

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Council

TUESDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER 1919

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

TUESDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER, 1919.

The PRESIDENT (Hon. W. Hamilton) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock p.m.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.**CHANGES IN CABINET.**

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones): I have to announce that to-day the following changes in the personnel of the Cabinet of this State have taken place. The resignations of the Hon. William Lennon, Herbert Freemont Hardacre, as Secretary for Agriculture and Stock, and Secretary for Public Instruction, respectively, and as members of the Executive Council, and the resignation of the Hon. John Huxham as Home Secretary, have been accepted by His Excellency the Governor; and that His Excellency has appointed the Hon. John Huxham, Hon. William Neal Gillies, and Hon. William McCormack to be Secretary for Public Instruction, Secretary for Agriculture and Stock, and Home Secretary respectively; and the Hon. William McCormack and the Hon. James Larcombe to be members of the Executive Council. I lay on the table of the House a copy of the "Government Gazette" (Extraordinary) issued to-day, and containing the notification of these changes.

PAPER.

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

Report of the Chief Inspector of Machinery and Scaffolding for the year ended 30th June, 1919.

QUESTION.**PRINTING OF PETITION RE FISH SUPPLY ACT.**

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: On Wednesday last the Council decided that a petition which was presented to this House should be printed. I would like to ask whether that has been done, and, if so, why it has not been circulated with the ordinary papers?

The PRESIDENT: The Clerk informs me that the petition was sent to the Government Printing Office, but has not yet been returned. It will have to take its chance there the same as other papers; but it may be expected any day.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS.

HON. R. BEDFORD: I desire to make a personal explanation.

The PRESIDENT: Is it the wish of the Council that the hon. gentleman be allowed to make a personal explanation?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. R. BEDFORD: Forty-eight hours after seconding the Address in Reply, my arrangements having already been made to proceed North, and my movements being governed, as may well be imagined, by the

fact of shipping complications, I left Brisbane for the North; and I read that a few days later the Hon. Mr. Fowles, when speaking on some question, spoke of the ordinary traditions requiring the presence of the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply, and commented on the fact that I was not present when the Address in Reply was presented to His Excellency. The hon. member said that I had been guilty of a discourtesy to the Governor. I think I made it clear at the beginning of my speech that, having all personal respect for the Governor as a man, it did not preclude me from being in favour of the abolition of the office of the Governor.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The hon. gentleman cannot make a speech. He can make a personal explanation without going into very lengthy details.

HON. R. BEDFORD: There was no desire on my part to show discourtesy to any man, and the only discourtesy was shown by the Hon. Mr. Fowles, who raised the question for purely political purposes.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Order!

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: You know that is not true.

HON. R. BEDFORD: You do not know the truth when you hear it. I also have to make a personal explanation with reference to a statement made by the Hon. Mr. Leahy, to the effect that it was far more probable I had gone to the North to make a strike rather than end one.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Wasn't that true?

HON. R. BEDFORD: I am neither a strike-maker nor a strike-breaker. If I were, I would come right out into the open, and not do as the hon. gentleman does, seeing he was a secret anti-conscriptionist, but was afraid to come out into the open.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Order! The hon. gentleman, in making a personal explanation, must conform to the rules of the House.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: I would ask permission to make a very brief explanation. (Laughter.) I wish to refer to what the Hon. Mr. Bedford has just said.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. gentleman will have to get permission from the Council to make a personal explanation. Is it the wish of the Council that the hon. gentleman be allowed to make a personal explanation?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. P. J. LEAHY: All I wish to say is that the remark I made was merely by way of interjection. I did not think the hon. gentleman would take it seriously; if he has no sense of humour, I cannot help him.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I have nothing to explain. (Laughter.)

THE FISH SUPPLY ACT.

MOTION TO GRANT PRAYER OF PETITION— RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

On the Order of the Day being called for the resumption of the adjourned debate on Mr. Fowles's motion—

"1. That the prayer of the petition from the representatives of the fish

industry in this State, or so much as may be deemed reasonable and just to this Council, be granted.

"2. That the regulations relating to the fish industry, and promulgated on 16th May, 1919, in the 'Queensland Government Gazette,' No. 175, be amended, and in particular that numbers 36, 41, 44, 62, 74, 75, 78, 96, 97, 98, 105, 106, 107, be disallowed by this Council.

"3. That independent inspection of fish be arranged, and that other convenient markets be provided to which suppliers could send their fish, if they so desired, and have them inspected without loss of time or detriment to the public."

HON. T. L. JONES said: I rise to oppose the motion, and in doing so I wish to challenge the bona fides of the petitioners and of the petition, and will seek to prove that the object of the motion is not to remove alleged grievances or to remedy conditions which are said to be unsatisfactory—but which, I submit, have not been proved to be so—but actually to seek to destroy and undermine the whole of the State enterprise which, if carried on for a sufficient length of time to enable it to be put into proper working order, will unquestionably effect the object for which it was established—first of all, the provision of a regular supply of fish to the consuming public of Queensland, and at the same time to ensure to the producers, the fishermen already in the industry, a fair return for their labour. I ask, in the first place, that consideration be given to the regulations which are sought to be destroyed by paragraph (2) of the motion. Taking these in their order, Regulation 36 provides for a scale of market dues and charges, which it is alleged are very heavy and a burden upon the producer, and have led to an increase in the cost of fish to the consumer. That I will deal with a little later on. Regulation 41 refers to the place of inspection of the fish. It reads—

"The Metropolitan Fish Market is hereby appointed as the place for the inspection of all fish brought into the metropolitan fish supply district."

If the motion is carried, that regulation will be disallowed.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: And an amended regulation put in its place.

HON. T. L. JONES: The hon. member has no power to put another regulation in its place. He is simply seeking to destroy the regulation, and, incidentally, to destroy the whole of the Government enterprise.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Not at all; we are giving them a week to frame amended regulations.

HON. T. L. JONES: I took the opportunity of going over the propaganda the hon. gentleman has carried on and the speech he delivered last week, and it seems to me that that is his object—not the motive he alleged when submitting the motion to the House. If regulation 44 is annulled, that will destroy the whole scale of fees in connection with the inspection of fish. The annulment of regulation 62 will destroy the power of the board to license hawkers and itinerant vendors of fish. That is the most dangerous proposal in the motion.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: No; the Government will amend that regulation in the way we desire.

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HON. T. L. JONES: In the speech of the hon. gentleman he did not suggest any amendment of the regulation.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I am not the Government yet.

HON. T. L. JONES: If the hon. gentleman seeks to destroy something, surely it is his duty to suggest what he proposes to put in its place, otherwise he cannot expect this Chamber to accept his advice. If the hon. member seeks to annul a regulation we are justified in saying that he seeks to destroy that regulation, and, as I say, ultimately to destroy the enterprise. The hon. member desires you to pass a motion which will remove from the Government the power of controlling this industry—the power to register hawkers and itinerant vendors, and to grant permits.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: We are not here to do that.

HON. T. L. JONES: You are here to destroy.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: No, we are here to disallow, and the Government can issue amended regulations.

HON. T. L. JONES: I think the hon. gentleman's motion will not be carried. I have dealt with Regulation 62, which deals with the licensing of hawkers and the control of those who have the distribution of fish. It is patent to anyone that such a power is absolutely necessary—that there must be control over the hawkers. If the system of licensing were abandoned, practically free trade in the distribution of fish would be allowed, and the distribution of fish would not be carried out in a satisfactory and decent manner. Regulation 74 provides for the licensing of fish vendors. This regulation also the hon. gentleman proposes to annul, and he does not suggest anything to take its place. I have carefully read the speech delivered by the hon. gentleman, and I can say that he did not suggest anything which might be put in the place of that regulation. Regulations 62, 74, and 75 deal with fishmongers and fish vendors, and provide for the issue of permits to such persons. The Hon. Mr. Fowles would destroy the valuable power which those regulations give to the Government.

HON. B. FAHEY: Will the hon. gentleman be good enough to read those regulations?

HON. T. L. JONES: Which one?

HON. B. FAHEY: The one the hon. gentleman says will destroy the enterprise.

HON. T. L. JONES: Regulation 62 is headed, "Hawkers and itinerant vendors of fish to obtain—(a) registration; (b) permit," and the regulation itself reads as follows:—

"Every person who intends to carry on within a district the trade, business, or occupation of hawking and itinerant vending of fish shall first obtain from the Commissioner, or the manager, inspector, officer in charge, or other duly authorised officer—

(a) Registration as a hawker or itinerant vendor of fish;

(b) A permit so to do upon each and every occasion of such hawking or itinerant vending.

"The Commissioner may refuse to grant such registration and permit without assigning any reason."

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* Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: Yes, "Without assigning any reason."

HON. T. L. JONES: If the hon. gentleman objects to the last two lines, why does he propose to annul the whole regulation?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: You cannot annul part of a regulation.

HON. T. L. JONES: The hon. gentleman also proposes to annul other regulations dealing with the same thing. I do not know whether the Hon. Mr. Fahey desires me to read Regulation 74, which is a somewhat lengthy one. Regulation 75 is headed, "Fishmonger's and fish vendor's premises and equipment may be inspected." The regulation reads thus—

"The manager or any officer authorised by him shall have power to enter the premises of any fishmonger or fish vendor within the district at all times during which such fishmonger or fish vendor is open for the sale of fish to inspect any fish therein, and to examine all places, vessels, receptacles, or utensils used for storing, keeping, or holding fish. The manager or such other officer may stop and inspect any barrow, cart, or other vehicle, container, or conveyance used by any fishmonger or fish vendor, and the driver or person in charge of any such cart, barrow, or other vehicle, container, or conveyance shall stop the same when so required by the manager or such officer, and shall permit inspection to be made thereof and of any fish therein."

The Hon. Mr. Fowles cannot say that it is only the last line of that regulation that he objects to. He proposes to annul the whole of the regulation, which would remove from the Government the power of doing what that provision authorises them to do. It is a most necessary power.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Fish are inspected now under the Health Act, the Factories and Shops Act, and the Pure Foods Act.

HON. T. L. JONES: I have read what the hon. gentleman suggested with regard to inspection. But I would remind him that under the Dairy Produce Act dairy inspectors have to exercise the same power of inspection. Fish is a commodity which requires special inspection; it quickly deteriorates, and it should be kept under special conditions. Yet the hon. gentleman singles out that provision, and gives as a reason for disallowing it that the inspection of fish is already provided for.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: How many inspectors do you want?

HON. T. L. JONES: We want as many inspectors as are necessary to secure the keeping and distribution of fish in a sound condition, and just as the hon. gentleman is in favour of having special inspectors in connection with dairy produce, I think it is necessary to have special inspectors with regard to fish. No one advocated more strongly than the hon. gentleman that there should be special inspectors of butter for the purpose of seeing that only the highest grade of butter reached the consumer. There is a direct parallel between the two commodities, and the hon. gentleman is not consistent when he makes the objection with regard to regulation 75 that inspection is already provided for. Regulation 78 says—

"Any holder of a license under this

Act who is convicted of an offence under these regulations shall be liable, at the discretion of the Commissioner, to have his license cancelled, in addition to any other punishment that may be inflicted upon him."

The power given there is very great, and the punishment may be severe, but it does not follow that the Commissioner will inflict additional punishment for the commission of a first offence. But the hon. gentleman is seeking to eliminate from the regulations the power of the Commissioner to control the licensees and distributors of fish. As I have already said, the existence of that regulation does not mean that the Commissioner will necessarily exercise the power on the commission of a first offence by an individual. We know quite well that there will be warnings by the inspector, probably several warnings, but if a man conducts this very difficult business in a careless manner, so as to be a menace to the public, I think the power to inflict further punishment on the licensee is not too great. It appears to me that the mover of the motion singled out as many of the regulations as he could for annulment. If he had shown that genuine grievances exist, I could understand his taking action and seeking a remedy for those grievances, but he has gone a great deal too far in proposing to annul regulations which are necessary for the proper inspection and distribution of fish. The next regulation the hon. gentleman seeks to annul is regulation 96, headed, "Prawns, crawfish, and crabs, to be brought to the market for inspection." The hon. gentleman in his special pleading did not even quote correctly, as I shall show presently.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: He never does.

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: Doesn't he sometimes do it?

Hon. T. L. JONES: I am not allowed to quote the exact words used by the hon. gentleman in the debate on this motion. The hon. gentleman certainly read the heading of the regulation, but he did not read the regulation itself. The object of the regulation is to ensure the proper cooking of prawns, and to prevent them being kept for a few days and then sold to the public, to the probable injury of the health of the people and possibly loss of life through ptomaine poisoning. Whether the hon. gentleman knows the object of the regulation or not I do not know, but he has rushed in with a motion to destroy that particular regulation. Possibly he has acted hastily; perhaps upon being asked to move the annulment of that particular clause he has done it without realising the real reason of the person who wishes it to be done. The real object of the regulation is perfectly plain and clear, and I am thoroughly satisfied that any member of this Council will see the necessity for it.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Who is the taker of prawns?

Hon. T. L. JONES: The man who goes out with the net and catches them.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: That does not say so.

Hon. T. L. JONES: I do not know whether it is necessary to define that. I think everyone knows it.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Is he to be the vendor?

Hon. T. L. JONES: It is a common phrase among fisherman—the taking of fish. You read in the fishing reports that a man took so many fish with certain bait, and the taker of prawns is the man who goes out with a net and takes them—the prawn-fisher.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Does this apply to everybody, whether a seller or not?

Hon. T. L. JONES: Certainly, the vendor.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Where does it say so? You state that it is the catcher that is concerned.

Hon. T. L. JONES: Certainly, the taker shall send them for inspection to the fish market—the taker himself—before they are offered for sale in a cooked state. The idea is to make the man who catches [4 p.m.] them cook them rather than allow him to sell them to another party who may cook them. They must be cooked when produced at the market, and if they are then unsound they are condemned. If the regulation is annulled, it will be possible for such prawns to be taken for inspection when uncooked—under the Act they have to be inspected because they are included in the general definition of fish—and then to be carelessly handled or neglected for several days, and then cooked or vended to the public. The reason for the clause is quite evident, and I strongly object to its being annulled.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: Read the second half.

Hon. T. L. JONES:

"Crawfish, crabs, and prawns intended for fishing bait need not be so prepared before inspection."

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: There is an open door for escape. The regulation is not worth the paper it is written on.

Hon. T. L. JONES: It is quite obvious that, if prawns are for bait, they will be prepared for that purpose. When the Act says that a certain act is illegal it provides for an inspector who will be there to test the vendor and see that the law is carried out.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: How can you catch him under regulation 96?

Hon. T. L. JONES: You catch him under regulation 97, plainly.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: He can say that it is not intended for bait, and that ends it.

Hon. T. L. JONES: Not at all. In order that every fish vendor might protect himself he would have to prepare it so that it would be obviously for bait. I understand that prawns for bait are generally mixed with sawdust. It is not necessary to annul that regulation to make it more secure. If the hon. member thinks something should follow, so that the prawns or crawfish can be identified as bait, I am quite certain it could be done, and am quite certain that if the department found that their regulations were ineffective in that respect they would make a new regulation; but the fact that they have not done so, and the consideration that it is they who are chiefly concerned with the effectiveness of these regulations, shows that they have ample power to prevent

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prawns and crawfish from being sold in an uncooked state except for bait. Then, why annual regulation 98?—

“The charges payable in connection with the receiving and inspection of prawns, crawfish, and crabs shall be prescribed in schedules A and B referred to in regulations Nos. 36 and 44 of these regulations?”

It proposes to cut out the charges for receiving and inspection. The move is obvious—that there shall be no inspection of prawns, crawfish, and crabs whatever.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Not at all. The petition is against exorbitant charges.

HON. T. L. JONES: The motion moves to eliminate all charges entirely. It is proposed to eliminate also clauses 105, 106, and 107, dealing with the returns. Those returns are quite necessary in order to keep a check on the sale of fish except through the sale of the market.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: But they need to be amended.

HON. T. L. JONES: In order to prevent persons dealing in fish sub rosa and trafficking with buyers without the fish going to the market, it becomes obligatory on the receiver of those fish to make a return, and if he fails he is liable under the regulations as for a breach of the Act. It is most necessary to have those returns, and why they should be eliminated I cannot understand. Under many Acts such returns are necessary. Under the Dairy Produce Act which we have just passed, quite a number of returns and forms have to be filled in—necessary to the good working of the Act and the conduct of the industry. The elimination of these clauses would tend to make the operation of the power of the board ineffective. It would allow leakages, and gradually the control would drift until portion of the fish consumed by the people in the districts under the Act would very likely reach them without being inspected. We might as well then drift back to the old conditions which prevailed before any board was appointed.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: You have got the wrong idea of disallowance altogether.

HON. T. L. JONES: I do not think I have. I have quite as good an idea as the hon. member: I realise the meaning of the resolution, whereas the hon. member seeks to impose on the House some other idea altogether. Now, the petition itself has some rather appealing clauses, but it is a very great question whether the statements therein are justified. I have read the speech of the hon. mover, and I do not think he proved the allegation in paragraph 9 of the petition, which says—

“Notwithstanding the provisions of the Act, only one fish market has been established in the whole of the metropolitan fish supply district, and as a result the fishing industry is grievously hampered.”

I do not think that the statement that the fishing industry is grievously hampered is correct. The hon. member did not produce evidence of it. The fish market is at a central place, and inspection now is also established at Wynnum. An hon. member asked that inspection should be established at all the points where fish are caught. That is scarcely feasible. They are caught at centres in very small quantities, and it would be impossible to have inspectors at all those places.

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At quite a number of places there are men who engage in fishing in a desultory way. They farm sometimes, and they sometimes do a bit of fishing. There are men at Southport who run pleasure boats and sometimes do a little fishing, but they are not debarred, as it was sought to lead the Council to believe, from selling their fish in the local centres.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Without inspection?

HON. T. L. JONES: Yes, without inspection in the local centres. Naturally they would be sold when they were quite fresh. The hon. member seems under the impression that fish are brought from Tewantin to Brisbane and inspected and sent back again, and that the same thing applies to Southport, Wynnum, and other centres. That is not correct. Fishermen are permitted to sell just at the place where the fish are caught.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Without any inspection?

HON. T. L. JONES: Without inspection. What necessity is there for inspection? The hon. gentleman seeks to wipe out the inspection by annulling the regulations, but he is simply horrified at the idea that a fisherman at Southport should be allowed to sell his fish straight off his boat without inspection. I do not say but that in the course of time inspection may not be necessary in these growing centres, when the industry becomes a large one and the distribution is done by second parties; but at the present time the fish is sold in those districts generally by the fishermen themselves, who just sell off their boats.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Have you read section 9 of the Act?

HON. T. L. JONES: Yes.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Then your case is worse than I thought it was.

HON. T. L. JONES: Continuing with the petition, the statement is made—

“The supply is restricted, sound fish are rendered unwholesome by needless and expensive delays, there are no auction sales whatever allowed, conditions are in existence which are unsatisfactory both to the buying public and to the suppliers of fish, and the beneficial objects of the Act are defeated instead of being realised.”

I would ask the Council, in considering that paragraph, to have some regard to the conditions that prevailed before the board was established, and before the fish industry was put under its present control, referring particularly to the statement that the conditions are unsatisfactory to the suppliers of fish. The board was established, and it consists of two representatives of the fishermen, two Government appointees, and an independent chairman. The board decided to establish the principle of collective bargaining, and a price was agreed upon by the fishermen's representatives, who were members of the Fishermen's Association. That price was agreed upon by them as a result of discussion and bargaining. They said, “We will sell all our catch at the price fixed,” and the board undertook to take all their catch. That was the first time on record that the fishermen had ever been assured of a steady price and of an assured market. Never before in the history of the

fish industry in Queensland had the fishermen any assurance that they would get a decent return, or that they would get a sale for their fish, and that a large portion of it would not have to be destroyed. The system in existence prior to the board's taking control of the operations was that the taker of the fish sent his fish to the board and it was submitted to auction. He put upon it a reserve price, which represented to him a return for his labour. That was the price he sought to realise for it; but he had no assurance whatever that he was going to get that price. Frequently the price was not realised. If fish happened to be plentiful, it was not the business of the fish dealers to take that fish. They pleased themselves whether they bought it or not. Their object was to make a profit from the sale of the fish, not primarily to provide the people of the metropolis and the other towns with a plentiful supply of fish at a reasonable price. It was then that the conditions were unsatisfactory for the fishermen, and it was then that the conditions were unsatisfactory for the people of Brisbane and other towns. It was before the Government took action that the conditions complained of in paragraph (9) prevailed.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: And this House held an inquiry.

Hon. T. L. JONES: I know quite well what happened. The hon. gentleman is now trying to undo what was done as a result of that inquiry.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: Not at all.

Hon. T. L. JONES: The conditions before that were simply disgraceful so far as the fishermen's interests were concerned. I need only refer to the statements of such an authority as Mr. Thomas Welsby, who wrote on the question of the fish supply in July, 1917. He then depicted the trials of the fishermen and the miserable wage that they were able to earn from their calling. He said—

"It may be asked: Why do men engage in this trade, seeing that so little is made by them? The question is easily answered. Many now engaged in the trade are the sons or relations of old fishermen, and have learnt their fishing knowledge from early infancy. But the chief charm, if I may call their hard work a charm, is the freedom of the living, the open air, liberty, and, in many cases, the love of the waters. The wages earned by them after all costs, such as motor launch for towing, carrying, and delivering purposes (the motor is not used for casting the net), building the fishing boat, the purchase and repair of nets, the high cost of benzine, etc., all leave but little margin for the living expenses necessary for all. I can honestly say that very few fishermen indeed of those licenced in Brisbane make more than 8s. a day, or say £2 10s. a week, the whole year round. Their life is a hard one in every respect, for summer and winter alike, when a cast has to be made, they are up to their waists in water continually. Their nets are from 180 yards to 200 yards in length, and it needs a big heart as well as a strong arm to pull these nets aboard. Ask them how often the fish are missed, and you would be astonished

at the answer, yet the net has to be hauled all the same, and has to be laid in the boat in proper manner, ready for another cast."

He goes on to say what he knew, from his expert knowledge, of the trials of the fishermen—

"Fishermen pay 10s. a year license fee for themselves, and £1 per year for their boats. These charges may not appear excessive, but the costs, as previously explained, re boats, nets, and benzine, are annually very heavy. Nets are repeatedly torn beyond recognition by sharks, cut shells, etc."

He goes on to speak of the necessity of modern equipment, and of the utter impossibility of these men being able, from their meagre earnings, to get the necessary capital for the purchase of proper equipment, and he points out at the same time that the public were paying an excessively high price for fish. He speaks of a catch of 7 tons, and he says—

"The 7 tons was for a week's catch, and the result in hard-earned wages works out at a farthing and a third of a farthing per pound of fish."

At present there is paid to the fisherman 1 4/5d. per lb. for the fish; cases are supplied to them; they simply put the fish on the railway with a certainty of a market. It is all sold at that price, however much they catch. When it is taken to the railway station, the cases are sent down by the department and they fill the fish into the cases, or they do it at the waterside, and the fish are taken away; and ultimately they receive their certain return of 1 4/5d. per lb. for black bream, 2 7/10d. per lb. for tailor, 3d. per lb. for bream, and 4 1/5d. per lb. for whiting.

Hon. R. BEDFORD: Wet weight.

Hon. T. L. JONES: I believe, as the Hon. Mr. Bedford says, that those prices are paid wet weight, the fish uncutted. That is the return they get. And I ask the Council to observe that they not only get those prices, but they get them for all they can catch. Compare those returns with the conditions which prevailed for the fishermen before the State enterprise was started. I have dealt, I think, fairly conclusively with the claim in paragraph (9) that the conditions are not satisfactory to the suppliers. I believe that Mr. Welsby not long ago made the statement that the work of the board was worthy of a monument being erected in Moreton Bay by the fishermen with the view of recording the advantages which have accrued to them as a result of the operations of the board. A paragraph appeared in the "Courier" this morning, which is very misleading, as other statements in regard to the same subject are misleading. The prices paid to the fishermen for fish are those which I quoted just now. Those are the prices for fish in the gross and on the rails. The "Courier" takes those prices as the prices paid to the fishermen, and compares with them the prices charged to the public. For example, the price paid to the fishermen for bream is 3d. per lb., and the charge to the public is 5½d. per lb.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: 2½d. per lb. advance.

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HON. T. L. JONES: Yes; the suggestion is that the Government make a profit of 2½d. per lb. It is not stated in that paragraph that the price paid by the public is for cleaned fish.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Look at the price of whiting.

HON. T. L. JONES: I have seen the figures, but I would point out to hon. gentlemen that the price paid by the Government is for fish in the gross at the railway station, while the price paid by the public is for cleaned fish. The suggestion in this paragraph, and in the arguments of hon. gentlemen opposite, is that the cost of that fish was 3d. per lb. and that the sale price was 5½d. per lb., and that there was a net profit of 2½d. per lb. to the Government. If the persons who make that suggestion were fair, they would recognise that in the one case the price is for fish in the gross, and that in the other case the price is for cleaned fish which has undergone a complete inspection and has run the market risks. The Government have to take all the fish that is brought to them by fishermen working under the agreement, and that obligation makes the cost fairly heavy. This is particularly worthy of consideration, as the undertaking is practically only in a preliminary stage. I do not think that any reasonable man could expect for a moment that an enterprise of this magnitude should pay on a narrow margin of profit after having been only one year in operation. The suggestion that it should is absurd. Yet this propaganda is continually going on with a view to discredit this State enterprise. I venture to express the opinion that anxiety for the fishermen, or anxiety for the consumer of the fish, is not the cause of this propaganda; but that the reason for it must be found in antagonism to State enterprise. That seems to be the object of the propaganda, and the object of this resolution which seeks to annul certain of the regulations. I shall quote some figures which have been supplied by Mr. Gilmour of the department. Those figures show the prices paid for fish, the cost of handling and marketing, and finish up by showing a very reasonable profit indeed. Take mullet, one of the varieties of fish sold at the market. The present price per tray of 40 lb. is 9s. 6d. To that has to be added freight, the cost of handling, and marketing, which is 25 per cent. on the price paid to the fishermen. That works out at 3s. 2d. per tray of 40 lb. The present wholesale selling price per tray of 40 lb. is 12s. 9d.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Did you say 25 per cent.?

HON. T. L. JONES: Yes.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Twenty-five per cent. on 9s. 6d. is not 3s. 2d.; you are only 1s. out.

HON. T. L. JONES: I should say 25 per cent. of the selling price. Against that there is to be charged freight, cartage, the cost of handling, and the cost of running the market. The present wholesale price is 12s. 8d. per tray of 40 lb. The cost of cleaning for the shops amounts to 1s. The loss in cleaning is 25 per cent. The cost price of placing the fish ready for sale in the shops is 17s. 9d., and the retail selling price is 20s. per tray of 40 lb., or 6d. per lb. The shop profit is 2s. 3d. per tray, or 11¼ per cent. on the selling price.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: That is the profit they are making in the State shop?

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HON. T. L. JONES: In the State shop and in private shops, if the latter sell at the State shop prices, because they both buy at the same price. The State shop is charged for the fish the same rate as is charged to private shops.

HON. T. C. BEIRNE: Do the Government show a net profit on the whole undertaking?

HON. T. L. JONES: I am not able to answer that question, but I should be very much surprised if they were able to show a profit after the industry had been working for twelve months only, especially in view of the fact that such an industry is a fairly big undertaking, and must involve a very considerable expenditure at the very beginning.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Hasn't money been lost on the enterprise?

HON. T. L. JONES: It may be quite true that money has been lost on the enterprise, but there is profit and profit. Some enterprises if properly conducted cannot show a profit, and I think that the fish enterprise, if properly conducted, will never show a profit. We should be perfectly satisfied if we achieve the result of ensuring to the fishermen a ready market and a fair price for all the fish they catch, and see that the fish is properly distributed broadcast, so that it may become a common article of food. It is said by some persons that the enterprise does not show a profit, as if that were the criterion by which to judge an enterprise of this character.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: You show a loss; that is the trouble.

HON. T. L. JONES: We are not prepared to judge everything by pounds, shillings, and pence. Personally, I prefer a very different definition of "profit."

HON. P. J. LEAHY: But the prices are higher than they were before.

HON. T. L. JONES: The hon. gentleman may have an opportunity of proving that. The statement is made in the newspaper this morning that the comparative prices show that the price of fish is higher now than it was before the Government started this enterprise. Perhaps the hon. gentleman will rise in his place, and give us the evidence supporting that contention. We challenge the correctness of those figures. I notice they carefully say that the fish supplied to hotels and boarding-houses, and places of that kind, where large quantities are taken, is dearer than it was previously. But those are not the only people who take fish. In any case, they were always fairly well provided for before, because they could send down to the depôt and buy fairly large quantities. We are looking at it from the standpoint of the general public. I know from my own personal experience that fish is cheaper now than it was before to the general public.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Where can you buy it cheaper?

HON. T. L. JONES: You can buy it cheaper at the State fish shop to-day than you could ever buy it before the board took control of the distribution of fish. It is a matter of common knowledge [4.30 p.m.] to those whose families are only small, and require only a moderate quantity of fish, that they can get it cheaper now. It is utterly useless to base any assumption on the figures which are quoted in the newspapers, because there is no proof in this newspaper, or in the articles

which appeared before, that these were the correct prices.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: You are not refuting it.

HON. T. L. JONES: I am casting great doubt upon the figures, and I say there is no proof of higher prices so far as regards the general public is concerned, and the supply of fish that they buy. I am bringing direct evidence that the fish is cheaper now than it was then. I bought fish ten or fifteen years ago. You never bought it by the lb. then; you always bought it by the fish, and unless you took a scale and weighed it, you did not know how much it was per lb. I know that fish was very dear. It was well known that when fish did not fetch the reserve prices which the fishermen put upon it, it was dumped in the river. It was a scandal. I can remember paragraphs in the papers at different times regarding the fact that fish was destroyed, and that was borne out by—

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Tread very carefully. Fish have been dumped lately.

HON. T. L. JONES: There may be some special reason for that. Fish go bad, but they have not been dumped at the expense of hard-working fishermen in the bay, who formerly used to suffer by the dumping. I do not admit that they have been dumped now. The hon. gentleman says they have, but whereas he may quote one dumping, it is quite an unusual thing, but in the olden times it was quite a common practice, and fish were dumped or sent back to the fishermen at Wynnum or Southport in order that the price might be maintained. The advantage of State enterprise comes in here. In the one case, under private enterprise, the object in view was distinctly to make a profit on the fish, and you could not expect anything else. It is necessary for private enterprise to do it. But the main object of State enterprise is not to make an £ s. d. profit, but to ensure a supply of good fish to the consumer and a reasonable price to the producer. That, I believe, has been accomplished in the enterprise that is being carried on. There are other kinds of fish dealt with in this return. Bream shows a net profit of 10.23 per cent. on the selling price, whiting 21.66 per cent., tailer 13.18 per cent., and black fish 19.44 per cent. Those are the shop profits, and the expense of running the shop has to be deducted from that profit. Those profits are not excessive at the present time, at the cost of carrying on a retail business.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I thought you said Mr. Badger's profits at 4½ per cent. were excessive, and yet you say 19 per cent. is not excessive.

HON. T. L. JONES: This is an entirely different thing. I did not say so, as a matter of fact. One is an assured profit on a public franchise—a monopoly—

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: This is a State monopoly.

HON. T. L. JONES: Not of the same kind. The State shop gets its fish in. The people may come and buy it. There is no certainty assured. In section 9 of the petition it is said that "conditions are unsatisfactory and the beneficial objects of the Act are being defeated." The figures showing the amount of fish handled do not bear out that statement. One of the most prolific of the fish, and that

which is perhaps of the greatest value to the people—principally to the working people—is the sea mullet, because it comes in in large supplies at a time, and the season for it is very certain, and it is a very good article of food. It is a seasonal fish. The season runs from, say, April to July. From April to July in 1917 the amount of mullet which passed through the board under the auction system, where private enterprise operated and bought fish by auction, was 729,921 lb. For the same period of 1918, mullet was sold to the extent of 1,159,837 lb., or an increase of 50 per cent. in the amount of mullet handled. It is pretty safe to say that that increase is not because fish were more plentiful. The fish come along in shoals in the season in about the same quantity. They may vary in particular spots, but, taking the whole coast operated on by the fishermen, you may say there is practically the same amount of fish available in one season as another during those particular months. If you find a 50 per cent. increase in the fish handled and consumed, it is fairly safe to say that it is the result of the improved system of handling and marketing.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: You refer to auction sales; the petition says that there are no auction sales now.

HON. T. L. JONES: That is quite true. Under the old system of auction sales before the fish was dealt with by the board as it is at present, there were 726,921 lb. handled, and an increase of over 50 per cent. was handled owing to the improved conditions and the certain price assured to the fishermen during the same months in 1918 under the operation of the board.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Have you got the returns for 1919?

HON. T. L. JONES: No, I have not got the figures for 1919, but I understand that there is an increase. For the period from April to June, when the fishermen were working under the agreement with the State, and had their price guaranteed and a certain market, they could dispose of all they caught. The operations of the board tended to increase the amount of fish passing to the consumer, and that completely disproves paragraph 9 of the petition, which declares that conditions are in existence which are unsatisfactory both to the buying public and to the suppliers of fish. An effort is being made for country trade. It should be recognised that this is not an enterprise for the benefit of the people of Brisbane only. It has only been in operation a little over twelve months, and it takes time, of course, to establish a system of country trade, but for the fortnight ending 29th August fish was sent to the country towns in the following quantities:—Toowoomba, 9,400 lb.; Warwick, 4,372 lb.; Dalby, 1,893 lb.; and Roma, 1,720 lb.; or a total of 17,385 lb., making 454½ trays. I am informed that the agent at Warwick telegraphed down the day after he had the consignment, saying that it was a huge success, and was completely sold out in two hours, which shows that something is being done to cater for the people in the country as well as those in the town. I understand that the basis of selling in the country is the same as in the towns, so that the country people will get the benefit of the organisation. As time goes on, if the business increases as it should—and it will be doubled, trebled, and quadrupled—there is no

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reason why the selling price should not be brought down, because we know what an effect increased output has upon a manufacturing enterprise. You must have a large overhead expense to start out on an industry of this kind; you must have an immense plant and organisation which, for the first year or two, will bear heavily upon the industry. And it is to be expected that it will not pay. Those overhead expenses remain practically the same although the business expands, and the cost of fish per lb. is proportionately decreased at the same time. That, of course, is the law of increasing returns in a manufacturing or any other business, and will certainly come into operation as this business extends as it should.

Hon. T. C. BEIRNE: Do they charge annual interest on the capital and depreciation on the plant?

Hon. T. L. JONES: That should be done. I think you will find that this State enterprise will do it. I cannot answer for this particular one, but I believe I am right in saying that it is charged in other enterprises. I believe it is charged in the case of the State butchers' shops.

Hon. T. C. BEIRNE: It should be charged.

Hon. T. L. JONES: I quite agree. It is not correct accounting if it is not charged. I am not a special pleader for the enterprise, and even if it shows a loss without including them, and those charges are made and it shows later on a still greater loss, I would still defend the enterprise on the grounds I have laid before the Council.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: That was not the evidence given to the Committee.

Hon. T. L. JONES: That was before the State enterprises came under the control of the Commissioner under the State Enterprises Act.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It is charged in mining enterprises.

Hon. T. L. JONES: The Minister himself interjects that it is charged in connection with mining enterprises, and I think I am correct in saying that it is charged in this case. I have a distinct recollection of its being charged in regard to State butchers' shops, and I cannot conceive for a moment why it should be left out here. I am informed, just as I stand here, that the secretary of the board declares that both those items are included in costs.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: Are the losses on the trawler charged also?

Hon. T. L. JONES: The trawler is not included in this State enterprise.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: Put under the Marine Department, because it shows a heavy loss.

Hon. T. L. JONES: Correctly so, because it is in just the same position as a prospector. If you send out a man prospecting, you do not call it goldmining. If you send out a trawler to prospect for fish, to investigate the conditions of the coast and the whereabouts of the fish, it would be grossly unfair to charge the cost to an enterprise such as this, which is dealing with a concrete system of buying and distributing fish. I am surprised at the hon. member's making the interjection.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: It gets the benefit of the fish caught. Is it not put through the central market?

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Hon. T. L. JONES: Yes; and the department that pays the expenses of running the trawler gets credit for the fish.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Where do the expenses come from—out of harbour dues?

Hon. T. L. JONES: I do not know which department it is debited to. I do not think any particular revenue is earmarked, as the hon. member, who once was Treasurer, ought to know. It comes out of consolidated revenue, I suppose.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: What happens to the fish that the trawler catches, when it does catch fish?

Hon. T. L. JONES: I presume that if it is sent for sale, it must go through the market to be inspected, and I presume that if there are any proceeds the department which is charged with running the trawler and which pays the expenses takes very good care that it gets hold of the sum that may be realised.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: I must have hit you pretty hard, if you have to stonewall like this.

Hon. T. L. JONES: The hon. member does not seem to like it—he does not speak as if he did. Charges for inspection are referred to in paragraph 11 of the petition. The suggestion is that those charges are borne by the catcher of the fish, the fisherman. That is not correct, because the prices paid to the fisherman are clear of all charges and expenses. They are "free on rails," and the cases are provided by the department. Instead of the charges bearing heavily upon him, they have nothing to do with the fisherman at all. The real bone of contention is the charges that are levied, or sought to be levied, upon fish that are not sold under the agreement, and the avowed object of that is to force all fish through the market. Now, the hon. member exclaimed that this was a monopoly, but there are such things as beneficent monopolies, and this is distinctly one of them.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Not under this Government.

Hon. T. L. JONES: According to the hon. member, there is nothing beneficent under this Government.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: I cannot see it.

Hon. T. L. JONES: I appreciate the tenor of the hon. member's objection, but I would remind him that this Government has twice been returned by the people of Queensland, and I believe will be returned again. Now, the real trouble is the charges which are levied upon fish that are not sold under the agreement, and I admit distinctly that the object is to force all the fish through the market. There is nothing in the objection that it becomes a monopoly. If it were permitted to go without inspection, the whole thing would go.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: You say that the Wynnum fish is bought without inspection.

Hon. T. L. JONES: From the boat's side, but the hon. member knows that the objection to these regulations has nothing whatever to do with that. Is the hon. member prepared to advocate that that fish sold at Wynnum from the boat's side should be inspected and pay inspection fees? I think that the very people who have presented this petition would have a very

strong objection to us taking that action. They would certainly exclaim, "Save us from our friends!"

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Why should the Brisbane people pay more than the Wynnum people for fish?

HON. T. L. JONES: You generally expect to get fish at the seaside cheaper than in the metropolis, as at the seaside you buy the fish from the boat. Practically the fisherman, who is also the vendor, is quite satisfied if he gets a small profit on the price paid by the Government. There can be no objection to that. Now, I come to the point of the charges to be levied on the fish that are bought and passed through the market outside the agreement arrived at by the Fishermen's Association and the Government. The reason why those charges are necessary is distinctly in order that a monopoly may be created. There are industries—and I claim that this is distinctly one of them—that from their very nature must be monopolistic if they are to be run properly. Earlier this afternoon I argued that you cannot run a business like supplying the people of a city with fish unless, on the one hand, the fisherman obtains a reasonable price for his fish, and, on the other hand, the consumer gets the fish at a fair price. In order to reduce the profits that are made between the fisherman and the consumer you must centralise—you must have a monopoly. I ask: Was there not practically a monopoly before the Government took control, and not a beneficent monopoly, but a monopoly that operated very hardly upon the fishermen and very hardly upon the consumer, and that carried in its train all the evils which I have already indicated—the destruction of fish, and the failure to supply to the public this valuable food? It was a monopoly then, and there is no reason now to exclaim against the monopoly. There were always plenty of people present at the auction sales; but it was well known that the buying was artificial and there was not proper competition.

HON. T. M. HALL: I expect they divided up afterwards.

HON. T. L. JONES: That may have been the case. At any rate, it is well known that the result to the fishermen was a poor one, and the result to the consumer was a bad one; and, generally speaking, those results were arrived at because competition did not enter into the business so far as the fisherman was concerned, and it had very little bearing upon the price so far as the consumer was concerned. The supply was always kept short. It was a matter of common knowledge that, if a consumer desired to get fish, he had to hurry to the fish shop early in the day to get it. The supply for the public was kept at that point where it would secure a quick sale. That was one of the most objectionable features of the whole business, and that was the great reason why the whole system under private enterprise broke down, and failed to achieve the objects that are now being achieved. There should be no objection to that particular regulation. The object is to have all the fish come in under the agreement, so long as that agreement is a fair and equitable one—and I contend that it is. I would remind hon. members again that it was arrived at by collective bargaining between the parties interested with the assistance of an independent chairman; and, so

long as that agreement is a fair and equitable one, there is no hardship imposed on any fisherman who is compelled to sell under that agreement, because the forcing of all the fish through that agreement, if I may use the expression, is necessary with a view to bringing about centralisation of control and management. Centralisation is necessary to secure distribution at a reasonable price, and at the same time make sure that the article sold is in the very healthiest and freshest condition possible. Dealing further with the question of monopoly, I would refer to paragraph (14) of the petition. It is almost ludicrous to anyone who knows the conditions prevailing in the old times to hear men who are fishermen—there are only a few fishermen who signed the petition; it is signed chiefly by men who are dealers and vendors of fish—

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Over forty bona fide fishermen have signed the petition.

HON. T. L. JONES: I will come presently to the signatories to the petition. Paragraph (14) is almost ludicrous to men who know the conditions that prevailed under the old régime. Just fancy this statement being made—

"Fishermen by being practically confined to one market and hampered by many sore restrictions are menaced by a monopoly which may rob them of the fair return for their difficult and dangerous toil and reduce their irregular and hard-won earnings to a pittance far less than the living wage."

I think the person who wrote that must have had his tongue in his cheek while he was writing it. The present beneficent monopoly is ten times better for the men who catch the fish than the old conditions; and yet we are told that there is a monopoly, as if there were something shocking and dreadful about a monopoly. It all depends on who are in the monopoly. A monopoly in the interests of the people as a whole is a good thing. It is a piece of hypocrisy to talk of the fishermen being "menaced by a monopoly which may rob them of the fair return for their difficult and dangerous toil." A great deal—the majority—of the men who signed that petition care for the difficult and dangerous toil of the fishermen! Just contrast the condition of the fishermen to-day with their conditions before this State enterprise was brought into existence! I have already quoted what Mr. Thomas Welsby said about the conditions under which they worked and the prices they got; and yet we are asked to become alarmed because those conditions are not allowed to continue.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Wouldn't you rather fish on land than on sea?

HON. R. BEDFORD: Wouldn't you rather fish in George street than down in Moreton Bay?

HON. T. L. JONES: I cannot see the application of that question.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: You are laughing at the difficult toil of the fisherman.

HON. T. L. JONES: I am not laughing at the difficult toil of the fisherman, I am laughing at the person who had the effrontery to draft paragraph (14) of this petition. It is nothing but crass hypocrisy for the majority of the petitioners, who were

the men who used to control the industry under the old régime, to use such language with respect to the condition of the fishermen.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: Some of the biggest bonâ fide fishermen at Wynnum signed that petition.

Hon. T. L. JONES: I have the signatories to the petition, and there are fifty-three dealers amongst the signatories, and of fishermen sending regular supplies to market, there are seventeen only, eleven [5 p.m.] of whom are operating under the agreement. There are only eleven fishermen, out of a total of ninety-nine signatories to the petition, who are working under the agreement.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: Will you tell us how the opposition meeting last week fared?

Hon. T. L. JONES: I would like to know how the petition was got up. The hon. gentleman can tell us more about that than he can about anything else. Of the signatories to the petition, there are only eleven genuine fishermen who are working under this agreement.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: There are over forty fishermen. There are quite a number of genuine fishermen outside the agreement.

Hon. T. L. JONES: The hon. gentleman seems very anxious to lose sight of the fifty-three fishmongers. It is rather interesting to look at the names of some of the other fishermen who do not supply the market regularly. It appears that many of them are not able to sign their own names without difficulty. That is nothing to their detriment, but it shows that they may not be capable of understanding the petition. I suppose somebody told them that if the agreement were broken down they would get a far bigger price for their fish. Probably one of those fifty-three fishmongers said to them, "Instead of giving you 3d. a lb. for your whiting, I will give you 6d. a lb." But he did not tell the fishermen for how long he would give it. These people may have been tempted, as people often are tempted, by an immediate advantage, and they have no business capacity, and would not ask, "Will you give me the same offer as I have from the Government—a certain market for all my fish? Every fish I can bring in, will you buy it at that price?" If they put that question to the fishmongers and received a truthful answer, I question very much if those fishermen would have signed the petition. The hon. gentleman must know that it is the easiest thing in the world to get names to a petition. People sign petitions knowing very little indeed of the contents, and it is quite evident from the wording of the petition that a great many of the fishermen did not know what they were signing, otherwise they would never have suggested that they should get back to the dark days when they got practically nothing for their toil, and at the same time the consumer had to pay a very high price. The hon. gentleman, in moving the motion, referred to the fact that the regulations were withdrawn so far as Maryborough was concerned. He told us that, as a result of a deputation, the regulations were withdrawn, and, of course, he tried to make political capital by the way he said a Labour member introduced the deputation. What are the facts regarding the Maryborough deputation?

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: Are the regulations in force up there?

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Hon. T. L. JONES: A deputation waited on the Minister in Brisbane, and the reply was as follows:—

"Until such time as the State Fishery Department advises the fishermen that they are prepared to receive supplies at Maryborough, the regulations framed under the Fish Supply Act shall be inoperative in so far as relates to supplies of fish coming from the Maryborough district into the metropolitan area."

The regulations were withdrawn simply because the department was not prepared to carry out there the same bargain that they were carrying out in Brisbane—they were not prepared to take all the fishermen could catch and pay the price for it.

Hon. W. H. DEMAINE: They were prepared to sell if the Government would take the fish.

Hon. T. L. JONES: The Maryborough fishermen were anxious to come under the scope of that agreement, but the organisation of the board is not sufficiently complete for them to say, "Come in under the agreement, and we will give you the same guarantee that we give to the fishermen in the metropolitan area." That was the sole reason why the regulations were suspended in Maryborough. There was nothing political about it, and for the life of me I cannot understand why the hon. gentleman raised the point. He wished the House to gather from his remarks that the alleged oppressive conditions which he complained of in Brisbane were being waived so far as Maryborough was concerned, simply because it was a Labour constituency. I cannot understand that, because I would remind him that a majority of the constituencies around Brisbane are Labour constituencies also, and if the conditions were oppressive on the fishermen and unfair, as he said they were so far as Maryborough was concerned, no doubt the same pressure, if there was pressure, would be brought to bear in Brisbane. The Hon. Mr. Fowles also referred to the increasing charges for inspection and for market dues, and then went on to say that an inspector would become a Rockefeller. The fact remains that the increase in the charges has not resulted in dearer fish, and the fishermen do not have to pay those charges. They supply the market with fish free on rails at the prices which I have indicated. The Hon. Mr. Hall interjected, and said fish was dearer now than ever before, and the Hon. Mr. Sumner asked him for evidence on that point.

Hon. T. M. HALL: I am going by my own personal experience, and I have been buying fish in Brisbane for twenty years.

Hon. T. L. JONES: The hon. gentleman says his experience is that fish is dearer, and I alleged earlier, and reiterate it now, that my personal experience is that you can go to the State fish shop and buy fish much cheaper than you ever could under private enterprise.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: It is dearer in George street.

Hon. T. L. JONES: I think I have covered the ground fairly well, although I recognise that it has been in a somewhat disconnected manner. My apology for that is the fact that I have had no opportunity to prepare myself in any way carefully. I have sought to emphasise the principles under which this enterprise should be conducted,

and the effort that is being made to conduct it in accordance with those principles. It is not to be supposed that an enterprise of this kind is going to be carried out successfully without disturbing private enterprise. There are vested rights in all these things, and directly a Government steps in, because they realise that things are not as they should be, and seeks to remedy those evils, there is bound to be an outcry from vested interests. There are no rights appertaining to vested interests when public interests come in. I would like to point out that if an individual in business becomes injured because of the growth of a private monopoly, he does not have the opportunity of voicing his objection and making an outcry upon the floor of this Chamber. He has to accept it. He has to realise the fact that the man in the small way of business has to face the competition of the larger enterprises and the bigger organisations. It is infinitely better that that inevitable economic development should come in the guise of a State monopoly than that it should be a private monopoly which, while crushing the smaller man, is not actuated with either of the two ideas that are at the basis of this enterprise, namely, the absolute necessity of securing to the taker of the fish a good return and to the consumer a reasonable price. I conclude by again pointing out that the object of the disallowance of these regulations is to undermine this valuable enterprise, and the effect of so doing would be that others would become inoperative towards the achievement of the object which is sought to be arrived at. The hon. member may suggest that certain regulations might be altered by other regulations, and that the object he seeks to achieve will simply result in other regulations taking their place. That is not true, if a reduction in the charges of inspection of fish outside the agreement were agreed to—and that is the real object which is sought to be achieved by this motion—to attack the monopolistic character of this enterprise. These other regulations which are put into the motion are so much camouflage. I say we would be helping to destroy this beneficent enterprise if we allowed that regulation to be annulled which imposes heavy fees. I remind the Chamber of the argument that, to be successful this must be a monopoly, and it will not do to allow it to be undermined by making it possible for fish to be handled by private enterprise. I say openly that it must be a rigid monopoly, and the sooner we recognise that the better. If we forego that point we are really saying that we are in agreement with the destruction of the enterprise. It was because I wanted to stress that point and to show the value of the enterprise as a whole that I have dealt so fully with the various points.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: It is a poor business that will not stand competition.

HON. T. L. JONES: There are businesses which will stand competition, and there are others which, from their very nature, will not. I am not saying it will not stand competition because you cannot get the price, but, from its very nature, to get the proper handling of it. The hon. gentleman knows there are businesses that will not stand competition. There are businesses which are naturally monopolies, into which competition cannot enter, such as the running of trams and railways, which are monopolistic by their very nature. In connection with railways, for instance, where competition

has sought to be established it has gradually disappeared. Hon. gentlemen opposite must know that in Great Britain the railway systems were being consolidated until competition almost disappeared. In cases where they did not consolidate, they had a working agreement whereby, when certain lines were built parallel to one another for a short distance, one was allowed to remain idle. In that way competition was overcome. That is what I mean when I speak of a natural monopoly. That argument, of course, is capable of great extension, and it is arguable where you are going to stop in saying what is natural monopoly and what is not. I am not prepared to discuss that at the present time. I am prepared to say that when enterprise becomes so highly capitalised, or demands high organisation, that there is a disappearance of competition as a factor in fixing the price of the commodity that is to be marketed, it is time for governmental action of the most effective kind, either by regulation of the price—as was done with monopolies such as gas, trams, and so on—or by the industry and the enterprise being taken over by the Government itself. In regard to this enterprise, I say, from its very nature, it is not possible to have it well conducted if you have competition. Again I ask that careful consideration be given to this motion that seeks to annul the regulations, the object of which distinctly is to create a monopoly so that the enterprise can be well conducted in the interest, not only of the general community who consume the fish, but of the fishermen who conduct the arduous toil of taking the fish. (Hear, hear!)

Hon. R. BEDFORD: This motion is only an echo of the old attempt to throw cold water on any form of State enterprise. For instance, the petition itself is largely a tissue of misstatements. It says, for instance, in clause 14—

“Fishermen, by being practically confined to one market and hampered by many sore restrictions, are menaced by a monopoly which may rob them of the fair return for their difficult and dangerous toil, and reduce their irregular and hard-won earnings to a pittance far less than the living wage.”

That statement is in itself contradicted by the fact of the signatories to the petition. One of the best authorities on local fishing grounds and the condition of the fishermen in Queensland, Mr. Thomas Welsby, has shown that the lot of the fishermen has been made better by a fixed market, by about four times the original price, with never the necessity for dumping, and with a continuous market ready for them if they work all the year round, if that were possible. Says clause 16—

“Your petitioners have been unable to learn whether the fish sold in the State shops is inspected under the same conditions as those sold elsewhere.”

The attempt that is here being made is in itself a general proof of the falsity of the grounds on which the petitioners make the petition. It is known that fish sold in the State shops are open to the same inspection. The clause continues—

“At present the fishermen are entirely at the mercy of inspectors who are not independent but also are employees of the State fish market, and the fish

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supplied is liable to be condemned under very arbitrary conditions." One would be led to believe, from this, that the State fish shops were straight-out opponents of the private fish shops, with the same intention of gain. As a matter of fact, the State fish shops are there for the purpose of equalising the conditions between the consumer and the producer—they are there not so much for the purpose of making a profit, as for the purpose of giving a fair deal to both sides. One of the regulations objected to is really a protest against the dirty and insanitary conditions under which fish shops were kept in the past. Clause 19 of the petition says—

"Neither in New South Wales or in Western Australia or in any other part of Australia is the fish industry so embarrassed or retarded by such conditions. The present conditions tend towards driving fishermen out of the local industry, in which case consumers would have to depend upon imported fish, although large supplies can be secured near at hand under altered conditions."

The proof that that is untrue is found in the fact that during the first year after the establishment of the State enterprise 589,120 lb. of fish represented the increase in the weight of fish marketed as compared with the weight of fish caught in the year prior to the establishment of the State shop. The petitioners go on to say—

"Your petitioners respectfully invite attention of hon. members to the report of a Select Committee appointed by the Legislative Council on 29th September, 1914, to consider the Metropolitan Fish Market Act Amendment Bill, and to the evidence, decisions, and recommendations therein contained."

A Select Committee was appointed by this House, and its members were quite as partisan as the Select Committee on the Brisbane Tramway Fares Bill, which was introduced for the purpose only of side-tracking the increase of fares for another year.

HON. T. M. HALL: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. gentleman in order in referring to another Bill which is not before the House?

The PRESIDENT: Order!

HON. R. BEDFORD: The petition goes on to say that the petitioners pray—

"That the regulations promulgated on 16th June, 1919, in the "Queensland Government Gazette," No. 175, be amended, and in particular that Nos. 36, 41, 44, 62, 74, 75, 78, 96, 97, 98, 105, 106, 107 be disallowed by this honourable House"

The second prayer of the petitioners is—

"That before any new regulations become operative a fish commission be appointed to take evidence with a view to beneficent action, in order to ensure to the public a regular, adequate, and well distributed supply of wholesome fish at reasonable prices, such commission to include evidence from the professional fishermen, the fish vendors, and the consumers."

The paragraph of the motion referring to that prayer has been withdrawn by the mover, and that is just as well, for it is only an attempt to require the Government

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to appoint a commission to inquire into its own acts. The fishmongers, the hawkers, and the distributors have apparently more to say in this matter than the consumers or the producers. Those gentlemen are mostly not of British descent. There is nothing against that, because Australia invites all white men to come to this country and is ready and anxious to receive them as citizens. But the chances are that they, not having a knowledge of the way State enterprises have grown, are probably irritated by the fact that the old liberty of the subject to charge the other fellow whatever he likes, and occasionally kill him with bad commodities, has disappeared under the policy introduced by the Government. I shall read a list of the signatories for the benefit of all students of ancient Greece. They are as follows:—P. Freeleagus, C. Freeleagus, Chas. Freeleagus, G. Freeleagus, E. Zervos, J. White, James Manogos, C. Patty, G. Feros, A. G. Drugus, V. Princous, D. Kastrissos, G. Habibe, P. Morton, T. Zeromo, W. Gooma, John Black, Strathe Black, Con. Black, Jerry Black, G. Marcellas, Luigi Cervetto, J. Stefano, P. Samois, J. Basile, Speros Fefos, F. Lewis, E. Wilkins, M. Palasin, F. Pochernekoff, D. G. Vasyli, C. Counsell, A. Aroney, X. Karandrews, P. Patty, Lazaretto Brothers, J. Forney, D. Kastrissos, P. Careedy, D. Likiardeputo, N. Leninos, C. E. G. Domjahn, P. Spathis, C. Masmeros, P. Comino, J. Murray, J. Strategos, N. Sklavos, P. Cassimatis, J. Condoleon, A. Gerakitis, A. Blaveys, A. Kerr, G. A. H. Watson, F. B. Kerr, V. Hurlstone, C. O. Major, E. Brockman. There are only seventeen men who sign as fishermen who send regular supplies to the market. Twenty of the signatories are local fishermen who do not send supplies of fish to the market regularly, and nine are fishermen who send supplies to the market at certain times only, while fifty-three of the signatories are representatives of firms and dealers. Everybody knows the insanitary conditions under which fish were often kept before State enterprises took charge of the business. Clause 68 of the old regulations provided as follows:—

"Fishmonger's and fish vendor's licenses—

(a) Shall be in Form 2 hereto or to the like effect, and signed by the secretary;

(b) Shall be in force for the time stated therein;

(c) Shall not be transferable;

(d) May be suspended for any period not exceeding three months or may be absolutely revoked by the board for any breach of the by-laws or regulations;

(e) Shall be kept at the premises wherein the licensee carries on business, and shall be produced on demand and shown to any officer of the department or member of the Police Force, or intending purchaser."

No attempt was made in that regulation to say how the general conduct of the fish-selling business should be carried on. Clause 74 of the present regulations is framed in the interest of the public, and is a most beneficent provision. For instance, it provides that a license "shall be in force for the time stated therein"; that it "shall not be transferable except as provided in clause

(f) hereof"; that it "may be suspended for any period not exceeding three months, or may be absolutely revoked"; that it "shall be kept at and put up in a conspicuous place in the retail section of the premises wherein the licensee carries on business, and shall be produced on demand to any officer of the Commissioner," etc.; that the licensee of such premises "shall not permit any sanitary convenience to be situated in any room where fish is prepared or kept, and any sanitary convenience, and also any stable, shall be so situated as to be completely cut off from any such room by cross ventilation"; that "he shall not receive or store upon his premises any unwholesome fish, and any such fish found therein or thereon may be seized and destroyed by the Commissioner or his officers, and such licensee shall bear all expenses in connection with such seizure and destruction"; and that "he shall permit inspection to be made of the premises, equipment, and appurtenances relative to such business at all reasonable times." Does anybody want that pulled out?

[5.30 p.m.]

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: It is already the law.

HON. R. BEDFORD: You want the removal of section 74, which replaces the old regulation 68?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: We want No. 74 amended in a reasonable way.

HON. R. BEDFORD: How do you want it amended? Is this what you object to—

"He shall permit inspection to be made of his premises."

Are you against that?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: That is already the law.

HON. R. BEDFORD: What are you against in 74?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I have told you already. This is a duplication of powers which the Crown has already under other regulations.

HON. R. BEDFORD: I see. You are only trying to get the law simpler than it has been.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Exactly.

HON. R. BEDFORD: At any rate, you are asking for the amendment of all these clauses, and I am reading the regulations which you say you want amending—

"He shall not carry fish intended for sale for human consumption except in a vehicle—"

and also—

"He and all persons employed by him shall, when engaged in the receiving, handling, preparing, or selling of fish in connection with such trades, business or occupation, always wear a clean detachable apron made of washable material."

This is the anti-apron motion, do you want that amended?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: No, certainly not.

HON. R. BEDFORD:

"He shall at all times, and to the satisfaction of the manager, keep in a thoroughly clean and wholesome condition, each and every vehicle or other container and conveyance used by him in

connection with such trade, business, or occupation, also all utensils used by him in connection therewith."

Do you want that amended?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: No.

HON. R. BEDFORD:

"He shall maintain his person and clothing in a clean condition, and shall be held liable for the cleanliness of person and clothing of each, and every person so employed by him."

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Would you not amend this yourself?

HON. R. BEDFORD: No, why?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: It says that you would be liable for the cleanliness of everybody employed by you. A pretty tall order, is it not?

HON. R. BEDFORD: Would you not, in the interests of a business, see that there was nobody there to send trade away from the place?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Yes.

HON. R. BEDFORD: Some people make a fetish of dirt; this regulation is against it. Then with regard to section 105—

"Every person selling or exposing or offering for sale fish at any fish market, shall, if so required, and as often as may be required by him by the manager or other duly authorised officer, furnish in writing to the Commissioner a statement of all fish consigned to and or received by him."

This is perfectly right. You demand statistics, in the interests of ordinary trade, just as much as you do in connection with the production of gold to show how much is produced and sold. There can be no objection to that. Then section 107 requires transport statistics to be furnished to show how much fish has been sent to country districts. That is a very necessary series of food statistics, because the intention all this time has been to give the country a continuously increasing supply of marine food. I desire to quote the following questions which Mr. J. Larcombe asked the manager of the State fish shop, and the replies given thereto—

"1. The price charged for fish at the State shops in Brisbane to-day, as compared with the price ruling in the year prior to the opening of the State shops."

The answer to that is—

"The prices charged prior to the opening of the State fish shops were at 'per fish,' and it was not possible to obtain any reliable data, though Mr. Gilmour had purchases made at various shops on different dates as a test, and may be able to give these on his return. Messrs. Freeleagus quote figures on the lb. basis, but, though they may have sold by this method at contract rates, to hotels and large buyers, they have never had any prices in their windows.

"Present prices in State shops are—

Mullet, 6d. per lb., cleaned and scaled ready for the pan.

Bream, 6d. per lb., cleaned and scaled ready for the pan.

Whiting, 9d. per lb., cleaned and scaled ready for the pan.

Tailor, 5½d. per lb., cleaned and scaled ready for the pan.

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Gar, 8d. per lb., cleaned and scaled ready for the pan.

Blackfish, 4½d. per lb., cleaned and scaled ready for the pan.

Tiger, 4½d. per lb., cleaned and scaled ready for the pan.

Flathead, 9d. per lb., cleaned and scaled ready for the pan.

Schnapper, 1s. per lb., cleaned and scaled ready for the pan.

Squire, 10d. per lb., cleaned and scaled ready for the pan.

"2. The price charged for fish at the State shops to-day as compared with the price ruling in private shops to-day."

The answer is—

"Prices in private shops to-day are in some instances on the same basis as the State fish shop, but most of them by selling at 'per fish' hide the actual selling rate, and so obtain slightly higher rates.

"3. The price paid to the fishermen to-day as compared with the price paid the year before the State shops were open."

The answer is—

"Prices paid to fishermen to-day, and the average rate realised at auction prior to the State purchasing catches, are given below. It must be taken into consideration however, that in many instances when large consignments were received, the prices realised were less than sufficient to cover out-of-pocket expenses."

	Present prices per tray of 4½ lbs. net on rail, and free of all market charges.	Average price at auction, year 1916, after paying market and transport charges.
Mullet—		
May and June	s. d. 5 6	s. d. 3 8.4
July and April	9 6	6 0
Bream	10 0	6 4.2
Whiting	14 0	11 2
Tailer	9 0	6 1
Gar	8 6	6 6
Blackfish	6 0	4 6½
Tiger	8 0	4 2
Flathead, per lb. 4½d. and 6d.		0 3½
Schnapper, per lb. 0 8		0 6½
Squire, per lb. 0 5½		0 4¾

"At the auction prices the fishermen were not earning anything like the standard living wage, and though their prices have been increased it must be borne in mind that in addition to the increased cost of living, net, which then cost 25s. per bundle, now costs about 70s. per bundle, and a full-sized mullet net now means an outlay of £49, as against £13 previously. Benzine, which before the war was 10s. per case, is now 25s. per case; whilst ropes and corks have gone up over 100 per cent.

"4. Is the supply of fish more certain and 'continuous' than before the State shops opened?"

The answer is—

"The supply of fish to the public is more certain through reserves from cold storage being available for use during scarce periods, both for sale in the shops and for smoking purposes. The fish now

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stored was previously condemned when excess supplies were sent in by fishermen, or the proportion which was placed in cold storage was sold at a high rate in the scarce periods. The supplies from fishermen are insufficient to meet demands during certain of the summer months, and there is no probability of any increase from this source, as the fish are not obtainable on the regular grounds during these periods. Trawlers are, therefore, the only source from which a regular supply can be secured."

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Whose opinion is that?

Hon. R. BEDFORD: It is not an opinion; it is a statement by Mr. Norman Fell, an officer of the State Fisheries.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: In answer to leading questions by one of his own side.

Hon. R. BEDFORD: What are the questions you would like to lead with—something to show that we should not have State shops? When anything like this is done there will always be a general objection to it by some section of the community. We have no right to take away the liberty of the subject who makes as much money as he can at the expense of his fellow creatures. We are going further, because the profiteer is going to be put in his place by fixed prices for commodities, no matter how anyone may object. It is not rare to find regulations hitting somebody. I know of a case the other day where a coalmining regulation hit certain gentlemen, who did not like it. The regulation required the mine to be kept open and in a good condition for the men working it. It not only meant that the owners should keep the mine open for the selfish purpose of better working and better profit, but should do so out of consideration for the life and health of the men who were working the mine; but in this case, although the Inspector of Mines had notified these people for months before, they did not comply with the demand, and when the Mines Department launched a prosecution there was an attempt made to sidetrack it.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The hon. gentleman is getting away from the question before the House.

Hon. R. BEDFORD: I am trying to show that regulations must hit someone, and if I am permitted to speak, I shall be able to do that. There was not only an attempt to get behind the regulation, but an attempt to stop a prosecution which was on the way. Two of the men who owned that mine were the Hon. Mr. Brentnall and the Hon. Mr. Fowles. Naturally, they are against regulations which would seem in any way to interfere with the right of anybody to run his business in his own way, no matter whether it affects the health of his employees or anybody else. These regulations are the proper corollary to the Act which was intended to see that the producer and the consumer got a fair deal; they put the cap on the legislation by insisting, among other things objected to, that the business of vending fish shall be carried on in a proper, decent, cleanly manner, so that at least the public shall not be disgusted when purchasing a very necessary food.

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: And carried on as a monopoly.

HON. R. BEDFORD: As a monopoly which takes but to surrender, which is not out for its own profit. If you think I get a fish scale out of this business you are quite wrong. We know that in a country where the waters along the coast are the most prolific in the world, the whole fish business has been most shockingly mismanaged. I do not think the general sense of gentlemen on the other side will permit any support of a motion which attempts to abrogate regulations which have been made in the best interests of the people.

HON. T. NEVITT: First of all, I want to ask, what is the object of the hon. member in tabling this motion?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: To amend some of the regulations, and to have a reasonable scale of charges for inspection.

HON. T. NEVITT: And what would be the result of the amendment of the regulations? I think the hon. member who moved the motion will admit that at the present time the fish supply is placed on a much better plane than ever before. I think that medical men in the city of Brisbane, without exception, will admit that the conditions surrounding the fish industry are very much better than ever before in its history.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: That is not the question, is it?

HON. T. NEVITT: The hon. member's motion would mean that we would practically go back to the conditions that prevailed before the present conditions were brought into the industry.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: No, by no means.

HON. T. NEVITT: It is all very well for the hon. member to say that, but everyone has a right to his opinions.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Were you not on that fish committee?

HON. T. NEVITT: No, it sat before I had the honour to get into the Council. That reminds me that the fishermen presented a petition to the Hon. Mr Hawthorn, when he was Treasurer, asking that the conditions under which they were labouring should be improved, pointing out that they were such that they could not make a living, that they were under the thumb of the fish vendors of Brisbane, and asking for legislation to protect them so that they would get reasonable prices for the labour which they performed.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: They got any amount of sympathy, but no legislation.

HON. T. NEVITT: They got sympathy, but no assistance. They asked for bread, and the hon. member gave them a stone. That was practically the hon. member's attitude on this question, and now to-day—with the industry under good hygienic conditions—the fishermen are getting better prices for their catches, and all the catch is taken, provided they enter into an agreement with the Government to sell the whole to the Government. They are not penalised by excessive conditions, to which the hon. member is taking exception.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Are you not prepared to suggest an amendment of any kind?

HON. T. NEVITT: I am not prepared to offer an amendment at the present time.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Are you not prepared to suggest amendments where the regulations are harsh and harassing?

HON. T. NEVITT: I think the hon. member has had several reasonable opportunities to accept certain amendments, but he refused to do so. It is his funeral, and I shall have to go on. I go so far as to say that the conditions to-day are such that the public of Queensland take pride in them. As was said by the Hon. Mr. Jones, no industry of such a nature as the fish industry, with ramifications extending so far as they do, could in twelve months be placed on a sound financial footing. Now, the people of Brisbane, when they go to a fish shop, know what they are buying, they know the conditions under which it is kept, and they know that the men engaged in the industry are getting fair and reasonable remuneration for their work. That is sufficient answer to the hon. member. It proves that these regulations should continue. What would it mean if these charges, which are referred to as exorbitant, were abolished? It would mean that the Saturday afternoon and Sunday fishermen would be able to send their catch to town to the retail shops, at the expense of the State shops of to-day. Is that fair, or right, or honourable?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: That is not the case at all. There is nothing to prevent the Government from bringing in a reasonable scale of charges.

HON. T. NEVITT: I would remind the hon. member that out of eighty-four regular suppliers to the fish market only twelve have signed the petition.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: What do you call "regular"?

HON. T. NEVITT: One-seventh of the regular suppliers have signed a petition asking that these regulations be amended.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: But those others do not pay the charges.

HON. T. NEVITT: Could not every man get the same conditions that those eighty-four are getting? Every fisherman in the Southern portion of Queensland could get the same conditions. Why all this fuss and bother and anxiety and worry? Underlying this motion is the objection of the fish vendors. They want to break down the existing system. That is the motive. There can be no other motive, because more than half of those who have signed the petition are hawkers and vendors of fish. What right have they to petition this Council that regulations should be altered so that they can bleed the public and the fishermen as they did in the past?

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: We do not propose to consent to anything of that kind.

HON. T. NEVITT: That is what it would mean if these conditions were altered. I am very pleased to hear the interjection. If the hon. member is of that frame of mind he will not be in favour of the motion.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: What amendments are you prepared to make?

HON. T. NEVITT: As I have told you, I am not prepared to make any. There was a stage at which amendments could have been made, but the hon. member would not accept them. I go so far as to say that at one period the hon. member was prepared to accept them, but at a later period he withdrew and refused to accept them.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: That is not correct.

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HON. T. NEVITT: That is the position. If this motion is carried the regular fishermen who are supplying will be unable to get a fair price for their labour, although they are justly entitled to it. I wish now to refer to the petition. Paragraph 1 reads—

“Your petitioners are well acquainted with the position and conditions of the fish industry in the State of Queensland, and have a wide and intimate experience covering many years and embracing the coastal catching grounds from the Mary River to the Tweed.”

It shows the carelessness with which the petition has been drafted when we find that the petitioners are all confined to the Tweed, Sandgate, and Wynnum, and yet they speak of their knowledge of the fishing industry from the Mary River to the Tweed.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Do you know that some of the Wynnum fish is caught at Bribie Island?

HON. T. NEVITT: It is quite possible that some of it is caught at Bribie Island sometimes.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: They don't fish in the mangroves at Wynnum.

HON. T. NEVITT: And they do not fish in the Mary River and bring their catch to Brisbane at all. Neither do they put it all through the depôt at Wynnum or the depôt at South Brisbane.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Are you talking the motion out?

HON. P. J. LEAHY: What about the division that was promised us before 6 o'clock?

HON. T. M. HALL: You know the motion lapses unless the regulations are disallowed to-day.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You had four-teen days within which to disallow them.

HON. T. NEVITT: Let me now bring under the notice of hon. members paragraph 9 of the petition—

“Notwithstanding the provisions of the Act only one fish market has yet been established in the whole of the metropolitan fish supply district, and as a result the fish industry is grievously hampered, the supply is restricted, sound fish are rendered unwholesome by needless and expensive delays, there are no auction sales whatever allowed, conditions are in existence which are unsatisfactory both to the buying public and to the suppliers of fish, and the beneficial objects of the Act are defeated instead of being realised.”

Again, it shows the carelessness with which this petition has been drafted. In the first place it says that there is only one depôt for the inspection of fish, which is not true; there are two depôts for the inspection of fish—one at Wynnum and one in South Brisbane. Then they say that “the fish industry is grievously hampered”—another statement that is not in accordance with fact. The only hampering that has been done is with respect to the Saturday afternoon and Sunday fishermen. The men who are engaged regularly in the industry are not hampered in any shape or form. They can bring their supplies to Wynnum or to South Brisbane, and get full price for their catch, without any unnecessary delay, and, I may also remark, without incurring any bad debts. Wherever a fisherman has placed his catch

in the hands of the State, he always gets cash in return. That was not always the case in days gone by. Then the petition says that “the supply is restricted.” That also is not in accordance with fact, because we have it in evidence that, in a short twelve months since the establishment of the board, there has been an increase in the catch of 263 tons, or 584,820 lb. Over half a million more pounds of fish have gone through the fish depôts at South Brisbane and Wynnum than went through the fish market over in South Brisbane when under the control of private enterprise. Then I come to paragraph 10, which says that “only one place of inspection has yet been provided.” I say again that the fisherman can get his fish inspected at Wynnum quite as easily as he can get it inspected in South Brisbane. Paragraph 11 reads—

“Notwithstanding the provisions of the Act for the prevention of excessive dues and charges, these, both for market and inspection, as promulgated in the regulations of 16th May, 1919, and now in operation, are enormous and oppressive, and threaten to wreck the fish industry within the metropolitan area. The former scale of dues and charges, which were not light when compared with charges in other parts of the world, has been suddenly expanded by charges reaching as high as a 900 per cent. increase.”

That shows a further carelessness in the drafting of the petition. As was very ably stated by the Hon. Mr. Sumner, chairman of the fish board, there is a reason why increased charges were necessary.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: What, 900 per cent.?

HON. T. NEVITT: In some cases the increase may be somewhere near 900 per cent., but there is no occasion to pay any charges at all if the regulations are followed; and to show the fallacy of the argument advanced by the hon. gentleman on the other side of the House in regard to the increase of 900 per cent., I would point out that for the whole month of June of the present year the amount levied and collected was £8.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: That is not so.

HON. T. NEVITT: Those are the figures supplied by the Department.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I have a receipt here for £16.

HON. T. NEVITT: For fish supplied in June?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: It is dated 13th June, 1919. I have another receipt for £8.

HON. T. NEVITT: Is that account for charges levied on fish put into the depôt for the month of June?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: The receipt bears the date 13th June, 1919. I have a bombshell for every other mistake.

HON. T. NEVITT: I am open to correction, but I say that £8 was for inspection and £8 for market dues. What is there in the talk about extortionate charges when the whole fish industry in the Southern part of Queensland is only called upon to pay £8 in one month, or a total for the year, if that is an average month, of £108?

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: It does not alter the principle that the charges are inflated.

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HON. T. NEVITT: It alters the argument advanced by the hon. gentleman that the charges are exorbitant, when I point out that the fishermen need pay nothing at all; and secondly, when a big industry supplying a population of nearly a quarter of a million cannot stand a tax for inspection and storage charges of £108 a year—well, it is on a very rotten foundation.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Your argument is that you do not impose dues except in one or two instances.

HON. T. NEVITT: I am giving the figures supplied by the Department, and I am giving facts. The facts I have given upset the contention put forward by the hon. gentleman.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: But they are not facts. I have documents against you.

HON. T. NEVITT: I do not care what you have got. The account you have is for charges and inspection. Then I come to clause 12 of the petition; and what do we find there? It reads—

“The imposition of extra dues and charges confers no benefit either on the suppliers or on the public; the former are reaping nothing from the burdensome levy; and the extortionate demands made by the regulations necessarily make fish a dear commodity, quite out of reach of the multitude who desire good and cheap food.”

That is not correct. In the first instance, the quality of the food is admitted on all sides to be good. Nobody has been able to produce the slightest bit of evidence to show that the fish is not better marketed to-day than ever it was in the past. Then, too, the hon. gentleman who moved the motion will admit that the fish is marketed in a better condition and supplied to the public in a better condition than prior to the establishment of the present market.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Do you know how long fish is kept in the State cold stores in South Brisbane without being gutted? Four months sometimes.

HON. T. NEVITT: I do not know how long the fish is kept there.

HON. T. L. JONES: Who told you that?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Deny it if you can.

HON. R. SUMNER: Let them bring the matter before the board.

HON. T. NEVITT: As I was remarking, the position is this: The fish is marketed and distributed in a much better condition to-day than ever it was before. That upsets the statement made that the public are reaping no benefit from the levying of these charges. I understand that the principal reason for these charges being gazetted was to get at those people who do not devote the whole of their time to fishing, but use it more or less as a pastime and undermine the legitimate fisherman and practically try and break down his living. The hon. gentleman is out to try and break down the living of a class of men of whom the country need be proud. Fishing is no child's play, it will be admitted. It is a hard, laborious, uncertain occupation, and if these regulations had not been gazetted it meant they would get little or nothing for their supply when fish was plentiful, because these Saturday

afternoon and Sunday fishermen, or other people who have a fortnight's or three weeks' holiday—being paid for it—frequently go down the bay, utilise their time in catching fish, and flood the market.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: The best *bona fide* Wynnnum fishermen signed this petition.

HON. T. NEVITT: I will give the hon. gentleman figures from the petition later on. What I am dealing with now is that clause 12 of the petition is not in accordance with fact. Then it says, “The fish is not within the reach of the multitudes who desire good and cheap food.”

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Is that not a statement of fact?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Can everybody get cheap fish in Brisbane to-day?

HON. T. NEVITT: This is what you may term a half truth; and frequently a half truth is worse than a lie.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: It must be fairly true if you admit it is a half truth.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

HON. T. NEVITT: The day before these regulations were framed, or the State took charge of the fishing industry, what was the position?

Several hon. gentlemen interjecting simultaneously—

The PRESIDENT: Order! I must ask hon. members on each side to cease interjecting. The Hon. Mr. Nevitt has the floor, and has the right to speak without interruption.

HON. T. NEVITT: If the hon. gentleman expects to get fish at the same price to-day as in pre-war time, simply because it is supplied by the State, I hope at a later period of the session I will have his assistance when I show where there has been a large amount of profiteering taking place in a good many other commodities.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: You will have my assistance.

HON. T. NEVITT: It is absolutely impossible to-day to get fish or any other commodity at the same price as in pre-war days. That is what, in clause 12, they state they are not getting. We know they are not getting it. Every commodity for which you have to pay anything costs a great deal more to-day than it did four years ago.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: But you promised cheap food.

HON. T. NEVITT: We tried to keep our promises. In many respects I may tell the hon. gentleman that fish is considerably cheaper to-day compared with what it was four years ago, considering the amount that is paid to the fishermen who produce it. Prior to the establishment of the State market the fishermen got on an average about half the price they are getting to-day. In a good many instances they did not get even half the price, and sometimes they had even to dump it because no one would buy it from them at any price. To-day, when the conditions are improved with the object of encouraging the fishing industry, why should the hon. gentleman try to break down the regulations?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: We do not do that.

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HON. T. NEVITT: If the hon. gentleman had his way in doing away with the regulations he has enumerated, that would be the effect.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Not at all. You bring in amending regulations.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Order!

HON. T. NEVITT: The next clause to which I wish to take exception is clause 14. It reads—

“Fishermen, by being practically confined to one market and hampered by many sore restrictions, are menaced by a monopoly which may rob them of the fair return for their difficult and dangerous toil and reduce their irregular and hard-won earnings to a pittance far less than the living wage.”

How many markets does the hon. gentleman want in Brisbane? In the first place there are two markets, practically.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Are there, or are there not?

HON. T. NEVITT: Wynnum is a market as far as the fishermen are concerned.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Mr. Justice Real says “practically” means there is not.

HON. T. NEVITT: As far as the fishermen are concerned, it is a market. They can sell their catch at Wynnum; they do not need to come to town. If they catch any fish between Wynnum and town, they can be deposited at South Brisbane. Therefore, there are two markets. That is not the first error I have pointed out in the hon. gentleman's motion during the day.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: But the petition is perfectly correct there.

HON. T. NEVITT: I say the petition is not correct when it says “confined to one market.”

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Where is the other?

HON. T. NEVITT: I say Wynnum.

HON. R. SUMNER: Southport, Sandgate; wherever they catch fish they can sell them.

HON. T. NEVITT: They can put them on rail, and the State supplies them with cases, hampers, or whatever is necessary to pack them. Therefore, besides the markets I have named, as far as the fishermen are concerned, wherever there are rail facilities there are places where they can dispose of their fish. Therefore, clause 14 is again not in accordance with fact.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: It is in accordance with section 9 of the Act, which your Government are not carrying out.

HON. T. NEVITT: Clause 14—which is drawn up, I presume, by the hon. gentleman—states they have one market only. I state there are several markets, and the hon. gentleman cannot deny it.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I certainly do deny it.

HON. T. NEVITT: If you do, you deny what is a fact.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Can you show me a “Government Gazette” appointing more than one market?

HON. T. NEVITT: Can the fishermen sell their fish at Wynnum?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: You say so, and the Act says they cannot.

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HON. T. NEVITT: The hon. gentleman dare not deny it when I say they can dispose of their fish at Wynnum, and at any point where there are rail facilities.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Well, they flout the Act if they do.

HON. T. NEVITT: It does not matter whether they flout the Act or not. If it is in conflict with the Act, it is not the only time that a regulation has been in conflict with an Act; and it is not the only time the hon. gentleman has drafted a regulation in conflict with an Act. I now come to clause 16 of the petition.

[7.30 p.m.]

HON. P. J. LEAHY: How many clauses are there altogether?

HON. T. NEVITT: There are quite a number of them. I hope I am not wearying the hon. gentleman. The latter part of that clause says—

“Your petitioners have already suffered so severely that they were compelled to ask for independent inspection by the Health Department, and although relief was promised, the unsatisfactory conditions still continue.”

Who are the petitioners who have “suffered so severely”? Only the fish hawkers and the fish dealers.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: The House was told that an independent inspector was already appointed.

HON. T. NEVITT: I understand that such is the case. The only way in which those people have suffered was in losing what they might have gained when there was a glut of fish in the market before the State took over the control of the industry. How many of those men would bid for those fish when they were offered at auction? I have heard a gentleman on the other side of the House, who was at one time a member of the Fish Board, say that he had seen hundreds of bushels of fish going down to the bay to be dumped into the sea. Who gained by that? The men who have signed this petition. Hon. members opposite have not been able to produce a single statement from a fisherman to show that he was not getting a better price for his fish to-day than he was previously. The fishermen admit that they are better off to-day than they were formerly. The hawkers and the dealers are the only persons who have suffered by the change which has been effected in the manner of conducting the fish industry. Hon. gentlemen have heard the names of petitioners read out by the Hon. Mr. Bedford this afternoon.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: He said he was giving them to us correctly, but I do not know whether he was or not.

HON. T. NEVITT: I simply heard the names read out, and I cannot say whether they were given correctly or not. I understand that the bulk of the men who are engaged in catching fish are at least Britishers. I am not going so far as to say that a man who is in this country should not have the protection of the laws of the country; but are we to go out of our way to give certain men the opportunity to fleece the fishermen and the public?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: No.

HON. T. NEVITT: If you disallow these regulations, that is what you will do. Seeing that the fishermen who have to suffer the

perils and dangers of the sea are satisfied, and that the consumers are satisfied, why should not we be satisfied? Only one-seventh of the men who are supplying fish to the market are taking any interest in this petition; and are we going to legislate for a minority of one-seventh, and ignore the interests of the other six-sevenths? Would that be democratic government, or honest government, or just government?

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Have the minority no rights?

HON. T. NEVITT: Yes, the minority have rights, and they should be respected, but not at the expense of the majority. Clause 18 says—

“Your petitioners submit that a steady minimum and fair market for their fish is desirable in the interests of all suppliers—”

Quite true, and the State has been able to accomplish that object—

“and that it is in the interests of all consumers that suppliers be left free to trade with any possible buyers.”

That is where the fish dealers and hawkers want to come in; they want to come in at the expense of the fishermen, and fleece all hands. Those people can go to the State fish market and buy fish on the same terms and conditions as the State shops are supplying. Is not that legitimate?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: That is not the subject at all.

HON. T. NEVITT: That is the subject of clause 18. I do not wish to repeat ad nauseam the argument I used in the early stage of my remarks. Therefore, I shall content myself with saying that the hawkers and dealers can trade on exactly the same terms and conditions as the State fish shop, and they should not ask for anything more. During the time the Hon. T. L. Jones was speaking, some hon. member opposite asked if State enterprise could not enter into competition with other people? Well, as was clearly explained by the Hon. Mr. Jones, it is not always politic or wise to attempt to accomplish the object we are aiming at by allowing free competition. But there is really nothing to complain of in this matter.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: What is the prayer of the petition—to disallow excessive charges?

HON. T. NEVITT: There are twenty clauses, and I must take them seriatim, in order to show the unfounded charges which have been made against the State control of this business. The statements made were not proved. To finish the latter portion of the clause, it is stated—

“The suppliers be left free to trade with any possible buyers without any of the delays prejudicing the condition or the price of the fish.”

There is no delay. They can leave their order at the fish market, and if the supply is sufficiently large it is told out to the different fish dealers in proportionate quantities. What can be fairer than that? Why should one man, because he can control a good banking account, be allowed to take all the fish on a day when the supply is short? Is it not more equitable when, as now, it is dealt out according to their requirements?

HON. R. SUMNER: They do not like it.

HON. T. NEVITT: They do not like it; but why should we take any notice of complaints of this kind?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: The prayer of the petition is to disallow excessive charges, which everybody knows to be outrageous.

HON. T. NEVITT: If the prayer of the petition referred to excessive charges only I do not think we should have had the debate which we have had. I am prepared to sit down now, if the hon. members will let them go.

HON. R. BEDFORD: The charges are necessary for proper administration.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: No. Your own side admitted that the charges were excessive.

HON. T. NEVITT: Clause 19 says—

“Neither in New South Wales nor in Western Australia, or in any other part of Australia, is the fish industry so embarrassed or retarded by such conditions. The present conditions trend towards driving fishermen out of the local industry.”

The way in which they have driven them out is this—that in twelve months they have got 253 tons more fish deposited through the market than was deposited before, and at a better price.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: They ought to get that in one month. It is a State fish shop. The whole thing is a lumbering futility.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I must ask hon. gentlemen on both sides to allow the Hon. Mr. Nevitt, who has the floor, to continue his speech without so much interruption.

HON. T. NEVITT: The petition proceeds—

“The present conditions trend towards driving fishermen out of the local industry, in which case consumers would have to depend upon imported fish, although large supplies can be secured near at hand under altered conditions.”

We are increasing the supply. There is no denying the fact that this petition is got up in the interests of the fishmonger and fish dealer. Under all conditions, the fisherman's life is not a particularly happy one. The public have a good deal to be thankful to the fisherman for. In Great Britain the fishermen have done fine work during the war, in patrolling the coasts and along the Dogger Bank, and other places.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. T. NEVITT: The object of the State, when they took over the fish industry, was to give better conditions to the fishermen, and the fishermen have responded to the call. During the past twelve months they have supplied half a million pounds more fish than was supplied before. Is not that answering the call? The State has spent a good deal of money to encourage the fisherman, and to help him to get a fair and decent price for his products, and to enable the public to get a good article, because it is admitted that the conditions under which fish is now prepared, cleaned, inspected, and placed upon the market have resulted in the public getting a clean and wholesome article at the State fish shop. They were not certain of getting it before

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the State fish shop was established. Then, the petition says—

“Thirdly, to increase and cheapen the fish to the public.”

I have already stated the reason why it is impossible to cheapen fish at the present time. In some instances, I believe that fish even now—although we are working under very adverse conditions—is supplied cheaper than it was supplied by the fish dealers prior to the inception of the fish market. In the aggregate, fish, I understand, is a little dearer for the reason I have stated—that you cannot get any article for the price you could get it at in pre-war days.

HON. R. SUMNER: You cannot get a fisherman's net or benzine.

HON. T. NEVITT: It has come within the knowledge of quite a number of people that, prior to the framing of these regulations, there was a movement on foot by the fish dealers and hawkers of Brisbane to establish an independent market. Why should they be allowed to come in at this stage and undermine the industry by establishing a market of their own?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: No; bring in a revised scale of charges—that is all the House asks.

HON. T. NEVITT: I am dealing with the petition as presented. I just want to refer to one or two other regulations, to see what the injustice is which they say they want remedied. We now come to regulation 41, which provides—

“The metropolitan fish market is hereby appointed as the place for inspection of all fish brought into the metropolitan fish supply district. Fish may also be inspected at such branch markets and depôts as may from time to time be established and appointed for such purpose by the Commissioner.”

What is wrong with that? I am not very sure as to whether a man can get his fish inspected at Wynnum.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: That is just the point. That regulation is not in conformity with section 9 of the Act.

HON. T. NEVITT: You have to remember that the bulk of the fish is distributed from the vicinity of Victoria Bridge, and the fish is inspected there. Should the fish not be inspected?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Regulation 41 does not go far enough. It needs amendment.

HON. T. NEVITT: The hon. member would have an inspector wherever a boat lands—at Breakfast Creek or any other creek.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I would have one at Wynnum.

HON. T. NEVITT: I sat on a committee not long ago with the hon. member, who realised the impossibility of having an inspector even at every butter and cheese factory, at which they turn out very large quantities of produce; and, if that be so, how could we have an inspector at every landing where there is a fisherman with half a dozen baskets of fish?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Not every landing. I want the Act maintained.

HON. T. NEVITT: If he does not want to comply with that, he can sell to the State at

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a better price than in the past, and all the fishermen, with twelve exceptions, are satisfied.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Has not a minority got rights?

HON. T. NEVITT: Certainly they have, and I respect their rights. The rescission of the regulations would mean that the people who are complaining would benefit and the 90 per cent. would be losers. I say that no democratic House—and I am often told by my friends on the other side that this is the only democratic Chamber—would do that. Hon. members want to legislate for the one-seventh as against six-sevenths. Clause 74 was very ably dealt with by my friend the Hon. Mr. Sumner, who knows this question from A to Z, and it was dealt with also by the Hon. Mr. T. L. Jones. But there are one or two points which I think warrant reference to them. Subclause (c) provides, with reference to fishmongers' and fish vendors' licenses, that they—

“Shall not be transferable except as provided in clause (f) hereof.”

The hon. member wants to make a license transferable at any time, under any conditions. I say that an inspector controlling the industry should have control over any fish hawk or fish dealer. Subclause (d) provides that the license—

“May be suspended for any period not exceeding three months, or may be absolutely revoked by the Commissioner upon conviction of any breach of the regulations.”

If a man commits a breach which the Commissioner thinks is sufficient to justify him in suspending his license, should it not be suspended?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Is there no appeal?

HON. T. NEVITT: I think he can appeal to the fish board.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: You think? Can you show me where there is any appeal?

HON. T. NEVITT: Have the regulations been harshly administered? The hon. member wants to do away with all the safeguards.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Not at all.

HON. T. NEVITT: Well, there is a safeguard here. If the breach is sufficiently great, the Commissioner can have the power to revoke his license.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: And kill him and gaol him!

HON. T. NEVITT: That is where the hon. member frequently puts his foot in it—when he makes statements that are not in accordance with facts. It is not right to put him in gaol and nobody is asking for power to do so.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I ask for a court of appeal.

HON. T. NEVITT: There is the appeal to the board. If an inspector deals out anything but evenhanded justice the fisherman can lodge his petition to the board.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Where does it say that?

HON. T. NEVITT: That is the natural inference.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: We want to amend these regulations.

HON. T. NEVITT: The hon. member wants to do away with them altogether. He occupied some considerable time in showing that they were not necessary.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: Oh, no! An amended form is necessary.

HON. T. NEVITT: Where is that amended form?

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: We are not supposed to draft that. All the Council can do is to disallow.

HON. T. NEVITT: I think the hon. member should have foreshadowed some means by which they could be amended. He takes exception to certain regulations and does not state on what grounds, beyond some brief statement made in the petition, which is not in accordance with facts. Then we come to subclause (c) which provides—

“Shall be kept at and put in a conspicuous place in the retail section of the premises wherein the licensee carries on business, and shall be produced on demand to any officer of the Commissioner, or member of the Police Force, or intending purchaser.”

Is that not right?

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: Quite right.

HON. T. NEVITT: But the hon. member wants to delete it.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: Oh, no!

HON. T. NEVITT: That is his motion practically—re-scind it; disallow it.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: That is all this Council can do.

HON. T. NEVITT: The hon. member is a gentleman of the law and knows quite sufficient—at least I give him credit for that—about drafting amendments in regulations or Bills to know how to do it here, and I want, as a layman, to point out that he wants to strike them out and to draw attention to the effect it is going to have on the country and the community.

[8 p.m.]

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: You can gazette amended regulations to-morrow, and they ought to be ready.

HON. T. NEVITT: Subclause (f) reads—

“The license held by a fishmonger or fish vendor shall be transferable only in the event of such person disposing by sale of his interest in such business, provided that notification of such sale is made in writing to the Commissioner by the vendor, and a transfer of the license effected and registered by the purchaser within fourteen days of the date of such sale.”

Yet the hon. gentleman proposes that that should be disallowed.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: Not that paragraph.

HON. T. NEVITT: According to the motion, the hon. gentleman wants that disallowed.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: That part is all right.

HON. T. NEVITT: The only time at which a license should be transferred is

when the vendor is disposing of his business, and then he must give reasonable notice to the inspector that he is going to do so.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: You know very well we cannot disallow part of a regulation without disallowing the whole regulation.

HON. T. NEVITT: If there is anything in the contention of the hon. gentleman, the motion should not have been tabled at all; there is no necessity for it if the hon. gentleman had the interests at heart of anyone but the petitioners.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: This was mentioned months ago.

HON. T. NEVITT: When did the regulations come into force?

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: On 15th May.

HON. T. NEVITT: Several months ago.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: They provoked a storm of opposition at once in the Press. They were withdrawn at Maryborough. They are not in operation at the present time at Wynnnum or in South Brisbane, except in some disfavoured directions.

HON. T. NEVITT: There is quite a number of regulations in existence to-day that are not enforced. The hon. gentleman knows that there is quite a number of Acts of Parliament on our statute-book that are not enforced.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: Well, overboard with them, if they are not doing any good.

HON. T. NEVITT: The hon. gentleman knows it is not so easy to throw them overboard; and there are times when it is very handy to have those statutes; and it will be very handy at times to have these regulations; but it does not follow that they are going to be enforced under all conditions and at all times. They are only there to be brought into execution when needed; and, if the hon. gentleman had considered that aspect of the question, I do not think he would have tabled this motion. Subclause (g) reads—

“The licensee of any such premises shall not permit any sanitary convenience to be situated in any room where fish is prepared or kept; and any sanitary convenience, and also any stable, shall be so situated as to be completely cut off from any such room by cross ventilation.”

What is wrong with that?

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: That is all right.

HON. T. NEVITT: Does the hon. gentleman want the old conditions back again? Yet the hon. gentleman wants to wipe that out.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: You know we have to disallow the whole regulation; we cannot disallow them piecemeal.

HON. T. NEVITT: Subclause (h) reads—

“He shall not receive or store upon his premises any unwholesome fish; and any such fish found therein or thereon may be seized and destroyed by the Commissioner or his officers, and such licensee shall bear all expenses in connection with such seizure and destruction.”

Does the hon. gentleman want that out?

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: How are you going to exact the payment of expenses from the licensee?

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HON. T. NEVITT: The licensee should be charged with any costs that are incurred in carrying out that regulation.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: But how are you going to collect them?

HON. T. NEVITT: If the licensee will not carry out his instructions, and the inspector authorises certain work to be done and sends men to do that work, whatever that work may cost the licensee will be charged with the expense.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: But what machinery are you going to use to get the money?

HON. T. NEVITT: The ordinary law court procedure that is put in force by the Crown.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: You want another clause in after that indicating how you are going to recover.

HON. T. NEVITT: Will not the common law apply?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Certainly not. You don't expect me to decide that here.

HON. T. NEVITT: The hon. member put a question to me and I answered him. The Crown would have no trouble whatever. The hon. member need not be afraid that the Crown will not be able to protect itself.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Why not put in an additional clause there and save a lawsuit?

HON. T. NEVITT: A lawsuit would only be necessary if the licensee objected to pay the charges.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Most of the speeches on your side proceed on the assumption that we are attacking the regulations. We are only proposing to improve them in every case.

HON. T. NEVITT: I contend that the hon. gentleman is attacking the regulations; he says that the regulations should not be allowed.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: In order that they may be improved.

HON. T. NEVITT: But the hon. gentleman has not given any indication as to how they are to be improved. I am pointing out the serious danger that would arise if we adopted the motion. It is the old story of choosing the lesser of two evils; and I think that the lesser evil is to adhere to these regulations.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: You could have new ones gazetted to-morrow.

HON. T. NEVITT: The hon. gentleman has had from May until he tabled his resolution about a fortnight ago within which to indicate in what way he wanted the regulations amended, and he has not given any indication. Yet he expects the inspector to draft new regulations and have them put in operation at the hon. member's sweet will in less than twenty-four hours. See the unreasonableness of what the hon. member suggests!

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: He has had a week already.

HON. T. NEVITT: He does not know that he has to draft any new regulations. The Government do not consider that there is any necessity for new regulations; and I

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understand that the inspector and the fish board are of the same opinion.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Are they proud of the regulations?

HON. T. NEVITT: Those whose interests we should look after, because they are not as well able to look after their interests as the fish hawkers and fish vendors, are satisfied with these regulations. The man who catches the fish—that is the primary producer—is satisfied with the regulations.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: He has signed the petition against them.

HON. T. NEVITT: I come then to clause (i) which reads as follows:—

“He shall permit inspection to be made of his premises, equipment, and appurtenances relative to such business at all reasonable times.”

That is the clause that is contained in nearly all our regulations, and where is there anything unreasonable in it? In connection with a commodity such as fish, which will not keep except under the very best conditions, it is necessary that inspectors should have the right of free access to the premises of anybody selling such an article, at all times, and yet the hon. gentleman wishes to wipe out that clause. The following subclause (j) reads—

“He shall not carry fish intended for sale for human consumption except in a vehicle, box, basket, or other approved conveyance or appliance which is so constructed as to exclude all risk to such foods of contamination from flies, dust, or other impurities or agency of disease.”

Again, does the hon. gentleman see the trouble that will arise if his motion is carried? He would leave it to the sweet will of the fish vendor to place his fish upon the market under the most crude conditions.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: That is not true.

HON. T. NEVITT: That subclause is for the protection of the public.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: No one objects to that subclause.

HON. T. NEVITT: Then, why did the hon. gentleman move his motion? I am trying to show to the hon. gentleman that we want this article of food placed upon the market under the most hygienic conditions.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: So do we.

HON. T. NEVITT: Then the hon. gentleman is taking a very peculiar method of carrying that out, when he wants to disallow regulations which have for their primary object the placing of this article on the market in the best possible condition.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: You are dealing with a matter that is bad in parts and good in parts. We want to wipe out the bad parts.

HON. T. NEVITT: The hon. gentleman wants to legislate for one-seventh of the community at the expense of the other six-sevenths.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: It is the only way we can do it in this Council.

HON. T. NEVITT: The hon. gentleman has not learned the lesson that one would

have expected him to have learned considering the time he has been here. Then subclause (k) reads—

“He shall not carry in such vehicle or other container any unsound or unwholesome article of food at the same time as fish is being carried therein.”

If an inspector stopped a fish hawkker and finds a portion of the fish unwholesome, why should the fish hawkker be in a position to say, “I know that is unwholesome, but I am not going to sell it.” The fact of the fish being in a cart should be *prima facie* evidence that the hawkker intends to dispose of it to the public, and if that regulation is disallowed, a good deal of unwholesome fish will be placed on the market at great risk to the lives of a good many in the community. The next subclause is (l), which reads—

“He shall not permit customers or other persons to overhaul or handle any fish offered by him for sale.”

That is a well-adopted principle in connection with a good many trades. There are some people who have the impudence to go into a shop and overhaul a great quantity of the food in that shop and then, in some cases, do not buy anything. That regulation is absolutely necessary to stop that kind of thing. We have regulations under the Dairy Produce Act which prevent people suffering from certain diseases from being employed in the dairying industry. A good many people suffer from contagious diseases of one sort or another, and without this regulation these people could not be prevented from handling fish. Then I come to subclause (m), which is as follows:—

“He and all persons employed by him shall, when engaged in the receiving, handling, preparing, or selling of fish in connection with such trade, business, or occupation, always wear a clean detachable apron made of washable material, which shall be worn on the outside of his ordinary clothing.”

What is there against that? That is only carrying out the hygienic conditions which the public have been asking for a long, long time to apply to this industry.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Nobody objects to that.

HON. T. NEVITT: Does the hon. gentleman object to any of the regulations? I have dealt with quite a number of the regulations and the hon. gentleman keeps on saying, “Nobody objects to that.” It seems to me that there is no objection to anything, and yet the hon. gentleman moved his motion. Now I come to subclause (n), which reads—

“He shall maintain his person and clothing at all times in a clean condition, and shall be held liable for the cleanliness of the person and clothing of each and every person so employed by him.”

What is there wrong with that? That regulation is necessary in order to have fish placed on the market in a clean and wholesome condition. There is one more clause that I wish to quote. Clause 78 reads—

“Any holder of a license under this Act who is convicted of an offence under these regulations shall be liable, at the discretion of the Commissioner, to have his license cancelled, in addition to any other punishment that may be inflicted upon him.”

That is only reasonable. If any vendor of fish commits a crime for which he has been punished by the law courts, and the inspector considers that that man should be prevented from following the calling of a fish vendor for the future, for the protection of the community, the Commissioner should have power to cancel his license.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Without appeal?

HON. T. NEVITT: Yes, in a case of that kind.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: You put a man's bread and butter at the sweet will of the Commissioner.

HON. T. NEVITT: That is not putting a man's bread and butter at the sweet will of the Commissioner. Quite a number of people commit crimes that have a great effect on the welfare of the community, and for which they receive no punishment. If a man is guilty of putting an article of food on the market quite contrary to what it purports to be, that man should no longer be allowed to follow that particular calling.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: You would punish him twice?

HON. T. NEVITT: I would punish him a thousand times for that kind of thing. How often do we find our inspectors under the Health Act taking samples of milk from the milk vendors, and at times it has been found that the milk has been adulterated to the extent of 70 per cent. with water? That milk frequently is supplied as food for infants, and yet the hon. gentleman tells me that it would be too heavy a punishment to prevent such a man from following the calling of a milk vendor in the future! I say no penalty is too great for such a man, and the same argument applies to the fishmonger, or any other vendor of foodstuffs.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: You must be just.

HON. T. NEVITT: That is justice. I am dealing out justice to those who are unable to protect themselves. An infant cannot protect himself. He cannot see that the milkman supplies him with pure milk. We are told by the Government analytical chemist that there is something like £300 or £400 collected in Brisbane for fines imposed on account of the watering of milk.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: But they do not have their licenses taken away until they have been convicted two or three times.

HON. T. NEVITT: I would take it away at the first offence, if I had my way. In that particular respect the law is not sufficiently severe. No punishment is too great to inflict upon men who are guilty of that kind of thing. In conclusion, I wish to emphasise one or two little points. The first is that no *bonâ fide* fisherman has ever laid a complaint before the fish board. I think that that proves to any ordinary, un-biased individual that these regulations are necessary, and are not inflicting any undue hardship upon anybody. The next point I wish to emphasise is that at the present time fishermen can sell their fish at Sandgate, Wynnum, Southport, and Tweed Heads; and, if they are not prepared to sell their fish at those places, they can send them to the State fish market to be purchased, and the full market price will be given—which they never had an opportunity of getting before. The last point I wish to emphasise is that the fish is bought in an unclean condition. It is cleaned, gutted, and placed upon the market in a wholesome condition. That

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was never done before. I wish hon. gentlemen to seriously consider what would be the effect if this motion were passed. I hope the mover, even at this late hour, will see his way clear to withdrawing the motion.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: We have heard a good deal from the other side in defence of their suggestion that these regulations should be passed as they are. I must say that what we have heard has not been in any way convincing. We have here a petition from a large number of vendors, fishermen, and hawkers.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Read the list.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: I am not going to attempt what the Hon. Mr. Bedford attempted. I cannot undertake to pronounce those names properly. I know what Venizelos is. He is the sort of Greek I admire.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Do you claim that that petition is signed by fishermen supplying the market with fish?

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: We claim that a dozen of those fishermen are included in this petition who actually supply fish either to the State market or to the public.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: But there are eighty-four suppliers. You only have one-seventh of the suppliers.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: They have their rights as well as anybody else. Here we have a petition which is signed by a number of what we may take to be reputable, decent men, carrying on business in connection with the fish industry. They say, first of all, that they are not getting proper treatment at the fish market, that they are being charged excessive charges. We know that those excessive charges must be passed on to somebody, and the result will be that the general consumer will have to pay more for his fish. That is borne out by the figures which were published in the "Courier" this morning.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The Hon. T. L. Jones effectively replied to the "Courier" statement.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: He was not convincing. He did not touch upon the last part of the quotation at all. This quotation shows the retail shop price before the Government took control of the industry, and the present State retail prices to be—

"Mullet (winter), private enterprise, 2½d. to 3d. per lb.; 'cheap food' Government—that is the present Government, who came in on the cheap food cry, and were going to cheapen everything—4½d.—"

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: They are quoting uncleaned fish. Don't you know the difference?

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN:

"Mullet (summer), private enterprise, 4d.; 'cheap food' Government, 6d.—"

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER interjected.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: I do not know any of the petitioners. I have no brief for them, and I should be sorry to see the conditions go back to what they were some years ago.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: This Council brought about the reform.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN:

"Tailer, by private enterprise, was 4d. to 5d.; by the 'cheap food' Government

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it was 5½d. Bream was 5d. under private enterprise, and 5½d. by the Government. Whiting was 7d. under private enterprise, and 9d. by the Government; mackerel, 10d. under private enterprise, and 1s. 3d. by the Government."

I quote this for the purpose of showing that there is some disparity, and there is no doubt we are not getting fish as cheaply as we ought.

HON. L. McDONALD: We are getting it cheaper than any State in the Commonwealth.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: I believe that is not so.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Last week I quoted the prices for Sydney and Melbourne.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: I am surprised that the Minister has not offered to meet us in some way. There is no doubt there are excessive charges. When complaints of this kind are made it is the duty of the Government to try and have them got rid of.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: There is no charge to those who supply the fish market.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Of course, that is only getting in by a side-wind. The Government, and their supporters who have spoken, have admitted that they want to get a Government monopoly.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Quite right, too.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: I say it is not right; there should be no monopoly. The Government ought to be prepared to enter into competition with everybody else.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: As long as we are giving the people cheap, wholesome fish—

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: You are not giving them nearly as much fish as they desire, and that which you are giving them is much dearer than it used to be, and than is being charged by private enterprise. The petition states this—

"Notwithstanding the provisions of the Act for the prevention of excessive dues and charges, both for marketing and inspection, as promulgated in the regulation of 16th May, 1919, and now in operation, are enormous and oppressive, and threaten to wreck the fish industry within the metropolitan area. The former scale of dues and charges, which would be light when compared with charges in other parts of the world, has been suddenly expanded by charges reaching as high as a 900 per cent. increase."

The Hon. Mr. Nevitt admitted that some of the charges are increased by [8.30 p.m.] 900 per cent., and that there had been only £8 charged under that particular regulation. The Government are out for a monopoly; if they think that increase of 900 per cent. in their charges will help them, it will be enforced, as there is every opportunity for their enforcing it.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The people are satisfied.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: The people are not satisfied.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You are representing the middlemen; we are representing the consumers and the fishermen.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I trust that hon. gentlemen will allow the Hon. Mr. Hawthorn to make his speech, and not interject in this manner.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: As I have said, the Hon. Mr. Nevitt has admitted that there has been an increase of 900 per cent. in some of the charges. Certainly the new charges frequently represent as high as 150 per cent. increase on the value of the fish. The petitioners go on to say—

“The imposition of extraordinary dues and charges confers no benefit either on the suppliers or on the public; the former are reaping nothing for the burdensome levy, and the extortionate demands made by the regulations unnecessarily made fish a dear commodity and not within the reach of the multitude who desire good and cheap food.”

The consumer is certainly not being treated properly, and gets no advantage under these regulations. It is admitted that there are some wrongs which need revision, and I think the Government should offer to frame new regulations to meet the difficulty. I would advise the Minister to get the Commissioner of Trade, who now takes charge of the whole thing, to meet the persons concerned, and if they are suffering any grievances to try to remedy those grievances. If the Government want to do the best they can for the public and the fisherman, let the Trade Commissioner meet the objectors who have presented this petition. There can be no harm done by following that course, and it may lead to a solution of the whole difficulty. In the meantime I would suggest that this debate be adjourned. I think we have forty days within which the regulations can be thrown out.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You can allow the motion to stand on the business-sheet until the end of the session, as long as you move the motion within fourteen days of the laying of the regulations on the table.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: What I want to do is, firstly, to prevent the Government getting a monopoly; secondly, to see that the consumer is not saddled with these excessive charges, because he has to pay every time; and, thirdly, to see that a fair deal is given to the fishermen and all the other people concerned.

HON. R. BEDFORD: And wipe out the insanitary condition of things.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: I think we would do that if we wiped out the hon. gentleman. The hon. member always reminds me of a little steamer which used to run up and down Sydney Harbour. It was put together in Mort's Dock, but they made a mistake in its construction. They put in a small boiler and a big whistle, and when the whistle blew the engines stopped. (Laughter.)

HON. R. BEDFORD: You ought to have been a “Lauder.”

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: However, as I say, we have here a petition from a number of reputable citizens who say that they are suffering under a grievance. I would suggest to the Minister that this debate be adjourned—I have no doubt that some one on this side of the House or on his own side would move the adjournment—and that the Commissioner for Trade confer

with these persons who allege that they have a grievance. If these excessive charges are imposed, they will have to be paid by the consumer, whether they are imposed by the State or anybody else. As that portion of the Houses of Parliament which is acting for democracy, it is our duty to see that the democrats and the community generally are properly looked after. We do not want to get back to the old system which obtained here a year or two ago, nor do we want to see the consumer saddled with these excessive charges. Therefore, I suggest to the Minister that he should adopt the course I have mentioned, and secure a conference between the State Commissioner and the persons concerned, which will probably lead to a solution of the whole difficulty.

HON. A. SKIRVING: I think if the Hon. Mr. Fowles would adopt the suggestion made to the House by the Hon. Mr. Hawthorn and withdraw his motion, it would be a very good thing for both his side of the House and ours. I understand that there are a number of men who constitute the fish board—

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: The fish board have gone to heaven, and the Commissioner has taken their place.

HON. A. SKIRVING: Well, I think the hon. gentleman would have done better if he had laid the complaint of these fish vendors before the Trade Commissioner. If he had done that, perhaps these regulations would have been amended to suit all parties concerned. It appears to me that the Hon. Mr. Fowles has brought in this motion, not with a desire to assist those whom he professes to be trying to assist, but to assist the men who used to get profits out of the fishermen. In fact, in the old days, those men were exploiters of the fishermen. Under the regulations brought in by the Government, the fishermen have a chance of making a living. The hon. gentleman knows why those regulations were brought in. He mentioned the fact that 1s. 6d. is charged for the inspection of a single crab. The regulation imposing that charge was brought in for a purpose. It would be well if the Hon. Mr. Fowles would withdraw his motion, and try to get the Commissioner to alter the regulations. The hon. gentleman spoke last week of the men who signed the petition, but there are very few genuine fishermen—those who make their living by fishing all the year round—who have signed the petition. Those who signed it are men who are making their living outside the fishing industry. The motion asks that the regulations relating to the fish industry, of 16th May, 1919, be disallowed by the Council, that independent inspection of fish be arranged, and that other convenient markets be provided. The hon. gentleman said that there was only the one market in South Brisbane, to which all the fish had to come, but the position is that 75 per cent. of the fish is sold by the fishermen at Wynnum. As the hon. gentleman knows, the regulations were framed to prevent men who occasionally go fishing and get a fairly large catch of fish, including, perhaps, a big groper, from selling these fish to the “dago” without inspection. The regulations have been fairly successful in preventing that practice. The Hon. Mr. Sumner has interjected that he would be very pleased if the petitioners would lay their charges before the Commissioner. Would it not have been far better if the

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Hon. Mr. Fowles, in the first place, instead of wasting the time of the House in debating the petition, had interviewed the Commissioner?

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: He had to do it within fourteen days after the regulations were laid on the table of the House.

HON. A. SKIRVING: I am satisfied the Hon. Mr. Fowles could have got them altered in two days' time if he had gone the right way about it. It would have been an easy matter for him to get the regulations amended.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Why not adjourn, as I suggested?

HON. A. SKIRVING: Why does the Hon. Mr. Fowles not withdraw his motion? There were two fishermen on the Commission, and there have been no complaints from the fishermen as a body. The Hon. Mr. Fowles has been entrusted with the task of bringing a petition from the Greek vendors of fish—or, as one hon. gentleman said, the fish and chip potato vendors. The man whom these regulations were designed to help has been given a decent living through their operation. The Hon. Mr. Fowles will remember that before the regulations were framed the fisherman had a very bad time, but to-day he gets a chance to earn an honest living because of them.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: There was a big deputation on 26th June to the Government on this matter.

HON. A. SKIRVING: Who was the deputation from—the vendors or the fishermen?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Delegates to the Master Fishermen's Association. A deputation of fishermen waited on the Acting Chief Secretary. I have the report here.

HON. A. SKIRVING: Out of the eighty-four men who signed the petition you can only claim eleven fishermen, and out of that eleven, I do not think there are two who follow fishing all the year round.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: One of the leaders was a member of the fish board.

HON. A. SKIRVING: I am talking about the men who signed this petition.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Over forty of the men were bonâ fide fishermen, twelve supplying the Government under contract.

HON. T. L. JONES: Only eleven of them working under agreement.

HON. A. SKIRVING: The position is that the Hon. Mr. Fowles has not brought this motion forward in the interests of the industry—that is, of the men who go out to sea, and do the hard work of fishing.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Why should we not consider the consumer?

HON. A. SKIRVING: As far as the consumer is concerned, I am of opinion that he is getting better fish.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: And dearer fish.

HON. A. SKIRVING: It may be dearer, but I am inclined to wonder whether, if there had not been a Labour Government in power, he would have got any fish at all—he would have had to import it.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: What did we get before?

HON. A. SKIRVING: Dear fish and rotten fish prior to the establishment of the market.

[Hon. A. Skirving.]

In the old days, if there was a lot of fish in the market which people did not want, there would be no chance of selling it, with the result that later on people would get it at 2s. a bushel, and put it in the ice works for themselves. Some hon. gentleman said to-day that the fish was kept in ice for several months by the present Administration. I know that in the old days it was kept in ice for a longer period than that. When there was a slackness, out the fish would come and the public would pay a great deal more than we have to pay at the present time. The Hon. Mr. Fowles knows that, and he also knows that, even supposing that we are not getting cheaper fish, we are getting better fish, and that the men are getting a decent living. In the old days I think they would average from 25s. to 30s. per week.

HON. R. SUMNER: Not that.

HON. A. SKIRVING: Certain evidence was taken before a Commission with regard to the fish industry, and it would be most interesting if it were placed on the table of the House. There is some evidence that "Tom" Welsby gave, and I think he knows as much about the industry as any member of this Council or any fisherman. If members opposite were to read that—

HON. R. SUMNER: They are all representative of "dagos" on that side.

HON. A. SKIRVING: If members opposite would read that, I am confident that when we came to a division the Hon. Mr. Fowles would be left "on his own," and that other members—because I am convinced they are fair-minded—would come over here in the interests of the men whose interests the Hon. Mr. Hawthorn said we should look after. The Hon. Mr. Fowles said he did not want all the regulations wiped out. He can go before the Commissioner and get anything that is wrong remedied.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Then we would lose our right to disallow the regulations.

HON. A. SKIRVING: I am a new member here, and I do not know what effect it would have if we did that and another place did not.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Either House can do it.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: They could bring in fresh regulations to-morrow.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: There is another way of defeating you.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Surely, it is not a question of defeating one another.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Surely, fish should be above party politics!

HON. A. SKIRVING: It is not fish we are bothering about, but the regulations, and they have served their purpose, and will continue to serve their purpose of blocking people from getting their fish to the "dagos" at lower prices. When the Hon. Mr. Nevitt was speaking, an interjection came from the other side to the effect that the Government did not want a monopoly, but these men have a monopoly.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: We do not want that, certainly.

HON. A. SKIRVING: But the wiping out of these regulations is going to assist them to get it.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Oh, no!

HON. A. SKIRVING: There is no doubt about that. Every member of this Council knows that prior to these regulations they had absolute command of the market, and if they did not want the fish they were able to block it from getting to the people. Without these regulations the fish business would have been in the hands of a certain class of the community whilst the fishermen—they are the main consideration with me, the men who do the work—would have been getting the pittance they used to, that is, 25s. to 30s. per week. Under these regulations they are able to get a decent living wage. For these reasons I intend to oppose the motion.

HON. L. McDONALD: I want to say a few words in opposition to the motion, and before I conclude I propose to move as an amendment, that all the words after "That" in paragraph (1) be deleted with a view to inserting the following words:—

"The regulations relating to the fish industry and promulgated on the 16th May, 1919, in the 'Queensland Government Gazette,' No. 175, be amended."

Hon. P. J. LEAHY: In what direction?

HON. L. McDONALD: That is the amendment I am going to move, but I want to say a few words in opposition to the motion. Members on this side have spoken and severely criticised the statements in the petition, but neither the Hon. Mr. Fowles or any of his supporters on the other side have given us any valid reasons whatsoever as to why the motion should be carried. I never saw any petition that was such a mass of vague generalities and unsubstantiated evidence as the one we have before us. A number of the statements made by the Hon. Mr. Fowles in his speech are in the same category. I want to deal first of all with clause 12 of the petition—

"The imposition of extraordinary dues and charges confers no benefit either on the suppliers or on the public; the former are reaping nothing from the burdensome levy; and the extortionate demands made by the regulations necessarily make fish a dear commodity quite out of reach of the multitude who desire good and cheap food."

When the Hon. Mr. Hawthorn was speaking, I interjected that fish were cheaper in Brisbane than in the Southern States, and in refutation of that portion of the petition which says that the demands made by the regulations make fish a dear commodity and not within the reach of the multitude who desire good and cheap food, I want to quote a comparison of the retail prices of fish in three States. The balance in favour of Brisbane is most marked. This comparison is between the prices at the State retail shops in Brisbane and the retail shops in Sydney and Melbourne.

[9 p.m.]

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: Who compiled those figures?

HON. L. McDONALD: They are official figures from the State Fishery Department.

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: Where do they get their information from regarding Sydney and Melbourne?

HON. L. McDONALD: The prices are obtained from the State fish shops in Sydney

and the general retail prices in Melbourne. Of course they have not got State fish shops in Melbourne—

	Prices at Retail Shops, Brisbane	Prices at Retail Shops, Sydney.	Melbourne Prices.
	per lb s. d.	per lb s. d.	
Mullet ...	0 5½	0 6	1/6 to 3/- per doz., according to size.
Bream ...	0 6	0 10	8d. to 1 d. per lb.
Whiting ...	0 9	1 1	6/- to 15/- per doz.
Flathead ...	0 9	0 6	...
Garfish ...	0 8	0 9	2/- to 2½ per doz.
Tailer ...	0 5½	0 10	...
Schnapper ...	1 0	1 1	1/- to 1½ per lb.
Schnapper (dilled)	1 4
Nannygai ...	0 9	0 7	...
Blackfish ...	0 4½	0 6	...
Butter Fish ...	0 5	0 8	...
Jewfish ...	0 10	0 10	...
John Dory ...	0 5	0 9	...
Leatherjackets	0 5	0 5	...

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Who eats leatherjackets?

HON. L. McDONALD: They are considered quite an edible fish in Sydney. I have never eaten them myself, but when I have been in Sydney, going round the different parts of the harbour, I have noticed amateur anglers fishing off the wharves and catching leatherjackets, and when I asked them if they regarded them as edible fish, they said they considered them quite a delicacy—

	Brisbane State Shops.	Sydney.
Smoked roes	10d.	1s. 1d.
Black Trevalli	3½d. per lb.	7d. per lb.
Smoked fish	9d. per lb.	10d. per lb.

With quite a number of fish it is not possible to institute a comparison, because they are peculiar to one State or the other; but I think the prices I have quoted are an absolute refutation of that part of paragraph (12), which says—

"The extortionate demands made by the regulations necessarily make fish a dear commodity, quite out of reach of the multitude who desire good and cheap food."

The Hon. Mr. Fowles said in his speech that it was difficult for customers to get fish, and I have some figures which show that even in the early stages of the State fish shops the number of customers who have been supplied at the State shops in Brisbane is very large. The number of customers served at the Victoria Bridge shop in twelve months was 185,542; at the Valley shop in seventeen weeks the number of customers served, was 69,215; at the Roma street shop in two and a-half weeks—of course that is the most-recently opened shop—the number of customers served was 6,746. The total number of customers was 261,503. The amount of fish distributed through the suburban agencies which have been opened in various localities from the middle of May to the end of June was approximately 25 tons. I think those figures rebut the statement made by the Hon. Mr. Fowles

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that consumers cannot get fish. Since the advent of the State fish market and the State shops, the people of Brisbane have been able to get fish with greater facility than ever before. It is quite a fact, as stated by the Hon. T. L. Jones, in a very able contribution that he made to this debate, that under the old order it was practically impossible on many occasions, when there was an abundance of fish, for consumers to get it, simply because the gentlemen who are in the main the signatories to the petition formed the old fish combine; and, sooner than put a large quantity of fish on the market that would be likely to bring down the price, they would send it back to the fishermen at Wynnum and other places, and they would have to dump it into the sea. Any man who has frequented the foreshores of the bay, and who has been associated with fishing even in an amateur way, knows that, prior to the establishment of the State Department, the dumping of good edible fish back into the sea to keep up the price amounted absolutely to a scandal.

Oftimes, when fish were plentiful, particularly in the mullet season, the fishermen would not go out and catch fish, because they knew they ran the risk of having it left on their hands. I was particularly interested some time ago in a Bill that was passed by this Council last year. That was an amendment of the Fisheries Act, which gave the Governor in Council power to open Nerang Creek. I sometimes go down to Southport, and in my peregrinations there I have become friendly to some extent with the men who are engaged in the fishing industry, and at that particular time I had representations made to me asking me to do what I could to get that creek opened, and I did so. Of course, it was not necessary for me to speak about that matter in this Council, because hon. gentlemen recognised the justice of their claim, and passed the Bill without debate, for which the Southport fishermen are very thankful. From my own knowledge of the fishermen at Southport, I know that they are more than satisfied with the conditions under which they catch fish and supply it to the State market. To me it is not a satisfactory state of affairs when a petition like this is brought in signed by only eleven suppliers out of eighty-four suppliers. I venture to say that if I had the time and inclination, and took the opportunity of going to the genuine fishermen who supply the metropolitan fish market, that I would get 99 per cent. of them to sign a petition for the retention of these regulations that the Hon. Mr. Fowles is seeking to have disallowed. I could bring just as influential a petition in rebuttal of this petition, and, as a matter of fact, a more influential petition, because it would be representative of the producers, and not representative of the middlemen who, prior to the advent of the State Fishery Department, were the people who exploited not only the fishermen, but who exploited the public of Queensland. We have seen time and again special pleadings being made in this Council for vested interests that had been attacked by the legislation of the Labour Government, and here again we find special pleading on the part of the Hon. Mr. Fowles and those supporting him in favour of those who constituted what was a powerful fishing ring before their exploitation was

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interfered with by the establishment of a State Fisheries Department. The Hon. Mr. Fowles states that he does not want these regulations absolutely abandoned, but that he wants them amended. If that is what he wants, why does not he say so? Why does he say he wants them disallowed? To anyone who has read and studied these regulations, it would be an absolute scandal and disgrace for this Council to pass the motion that these regulations be disallowed.

HON. R. SUMNER: Why do they come to this Council?

HON. L. McDONALD: This Chamber is where the vested interests are represented, and it is the back door by which those people get their wishes carried out. Regulation 41, which they seek to have annulled, reads—

“The metropolitan fish market is hereby appointed as the place for inspection of all fish brought into the metropolitan fish supply district. Fish may also be inspected at such branch markets and depôts as may from time to time be established and appointed for such purpose by the Commissioner.”

What is there in the mind of those who want that regulation wiped out? I know the Hon. Mr. Fowles will say that he only wants it amended, but that is not what the motion says.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: That is the only way we can do it.

HON. L. McDONALD: That is not the only way to do it. I am moving an amendment that the regulations be amended, and the Hon. Mr. Fowles's motion is that they be disallowed. He does not suggest that other regulations be put in their place.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: You have no power to amend the regulations.

HON. L. McDONALD: It can only be a recommendation.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: No. Disallowed is an actual fact, but amended is only a pious wish.

HON. L. McDONALD: What do they want after having this regulation disallowed? Do they contend that there should be no place of inspection? I would like those hon. members who know anything of the fishing industry to cast their minds back to the conditions that obtained prior to the establishment of that up-to-date fish market which we have at the end of Victoria Bridge. I have been through the fish market up Stanley street, where the most unsanitary conditions prevailed. Fish were exposed under the most unsanitary conditions, and the absolute lack of any strict regulations regarding inspection and sale was something to be deplored, while now we have something approaching a sane method of inspection and marketing, and as sanitary a method of handling fish as it is possible to get. There is no doubt that these markets are the most up-to-date in Australia, and it is ridiculous to say that the regulation should be done away with, and the fish taken to some unsanitary place. There is nothing definite about the motion. It asks that the regulation be wiped out altogether. Then they propose to wipe out regulation 62, which reads—

“Every person who intends to carry on within a district the trade, business,

or occupation of hawking and itinerant vending of fish shall first obtain from the Commissioner, or the manager, inspector, officer in charge, or other duly authorised officer—

(a) Registration as a hawker or itinerant vendor of fish;

(b) A permit so to do upon each and every occasion of such hawking or itinerant vending.

“The Commissioner may refuse to grant such registration and permit without assigning any reason.”

Hon. gentlemen propose to take away the power given to the Commissioner under the Act to require persons who carry on business of a fish vendor to have a license. We know that every firm has to be registered, and the hawker of every other commodity has to have a license. The Hon. Mr. Fowles did not tell us what they propose to insert in place of these things. He did not even offer a suggestion. He simply comes along with this bald announcement that he wants all licenses cancelled. Whether they are persons of cleanly habits, or suitable for handling a most delicate and perishable article of foodstuff—no matter whether the man might be diseased or anything else—no person has the power to say he is not a fit and proper person; all licenses are to be cancelled. I ask hon. members if that is anything like a suggestion that would commend itself to the consideration of reasonable men. I contend that it is not. Regulation No. 75 says—

“The manager or any officer authorised by him shall have power to enter the premises of any fishmonger or fish vendor within the district at all times during which such fishmonger or fish vendor is open for the sale of fish to inspect any fish therein, and to examine all places, vessels, receptacles, or utensils used for storing, keeping, and holding fish. The manager or such other officer may stop and inspect any barrow, cart, or other vehicle, container, or conveyance used by any fishmonger or fish vendor, and the driver or person in charge of any such cart, barrow, or other vehicle, container, or conveyance shall stop the same when so required by the manager or such officer, and shall permit inspection to be made thereof and of any fish therein.”

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: It makes the manager of the State fish shop the boss of every fish shop in Queensland.

Hon. L. McDONALD: He is not only the manager of the State fish shop, he is the head of the whole fish business. Will any hon. member opposite contend that it is an unfair thing, in the interests of public health, to have some responsible person—

Hon. E. W. H. FOWLES: Oh, yes; say the Commissioner for Public Health, and I will give way at once. Why should the manager of a rival establishment boss everybody else?

Hon. L. McDONALD: The manager of the State fish shop is an expert in these matters. Other officers may be appointed. Is not a man who is an expert in the fish business, or someone who is expert in that particular department, more able to satisfactorily inspect fish and decide whether they are in a fit state for human consumption,

than an ordinary Health Department inspector? I think he is the best person. It is more essential in dealing with the fish supply than it is with any other food commodity which we consume to have every possible avenue open to inspection, to see that the people get their food clean, wholesome, and in a state fit for human consumption. I showed by the official figures I quoted that fish is being supplied more cheaply in Brisbane than it is in Sydney or Melbourne. Here is another regulation which they propose to have disallowed—

“Any holder of a license under this Act who is convicted of an offence under these regulations shall be liable, at the discretion of the Commissioner, to have his license cancelled in addition to any other punishment that may be inflicted upon him.”

Why should not the Commissioner have the power to refuse a license to anyone who has been convicted of an offence under these regulations?

Hon. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: He could refuse them all and have a monopoly. We understand that, and that is what we are opposing.

Hon. L. McDONALD: I think it is absolutely essential to have a regulation such as that. The Hon. Mr. Nevitt delivered a most trenchant criticism of the motive that apparently was behind those who got up this petition in endeavouring to have these regulations annulled. I think in this matter we must be very careful about anything that is inspired by the source from which this petition comes. We know that they are the people against whom the whole of the populace were crying out prior to the establishment of the State fish shops. We know that the majority of the signatories to that petition were people who had practically the monopoly of the wholesale and retail fish business in their hands, and it is those people whom the Government were out to strip of their monopoly in the interests of the whole of the people, who are beginning to squeal, and are behind this petition. I say they should have no quarter. As far as I am concerned, they will get no quarter. They had their day, and they made their undue profits out of the community. They can submit to the regulations in the same way as any other honest retailer, and they will get equally fair treatment from the Government. I would never be a party to their getting anything more than a fair deal—which they would get if these regulations were disallowed. I think the fish industry is one which ought to be safeguarded and preserved in every possible way, right through every stage from the catching of the fish with the net, line or trawl, to the time it is put into human consumption; because everybody knows it is one of the most perishable of human commodities, and it is one which, if not properly and carefully handled and looked after in every stage, is liable to cause disease and sickness. It is more subject to taint than is any other food. We also know that it is one of the most beneficial foods that we can get. I think our fishing grounds ought to be exploited more than they are.

[9.30 p.m.]

The Government have invested in a trawler for the purpose of testing the grounds. I

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have here a little pamphlet on "The Commercial Fish and Fisheries of Queensland," by Mr. J. Douglas Ogilvy, which shows that there are great possibilities for opening fresh fields by means of trawlers. Hon. members opposite complain of the expense incurred in connection with this particular industry, but they should remember that it is in the pioneering stage. We ought to safeguard the industry from exploitation in every possible way, so that it will be established as one of the major industries of the State. In support of my contention as to the importance and necessity of developing this industry, I propose to make a few quotations from the report of a Royal Commission on Victorian Fisheries and the Fisheries Industry. It is the latest report in connection with the fishing industry that has been made in any State of the Commonwealth, and was issued in June of this year. The first portion of the report deals with the neglect of the industry, and the commissioners say—

"Our investigations have convinced us that the importance to Australia as a whole, and to Victoria in particular, of a properly developed fishing industry can hardly be overestimated, and that the industry, as far as Victoria is concerned, is carried on at present in a wasteful and unsystematic manner."

That was the system which obtained in Queensland prior to the present Government taking the steps they have done to regulate the industry. The commissioners further say—

"An acre of water has been declared to be more productive and profitable than an acre of land. At a time when food is universally dear, it is little short of criminal that so valuable a field as the ocean should be left in the state of almost complete neglect in which our deep seas now remain—practically unexplored from the point of view of ichthyology, and worked, where they are worked, by inefficient and extravagant methods."

Our object should be, not to relax regulations, but to encourage the fishermen, the men upon whom the industry depends in the very first instance, to go out and work harder, to go further afield, and to win more and more fish for the market, so that there will be more available for human consumption. The majority of the men who are signatories to this petition do not care for that. They are only concerned about the profits they can make out of the industry. The aim and object of the Government are not profits, but to open up the fishing fields for the fishermen, so that good, wholesome food can be supplied, not only to the people of the cities, but, with the development of the scheme, to get fresh fish supplied to distant portions of the State, where the people never see a bit of fish out of salt water. The Secretary for Mines has just handed me a statement showing the fish consignments to country towns during the past fortnight. For the fortnight ending 29th August, 1919, the consignments of black and silver bream to Toowoomba were 9,400 lb., to Warwick 4,372 lb., to Dalby 1,893 lb., and to Roma 1,720 lb., total 17,385 lb., or 434½ trays. Here is a copy of an urgent telegram sent by Aitken, Warwick, on the

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16th August, 1919, to the Commissioner for Trade—

"Yesterday's consignment fish Warwick huge success, completely sold out in two hours."

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member is repeating what has already been placed before the House by another hon. member, and I do not think he is in order in doing that.

HON. L. McDONALD: I am glad the Minister handed me that document, because it fits in with my argument.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: That is in support of amending the regulations?

HON. L. McDONALD: I am adducing these arguments to show that under the regulations, and under the system that the Government have created for the better supply of fish to the consumer, the people are getting their wants better supplied than they were previously. The scheme is practically in its infancy at present. When the Minister handed me that very interesting return I was quoting from the report of a Victorian Royal Commission. The commissioners further say—

"Australia, including Tasmania, has a coastline of some 12,000 miles, of which Victoria claims 680. While the question has been debated as to whether the in-shore waters and estuaries of our State are not yielding all that may reasonably be required of them, there seems to be no reasonable doubt of the abundance of fish to be had by venturing further out and using, systematically, such means as the trawl."

In that paragraph the commissioners advocate the development of the industry by means of a trawler. Members opposite, and opponents of the Government outside, condemn the extravagance and wastefulness of the Government in investing money in a trawler as they have done, and point to the fact that it has not made a profit.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: It is reported that the trawler has lost £3,000 worth of nets already.

HON. L. McDONALD: That may be reported, but people say a lot of things that are not true. Any sensible man knows that the fishing grounds cannot be discovered at once, that experiments have to be made, and that it may take a year, or a couple of years for the experts of the Fishery Department to be able to locate the grounds where they can get abundant supplies of fish that will make up for the lost way in the initial stages of the venture. The New South Wales Government went in for State trawlers, one of which, the "Endeavour," evidently foundered, as no one knows what became of it. These losses are incidental to the development of a great industry such as we hope to see the fish industry established by the State become in a few years. Then there is a paragraph here referring to the searches of the Commonwealth trawler.

The PRESIDENT Order! The hon. gentleman is quoting from a report dealing with fisheries in another State, which has nothing to do with the regulations in Queensland. If he wishes to quote anything in it which

is relevant to the question before the House, he will be at liberty to do so, but he will not be in order in reading the whole of the report.

HON. L. McDONALD: I submit that, as I go along, I am showing the relation of each paragraph to the question at issue. The trawling industry, and the losses incidental thereto, were mentioned by way of interjection when the Minister was speaking. I am showing that the trawling experiments which the State Fishery Department are undertaking are justified by the report of experts in another State.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The question before the Council is not the question of the Government trawler—although nearly every hon. member has referred casually to that subject—but the disallowance of the regulations.

HON. L. McDONALD: I am very sorry, Mr. President, but I must bow to your ruling.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. gentleman may quote anything which is relevant to the question, but not too lengthily. He must not read the whole of a report like that.

HON. L. McDONALD: I consider that this report is relevant to matters raised during the debate. My contention is that if we pass this motion for the disallowance of the regulations which the Government has drawn up for the better control of the fishing industry, it will only be a matter of time when we shall relax other regulations, and the fishery industry will go back to the conditions which existed in the bad old days before the Labour Government stepped in and regulated it—not only in the interests of the fishermen who brave such hardships, but also in the interests of the consumers generally. If hon. members opposite get their way in this matter they may endeavour to interfere with the department in regard to the purchase of a trawler, on the ground that it is not necessary. They have been saying that the expense is not necessary.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: The losses are not.

HON. L. McDONALD: It is a matter for the experts. No man makes a profit in a mining venture until he strikes a reef. In this instance, the reef is a shoal of fish. I want to quote a portion of this report, which has more particular reference to the Queensland industry. It says—

“It is unthinkable that this great industry can make progress, or indeed escape decay, unless there is a definite understanding of the habits of the creatures with which it deals. It must necessarily fail to secure the best returns, and there is ever the danger of actual injury to the business if it proceed blindfold. Your Commissioners are forced to the conclusion that the only means whereby the fisheries industry may develop to its fullest extent, and continue to be a consistent source of wealth, is to make the matter one of national concern.”

These Commissioners urge the necessity of making the fish business a national concern. I want to see it a wholly protected national concern in the interest of the people, and not

tinkered with in the interests of private vendors, as the motion proposes to allow. The report goes on to say—

“They regard the industry as of prime importance to the people of Victoria, and consider that the State should spare neither effort nor expense to place it on a sound footing, and direct its energies into right channels.”

That is not a Labour or socialistic Commission, but they say that the State should spare no effort or expense to place the industry on a sound footing. We find hon. gentlemen here coming along in the interests of big vendors to try and get regulations which are necessary to the proper conduct of the industry annulled, and not suggest anything reasonable in their place. There is another paragraph with reference to Queensland trawling, which I wish to quote. It says—

“As a preliminary to obtaining trawlers, the Queensland Government introduced the system now in force of taking at a definite price the whole of the catches made by the fishermen which can be brought to the metropolitan market.”

This was brought out in Mr. Gilmour's evidence when the Commission came to Brisbane—

“The prices are fixed for twelve months ahead at a time by a board composed of representatives of the fishermen and the Government. This, too, it is claimed has worked satisfactorily within its limits. The first cruise of the trawler purchased by the Queensland Government has just been completed. The captain of the vessel stated that he had never seen such fine specimens of fish, nor fish of such good quality, during all the time he had been trawling in New South Wales waters.”

I think that the evidence which the Commission got and the paragraph in their report with reference to the possibilities of the trawling industry in Queensland is very complimentary. It shows that those men, who were taking expert evidence, saw the possibility of a big business being built up in the direction of trawling. One does not know but that, if we pass this motion, another will be moved disallowing something else—inspired from the same quarter as this. Fired by success in one effort, other crafty methods may be adopted of defeating the State fishery business. There is a good deal more in this report which is applicable to the discussion, but I do not propose to read any more. Perhaps some other member who has studied the report to a greater extent than I have will have reference to it in the course of remarks which he will probably make to the Council. I feel that it is a duty I owe to the people of Brisbane and Queensland to oppose the motion in order to prevent anything that will allow the regulations which have been found necessary for the proper conduct of the fish industry to be interfered with. I have given evidence as to the prices that obtain in Brisbane as compared with the cities of the Southern States. The people here are getting fish more cheaply.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No.

HON. L. McDONALD: Taking the prices of other commodities and everything else into

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consideration, fish is cheaper in proportion. Every day you see advertisements in the papers that the State shops are selling wholesome fresh fish for 4½d. per lb.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Black bream.

HON. L. McDONALD: Yes, and very good fish. Under the old system you could not get it at all. There is a lot more I might say, but I will conclude by moving the amendment which I foreshadowed. I move the omission of paragraph (1) with a view to inserting—

“That the regulations relating to the fish industry and promulgated on the 16th May, 1919, in the “Queensland Government Gazette,” No. 175, be amended.”

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: The Government moving to amend their own regulations!

HON. T. C. BEIRNE: I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: This is rather an unusual motion at this hour of the day, to move the adjournment of the debate when a member has just moved an amendment which has not been discussed.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: It is not unusual. It is so important that it requires time to consider it.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You can take as much time as you like over it. Anyhow, we are going to oppose the adjournment of the debate at this stage. I think the promise I gave the other day that we would go to a division to-night—

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Did you not say before 6 o'clock?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Hon. members forced me to promise, or got me to make a promise, that we would go to a division to-night, and they are the first to break it by moving that the debate be adjourned.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Your member has moved an amendment and absolutely prevented us from taking it.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Hon. members ought to finish this discussion to-night. It is not our fault that they have not the numbers here. If they wish to take a division on the amendment, they can do so. I have no objection to taking a division on the original motion so far as that is concerned. We know very well that the motion is moved by the Hon. Mr. Fowles for a certain purpose.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: Everything is done for a purpose.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I am of the opinion that it is absolutely immoral to use this branch of the Legislature for the purpose for which the hon. member has used it in connection with this motion.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: What is the purpose?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Just to satisfy a few fishmongers carrying on business in the city of Brisbane. It is not done in the interests of the fishermen. We on this side represent the fishermen and the consumers—that is our business—hon. members

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opposite represent the middlemen between the two.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: The regulations are monstrous.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The debate to-night proves that fact. I appeal to the good sense of the Chamber. Let us finish the debate to-night. We have more important business than this, but it is very important that this business should not be taken out of the hands of the Government on this question. The regulations have been drafted by the department in the interests of the fishermen and the consumers.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: But your supporter has moved that they be amended.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We have not done anything of the sort. The hon. member is old enough, and has been in Parliament long enough, to know the purport of the amendment moved by the Hon. Mr. McDonald. He moved to amend the hon. member's motion, and we have another amendment to follow.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: That is not so.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The Hon. Mr. McDonald's amendment is to delete paragraph (1).

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: And to insert certain words.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That amendment has not yet been moved. I strongly object to the adjournment of the debate. Why not finish?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: It should have been finished at 5 o'clock.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The discussion has proved to the people of Queensland that hon. members on the other side are simply here to obstruct, [10 p.m.] not only these regulations, but the business of the country and the administration of Government departments.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Your side has been stonewalling for the last four hours.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: No one can call the admirable speech of the Hon. T. L. Jones a stonewalling speech, nor could the speeches delivered by the Hon. Mr. Nevitt and the Hon. Mr. McDonald be so described. Unless the debate is concluded to-night, we shall have it continued next week. We are not prepared to allow the motion to go through in the form in which it has been moved.

HON. A. G. C. HAWTHORN: Are you prepared to offer any amendments and say what they are?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I said last week that, if the fishermen made any complaint regarding any of the regulations, the Government and the department were quite prepared to consider their grievances.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: You turned them down on 26th June last.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: But the petition is not a petition from fishermen. Last week I proved that only twelve out of eighty-four fishermen who supply the Fisheries Department signed the petition, and it seems now that the number is even less than twelve.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I think I was very reasonable last week, and that is why I am opposed to the adjournment of the debate at the present time. I then made a promise on behalf of the Government and the department that inquiry would be made. We did not object to the petition being presented, though we did object to its being printed, as being unnecessary. But we considered it was our bounden duty to inquire into the prayer of the petitioners. We were agreeable to do that, and the Hon. Mr. Fowles should have been content with that; but, evidently, he is here in the interests of some body of men who stand between the producer and the consumer.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I rise to a point of order. I just formally object to that. The hon. gentleman knows that it is untrue.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I think the hon. gentleman's actions prove it.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I must ask that the words be withdrawn.

The PRESIDENT: It is not in order for any hon. member to impute improper motives to another hon. member.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I must ask that the words be withdrawn, or that they be taken down.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I stated that the hon. member was here in the interests of some body of men who stand between the producer and the consumer, and I contend that that is not offensive.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. gentleman knows that it is not in order to impute unworthy motives to another hon. member, and, as the hon. member takes exception to what is said, I would ask the hon. gentleman to withdraw the words.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: What I wished to convey was that we on this side represent a different set of people to those represented by hon. members on the other side.

The PRESIDENT: I ask the hon. gentleman to withdraw the words objected to.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I do not intend to withdraw. My remarks were not offensive.

The PRESIDENT: The Hon. Mr. Fowles has taken exception to the remarks made by the Minister, and has asked for their withdrawal. He is evidently under the impression that they imputed improper motives to him, and the Minister must either withdraw the words, or make a statement that it was not his intention to impute any improper motives.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I have been in this House for a considerable time, and during that time I have not endeavoured at any time to offend any hon. member. As a matter of fact, I think I have suffered myself more in that respect than anyone else, but I am not thin-skinned, and have frequently refrained from taking exception to offensive remarks that have been hurled at the Government. However, I may say that all that I wished to convey was that we on this side represent the consumer and the producer, and the Hon. Mr. Fowles, by presenting the petition signed by a body of men who are distributors, shows that he represents that class. I did not wish to impute any motive to the hon. gentleman or to accuse him of being in the pay of anybody.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I must ask that the words be unconditionally withdrawn.

The PRESIDENT: Will the hon. member state what are the words to which he takes exception?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: That I am here in the interests of any body of men at all. I presented the petition to this honourable Council, and there it stays, and then I gave notice of motion with regard to the prayer of the petition.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: If it will satisfy the hon. gentleman, and, as I always bow to your ruling, Mr. President, out of deference to yourself and to the Council, I gladly say that I did not intend to be offensive to the hon. gentleman, nor did I intend to convey the impression that he was representing any body of men unfairly, or was getting paid for any representation. If the hon. gentleman is so thin-skinned as to regard what I said as being offensive to him, then I gladly withdraw the words at your request. As the hour is getting late, probably we can take a division on the motion for the adjournment of the debate. I am sorry that the Hon. Mr. Beirne has moved the adjournment of the debate, because I feel myself absolved from my promise, and I will make no further promises to hon. gentlemen opposite that we will take a division at a certain hour. Hitherto, I have always thought it a fair thing to confer with hon. members opposite regarding the business. Last week I gave way to the Hon. Mr. Fowles, and allowed this motion to come on to-day, when Government business should have taken precedence. To-morrow is private members' day, and I was willing that a division should be taken, and the whole matter brought to a conclusion to-night. No further promise do I make to hon. gentlemen, and hon. gentlemen must not accuse me of breaking a promise that we should get to a division to-night if we do not come to a division until next week. I am relieved of my promise by the Hon. Mr. Beirne moving the adjournment of the debate. I do not accuse that hon. gentleman of breaking a promise because, probably, he was not aware of the arrangement made.

HON. T. C. BEIRNE: It is after 10 o'clock.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We are here to do business.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: The Minister has made some remarks which I do not think should be allowed to go without some reply. If I remember rightly, what was agreed upon was this: That the Minister would afford us an opportunity of coming to a vote to-day. He did not say anything about to-night—we were to be afforded an opportunity of coming to a vote to-day, and as we had not sat after tea, a clear impression was left in the minds of hon. gentlemen that we should come to a vote before 6 o'clock. The Minister and his supporters, by their stonewalling tactics—I cannot use any other words to adequately describe the position—kept this debate going long after the usual hour. We were prepared to take a division at any time, but the Minister's supporters would not give us an opportunity, and now the Minister turns round and tries to blame us.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You broke your word.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: I do not think we blamed the Minister. I have always found

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that the Minister has kept his promise, and I think we have done the same. I have done so.

HON. T. NEVITT: Not to-night, if you adjourn the debate.

HON. P. J. LEAHY: If we adjourn the debate, how can it be said that we are departing from any arrangement? The Minister said he would afford us an opportunity to come to a division to-day, but his supporters did not give us that opportunity. For some reason or another they want to make long speeches on the subject. Up to the present moment I have not spoken on the main question, and many hon. members were willing to have the division taken, but what did we have after the tea adjournment? Member after member on the Minister's side got up, talked all round the subject, and kept the debate going until the present time; and then, because it is 10 o'clock, the Hon. Mr. Beirne moved the adjournment of the debate purely on his own initiative and without any suggestion from hon. members on this side.

HON. R. SUMNER: What?

HON. P. J. LEAHY: I say entirely on his own initiative. Because somebody says 10 o'clock is a reasonable hour to adjourn, the Minister gets into a temper, and his supporters get into a temper, and say we are breaking faith. We are not breaking faith in any way. The position is this: This question has been debated at considerable length, and then the Hon. Mr. McDonald's amendment is sprung upon us. Are we going on for an indefinite period debating this amendment or are we, like sensible people, going to adjourn till some day when we can quietly and calmly consider the thing on its merits? That is the sensible thing to do, but, of course, if the Minister does not agree to that, we must take a vote on it, and abide by the result.

Question—That the debate be now adjourned—put; and the Council divided:—

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Hon. T. C. Beirne	Hon. C. F. Marks
" E. W. H. Fowles	" A. H. Parnell
" H. L. Groom	" W. Stephens
" T. M. Hall	" W. F. Taylor
" A. G. C. Hawthorn	" A. J. Thynne
" P. J. Leahy	" H. Turner

Tellers: Hon. T. C. Beirne and Hon. T. M. Hall.

NOT-CONTENTS, 12.

Hon. R. Bedford	Hon. G. Lawson
" W. R. Crampton	" L. McDonald
" W. H. Demaine	" T. Nevitt
" A. Hinchcliffe	" G. Page-Hanify
" A. J. Jones	" A. Skirving
" T. L. Jones	" R. Sumner

Tellers: Hon. W. R. Crampton and Hon. A. Hinchcliffe.

The PRESIDENT: "Contents," 12; "Not-Contents," 12. I give my vote with the "Not-Contents," in order to keep the question open.

HON. L. McDONALD: I ask the leave of the Council to withdraw my amendment.

The PRESIDENT: Is it the pleasure of the Council that the hon. gentleman withdraw his amendment?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: The amendment proposed by the Hon. Mr. McDonald admits the necessity for the original motion. In fact, it is a close question whether the amendment could be accepted at all, since it

practically amounts to the original motion. I would like to direct hon. members' attention to the Act itself. The discussion has wandered away to all points of the compass, and it would be useful to turn to the Act to see what powers the Government have under it, and also what powers we have under the regulations. As a matter of fact, the amendment which is before us deals with a subject with which this Council has no power to deal; it would be nothing more than a pious expression from hon. members. Everybody knows that at the end of this Act—I think it is section 16—it says that regulations made under this Act must be laid upon the table of both Houses of Parliament, and they can be disallowed by either House. There is not a word in it which says they can be amended by this Chamber.

HON. T. L. JONES: Your original motion asks that they be amended.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: The hon. gentleman might as well read the whole of the sentence, and not give half of it to hon. members. My motion is to amend in the direction of disallowing. The Act says that the regulations can be disallowed. If the Hon. Mr. McDonald, by his amendment, means that they be disallowed, it is identical with the motion which I have moved.

HON. T. L. JONES: Those words "be amended" in your motion are redundant.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: They are explained afterwards. It is perfectly clear what the motion is. The motion has been criticised tremendously because we do not set out to disallow some of the regulations piecemeal. That simply is not within the power of the Council.

HON. T. L. JONES: Will not you admit that the real reason for moving the motion is to destroy the whole enterprise?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Certainly not. The real reason is to get a reasonable scale of charges at the fish market. That is the sole reason from beginning to end. Those charges are an outrage on business methods.

HON. T. L. JONES: They are perfectly justified.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: They are simply monstrous, and will not stand the light of day for one moment. They are extortionate. No Shylock in either hemisphere would think of descending to such charges. Yet the Government set out to be not a Government of profiteers, or extortionate chargers, or anything else.

HON. R. SUMNER: You know the position. Tell me your own feelings.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: That these charges for marketing and inspection dues would be the laughing stock of the universe if the universe took the trouble to look at them. You will not find charges like that in any other country, civilised or uncivilised. (Interruption.)

The PRESIDENT: Order! Order! The Hon. Mr. Fowles has the floor.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: If interjections could be other than disorderly, I would welcome every one, because we want as much truth and daylight on this subject as we can get. Can the Hon. Mr. Jones, or anyone else outside Goodna, justify charges such as this:—"Section 44: For the inspection of crabs, per each, 1s. 6d."

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: The charge is never made.

[Hon. P. J. Leahy.]

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: What is the good of the regulations if they are not enforced?

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: To force the fish through the market.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Why do not they come straight out with an amendment that fish must go through the market? Why go into this devious, Bolshevik way of doing things? Why can't the Government express themselves and say, "We want to do this, and we will do it," in open daylight? Why go round like backdoor burglars and bring in tricky legislation such as this?

THE PRESIDENT: Order! The hon. gentleman is not using parliamentary language.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Let the words be taken down—Why do the Government go like backdoor burglars and bring in tricky legislation such as this?

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: I rise to a point of order. I ask that the hon. member withdraw the words he has used regarding the Government.

THE PRESIDENT: Order! The Minister requests the hon. gentleman to withdraw those words, and he must withdraw them.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I withdraw them with the greatest of pleasure. Why do the Government give the appearance of adopting methods that belong to the burglarous profession?

THE PRESIDENT: Order! Order! The hon. gentleman must understand that he is not using Parliamentary language when he addresses words like that to the Government—accusing them of being burglars. The hon. gentleman must use more parliamentary language.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I do not accuse the Government of being burglars in the slightest, but I accuse them of not giving honest legislation, on their own admission. They say the ulterior object of these regulations is to force all fish through the market. Why not face the question squarely and bring in a regulation that all fish shall go through the market?

[10.30 p.m.]

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: You are wild because the Government prosecuted you for a flagrant breach of the Mining Act.

THE PRESIDENT: Order! I must ask the Minister not to impute motives.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: I will give you a bit of the truth to-night.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: There is no need for the hon. gentleman to lose his temper.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: You tried to use me, and I prosecuted you, and I will prosecute you again, too. You don't want honest administration; you want dishonest administration.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I have no doubt that you are capable of any tyrannical act of that kind.

THE PRESIDENT: Order! The question before the House is the amendment of the regulations, and this dialogue between the Minister and the hon. member must cease.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: On the admission of certain members, the Government seek to force all fish to go through the

market. If that is their plain object, why not say so? Why take a devious method like this? Why not immediately bring in a regulation saying that all fish must go through the market?

HON. T. L. JONES: This is just as effective.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Yes, but it cloaks the ulterior object. My objection is that the charges imposed are farcical, unreasonable, and outrageous. Really, it is remarkable what unnecessary heat has been imported into this debate. I do not know why it is, unless it is that the Government have no other business to bring before us this afternoon. The reasonable attitude of the Government in the matter would have been to have considered the regulations, and to have taken into consideration the representations made to them by deputations from the fishermen. As a matter of fact, the regulations were framed by one or two persons in the fish market, and they were probably signed by the Treasurer without his knowing very much about the regulations. The hon. gentleman, no doubt, took it for granted that they would be all right, and it was only after they were published in the "Gazette" that public attention was drawn to them, and it was seen how outrageous they were. The Government should be very thankful to this House for having drawn attention to the regulations. The Hon. Mr. Sumner, the chairman of the independent fish board, told the House that he disagreed with the policy of the Government as far as their fish policy is concerned.

HON. T. L. JONES: He did not use those words; he said he did not think much of some of the regulations.

At twenty-five minutes to 11 o'clock p.m.,

HON. W. F. TAYLOR, Chairman of Committees, relieved the President in the chair.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: The reasonable course for the Government to have followed would have been to have the debate adjourned, and to have reviewed the regulations with a view to seeing if they are right or wrong and to amending them if necessary. At present the regulations contain a scale of charges which will be the laughing stock of the whole community if they are retained.

HON. R. BEDFORD: Tell us something about the mining regulations.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I could tell the hon. gentleman something about the mining regulations, and I have no doubt that I could inform him on a number of subjects. The honest and fair thing to have done with regard to this matter would have been to have amended the regulations. We cannot disallow one part of a regulation, unless we disallow the whole of it. I may point out to hon. members that some of the regulations are so intertwined with one another that if we deal with one we have to deal with another. That is the reason why I proposed that eight or nine regulations should be disallowed, and the Government ought to be grateful to me for pointing out how one regulation bears on another, so that they would not bring in a hotchpotch of regulations which would have to be amended again.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: You brought in a hotchpotch resolution; you omitted one paragraph from it.

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HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I am quite willing to restore that paragraph.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: Are you willing for a Commission to be appointed to inquire into the whole business?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Absolutely, and I would appoint the Minister as a member of the Commission. I would move that at once, because nearly the whole of the reforms that have been brought about during the last three or four years in the fish industry are due to the work of the Select Committee of inquiry into the industry. The reforms in the fish industry, almost without exception, sprang from the action taken by this House. We gave an independent impartial non-party inquiry into the fish business, the result of which is before us. The Act of 1916, which was based on that report, put the fish industry on a new footing, so that whatever credit there is due to this House. When hon. gentlemen say that section 41, which is one of the regulations which it is proposed to disallow, is a perfectly good regulation, I agree with them entirely, only it does not go far enough. My proposition with regard to that regulation was to make it go a little further, and improve it, so that when the Government saw the improvement in it they would say they were glad that I had suggested it. The reason for that improvement is to be found in section 9 of the Fish Supply Act of 1916, which reads—

“After the date of the establishment of the market it shall not be lawful to sell within the district any fish which have not been first inspected at the markets, or have not otherwise been duly certified as fit for human consumption by any inspector appointed under this Act.”

Now fish is sold at Wynnum at the present time in absolute despite of that section of the Act. The right thing to do is to amend the regulation here and bring it into accord with the Act, and my sole purpose in moving that that regulation might be disallowed was in order that it might be amended.

HON. T. L. JONES: Are you in favour of the amendment?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Yes, and in favour of something more, too.

HON. T. L. JONES: Will you vote for it?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Yes. I want to go further. If necessary I may move an amendment on the amendment. Section 41 says—

“The metropolitan fish market is hereby appointed as the place of inspection for all fish brought to the metropolitan district.”

That is the power for the Commissioner asking for all fish to be inspected at the place it is caught, and the regulations state that the only place for inspection must be according to section 41 of the regulations.

HON. T. L. JONES: They allow them to sell at Wynnum fish direct from the boats without inspection. They do not make them bring it to South Brisbane and send it back.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I see that the hon. gentleman is anxious to put these regulations right. Section 9 of the Act says that they cannot do that. Will the hon. gentleman

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show me the power to sell fish for local consumption in Wynnum without inspection?

HON. T. L. JONES: It is done.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Section 9 says that they cannot sell fish, unless it is brought to the market here and inspected; yet they are flouting their own law at Wynnum. My sole object in moving the amendment of regulation 41 was to bring it into conformity with the Act, so that the Government would not be a law-breaker every time down there. If I had the drafting of that regulation I would restore that regulation, plus another paragraph, and I would say that the inspector could inspect any fish at Wynnum or any other centre approved by the Minister.

HON. T. L. JONES: Would you be in favour of a regulation straight out compelling all the fish to go through the Government market?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: If the Government markets were established at places where it would be convenient for the fish to go. I would not bring fish from Tewantin down to South Brisbane; I would not bring fish from all parts of the bay up to South Brisbane. I would not dream of putting fish without gutting them into the cold stores.

HON. T. L. JONES: That is challenged. Who told you it was done?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Done, and done every day in the week.

HON. T. NEVITT: I suppose it may be done temporarily.

HON. T. L. JONES: The Chairman denied it; he asked that the matter be brought before the board.

HON. R. BEDFORD: Were not the owners of your New Aberdare mine prosecuted for running it unsafely?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: No.

HON. R. BEDFORD: Not fined?

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I think a new manager, who was there only three or four days, and had not time to get his eyesight, and against whom there had not been a black mark in his life, was prosecuted. It was a dastardly thing.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: We completely exonerate the manager.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I did, and the Government withdrew the prosecution.

THE PRESIDING CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. gentleman to confine his remarks to the question before the Council.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: They arise in consequence of the interjections which hon. members make with regard to it. Regulation 41 should be amended in the direction which has been suggested. It should be restored, and a further paragraph added saying that there should be other places and centres for inspection, that any place may be appointed a centre for inspection by the Minister or Commissioner. Regulation 44 sets out the fees for the inspection of fish. I notice that everyone supporting the Government position carefully avoided any reference to this scale of fees. He slid over them, simply because anyone would be ashamed of the extortionate charges. As a matter of fact, not only are these charges in some cases 900 per cent. more than under the old board, but also represent from 300 to 500 per cent. more than the cost

of the article itself. What is the reply by hon. members? That the charges are not put into operation. Then, where in the wide world is the use of them? No wonder that the Hon. Mr. McDonald moved that the regulations be amended. I refer to one or two alleged benefits by hon. members on the other side, who showed that they had not studied the regulations in particular, but were more inclined to make wild statements. For instance, the Hon. Mr. Nevitt, who usually keeps as near as possible to the truth, said that the Government will buy all the fish caught by the fishermen—there is no limit—and the Hon. Mr. McDonald said the same thing. That goes out to Queensland, and shows that they have not read the regulations. As a matter of fact, the hon. member knows perfectly well that that is not a fact. There is nothing like quoting from the document itself, and I quote now the "Government Gazette" of 10th May, 1919, No. 164, where it says—

"Supplies of fish from casual fishermen should be limited during the months of May, June, and July—"

So that the Government will only take a limited amount. That is in absolute refutation of the wild statement, the extravagant claim that has been made.

HON. T. L. JONES: That refers to fishermen outside the agreement; it says "casual fishermen" distinctly.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: The claim made by the hon. member was that no fish was dumped, that all the fish was taken by the Government.

HON. T. NEVITT: I say it still—all the fish supplied by regular suppliers.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: "Regular suppliers!"

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I am glad that that qualification is made now. I did not hear it before. Here we have the actual regulation in black and white.

HON. T. L. JONES: It does not bear out your argument.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: It bears out the statement that the Government will only take a limited amount.

HON. T. L. JONES and other HONOURABLE MEMBERS: From casual fishermen.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Now, we come to the next regulation of which, no doubt, the Government may be ashamed—that is, regulation 62. It was read before by one hon. member, who, however, stopped before he came to the last two lines—

"The Commissioner may refuse to grant such permit without assigning any reason."

Would anybody have prophesied that a Labour Government, supposed to be absolutely fair, would draft a regulation such as that, giving Czar-like power to any Commissioner? Even when a servant is dismissed the law is that he must have a reason given to him. It is a fair thing, and that is why I moved that the regulation be deleted.

HON. R. SUMNER: You moved that the whole regulation be deleted.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I must do that. The Act says, "Any such regulation," not "Any part of such regulation." Are hon. members going to dismiss a person without assigning any reason? Are they simply going to turn their thumb down? It would be

splendid propaganda to have these regulations printed and circulated, with these regulations I refer to in black type.

HON. R. SUMNER: Why stonewall? You are going to speak for two hours and then there will be no quorum.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Hon. members occupied the time of the House for five hours. I have not started yet. Are hon. members going to allow this regulation I have just read to pass? No wonder, I say again, that the Hon. Mr. McDonald moved that they be amended. The Commissioner should give a reason for refusing to grant registration, and there should be an appeal. That is fairness, and that is the object of disallowing the regulation. There is very little to quarrel with respect to

[11 p.m.] regulation 74, which deals with the conditions of the licenses of fishmongers and fish vendors, only it is not complete. I suppose that the Government do not intend to prevent these people earning their bread and butter honestly. As a matter of fact, the Government are just gigantic fishmongers themselves.

HON. T. L. JONES: Your object is to smash the whole Government fish business.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Not in the slightest. If the hon. gentleman will introduce a scale of fees that would approve themselves to his business instinct, I would be quite prepared to accept them.

HON. T. NEVITT: You were offered that this afternoon, and you accepted it, and then you went back on it.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: Not at all. If the hon. gentleman would make such an offer now it would meet the case. It is only proposed to disallow eleven regulations out of 112. The rest of them, although not perfect, have their good points, and they might well be allowed to stand. The next regulation to which exception is taken is No. 75. That provides that the manager of the State fish shops can order anybody to go into any other fish shop in Queensland and practically do as he pleases. That, surely, does not commend itself to the sense of justice of any hon. member on the other side. If the Commissioner of Public Health could send an inspector round, it would be a fair thing, as he is not running fish shops, and would not be likely to show any favouritism. But why should this invidious duty of prying into the establishments of business rivals be imposed upon the manager of the State fish shops, whose long list of onerous and responsible duties is laid down in regulation 2? I am quite certain that, if this regulation had been seen by any member of the Government before it was published in the "Gazette," it would have been immediately altered, on the ground that it was not right to thrust the duties of a detective with regard to other fish shops upon the manager of the State shops.

That, of course, is the reason why it is proposed to disallow that regulation. Hon. gentlemen do not see any reason why these extraordinary regulations should be brought before the public gaze; or why they should be disallowed by this Council—the only action that this Council can take with regard to them. Then, section 78 gives the Commissioner, at his own discretion, power to cancel a license when a man has been convicted of any offence under the regulations and has already suffered punishment for it

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through the courts of law. Is that a fair thing? Is it not giving too much discretion to the Commissioner? There is no appeal. The Commissioner has the power of life and death almost over any poor hawker who may have been convicted before the court. The balance of evidence may have just turned against him, and he is convicted, suffers his punishment and purges himself of his offence, and on top of that the Commissioner can come along and, with an arbitrary hand, take the bread and butter out of his mouth. I suggest that the words "at the discretion of the Commissioner" be crossed out, and that there be some appeal. The question before the Council is the amendment moved by the Hon. Mr. McDonald, and as the Government seem anxious to come to a division, there is not the slightest objection on my part. I only regret the tactics that have kept hon. gentlemen here till a quarter past 11 o'clock.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Let us have a division.

HON. E. W. H. FOWLES: I am quite willing to take a division on the amendment, and reserve to myself the right of replying on the main question.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted (*Mr. McDonald's amendment*) stand part of the question—put; and the Council divided.

After the tellers had been nominated, hon. gentlemen sitting on the right crossed the Chamber.

HON. A. J. THYNNE: Hon. gentlemen changed their seats after the "Contents" were called. This is against the Standing Orders.

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN: It appears that after the question was put hon. gentlemen moved to the other side of the Chamber, which is quite irregular. Hon. gentlemen will have to go back to their seats.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I think there is another point of order, Mr. Chairman. The Hon. Mr. Fowles called "Divide" when you declared in favour of the "Not-Contents," and he is now voting with the "Not-Contents."

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN: I gave my decision for the "Not-Contents." Hon. gentlemen on the "Contents" side moved over after I had put the question the second time. I asked them to return to their seats, because they had no right to leave their seats when the question had been put a second time.

The tellers reported the following division:—

CONTENTS, 12.

Hon. R. Bedford	Hon. G. Lawson
" W. R. Crampton	" L. McDonald
" W. H. Demaine	" T. Nevitt
" A. Hinchcliffe	" G. Page-Hanify
" A. J. Jones	" A. Skirving
" T. L. Jones	" R. Sumner

Tellers: Hon. L. McDonald and Hon. T. Nevitt.

NOT-CONTENTS, 2.

Hon. E. W. H. Fowles	Hon. A. J. Thynne
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Tellers: Hon. E. W. H. Fowles and Hon. A. J. Thynne.

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN: There not being a quorum present, the Council stands adjourned to the next sitting day.

The Council adjourned at thirty minutes past 11 o'clock p.m.

[*Hon. E. W. H. Fowles.*