of fact, all the cattle the Government had sold at Newmarket realised a very good price.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The price was lower when they were sold than it was before.

Mr. FORSYTH: The number the Government sent in was a mere bagatelle.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Nevertheless the market dropped.

Mr. FORSYTH: At the very time the Minister told them it dropped, the next week the market dropped £2 and there were no Government cattle in. There was nothing in the Minister's argument, and the whole thing depended upon supply and demand. If they only had 400 at the sale when the people wanted 600 or 700 the price of cattle would go up. Hon. members would find that last week the price of sheep went down 1s. or 2s., and the Minister should know, and if he didn't he (Mr. Forsyth) knew, they might strike a good market when there was a small supply and the price went up. But if the following week there were 800 or 900 the price would come down.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is why we did send ours in, and it did drop.

Mr. FORSYTH: It was a mere bagatelle, and, as for talking about cheap beef for the people, the Government took the best price they could get and they got a very good price. There was not the slightest doubt about it a large majority of the butchers were simply losing money hand over fist, and he did not think that was a fair thing at all, and something should be done to relieve the position. He was speaking to a butcher only yesterday—the butcher from whom he got his meat—and he told him as an absolute fact that during the last six months he had lost £500 or £500.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Send him down some of your cheap wethers.

Mr. FORSYTH: He wasn't talking about mutton. The price the butchers had to sell at did not leave them a profit at all, and that was the cry right throughout the State—that the butcher could not make a living. He thought something should be done whereby men who had to make a living out of the industry should be placed in a different

position than they were in at present. With regard to the question of fruit culture, anyone who read the report of Mr. Benson must be satisfied he was doing a fair thing and was willing to help in every way possible. On page 8 of the report he made a statement with regard to the North Coast district, which was a very large source of production. In the district he had the honour of representing many of the people were engaged in fruit culture.

"The Director of Fruit Culture deals very exhaustively with the fruit industry in his report, which will be interesting to those who follow that occupation. He points out that the principal cause for the dissatisfaction among the growers was caused by a combination of reasons that can be briefly described as want of co-operation or combination, the glutting of markets at certain times owing to the prolific season with certain fruits, when, in accordance with the requirements of the consumers, other fruits were in good demand and realised good prices, and the restriction of shipping preventing free access to our recognised markets."

He knew that during the big strike, which lasted for three months, a great many of the fruit farmers in his electorate suffered enormous losses. They could only send a small quantity of fruit to Brisbane, and Melbourne and Sydney, the principal markets, were blocked. At a certain season of

[9 p.m.] the year there was naturally a glut of fruit. For instance, of pineapples there was a large surplus. The only cure for a big glut of pineapples was to have them tinned. The Government had arranged to take a considerable quantity at 6d. a dozen f.o.b., but the price of tin, and the nails for making the cases, as well as the timber for the cases, was now so exceptionally high as to militate against the arrangement. In a certain part of his electorate they were anxious to get a quotation from the Government sawmill, and the Treasurer was good enough to quote prices, but the price quoted was more than they could get the timber for from the outside sawmills. Of course, that might be accounted for by the fact that some of these sawmills were very near at hand, and could supply much cheaper than mills a long distance away. He had seen fruit grown in his electorate that could not be surpassed, but when it was sent to Sydney it had not realised more than from 2s. to 2s. 6d. a case. The Government should assist the growers of pineapples by establishing a canning factory, and having the fruit canned and sent to outside markets. He found that there were about 9,000 acres of land in Queensland under banana culture. That was, after all, not a very big area, but yet there was a large quantity of bananas grown. The Fiji planters sent enormous quantities of bananas to Sydney and Melbourne, and arranged with the shipping companies to build special vessels for the carriage of the fruit in the same way as the West Indian planters had special vessels built for taking their fruit to the old country. As a consequence, the fruit arrived from Fiji in an excellent condition, while the fruit from Queensland, through not having a special vessel to carry it in, arrived in a very bad condition. Some effort at co-ordination should be made here, so that their fruit-growers would be able to give a certain quantity of fruit to the shipping companies in the season and have proper accommodation provided on the vessels. There was a vessel called the "Levuka," which traded between

Mr. Forsyth.]

Sydney, Fiji, and Melbourne, and that vessel would carry from 60,000 to 80,000 bunches of bananas, one-half of which went to Sydney and the other half to Melbourne. They should endeavour to get a vessel built specially for the purpose in Queensland, so that the industry would prosper. There was no country where bananas could be grown better than in Queensland. In California the whole system of fruitgrowing was co-ordinated. The fruitgrower had not to bother about finding a market. The fruit was graded, and sold all over America by agents. A system like that would work very well in Queensland. Fruitgrowing was only in its infancy in Queensland, and with proper handling, grading, and distribution of the fruit there would be a great development of the market in Australia. They could not very well ship bananas to the old country, and had to depend upon the Australian market. He thought something might be done to dry bananas and so provide foodstuff for the people.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They are very fine when dried. It has been done, and I have sold them in packets.

Mr. FORSYTH: There were many places in Queensland where the people would be only too glad to get bananas in that form. They ought to establish a market in the Central and Northern districts of Queensland, where the people did not get enough fruit. If they could educate the people to eat more fruit it would be very beneficial in this hot climate, and they could do that all over Australia. The bulk of their fruit went to Sydney now, and a little to Melbourne, Adelaide, and Fremantle, and also to New Zealand; but there were localities in Australia which never saw the Queensland fruit, because they were too far away from the railway, and the fruit could not get there. When he lived in the North, they were sometimes without fruit for six months, and it was only occasionally they got a case of pineapples or oranges. He was in Mildura a year or two ago, where, owing to the system of irrigation in operation, they turned out £500,000 worth of fruit yearly. They graded the fruit, the wholesale and retail price was fixed, the people buying from an association, and the fruitgrowers got the whole benefit.

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

Mr. BAYLEY (*Pittsworth*): From the standpoint of the farming districts, the Department of Agriculture and Stock was the most important department in the State. The running of this department on good lines meant a great deal to the farmers and settlers of Queensland, and it was essential that the very best and most thoroughly qualified trained men, who were experts in their own particular line, should be engaged in the work of the department. It paid to employ the very best men that could be procured. There were one or two anomalies in connection with the Chief Office. He noticed that the Director of Fruit Culture was put down at £600 a year, the Dairy Expert at £450, while the Director of Agriculture only got £400. It was strange that the Director of Agriculture, who needed to have such a comprehensive knowledge, should only get £400. He also noticed that the Cheese Instructor got £225 a year. He was a good man, and one who understood his business, and the amount put down was too low a salary to give to a cheese expert. Men who were not so competent as the present cheese

[*Mr. Forsyth*

expert were getting £5 and £6 per week as managers of factories, while the man who had been appointed to instruct them in their business was getting a much smaller salary. He thought they were all prepared to admit that the present Minister had worked hard and taken an earnest interest in the department. The hon. member for Port Curtis had referred to the fact that during the year 1916-17 (July to July) the cream suppliers of Queensland received 2d. per lb. more for their butter than the suppliers of New South Wales. He could not agree with that statement. It was well known that the Federal authorities took over the fixing of prices in October, 1916, and since that time the prices obtained in New South Wales and Queensland had been practically the same. Early in October, 1916, prices were certainly a little higher in Queensland than in New South Wales. It was absolutely impossible for a difference of 2d. per lb. to exist for the whole twelve months when the Federal authorities took over the fixing of prices in October, 1916, and the State Government only had jurisdiction for a period of three months or a little over. Speaking of butter prices reminded him that the Government had not done all for the farmers that had been claimed by the member for Port Curtis and others who had spoken from the Government side of the House. Instead of helping the dairy farmers to secure as high a price as possible for their product, this Government had done absolutely the opposite. They knew that at one time, when butter was selling in Victoria at from 190s. to 200s. per cwt., factories—co-operative and otherwise—were forced to sell their butter at 50s. per cwt. less than they could have got in Victoria, and large quantities were commandeered by the Government at that price, meaning a loss of thousands of pounds to cream and butter producers in this State. In spite of that well-known fact, they found some members on the opposite side saying that the Government had given the dairy farmers far higher prices than were obtained in the other States of the Commonwealth. He would like to say a few words in regard to the Agricultural College. When it was established many years ago, they had great expectations of what was going to be accomplished by means of that institution. A year or two after it was established they had more than eighty students on the roll, and the minimum age for entering the institution was seventeen years. They found that had been decreased to fifteen years, and at the beginning of the present year only twenty-five students were on the roll. The proposed cost for this year was £11,341. With twenty-five students, each student would cost £450 per annum for his education.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There are many other privileges there besides educating these young men.

Mr. BAYLEY: Yes, he knew they had a number of teachers going there during the year, and that farmers' sons went there for short courses. There must be something wrong with the working of that institution. Speaking from memory, the institution had been established about twenty years. He had entered the college the first day it was opened, and there were then twelve students.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You cannot expect boys to go just now.

Mr. BAYLEY: No doubt the war made a difference, but after allowing for everything

in that regard they found that for years past the number of students had been steadily decreasing. It meant that the farmers of Queensland had not a great deal of confidence in the institution. If they had they would send their boys there in greater numbers in order that they might learn farming. This college should be one of the grandest and most helpful of all the institutions they had in Queensland. It should do more than almost anything else to imbue the young men—and the older men, too—with the idea that farming—agriculture—was an honourable calling; that it was not mere drudgery; that it was not merely carried on by rule of thumb, but that it could be carried on in a scientific manner, and that it was necessary that men should have a thorough scientific training in order that they might be successful on the land. He thought it would be better if the college were run on different lines and made more popular.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What lines would you suggest it should be run on; do you mean by charging no fees?

Mr. BAYLEY: No, the fees had been very moderate ever since the college had been instituted. He could tell the Minister one or two things by which the college could be made more popular. A number of years ago they had quite a large number of dairy-course students who went there to learn dairying in all its branches—including cheese-making, butter-making, and so on. For many years past they found that very little cheese and an exceedingly small quantity of butter had been turned out at the college. He knew that young men who had gone there with the idea of taking a special training in butter-making, cheesemaking, refrigerating, and so on, had left the college because they had not been able to get the necessary training. What was the reason? It was not because the teaching staff were not capable or competent to teach; but there was not sufficient milk there. Some little time back they had only between forty-five and fifty cows on the college property.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We are taking cream from outside now.

Mr. BAYLEY: He understood they were doing that now; but still the quantity was not sufficient. He was there some time ago and was advised that it took all the milk they were producing on the property to keep the masters' houses and the college students and others on the place supplied in butter. For very many months at a time no cheese whatever was manufactured. That was not as it should be. He would advise the Minister to do all he possibly could to increase the milk supply and encourage the neighbouring farmers to take their milk to the college factory. Then, again, what was to stop them increasing their dairy herd and getting a greater milk supply? That would be a step in the right direction. In spite of the fact that there was much more cultivation there now than there was in the early stages, they found that the milk supply had decreased very considerably, and it was absolutely impossible to go in for butter-making, cheesemaking, and other phases of the dairying industry.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The students don't care to work on Sundays.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Your people would not allow them to sell the cheese and butter that they made. They

were afraid it would interfere with private enterprise.

Mr. BAYLEY: In regard to the scientific theoretical training given in that institution they found that the theoretical lessons had been practically whittled away to nothing. They had a trained chemist there who used to give lessons on elementary and analytical chemistry to students. Quite a number of young men had left that college with a practical knowledge so far as chemistry was concerned. He understood that at the present time and for a considerable time past no training worth speaking of had been given to the students in that particular business. Coming to the other sciences, at one time they had quite an up-to-date curriculum. At the present time the students learned very little more than they would learn in an ordinary State school. He thought it was a pity that that was so. The institution had cost a vast amount of money and it was costing a large amount of money every year; and it behoved the department, and Parliament, to see that that institution—which should mean so much to the farmers of Queensland and their sons, the people of Queensland generally, and the State as a whole—was made as efficient as they could possibly make it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He did not propose to delay the Committee, but he thought a word or two of congratulation to the Minister would not be out of place. He had certainly galvanised that department, and they found that to-day it served the public in a way in which it never had done before. Evidence of that was before them in the House that session when two Bills were brought in for the purpose of placing at the service of the producers the whole of the influence of the department in finding markets and in handling their products. Also they found him endeavouring to extend agriculture into the North around Townsville, where there was some excellent land for fruit and other products. On the whole he thought the Minister had reason to be pleased at the result of his efforts in that department. He wished to refer to one or two remarks made with regard to the price of wheat. The member for Warwick, by figures which he quoted, endeavoured to show that the Queensland farmer had something to be pleased over in the marketing of his product this season. The very reverse was the fact. Instead of the Queensland farmer congratulating himself on obtaining war prices, as a number of other producers had since the war began, he could absolutely do nothing of the sort. Their woolgrowers, their beef and cattle men, and quite a number of other producers had all profited by the war; also the dairyman, who had had a big price for his cheese and butter right through. But the wheatgrower in Queensland, instead of getting a bigger price, had got a less price than even those in a neighbouring State; notwithstanding the fact that the neighbouring State was compelled to go abroad and find a market for its wheat, while the Queensland grower was not producing enough to keep the wheels of our mills turning in the State. The price of wheat in Queensland for this year, he thought, ran from 4s. 9d. down to—according to reports made by deputations that had waited on the Premier—something like 3s. 9d. or 3s. 6d.; and some could not even get a buyer. When they came to consider that

Hon. J. M. Hunter.]

the Australian pool fixed the price of wheat in New South Wales—and in fact throughout Australia—at 5s. 6d., while Queensland growers were compelled to take 4s. 6d., there was nothing much to be pleased about as far as the Queensland grower was concerned.

When they remembered that, over and above that, wheat was required to make up the full supply of Queensland, and it had to be bought in the South for 5s. 6d., and freight and wharfage charges [9.30 p.m.] had to be paid for bringing it here, raising the price to something like 6s. a bushel, one could see how much the Queensland farmer had gone short of what he was entitled to. If the miller could try to throw dust in the eyes of the farmer, and tell him he should be pleased with the result, he was not, to put it mildly, stating quite the correct position. As a matter of fact, the Warwick Farmers' Milling Company advanced to the wheatgrower 4s. 6d. to 4s. 9d., he thought, somewhere about the beginning of the season, and that was immediately seized upon as the price to be paid by other millers, and they went on buying at that price, taking as much or as little as they chose. Under those conditions the farmers had nothing to thank the millers for, nor had the consumers of Queensland anything to thank them for. Although the price of wheat had been so low, and had fallen since the time the price of flour was first fixed, the price of flour had never altered. It was fixed on a basis considerably higher than 4s. 6d. per bushel for wheat. Either one of two things should have been done by the Commonwealth. The price of wheat should have been fixed in Queensland at the same price as in the rest of the Commonwealth, or the price of flour should have been reduced, so that the usual relation between the price of wheat and the price of flour would have prevailed. Either the producer or the consumer, or both, had suffered in consequence of the position. He made those remarks because he came from a Western district, where first-class wheat was grown, and he knew that the growers this season had not received anything like the price they should have received compared with those in the Southern States. It was truly stated by the hon. member for Warwick that the New South Wales growers had not received as much as the Queensland growers, but they must remember this difference: that the Queensland grower had been paid right out, and had nothing more to expect, but a large proportion of the wheat in the South had not been sold or shipped home, and until the pool was cleaned up they could not distribute the last penny which was coming to them.

Mr. BARNES: Last year for prime wheat they received 3s. 11d.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes, but that had nothing to do with this year's price. He thought the Minister for Agriculture paid something like 5s. 6d. for all the seed wheat bought, but last year, if it were left to the millers, they would probably have paid 3s. or 3s. 6d. If war profits were going to come, the wheatgrower was entitled to the same consideration as the dairyman, or the woolgrower, or the cattleman.

Mr. BARNES: The Minister for Agriculture paid 4s. 9d., too.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He was under the impression he advertised

[Hon. J. M. Hunter.

that he would take all the wheat he could get at 5s. 6d. At any rate, the millers did not pay enough this year—that was the point. Or rather, they either paid too little for their wheat or sold their flour at too high a price. The hon. member could have it either way he liked. The hon. member for Murrumba wanted to know by what argument the Government could claim that they had effected a reduction in the price of beef. It was a well-known fact that when the State cattle were sent into the Enoggera markets the price did drop, for the very reason which the hon. member gave himself. With the extra supply, the price dropped.

Mr. GUNN: Why didn't you send them in when there was a bare market?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: How could the market be bare when they flooded it? The market would have been bare if they had not sent them in. They kept on sending them in, and the difference between the Government sending them in and private owners sending them in, was that the Government sent them straight to the yards and sold them. They did not arrange with somebody to have them sent back if there were too many yarded. That was a secret method of market rigging in which the Government were not joining with the cattlemen. Whether the supply was over or under, the demand did not make any difference to the Government, but it was very carefully watched by the cattlemen at a time like this, when cattle were scarce. On the whole, he thought the Minister for Agriculture was very much to be congratulated on the year's work he was able to show.

At twenty-five minutes past 9 o'clock p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. SOMERSET (*Stanley*): The hon. member for Dalby referred to the questions he had asked and the replies given thereto. He wanted to mention that he had received a considerable number of letters which showed that cattle-owners were very much disturbed about the question of dipping and also with regard to the other matter of showing all the brands on the waybill. He asked the questions with the intention of getting from the Minister a statement of exactly how the case stood. He found that the replies were unsatisfactory, because, with regard to dipping, the question was—

"In the event of two dippings being ordered for travelling stock, is any specific interval allowed between dippings, and, if so, what period?"

The answer to that was—

"Yes; seven to fourteen days."

Now, the various inspectors had been instructed to get the cattle dipped twice within seven days, and he considered there was a considerable difference between dipping them within seven days and at an interval of seven days. Some letters appeared in the "Daily Mail" and the "Toogoolawah Times" with reference to the matter, from Mr. Ernest F. Lord, who complained very much about the effect of the dipping. He believed that the department replied that in certain cases it was quite easy to obtain an extension to twelve days, but people were not aware of that, and the instructions to the inspectors were: "The cattle must be strictly dipped or the stock cannot leave for their destination." He would like the Minister to make it clear to the people that if they asked for

an extension they would get it. Another question he asked was whether it was absolutely necessary to show all the brands in waybills, and the answer was—

“Yes; if stockowners observed the provisions of the Brands Act of 1915 and regulations relative to the use of second or subsequent brands, the insertion of the last brand would be sufficient.”

He had looked up the Brands Act of 1915 and could find nothing in it about the matter, but when he came to look up the Diseases in Stock Act, to which no late additions had been made, there he found the regulation. It showed, at all events, that the two Acts and regulations were complex, that there was certainly ambiguity as to the meaning of “Within seven days” or “At an interval of seven days,” and as to whether the schedule in the Brands Act or the Diseases in Stock Act applied to the waybills. When he looked up the Brands Act, where one would naturally expect to find it, he found exactly the old schedule to which he had been accustomed for the last forty years, at any rate—“Number of stock, description of stock, brands and marks.” He never in his life had given all the brands on a beast. He contended, with the hon. member for Dalby, that if the Minister had issued instructions to magistrates, as he said he did—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I did not issue any instructions to magistrates. All I say is to prosecute.

Mr. SOMERSET: If the Minister did not give instructions, the magistrates had given wrong decisions.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Unfortunately, owing to the carelessness of stockowners, they do not care where they put brands. They will not take the trouble, like yourself, to read the Act.

Mr. SOMERSET: He had known the Act all the time.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The position of the brands has been entirely changed within the last two years.

Mr. SOMERSET: He knew the position of the brands had changed, but the regulation was not altered, and it ought to carry the same weight it used to carry, and if we gave the last brand with other brands, that was sufficient to put on any waybill. The regulation he had referred to was—

“I, [name and address of owner] do hereby certify that I am the owner of the stock mentioned in the schedule below, for the purpose of their being travelled from [place or run] to [destination] consigned to [consignee], and that such stock will travel by [rail or road or both, and route to be taken].”

and then they gave the number of the stock, the description, and the brands or marks. The regulation regarding waybills read—

“Every owner of travelling stock shall, before starting on his journey, provide himself with a waybill in the form in the ninth schedule hereto, and shall carry such waybill, together with the permit issued by the inspector, until the stock have arrived at their destination, and shall produce the same at the request of any inspector, police officer, or justice of the peace.”

And then there were instructions about an

interim waybill, and so forth. That was exactly as it used to be ever since he could remember. The matter was causing a great deal of heart-burning among the stock owners. They were very dissatisfied and did not know where they were. If the Minister would only listen to him, he would make a suggestion. Why not end the trouble by the issue of a pamphlet which would be comprehensive enough to contain the actual Act and the schedule, and state clearly what was meant by “interval” and “within,” and so on? He remembered a law case, when he was in New South Wales, which took up considerable time in the courts at Grafton. It was about the word “whenever.” A storekeeper had bought corn from a farmer, and he agreed to pay for it whenever it was delivered, and the farmer was naturally after his money when the first delivery was made, and the storekeeper refused to pay him. It turned out that one man was Scotch and the other English, and they both had a different meaning of the word “whenever,” and the judge was sensible enough to have the case settled out of court. It was the same with regard to these words “within” and “interval,” and the Stock Department inspectors did not understand the difference between the two. He thought, if his suggestion were adopted and a guide was issued, something like “The Drovers’ Guide,” issued by Mr. E. R. Gordon, it would save a lot of trouble. Why should these schedules be in the Diseases in Stock Act instead of in the Brands Act, when they related to brands? It was clearly shown in the printed document he had there from the Minister in answer to his questions “the provisions of the Brands Act and regulations thereunder,” and the regulations were not under the Brands Act, but under the Diseases in Stock Act.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: After the very exhaustive discussion hon. members had been pleased to devote to the first item of the Department of Agriculture, he supposed they would consider it discourteous of him if he did not reply to them. First of all, he would like to say that most hon. members on the other side had expressed a somewhat qualified commendation of the way in which the department was being run, and other hon. members had even gone one better than that. Hon. members had drawn attention to many things which they considered inadvisable, and so on, and a great deal of talk was made about the loss of Mr. Bailey, who was the Government Botanist, and also curator of the Brisbane Botanic Gardens. No one was more grieved than he when Mr. Bailey was leaving the State, but he could not be kept here. He was determined to leave for Adelaide. He was a native of that city, and he desired to return thereto. Possibly, if they had offered him a substantial increase, they might have been able to retain his services, but his heart was set on getting back to Adelaide. They had Mr. Bick—a good man—to succeed him, a man who had been trained by Mr. Bailey, and the position of Government Botanist had now been conferred upon Mr. White, who was trained by the old Mr. Bailey.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: A grandson of Mr. Bailey.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes; and he had a more intimate knowledge of the botany of Queensland than any man, however skilled, could obtain in anything like two years. So he thought they were quite right in retaining the services of Mr.

Hon. W. Lennon.]

White in that position. A good deal had been said about the need for more experimentation. That was all very well, but experiments cost a great amount of money. They had conducted an experiment at Wallumbilla in regard to the feeding value of prickly-pear, and he was very sorry the board of experts who had control of that matter under the Minister had not yet completed their report. He would have been much more pleased if he had been able to table the report before the discussion on the Estimates. But when he came to think of the amount of discussion that had taken place on the Under Secretary's report, he thought perhaps they would get on very much better if they had no reports at all. Hon. members set most of their comments on the report of the Under Secretary instead of on the Estimates themselves. They had had such long discussions about the flora and fauna, and so on, and one hon. gentleman had discussed the flora so long that he was reminded of the old song, "Ye shepherds, tell me, has my Flora passed this way?" He thought this should be more of a business discussion dealing with the expenditure. One hon. member called attention to the large expenditure by the department on the Gatton College chiefly, and whilst it did cost a good deal to run it, the fact must not be overlooked that it was an educational establishment which in many respects did not bring in any return. But it was not all loss. One of the items he would like to call attention to was this: From the inception of the college up till the 30th June, 1917, the total expenditure on the college was £208,926, and the receipts since its establishment amounted to £59,418. The receipts for last year were £4,200, and though it might cost £11,000 to run the college this year, that amount was brought down a good deal by the return. At the present time they were not only providing instruction in poultry-raising to soldiers, but they were also giving lectures there to grown-up farmers, and to their own stock inspectors who went there to get instruction in many things, and the lectures given to farmers there were so highly appreciated that he had been asked to afford similar facilities for instruction by giving lectures at the Yecrongpilly Experiment Station. He was sorry to say those lectures had not been availed of to a sufficient extent to justify him in going on with it. Some hon. members advocated an increase in the vote for the department. He was quite in accord with them on that. He advocated the same thing when on that side of the House. The hon. member for Murilla spoke about wheat, and said the present Government had not done so much for the farmers as the preceding Government. The hon. gentleman should be more careful. If he brought in the fact that they spent money in ploughing the land, perhaps he was justified, but the present Government spent very much more money for seed wheat than the preceding Government. For example, in 1916 they purchased 98,500 bushels of wheat, costing £30,700, and they distributed it among 1,389 farmers, whereas the preceding Government bought about equal to half that value, and only distributed it among 800 odd farmers. So he considered the present Government's benefits were wider spread, and consequently more generally beneficial. In addition, they spent the sum of £13,410 in the purchase of fodder, which they supplied to dairymen for the purpose of preserving their stock from starvation. Referring again to the matter of the purchase of wheat this year, to which the

[Hon. W. Lennon.

hon. the leader of the Opposition took exception, he would like to remind the hon. member that there was £50,000 owing to the department for wheat already distributed.

Hon. J. TOLME: Did I not make a suggestion to accept debentures?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Anyone who knew anything about the farmer knew he was continually issuing promissory notes, which was his kind of debenture, and unfortunately he was not always able to meet them, and he (Mr. Lennon) did not see how the farmer's position would be improved by giving him further facilities for "flying kites," as it was termed. Of course, he was well aware the leader of the Opposition was in a jocular mood when [10 p.m.] he made that suggestion. He did not seriously mean that.

Reference had been made to the very serious loss of some 400 head of cattle at Chinchilla, which had been dipped under Government supervision. It was proved that the liquid used in the dip was three times the proper standard strength, which resulted no doubt in the destruction of those cattle. A claim was made upon the department, and the department had to stand up to it. It was a great pity that people who were in charge of important work of that sort were not more careful, and more frequently tested the strength of the liquid they were using in their dips, so that they did not involve the Government in such very serious loss. Reference had been made to bird life in Queensland, and that more care should be taken to conserve it. He did not think any greater care had been taken by his predecessors than he had taken. He had added to the list of protected birds. The hon. member for Rockhampton desired to see placards warning people about the birds. Throughout his own district he had placards printed in the Italian language, so that the new arrivals in the State should be made acquainted with the fact that bird life must be protected. Attention had been called to the necessity of giving greater attention to the growth of cotton. He had done everything possible in the matter, and had distributed more seed than had ever been distributed before. The production of cotton last year was three times more than the year before, and the production this year would probably be twice what it was last year. There was a good market for cotton at the moment, which was brought about by the unfortunate conditions prevailing, and, perhaps, when those conditions had passed away cotton would not maintain its price, and cotton-growing would not be so profitable as now. He regarded cotton as a good adjunct to a farm. He regarded 5 or 10 acres of cotton as the maximum in conjunction with other things. They were offering the farmers every reasonable encouragement to go in for the production of cotton.

With regard to the pest of blowflies, reference had been made to the fact that they were only able to produce 64,000 flies in the three traps. He thought he was safe in saying that the Agricultural Department in Queensland was the very first in Australia to attack the subject of a fly enemy.

MR. GUNN: Those traps were invented by a New South Wales gentleman.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We were the first to buy them and make the effort. He had been urged to make more

inquiries and do something to cope more effectively with the blowfly pest. He regarded it as a serious menace to Queensland. They had had three experts for a considerable time devoting a good deal of study to the question of having a more effective lure to attract the fly.

The hon. member for Carnarvon referred to the destruction of the native bear. He (Mr. Lennon) had been pestered with applications from members of the female persuasion, asking him if he had no heart. The hon. member for Carnarvon said, somewhat flippantly, that they allowed bears and opossums to be slaughtered in the hope of extinguishing the national debt. They had continued the close seasons for the whole year after they took office; and last year they shortened the whole of the close season to two months, but they were informed that in many parts of the State there were a large number of opossums, which injured the fruit. Certainly, the bear was not so harmful. He was assured that there had been a fair number of very old men, who were unable to make a living by hard labouring work, who felt they ought not to be denied the privilege of having an opportunity for two or three months in the year to get opossums and bears. He would make no promise that he would close the season all the time in regard to opossums, but he proposed to give a little further rest to destruction of the bear.

Something had been said about the necessity for abattoirs. They were charged by hon. members opposite with being great advocates for the establishment of abattoirs in days gone by. He still thought Government abattoirs ought to be established, and they would have been begun before this but for the fact that under present conditions the State butcher shops were not supplied by bullocks killed for State purposes, but by meat from the meatworks. Moreover, it was not quite certain that they had chosen the proper site for the State abattoirs. It was thought by some people that they ought to be established on the river bank. In view of the scarcity of cash, he thought the Government had been wise in not pushing on with expenditure in that direction. It would probably mean a quarter of a million of money for up-to-date abattoirs on the same line as those at Adelaide, which he had inspected—abattoirs similar to which would suit Queensland.

They were taking very vigorous action with regard to ticks, although they did not hope to please everybody in that matter. In fact, no sooner had he come to a decision to take more vigorous action in connection with tick eradication than he immediately received petitions asking him not to go on from people who said they were going to be ruined. The tick was a serious menace. The tick flourished in a season like the present. He was informed from reliable sources that there were sporadic appearances of ticks in the North, where they had never been known hitherto. They had been discovered somewhere near Boulia, which had been regarded as a clean area. Consequently, drastic efforts would be required in this matter, and they had determined to erect several dips along the Northern Territory border, because there was a lot of cattle in that district, the owners of which desired to bring them into Queensland, and the Stock Department had prevented their entry for

some time past. The time might come when cattle in the Northern Territory might be indispensable to Queensland if the meatworks were to be kept fully supplied. The hon. member for Murrumba had dealt with the matter of dingoes, blowflies, and ticks. With regard to dingoes: Last year they had intended to amend the Marsupials Act, but hon. members opposite did not encourage him very much in the matter. The Bill was turned down in another place, no doubt at the instigation of hon. members opposite. That Bill proposed to make a level fee of £1 per dingo scalp; and since it had been rejected a large number of pastoralists had told him that they regretted very much the action of the Opposition in defeating the Bill. So much had been said about butter that one hardly liked to go into the question, but it would be unfair for him to let pass the opportunity of replying to some of the statements made to-night. On a former occasion the department was challenged on its so-called bad administration, and the whole thing was discussed so exhaustively, and had been talked of continuously ever since, that he was heartily sick of it; but he thought that perhaps he might say something further on the subject.

They had been told that that Government was determined to ruin the co-operative companies. He would like to make a comparison between the work of the department and the work of some of the co-operative companies. He had nothing but the friendliest feelings for the co-operative companies; but seeing that hon. gentlemen opposite had persisted in the statement, he would give them this comparison. He thought it would be unwise to name the particular company, but any member could see for himself what company it was, if he so desired. Comparing the department's transactions with those of a prominent co-operative company, the position appears very favourable to the department. The company consigned 17,614 boxes, the gross realisation of which was £76,111 (£4 6s. per box), and the charges against London consignments totalled £12,707, or 16.7 per cent. The department consigned 29,010 boxes, the gross realisation of which was £141,921 (£4 16s. per box), and the charges against London consignments totalled £11,859, or 8.3 per cent. That was a fraction less than half the charges made by the co-operative company. What had hon. gentlemen opposite to say to that? Those were facts which could be verified. They had heard some acrimonious discussion on the question of the promise on which butter had been sold in London. The managers of the business in Brisbane offered that butter to the Imperial Government at 149s. 4d. per cwt., but they got 151s. The average net price of butter sold in London by the Queensland Government was 179s. 4d. per cwt., being 28s. per cwt. more than the price voluntarily accepted by the butter producers through their agents. The Imperial Government had just agreed to pay 151s. per cwt. f.o.b. for 30,000 tons of Australian butter, which was offered them at 149s. 4d. That was another benefit conferred upon buttermen; but they could not get gratitude from the buttermen. If the hon. member for Drayton was a fair sample of the butterman, he did not know what gratitude was, nor did he know what decency in debate was.

Mr. VOWLES: What are the dates?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It was probable the sales were effected over

Hon. W. Lennon.]

the same period. There was no fluctuation in favour of either consignor. To show the kindly manner in which the department had treated the butter transaction, they were out of pocket an average of over £50,000; at one time it ran up to as much as £120,300. For a term of six months they were out of pocket £50,000; and that would come to £1,250, even at 5 per cent. They had not charged a brass farthing. Did they get any thanks for that? No. Instead of getting thanks, to which they were well and justly entitled, they got nothing but abuse—and ignorant abuse, too. He would like, also, to point out, that although the hon. member for Drayton objected to the term "profits" and said it should have been called "surplus," that was only a mere quibble, because he had there a balance-sheet of a co-operative company which used the term "profits." Everybody used that term; they could not get away from it. Comment also had been made on the method of distribution adopted by the Government. In the first place, unquestionably they made a blunder when they distributed a surplus, or profit, on the first butter secured by the Government; they simply gave it back to the companies from whom they had taken the butter. When they came to the second and larger transaction, dealing with a very considerable sum of money—£30,000—they adopted the plan of giving it to all the butter-producing factories in the State; because, although they had not actually sent any butter to London, they were just as much entitled to get a share of the surplus as those who did; because those who did send butter to London were the people who had the benefit arising from that trade. It must be remembered that some of those people never provided any butter for the local market. They would not have operated under the Control of Trade Act at all but for the fact that the butter agents here would not keep the Brisbane consumers supplied with butter. He had no less than fifteen complaints at his office on one day that they could not get butter. If they had chosen they could have taken legal proceedings against that butter agent and had him fined £500. But they were not a vindictive Government, and did not want to do things of that kind. They acted as they did merely because they were driven to it. They could not get the butter men to act in a proper way. They had undertaken to keep the local consumer supplied at the proclaimed price, and when it suited them they flouted that arrangement—hence the Government intervention. The distribution of £32,000 (surplus on account of butter acquired during 1915 and 1916 under the Control of Trade Act of 1914), on basis of butter (all grades) manufactured during the months June-October, 1916, both inclusive, by all Queensland factories, was as follows:—

Esk Co-operative Dairy Company, Limited	£372	5	11
Bundaberg Co-operative Dairy Company	455	7	6
Maclagan Valley Co-operative Dairy Company, Limited	223	1	0
Pioneer Butter Factory, North Ipswich (A. M. Linton)	36	3	6
Chinchilla Co-operative Dairy Company, Limited	143	3	11
Warwick Butter and Dairy Company, Limited	1,653	16	1
Oakey District Co-operative Butter Company, Limited	621	19	0

[Hon. W. Lennon.

Kin Kin Co-operative Dairy Company, Limited	481	12	0
Roma Co-operative Dairy Company, Limited	116	11	0
Queensland Farmers' Co-operative Company, Limited (Booval, etc.)	4,436	6	6
Silverwood Butter Factory Company, Limited, Gatton	1,082	10	0
Terror's Creek and Samson Vale Co-operative Company, Limited, Terror's Creek	126	12	9
Premier Butter Factory Company, Limited, South Brisbane	319	18	11
Farmers and Producers' Co-operative Company, Limited, Rockhampton	138	14	7
Caboolture Co-operative Company, Limited	3,017	12	0
Maleny Co-operative Dairy Company, Limited	906	1	10
Marburg Butter Factory (A. L. Frederick)	421	14	8
Killarney Dairy Company, Limited	105	4	1
Stanley River Co-operative Company, Limited, Woodford	378	3	11
Southern Queensland Co-operative Dairy Company, Limited, Kingston	2,427	0	10
Nanango Co-operative Dairy Company, Limited	396	0	6
Logan and Albert Co-operative Company, Limited, Beaudesert	1,181	18	3
Maryborough Co-operative Dairy Company, Limited	2,860	4	8
Rockhampton District Co-operative Dairy Company, Limited	314	11	10
Atherton Tableland Co-operative Butter and Bacon Company, Limited	1,144	13	8
Gayndah Co-operative Dairy Company, Limited	339	14	1
Crow's Nest Butter Company, Limited	443	14	9
Pommer Bros. (Ipswich Ice and Butter Factory)	101	12	6
Port Curtis Co-operative Dairy Company, Limited	486	9	6
Downs Co-operative Dairy Company, Toowoomba	2,956	9	1
Wide Bay Co-operative Dairy Company, Limited, Gympie	1,690	7	5
Goombungee Co-operative Dairy Company, Limited	532	3	3
South Burnett Co-operative Dairy Company, Limited, Mursion	1,534	8	6
W. Siemon and Sons, Limited, Wallcon	547	12	0

Mr. BARNES: Does it not strike you that that emphasises the loss made by dairymen in consequence of the butter having been acquired under the prices?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He maintained that the butter people had got a better price for their butter the whole of the time that Government had been in power than they had got at any other time.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear! and Opposition dissent.

Question put and passed.

AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE moved—That £11,341 be granted on account of "Agricultural College."

Mr. MORGAN: When are you going to make this college more attractive to students?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He would make it more attractive when the war was over. They could not attract people now; the world was out of joint. They had done their best. They were going to enlarge considerably the payment for the [10.30 p.m.] then competition for a single hen.

They also were going to make several indispensable additions to the dairy, so that they might cope with conditions that had arisen owing to the closing of the Silverwood factory. They were going to take the cream from the farmers in the neighbourhood of Gatton, and treat it at the Gatton College.

Question put and passed.

CHEMICAL LABORATORY.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE moved—That £2,660 be granted on account of "Chemical Laboratory." Last year they voted £2,556 and they spent £2,532.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE, the following items were agreed to without debate:—

"Dairy Produce Acts," £9,000.

"Diseases in Plants Act," £4,442.

"Slaughtering Act," £6,980.

STATE FARMS AND GARDENS.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE moved—That £14,705 be granted for "State Farms and Gardens."

Mr. MORGAN rose to a point of order. He wanted to call the attention of the Chairman to the clock, which showed that the time was after half-past 10.

The TREASURER: We can go on as long as we like. This is not an allotted day.

Question put and passed.

MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE moved—That £5,600 be granted for "Miscellaneous Services."

Mr. MORGAN: He wanted some information on this vote. He noticed that last year there was a vote of £1,100 for prickly-pear feeding experiments at Wallumbilla, and this year the amount was only £250. He wanted to know what benefit the directors of Queensland got out of the expenditure last year. In his opinion, the money was absolutely wasted.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Why do you not get the report before you criticise? It is not yet printed.

Mr. MORGAN: The Minister did not know what was happening in the department. It had not only appeared in print, but in a portion of the Press.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: A progress report.

Mr. MORGAN: What was the result? The stock, they knew, had been sold in the Brisbane yards, and everything had been made public. The progress report contained practically the whole of the information.

They had been told that nothing had been discovered other than that they already knew. People in his district who knew anything about prickly-pear knew that people had been mixing prickly-pear with pollard and other foods for years. Then they found that an item last year was £1,250 for the purchase of seed maize to assist farmers. This year there was nothing.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You have already made a song about that. Why whine about it any more?

Mr. MORGAN: The Agricultural Department's Estimates, the most important, in his opinion, next to the Lands Department Estimates, were being rushed through, whilst they had spent two or three days in discussing the Education Department Estimates, because there had been an arrangement.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What do you want to know?

Mr. MORGAN: He wanted a lot of information that the Minister had deliberately cut out, because the Treasurer was insisting that the vote should go through. It was the old farmer who had to suffer all the time. In that House he was the last man to be considered, but at election time he was called the backbone of the country. Here was the Agricultural Department, which had always been the Cinderella of the departments, and they could not find time to discuss it, although they were depending wholly and solely on their primary industries.

Mr. WEIR: Why do you not go to the pictures?

Mr. MORGAN: The hon. member was always at the pictures. They saw Charlie Chaplin every time they went. And anyhow, he thought he was just as regular in his attendance as the hon. member, and put more work in than he did. He was looking after a different section of the community. He was looking after the main section of the community, the man who went into the bush and struggled to make a living. That was the man who had never received the consideration he should get from the House. He objected very strongly to what had happened that night.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He thought the hon. member was not justified in hurling such a tirade of abuse about the way in which he had been treated and the way the man on the land had been treated. They had started the first item in that department at twenty-five minutes past 10 o'clock last night, and continued at half-past 3 or thereabouts to-day and continued till about 10 o'clock on one item. Hon. members had ranged over the whole scope of the discussion—ticks and blowfly and bears and opossums and flora and fauna. The hon. member himself talked about almost everything under the sun. He thought hon. members had no cause to complain about having their speeches curtailed.

Question put and passed.

DEPARTMENT OF MINES.

CHIEF OFFICE.

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*) moved—That £10,878 be granted for "Department of Mines—Chief Office." The vote last year was £9,038. The alteration was made up largely of increases in postages and telegrams and railway fares and freights, brought about by the inspections on various mining fields.

Hon. E. G. Theodore. }

Colonel RANKIN: He was under the impression that when they finished the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture they were going on with the Cane Prices Bill, which they were very anxious to see returned to the Council. Instead of that, they were starting with another set of Estimates. It seemed that there had been some misunderstanding.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: No misunderstanding. The arrangement was that the Mines Estimates should be through by half-past 10.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: That is so; but I think you might leave them till to-morrow.

The TREASURER: He would agree, if it were understood that they would not take long over them to-morrow.

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

REGULATION OF SUGAR CANE PRICES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move—That you do now leave the chair.

Colonel RANKIN: Mr. Speaker,—Before you leave the chair I should like to make one or two remarks with a view to facilitating the passage of this measure, if it be possible. The hour is late and the period in the session is very late, and it occurred to me that as there are several amendments which I understand the Minister is not prepared to accept—

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member cannot anticipate business in that way.

Colonel RANKIN: Which there is a possibility the Minister may not accept. I was going to suggest the desirableness of the appointment of managers by both Houses to go into the matter, and, if possible, come to a decision.

The TREASURER: It will probably facilitate it more if the Bill is returned to the Council and dealt with there.

Colonel RANKIN: When the Bill was before us last year the Minister pointed out that the reason for dropping the Bill was that certain important amendments which were essential to the carrying out of the principal Act had been so amended by another place that the Bill was practically valueless. The particular matters which the hon. member described last time do not appear in the disagreement between the two Houses this time. I am now referring to a circular which was issued by the Minister.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order in discussing, at this stage, subject-matter which it is proposed to consider in Committee.

Colonel RANKIN: I am not discussing the Bill at all. I am offering certain reasons why it is inadvisable that you should leave the chair at present. The Minister issued a certain circular in the beginning of the year, in which he set out the various matters on which the Upper House had disagreed with this House, and which he considered essential for the proper working of the Bill. I think we are all desirous that the Bill should be passed at the earliest possible moment, and I am suggesting that we should appoint managers for both Houses

with a view to meet the difficulties which have arisen in connection with the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I have no desire to prolong the discussion, but I cannot accept the suggestion of the honourable member, because we have already tried it and found that it did not work. Question put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

(Mr. Birrton, Maree, in the chair.)

On clause 3—“Amendment of section 4”—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE moved—That the Council's amendment on line 21 be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

On clause 4—“Amendment of section 5”—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: With regard to the amendment on lines 18 to 39, he could not accept the amendment, because it might be necessary in emergent cases to have this power. Where sugar-cane became damaged, whether by frost or anything else, it should receive proper treatment, and if it should happen that one mill was already dealing with a large quantity of cane and was fully employed, means were provided for sending that cane to some other mill. Therefore, he moved—That the Committee disagree with the amendment.

Mr. SWAYNE: Suppose that the mill to which the cane did not really belong and to which the cane was sent under this provision had already as much cane belonging to its own area as it could cope with, how could they compel that mill to take the other cane?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: If it cannot cope with the cane it will not be asked to do so.

Colonel RANKIN: He did not think this provision, with the exception of the second part, was of any great importance, because the matter it referred to could be dealt with without embodying it in the Bill. With regard to the latter part of the clause, which provided that the Central Board might assign land to another mill or bring new land into the mill area, that was an important matter. He should like to have a provision inserted whereby the owner of the land should have a voice in the matter, and not leave it entirely to the Central Board.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You must realise that it is the owner who will ask for it.

Colonel RANKIN: Not necessarily. It might be the miller who asked for it. However, he did not think the matter was such an important one that they need fight very much over it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They had already experienced what was necessary in this regard. When the South Johnstone Mill started it had to deal with only about 50,000 tons of cane, and they had no board there for the reason that they could only establish a board by getting growers who supplied cane to apply for the formation of a board. That was an example of the necessity for this power. At Inkerman, where the mill area was defined on the basis of the preceding year, which was the system, the area included a lot of pioneers' farms, because it was thought that the pioneers were not going to plant cane, but this year the Inkerman Mill was crushing and was not able to cope with the cane supplied. There would probably be about 50,000 tons

[Colonel Rankin.]

of cane left over on account of the failure of the board to make a reallocation of the area. From these facts it would be seen that the provision was absolutely necessary.

Question put and passed.

On clause 6—"Check chemists"—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE moved—That the Council's amendment on lines 29 and 30 be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE moved—That the Council's amendment on lines 39 and 40 be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE, the Council's amendments on page 6, lines 20 to 25, and on lines 34 to 42 were agreed to.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE moved—That the Council's amendment on lines 43 to 56 be disagreed to, because the amendment did not provide that both parties should have the right of appeal from the Central Board, but only the millowners, and he was not in favour of allowing an appeal by the millowners without granting the same right to the growers.

Colonel RANKIN: Why not give the same right to the grower?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He had prepared the message, and he disagreed to the amendment because it did not provide both parties with a right of appeal. The Council had shown a desire to meet the Assembly in a manner which he keenly appreciated, and he thought they would agree to accept his disagreement with the amendment.

Colonel RANKIN: An amendment might be made by adding the word "grower" after the word "owner," on line 39, so as to make it fair to both parties. He did not know whether the Minister would accept that amendment here, or accept an amendment from another place on the same lines.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE thought it would be wiser to let the thing remain as it was, as next year it would probably be necessary to introduce a consolidating measure, when they might be able to put in several minor amendments which were needed.

Question put and passed.

On clause 7—"Amendment of section 7"—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE moved—That the Council's amendment on lines 8 to 16 be disagreed to. This was the very crux of the whole measure. The members of the Upper House desired to open the door for the parties to contract themselves outside the Bill. It would alter the policy of the Bill altogether. He referred to section 15 of the principal Act in support of this contention.

Colonel RANKIN said the object of the amendment of the Council was simply to confer on any number of growers the right to enter into an agreement with the mill for a term of years, without in any way prejudicially affecting the rights of any other growers supplying cane to the same mill. Nobody would oppose more strongly than himself any proposal that the majority of the growers should be able to impose conditions as to price upon a minority by entering into an agreement, but this merely sought to permit any number of growers to make an agreement with the miller for a

period of years. The whole object of this legislation was merely to secure the grower of cane against any injustice at the hands of the miller. He regretted that the Minister could not see his way to accept the amendment, but it was not of sufficient importance to justify the loss of the Bill, which contained so much good, and, as the Minister had pointed out, a consolidating measure might be introduced next year.

Mr. FOLEY asked, if any growers made an agreement with a miller, would they be able to come under the award if one were made later on?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

Mr. FOLEY pointed out that the growers in his district were asked to make an agreement to supply their cane to Mr. Drysdale's mill for the next five years. The miller would fix the price, and if they [11 p.m.] entered into the agreement they could not come under the award. He hoped the Minister would not accept the amendment of the Council.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE said he had no intention of accepting the amendment. He called the attention of the hon. member for Burrum to the words "No local board shall be or be deemed to be constituted or have jurisdiction with respect to such canegrowers." It was contracting themselves out of the Act and was attacking the Bill at its very foundation. A large number of growers were under obligations to the Colonial Sugar Refining Company and other millers, and they would have to enter into an agreement whether they liked it or not. The Colonial Sugar Refining Company would enter into agreements with the growers for two years, and make other growers jealous so that they would want to enter into agreements and thus kill the Bill. For that reason he could not accept the amendment.

Question put and passed.

On clause 8—"Amendment of section 9"—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE moved that the Council's amendment be agreed to.

Mr. SWAYNE was pleased that the Minister had accepted the amendment. He took exception to the remarks made about the United Canegrowers Association when the clause was going through another place. The members of that body were bona fide canegrowers, and its officials were men who had worked hard for the farmers.

Question put and passed.

On clause 10—"Amendment of section 10"—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE moved that the Council's amendment be disagreed to, but offered to substitute "eighty" for "seventy-five." The Council inserted the words "not exceeding seventy-five per cent. of the estimated value of such sugar-cane," and he was willing to accept 80 per cent.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE, the Council's amendments in clause 12 were agreed to.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE moved—That the Committee disagree to the amendment of the Legislative Council on clause 16, lines 15 to 19. When the Bill was passed through that House, it was intended to overcome some cumbersome provisions in

Hon. W. Lennon.]

the principal Act. The other place had seen fit to strike out the word "Minister" in several places. He felt satisfied, from what he had seen of the attitude of the Council lately, that when they referred that back to them they would accept it as far as that disagreement was concerned.

Question put and passed.

The remaining amendments of the Council were agreed to.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had agreed to certain amendments of the Legislative Council, disagreed to others, and proposed further amendments.

The Bill was ordered to be returned to the Legislative Council with the following message:—

"Mr. President,—

"The Legislative Assembly, having had under consideration the Legislative Council's amendments in the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act Amendment Bill, beg now to intimate that they—

"Disagree to the amendment in clause 4, lines 18 to 27—because it may be necessary in emergent cases to have such power.

"Disagree to the amendment, lines 28 to 39—because circumstances have shown the necessity of this provision—as, for instance, the case of the Inkerman cane-growers during the present season; also, persons growing cane for the first time, or who have not been previously allotted to any mill. Further, where a mill ceases operations before all allotted cane has been delivered.

"Disagree to that portion of the addition to clause 6, contained in lines 43 to 56, page 6—because the amendment does not provide both parties with the right of appeal.

"Disagree to the addition to clause 7, lines 8 to 16—because the proposal is contrary to the policy of the Act, vide section 15 of the Principal Act.

"Disagree to the amendment in clause 12, page 10, lines 52 and 53, but offer to substitute the word 'eighty' for the words 'seventy-five' on line 52.

"In which substitution they invite the concurrence of the Legislative Council.

"Disagree to the amendment on page 11, lines 19 to 24, but offer to substitute the word 'eighty' for the words 'seventy-five' on line 22.

"In which substitution they invite the concurrence of the Legislative Council.

"Disagree to the amendments in clause 16—because the amendment proposed was designed to overcome a cumbersome provision of the principal Act; and

"Agree to all other amendments in the Bill.

"W. McCORMACK,

"Speaker.

"Legislative Assembly Chamber,

"Brisbane, 29th November, 1917."

STATE IRON AND STEEL WORKS BILL

MESSAGE FROM COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council, returning this Bill with amendments.

The consideration of the Council's message was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

The House adjourned at twenty minutes after 11 o'clock p.m.

[Hon. W. Lennon.