

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 29 OCTOBER 1919**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

WEDNESDAY, 29 OCTOBER, 1919.

The SPEAKER (Hon. W. Lennon, *Herbert*) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock p.m.

## QUESTIONS.

## LAND USED FOR STATE BUTCHERIES.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*) asked the Minister in charge of State enterprises—  
 “What was the value of all lands owned or rented by the State, and used for State butcheries, for the year ended 30th June, 1919?”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. Larcombe, *Keppel*) replied—  
 “Lands owned, £2,256 10s.; lands rented, information is not available.”

## STATE CATTLE FOR MEATWORKS.

Mr. GUNN (*Carnarvon*) asked the Minister in charge of State enterprises—

“1. Has he noticed in stock movements, as reported in the ‘Charleville Times’ of 11th instant, a paragraph reading ‘six donkeys and seventy-two bullocks, Kenmore, to meatworks. Queensland Government, owners’?”

“2. To which meatworks were the above stock consigned?”

“3. Is the meat of such stock intended for the use of the State shops?”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS replied—

“1. No.

“2. No donkeys were purchased with Kenmore Station, but thirty-six head of bullocks were railed from Kenmore to meatworks on 9th October.

“3. The meat of such bullocks is intended for the use of the State shops.”

## LATE RUNNING OF TOOWOOMBA TRAINS.

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Secretary for Railways—

“1. What was the reason for the 5.5 p.m. train not arriving at Toowoomba until after midnight on Wednesday, the 22nd instant?”

“2. On what days of this month has this train arrived at Toowoomba on time?”

“3. On what days, and how many minutes on such days, was this train late on arrival at Toowoomba?”

“4. Will he request consideration of the department as to a more regular running to time-table of this train?”

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. A. Fihelly, *Paddington*) replied—

“1. Owing to the engine steaming badly.

“2. None.

“3. 1st October, 15 minutes late; 2nd October, 10 minutes late; 6th October, 20 minutes late; 8th October, 10 minutes late; 9th October, 7 minutes late; 13th October, 17 minutes late; 15th October, 13 minutes late; 16th October, 56 minutes late; 20th October, 21 minutes late; 22nd October, 115 minutes late; 23rd October, 14 minutes late; 27th October, 45 minutes late.

“4. Yes.”

## PAPERS.

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

Report of the Marine Department for the year 1918-19.

Report of the Secretary for Public Instruction for the year 1918.

## FAIR RENTS BILL.

## INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS moved—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to provide for the determination of fair rents for dwelling houses, and for purposes consequent thereon or incidental thereto.”

HON. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): I would like the Minister to inform the Chamber whether it is proposed to establish a department, consisting of the usual officers—directors and staff—who will deal with the question of what fair rents shall be. On the principle of the Bill, of course, there can be no objection.

Mr. COLLINS: That is what you said on the Profiteering Prevention Bill, and then you denounced it for all you were worth.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Not at all. On the principle of fair rents there can be no question, but it is the method which is adopted to arrive at an end which is the subject-matter with which one does not often agree.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The questions of the hon. member for Albert are questions which can hardly be replied to at this stage. The information desired is information which should be given on the second reading. On the previous stage I gave some information of a general character, and I am willing to give some further information now. There will be no new buildings, no new set of offices. The court will be a model of simplicity and effectiveness. There will be no great expenditure. In New South Wales the cost of the court for two and a-half years was only £1,600, and that includes the salary of the magistrates, who would be paid by the department in any case. The hon. member for Albert, therefore, will see that there will be simplicity, expedition, and effectiveness.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Is that possible under a Labour Government?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Yes. It is not possible under any other Government.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): The Bill presupposes, to begin with, that high rents are the order—the general rule. I think there is abundant evidence at the present day which indicates quite the opposite. The want of buildings exists on every hand, and there is very little or no encouragement to owners of land to improve it, in view of the high costs of material, labour, and so forth. Building enterprises, consequently, have not been carried on in our midst, at any rate, not to any great extent. We want something to-day—possibly this Bill will provide it—that will not deter from building, but something which will encourage it.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I am, perhaps, a little out of order, but it is on those lines that I think the Minister might have enlightened the Committee.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You will get it on the second reading.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I would like it on the introduction, because the only opportunity to widen the scope of the Bill is at this stage. Once we accept the present proposal, we are precluded from making any alteration. Even the Minister might be ready to accept suggestions.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: In what direction do you want to widen the scope of the Bill?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: We want particulars of what it contains. It may require widening.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): We passed recently a very liberal measure in respect of workers' homes and another Bill liberalising the Workers' Dwellings Act. At the present time people will not invest their money in building dwellings owing to the fact that the profits are not sufficiently great. If this Bill is going to prevent further homes being erected by private enterprise, it is going to injure instead of do good.

Mr. SMITH: You are more concerned about the landlords' profits.

Mr. MORGAN: I am not concerned about the landlords' profits. I know a certain number of men who have invested in dwellings are very sorry owing to the fact that the rental they obtained is not sufficient to give them a fair interest on the capital expended.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: Do you not think it is desirable to give them a Bill which will ensure them a fair interest?

Mr. MORGAN: That may be the object of the Bill. Owing to the fact that a number of gentlemen representing the Government have put their money in property, it may be found necessary to introduce a Bill of this description to give them a reasonable interest on their investment.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: This only applies to rack rent.

Mr. MORGAN: I do not know where rack rent exists in Queensland. I feel sure the two Bills I have mentioned will do away with any necessity for a Bill of this nature, because, from the poorest inhabitant up to those who are in receipt of a fair wage, the people will be able to obtain a home of their own and rentals must eventually come down. I am doubtful whether it is wise to introduce a Bill of this description. If it is, I do not know why it has not gone further and included business properties.

Mr. SIZER: Before we decide whether it is advisable to introduce this Bill, I think the Minister should give us some more information. We know very well that there has been a general tendency to increase the cost of erecting houses, and the natural consequences are increased rents. I think the Minister should tell us at this stage the basis on which rents can be fixed; whether provision will be made for the raising of rents, which admittedly, in some cases, are low, as has been done in New South Wales, or is it only a process of bringing them down? We know very well that the State Insurance Commissioner is accepting reinsurances

on Queensland properties at considerably increased prices. We know that a house which years ago was safely insured for £300 can now be insured for £500.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. SIZER: Insurance companies are not benevolent institutions, and if they will grant an insurance of £500 on a house which years ago carried an insurance of only £300, there must be some good reason for it.

Mr. PETERSON: Do they do it?

Mr. SIZER: Yes, they do. With the increased royalties of timber brought about by the present Government, people are unable to purchase material to erect houses at anything near the price which previously obtained.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. SIZER: There is a big dearth of houses in Brisbane, and if this Bill is going to be the means of closing avenues for men to invest their savings in houses in order to relieve that distress—if it is going to be a detriment to those people—I do not think it is advisable that it should be introduced. But if the Minister will give us an assurance that it is to be purely a basis on which fair rents are to be established, and the court will be free to take into consideration the altered conditions, there should be no objection to the Bill.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to a resolution, and the resolution was agreed to.

#### FIRST READING.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS, the Bill was read a first time, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

#### JIMBOUR SELECTIONS BILL.

##### SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (*Hon. J. H. Coyne, Warrego*): The object of this Bill is to rectify another blunder of the past. (Opposition interruption.) Hon. gentlemen seem to disagree with that. Were it not for the blunder having been committed in the past, there would be no necessity for this Bill.

Mr. ROBERTS: Dry times.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Jimbour is an estate which was acquired by the Government in 1907 under an Act which was passed the previous year—the Closer Settlement Act of 1906. The Crown valuation of that land, and also that agreed upon at the time by the Land Court, was £2 2s. per acre. I might say it was regarded then as agricultural land. However, the owners of the land—the Queensland National Bank Company, Limited—objected to that valuation and the decision of the Land Court, and appealed to the Land Appeal Court. The owners' valuation was £3 10s. per acre, and the Land Appeal Court decided that £3 10s. per acre was a proper valuation for that land. Possession of the lands was to be given at different periods; the first lot in 1907, the next in 1908, the next in 1909, and the fourth lot in 1910. A condition of selection was that a selector would have to pay one-tenth of the purchasing price of the land on selection with his deposit. I might say that some of the land brought up to £7 per acre. The improvements on the land

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also were added to the purchasing price, and it was rather a heavy call upon the selector to have to pay one-tenth of the whole. They had to pay no rent for the second, third, and fourth years of the term, but for the next twenty-one years they had to pay at the rate of £8 2s. 7d. per cent. annually. Amending legislation was brought in in 1913 permitting the selectors to extend the term of their leases to forty years, and reducing the annual interest and redemption to £6 6s. per cent. of the purchasing price. I might say that the selectors of this estate were in trouble from the very commencement. Very few of them were able to pay their rents in 1912, 1913, or 1914. In 1915 the Land Court was asked to hold an inquiry into their position. As the result of that inquiry, a Bill was introduced into this Chamber, and was passed by Parliament, called the Agricultural Relief Act of 1915, giving an extension of the forty years' lease to forty-three years, and relieving the selectors of all rent payments for 1915, 1916, and 1917. That was in order to tide them over their then present trouble. This involved a loss of interest to the State, at 5 per cent., amounting to £54,600. So it will be seen what a loss the State has been sustaining owing to what I mentioned was a blunder in classifying this as agricultural land, by reason of which men went on the estate with a view to making a living from agriculture, when, as a matter of fact, it was not agricultural land at all. As well as giving that relief which I mentioned, the payment of arrears was spread over periods ranging from five to fifteen years, commencing on 31st March, 1913. Notwithstanding all this assistance, when the rents for 1918 became due, the selectors waited upon me and declared their inability to pay their rents. I was then of the opinion, and am still, that the selectors were speaking the truth to me when they told me they were unable to pay their rents. They were absolutely frank about the business. They produced their bank books, and showed me their accounts. A number of them had come from the other States, in which they had some property from which they were deriving a profit. They invested that profit in order to try and save themselves at Jimbour. It was very unfortunate that the

[4 p.m.] selectors should be there for a number of years and could not see their way clear to pay their rent in addition to making a living. I promised the selectors that I would place the matter before the Government, which I did, and the outcome was that a Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into the Jimbour selectors. That Commission consisted of Mr. W. Harris, Brisbane police magistrate, Mr. Macdonald, one of our assessing land commissioners and a very able man, and Mr. Stirling, a very successful farmer who resides near Pittsworth, on the Darling Downs. Mr. Stirling has also been employed by the Commonwealth Government as a valuator of land for taxation purposes. The Royal Commission commenced their duties on the 19th September, 1918, and they submitted their report on the 11th December of the same year. The recommendations of the Commission were considered by the Cabinet, and I was instructed by the Cabinet to submit them to the selectors at Jimbour to ascertain whether the recommendations would meet with their wishes, and, if so, have a Bill based on their recommendations brought before Parliament. That was done, and the selectors almost unanimously agreed to the

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recommendations made by the Royal Commission. If I remember rightly, there was only one who disagreed out of the whole number of selectors on Jimbour. He would not allow his land to be converted into perpetual lease. I understand that that man is not a bona fide agriculturist or dairyman, nor even a grazier, but he is a professional man, who resides in Dalby. According to the provisions of this Bill, and in order to tide the selectors over the unfortunate times they have gone through and to give them an opportunity of making a fresh start, in the hopes that the seasons will improve, we think that by making it a grazing proposition there is a better chance of making something out of it than there would be if they continued to work it as an agricultural proposition. The Bill provides for the first ten years from 1908—that is to say, up till the 30th June, 1918—the selectors shall only be asked to pay 1 per cent. on the capital value of the land. That will bring them up to 30th June, 1918. From that date they will be asked to pay 2 per cent. on the capital value for a further seven years. It is also provided that subsequent reassessments shall be made every seven years, instead of every fifteen years, as is usually done. I think that that is a very good provision, because if ill-fortune dogs the selectors, as it has done up to the present time, it is only a right thing that their position should be reviewed in seven years. Owing to the high capital value placed on that estate as an agricultural proposition, they have not made a success of it. This Bill will give them an opportunity of making good. If they do make good in seven years, then the Crown has a right to get portion of its own back during the subsequent seven years. It is, therefore, fair for the selectors and fair for the Crown. This provision may not apply to all repurchased estates or all perpetual leases, but it peculiarly applies to the Jimbour selectors. After the passage of this Bill any selector on Jimbour who desires to come under the provisions of this Act may do so within ninety days of the passage of the Act, except soldier settlers, and in the case of soldiers they will be allowed six months in which to do so. That provision was put in particularly to apply to any soldiers who may be oversea and who may not know that this Act is being passed. They will then have an opportunity within six months of coming under the provisions of this Act. We also make a provision that where a man has an agricultural farm he may apply to come under this Act; also that a man who has applied for the conversion of his agricultural farm to perpetual lease may surrender it and come under the provisions of this Act. I think members will agree with me that we are dealing generously all round with the residents of Jimbour for the sake of the State and for the sake of the selectors, and it is hoped that they will do better than they have done in the past. As a matter of fact, they will have to do better, because their efforts in the past have been a complete failure. From inquiries I made, there is a big percentage of good, practical agriculturists and general farmers on the Jimbour Estate. We are making provision that they may hold up to 2,560 acres each. (Hear, hear!) There is a portion of the estate that is not yet selected. We are not regarding it as an agricultural proposition now, but as a grazing proposition, and that area can also be taken up.

Mr. MORGAN: Two thousand five hundred and sixty acres is small enough.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We consider that 2,560 acres will be as much as a man can look after. If a man takes up any of the unselected portion, it must be included in the 2,560 acres. We are waiving section 91 of the principal Act, which provides that a selector must reside within 15 miles of his block, because we find that portion of the unselected part of the estate is more than 15 miles away.

Mr. MORGAN: Will you give them preference?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes. It is no use saying we will allow them to make use of it and then let outsiders come in and take it from them. It is also provided in the Bill that no lease will be issued to any selector on Jimbour until the improvements are paid for. The Royal Commission dealt with the improvements separately from the capital value of the land, and, as we have decided that this is a continual drain on the Crown, we have decided that the selector must pay for his improvements before he gets his lease. There is not much argument required on this Bill, because it must be patent to everyone that a blunder was made in the direction of purchasing the land as agricultural land and in inducing people to come from all parts of Australasia to take it up as agricultural land. They have been trying to produce agricultural produce there, but it has been a total failure, and it is only right that we should do something for the selectors. This Bill provides what we are doing for them. The unanimity of the selectors of Jimbour will be the means of them becoming a self-contained community there instead of becoming a burden on the State, as they have been for a number of years past. There is one thing shown by the unanimity of approval that these suggestions have met with, and that is the popularity of the perpetual lease system. That is becoming more apparent every day.

Mr. MORGAN: Don't say that. They are compelled to accept the perpetual lease.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why are they compelled to accept it?

Mr. MORGAN: You force them to take it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They can go on as they are if they like.

Mr. MORGAN: That argument is no good. It is not that the perpetual lease is popular.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The perpetual lease system is becoming more popular every day, and hon. members cannot deny it. The reason why it is becoming more popular every day is that members of the Government, and honest persons outside the Government, are showing up the tricks of the land sharks who have been deceiving the people with regard to freehold in the past. Whilst the freehold system obtained, the land shark was able to deceive people.

Mr. SIZER: There are a good many freeholders sitting on that side of the House.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It may have been forced on them, as suggested by the hon. member for Murilla. They took up land under the conditions that were obtaining.

Mr. SIZER: It was not forced on the Secretary for Agriculture at Beerburrum.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I understand that the perpetual lease system is being better understood by the people than it was in the past, and as time goes on it will become more popular. (Hear, hear!)

During the initiatory stages of this Bill I mentioned that other repurchased estates would be considered, and if they were not given a fair deal in the manner in which their estates were purchased, and they found they could not make a living on them, I have got the permission of the Cabinet to say that, if 50 per cent. of the selectors on any one estate apply and say they are prepared to convert their freeholds into perpetual leases, I will be prepared to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into their conditions with a view of affording them relief on the same lines as that provided for the Jimbour selectors. They must, of course, be prepared to convert their freeholds into perpetual leases.

Mr. GRAYSON: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I know of my own knowledge at least one repurchased estate which will take advantage of this offer. I think I know of two. However, the offer is open to them, and if they wish to take advantage of it they may do so. But they will understand that there can be no reduction of the capital value of the land.

Mr. MORGAN: Ah!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member for Murilla says "Ah!" There can be no relief given towards reducing the capital value of the land unless the law is altered, but we can give them relief by offering a lower rate of interest than they are paying at the present time. I do not think I need say any more in explaining the provisions of this Bill. If any member of the Assembly wishes any further information, I will be prepared to give it when we get into Committee. I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I desire, on behalf of the Jimbour selectors, to congratulate the Minister on carrying out his promise, and on giving them the relief which was suggested by the Royal Commission which inquired into their fortunes, or, rather, their misfortunes. The Minister for Public Lands referred to the errors of the past. I know the history of Jimbour, because I was there at the time. I remember when the Government decided to rush in and take the property for the purpose of closer settlement; but the Queensland National Bank had already made arrangements to cut it up. It was surveyed and advertised, but, for some reason, the Government thought it was going to be a good proposition for closer settlement, and they decided to compulsorily acquire it. Unfortunately for them, there was a difference of opinion as to what the real value was. They went into the Land Court, with the result that a very heavy burden was put upon the land in litigation costs, and all the expenses of both sides had to be tacked on to the purchasing price, as well as other expenses. Under the Act 10 per cent. of the value must in all cases be added. That made the price higher than it might have been had it been readily fixed. However, as far as the pastoral land is concerned, the Government that I was supporting in those days wanted to deal with it—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They got 330 signatures to a petition in order that they might take it up.

Mr. VOWLES: I remember the lithograph being there, the advertisements appearing in the papers, and Mr. James Love

*Mr. Vowles.]*

being in Dalby to sell the land. However, that is not the point. The Jimbour selectors have had many vicissitudes; there have been most deserving cases; they have been up against misfortune after misfortune, drought after drought, and the Governments, from time to time, have come to their relief, but, unfortunately, they have had such a series of misfortunes that their capital has all been spent, and they are now on property which is encumbered, without sufficient capital to carry them along. As far as they were concerned, the only thing was to accept the Government's terms to remain on the property, and when the hon. member says the selectors have readily accepted the perpetual lease, I know that in many cases they would have much preferred freehold, but it was a case of "half a loaf is better than none," and I trust that their experience in perpetual lease will be the means of their making their fortunes. I think they are paying 1s. 4½d. an acre on the average area of the land. If they had that land for forty years at that price, they would have freehold at the finish, but, under perpetual lease, at the end of forty years all they will have will be the improvements. When those circulars were sent out, many selectors came and asked my opinion. I said, "The position is this: It is the Government's policy not to grant freehold; they are prepared to give it under perpetual lease, and if you do not take that you will not get it at all, and it will mean that your homes will have to be forfeited," and, like sensible men, they made the best of the deal and decided to accept it.

Mr. COLLINS: They accepted perpetual lease.

Mr. VOWLES: Because they could not get anything else.

Mr. HARTLEY: Well, what did they want?

Mr. VOWLES: They simply wanted some reasonable relief; because it has been admitted by all Governments that there had been a false price put upon the land, and it was also valued as agricultural land, whereas it should have been valued as pastoral land.

Mr. HARTLEY: Do you want us to write off about three-fourths of their liability?

Mr. VOWLES: It is not a question of writing off. Are you going to kick those men out after they have spent their money as Crown tenants?

Mr. HARTLEY: We are giving them a chance to stay on.

Mr. VOWLES: I am glad to see that the Crown realises its responsibility. The finding of the Commission disclosed that a living area of this class of land is nothing less than 2,560 acres, and that was after looking through the books of the selectors who have tilled the land, and many have gone in for mixed farming. Therefore, I ask the Minister to think whether he is doing a fair thing for the men he is putting on Cecil Plains in the area he is putting them on in the face of the finding of the Jimbour Commission?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There is no comparison whatever. The cases are not analogous.

Mr. VOWLES: There is not an acre of land on Cecil Plains to compare with any acre on Kaimkillenbun. If we could only manage to put the rainfall that we get evenly over the year—26 or 28 inches—the

[*Mr. Vowles.*

quality of soil we have there would produce anything, but the trouble is that the rain comes at the wrong time for agriculture, it comes at the wrong time for wheat; and then we must also remember that we have, unfortunately, had drought after drought and are still in one.

Mr. W. COOPER: At Jimbour you are in a drought but not for the State Government.

Mr. VOWLES: I hope the hon. gentleman will realise that the State Government, or the gentlemen who sit there, are doing nothing, personally, towards the relief. (Government interruption.)

Mr. BRENNAN interjected.

Mr. VOWLES: It is not a just claim, and I am sorry to hear the hon. gentleman who is supporting it say that it is.

Mr. BRENNAN: I did not say it is not just.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If we did not do it—

Mr. VOWLES: If they did not do it I would say they were not treating their tenants in a just way; but I say that you are treating them in a just way, and I commend you for it.

Mr. CARTER: The Government always does that.

Mr. VOWLES: It does occasionally.

Mr. CARTER: Then, why are you saying so much about it?

Mr. VOWLES: Well, I said I got up to reply to the Minister; I quite agree with all he said, except one thing. I can assure him, that, as far as perpetual lease is concerned, it is force of circumstances.

Mr. COLLINS: Are you opposing the Bill?

Mr. VOWLES: No, I am supporting it, and am giving my reasons.

Mr. COLLINS: It contains the principle of perpetual lease.

Mr. VOWLES: I know it does, and the selectors have agreed to accept it; therefore I am quite in agreement with it. Still, I believe in their having the option if they want it.

Mr. CARTER: Why do not you eat the plums and say nothing?

Mr. VOWLES: When I get good plums I like to talk about them, and I have good plums on this occasion. I trust the Bill will get the support of this Chamber and a speedy passage through the other, because I know the Government are building on this becoming law; they are framing their rental now in anticipation of this legislation, and the selectors also want to know if it is becoming law. I hope it will become law within a week.

Mr. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): I was very pleased to hear the hon. member for Dalby congratulate the Minister on introducing this Bill. It is only evidence that perpetual lease is, or should be, the most popular form of tenure for our land settlement. Had the Jimbour settlers taken up the land originally on perpetual lease, they would have been relieved of a great deal of inconvenience and stress. They tell me that in 1913, when they approached the then Minister for Lands, the Hon. James Tolmie, they got an unsympathetic hearing. The member for Dalby was then a supporter of the Government, but had no influence with his own Government

to get relief for them. That is proved by the fact that there is no alteration in the tenure, and the hardships have been inflicted upon those Crown tenants until this Government saw fit to alter the tenure. We find that clause 3, section (d) of the Act says—

“The annual rental for the first period of the lease shall be a sum equal to one pound per centum of the notified purchasing price of the land (exclusive of improvements, if any) when selected as an agricultural farm.”

Mr. MORGAN: That amounts to 1s. 4d. an acre.

Mr. BRENNAN: Had that condition been imposed on those settlers in 1913, they would have had great relief for the past six years, but, unfortunately, the then Government did nothing. This Government has made it possible for those men to pull through and remain on the land. Those settlers assured me that they are grateful for what this Government has done, and you can see that this Government is now out to assist the man on the land and to encourage production—the primary industry of farming. I think that hon. members opposite should at least co-operate with this Government to bring about this Bill without any further debate. I feel sure that the Government will be congratulated by the whole of the people of Queensland, particularly those in the Dalby district. The hon. member for Dalby made reference to Cecil Plains as compared with Jimbour. I think any expert will know that Cecil Plains is a far better property and proposition for closer settlement than Jimbour.

Mr. VOWLES: It is exactly the opposite.

Mr. BRENNAN: The hon. member must know that Cecil Plains is looked upon as a far better and more convenient place for closer settlement than Jimbour.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: And it has permanent water on it.

Mr. BRENNAN: And it has permanent water on it, and water of a very soft nature can be obtained very near the surface, which is not the case at Jimbour. It is far easier to irrigate the Cecil Plains Estate than the Jimbour Estate. I think this Bill will be the means of educating all the farmers on these repurchased estates to the belief that perpetual lease is the best, because this land was taken up by the earlier owners at something like £1 an acre. They made a profit on it—they paid no land tax, and they pawned it off on to the Government at something like £4 or £5 an acre, and the farmer who comes along now has to bear the burden, while the earlier selector can go and live in England, or Sydney, and retire for life; and the poor man, who is supposed to be represented by the Opposition, has to bear the burden. Yet they stand for the leasehold system at 2s. 6d. an acre, and selectors take it up at £7 and £8 an acre. This Government stands for perpetual lease, which allows the small holder to make income from his capital and thereby secure to himself the means, should his investment be a bad one, of surrendering or forfeiting his selection and going to some other place. It stands for the best and most progressive system of land settlement, and the Opposition know it and will not admit it.

Mr. MORGAN: The Minister, in introducing this Bill, said it was for the purpose of rectifying blunders made in the past. I admit, to a very great extent, that a blunder was made in opening Jimbour, in the first instance, as an agricultural settlement, but I also think the Government should not, after paying for its experience, blunder in the same direction; because that is what this Government is doing, so far as Mount Hutton and Cecil Plains are concerned. It is only a matter of a few years until—no matter what Government is in power—they will have to bring down Bills to increase the areas on both those holdings. It is very interesting to note what occurred in 1917, when the present Government introduced a Bill known as the Agricultural Settlers' Relief Act Amendment Bill. They did not at that time bring in a Bill of this sort. They did not propose to give the Jimbour settlers any permanent relief.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They carried out the directions of the Land Court.

[4.30 p.m.]

Mr. MORGAN: Why did they tinker with it in 1917? At that time I made these remarks—

“The trouble is that the Jimbour land was cut up for agricultural purposes when Nature never intended it for such purposes. Nature never intended the Jimbour land for anything else but grazing land. The hon. member for Eacham said that relief Bills were necessary owing to the fact that a high price was paid for the land. I admit that too high a price was paid for the land, but that has nothing to do with the fact that the Jimbour settlers have been unable to make a living on their selections. The trouble is that they have been trying to make a living from the cultivation of land which was never intended by Nature to be used for agricultural purposes. They have tried to do that year after year, and the effort has been almost a complete failure. Had the Government of the day when they decided to resume the Jimbour Estate cut it up into 5,000-acre grazing farms instead of 640-acre agricultural farms, or less, we should have had a number of prosperous graziers on that estate.”

That is what I said when I endeavoured to get the Government to increase the areas as they propose in this Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why did the Government not do it in 1913 when you supported them?

Mr. MORGAN: In 1913 I had the same view as I have at this moment. I had an opportunity of becoming a settler on the estate myself, but I would not consider it under the conditions at any price. Further on I said—

“There is only one remedy, and that is to resume the whole of the area again and cut it up into grazing areas of 5,000 acres and upwards. A number of the Jimbour settlers have not up to the present moment contributed anything of the capital value of their land, and when they have not contributed anything of the purchasing value of the land and they are still unsuccessful . . .”

Then again, I said—

“I am not going to oppose this Bill, though, as I have pointed out, it will

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only afford temporary relief. If the present Government remain in power for the twelve months they will have to bring forward some other relief, because the settlers will then be in the same position as they are in to-day. They need to be placed in a different position, and until that is done, no matter what Government are in power, there will be continual agitation on the part of the settlers to get better conditions."

I told the Government in 1917 that the Bill they were introducing was only temporary, and that it was of no permanent use. The Commission which the Government appointed have practically borne out all I said.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Will you not admit that whatever Bill they brought in in 1917 the tenure could not be reviewed?

Mr. MORGAN: They should have brought in a measure to increase the area. The Minister has admitted that it is only a grazing proposition, and even with 2,580 acres it is only going to mean an existence for the settlers. I defy the Minister, or any other person in this Chamber, to show that anything more than an existence can be obtained in an area of 2,580 acres as a grazing proposition. In good seasons the people on the Jimbour Estate will make money; but, unfortunately, Queensland suffers from continual droughts, and it is necessary for the man on the land to make a lot of money during good seasons so that he will have a nest egg to carry him over the bad periods that continually confront us. The rent for the second period is £2 per cent., which the hon. member for Dalby has stated is equal to 1s. 4d. per acre. I think the Minister will admit that there is no grazing farm or pastoral holding in Queensland at the present moment that is paying anything like 1s. 4d. per acre.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I admit that the people on Jimbour know their own business best.

Mr. MORGAN: As the hon. member for Dalby stated, it is purely and simply a case of accepting half a loaf as being better than no bread. This proposition is better than what they have, just as the Bill introduced in 1917 gave them temporary relief. This measure is going to give them, I admit, ever so much better opportunity of making a living than any previous measure of this or any other Government. The point I wish to make in regard to other repurchased estates, Mount Hutton and Cecil Plains in particular, is that the Government are erring in the same direction. On Mount Hutton from 5,000 to 20,000 acres is necessary to make a living. The Minister can bear me out in that if he has travelled over it, and I have no doubt that he has, because he has travelled a good deal in that locality. It is a fatal blunder to open the land on Mount Hutton in such small areas, and—although, perhaps, to a less extent—it is also a fatal blunder on Cecil Plains. I am going to support the Bill, and I hope that under it the Jimbour settlers will have a run of good seasons and be able to pay their way, and eventually become prosperous settlers.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): I want to have a few words on this Bill, because it seems to be almost an annual affair. We have had a good many Bills dealing with the Jimbour settlers. I am not saying that they should

not be introduced if they will give relief to the settlers, but I would like to point out that there are other repurchased estates besides Jimbour, and I was very pleased to hear the Minister say that in the event of 50 per cent. of the selectors on those estates making application, he will have a commission appointed to inquire into the conditions there.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: So long as they agree to perpetual lease.

Mr. COLLINS: Yes, so long as they agree to the policy of the Government: that is, the system of perpetual lease. There is no doubt that some of the farmers on the Inkerman Estate paid too much for their land, and I want it to be known to them that if they fulfil the conditions laid down by the Minister they also can get a commission, as can the settlers on other repurchased estates in different parts of Queensland. I remember that when this Bill was before the House in 1917, I said that more than likely we would have to alter it later on, that our laws were not like the laws of the Medes and Persians—we could alter them when we saw their imperfections. It has been found necessary to introduce a Bill in 1919 to amend that Bill of 1917, and if this Bill does not give relief, that is, if the men on the land cannot get a living from the land, it is the duty of this Government, or any other Government, to pass measures which will enable them to get a living on the land. I said that in 1917, and I repeat it in 1919, because I know that this Government, and I hope any other Government, have a desire to see people living on the land rather than coming into the city. We have too many in the city at the present time, and it is the duty of the Government to get as many as possible settled in the country, to build up the great nation we all desire.

Mr. GRAYSON (*Cunningham*): I shall certainly support the Bill, the second reading of which has been moved this afternoon. I consider that it will be of very great assistance to the Jimbour selectors. At the same time I would just like to point out that this perpetual lease system is not the popular system that the Minister has indicated. Perpetual lease is forced down the throats of the selectors. They have to accept it or they get no relief. The Jimbour settlers have signified their intention of accepting perpetual lease and in the terms which the Minister has indicated.

I remember that years ago under the Land Act there was only one year's grace in which the selector might pay his rent after he had paid a deposit of 10 per cent. and survey fees. In 1905 the Land Bill was introduced by the late Hon. J. T. Bell, and I had drafted a new clause which increased the tenure from ten to twenty-five years, and allowed the selector four years' grace. That was of very great assistance indeed to the selectors. At the same time, my opinion is that the selector on the repurchased estates, instead of getting twenty years or twenty-five years or forty years, should have been allowed eighty years for the payment of his rental, that is, provided he paid a fair rental on the land. I say that every encouragement that can be given to those selectors, particularly on Jimbour, should be granted. Drought and other conditions have deprived them of the opportunity of making a living, and it was simply impossible for the selectors on repurchased estates to meet their payments. I must say that whenever I have

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approached the Minister I have had no difficulty in getting an extension of time for settlers who were unable to meet their payments. I think it is only right that he should grant it, but I have during my time in Parliament met Ministers who were not so willing to grant extensions.

I have heard it stated that it was a Liberal Government who were the cause of the repurchase of the Jimbour Estate. I would like to point out that I was in the House in that year, and out of seventy-two members thirty-five who were supporting the Government were members of the Labour party. I think the hon. member for Balonne was, amongst others, one who supported the then Government. I must candidly admit that it was a great blunder—a huge blunder. The land was never worth half what was given. Instead of £3 10s., it was not worth a farthing more than £1 per acre, because it is only grazing land.

I notice that the Minister stated that if the settlers on any other repurchased estates wished to come under the operations of the perpetual lease system he would grant a Commission to make inquiries. I think that 50 per cent. of the Maryvale settlers will make application to the Minister with a view to having a Commission to inquire into their conditions.

At the same time any concession that can be made in the direction of liberalising the terms under which those selectors have purchased will be a very great relief. I do not think there will be any trouble in passing this Bill through, and probably it will have the effect of rendering some assistance to other States if 50 per cent. of the selectors apply to the Minister for a Commission to inquire into their position.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*): Before the motion is put, I would like to draw the attention of the Minister to a matter which other members have drawn attention to. The hon. gentleman made reference to the fact, in his opening remarks, that a blunder had been committed when the purchase of this estate was brought about. The Minister was not candid enough to say that the estate was practically purchased at the instigation of the Labour party who were sitting behind the Government at that particular time. If it had not been for the support of the Labour party the Government of the day would not have been in a position to repurchase that estate. Mr. Bell was Minister for Lands at that time.

Mr. BRENNAN: Was he Labour?

HON. W. H. BARNES: He was in the Coalition Government of which the Labour party were the supporters. The hon. member for Toowoomba may not like it, but it is a fact nevertheless. We have heard again and again in this House that, in connection with the Seaforth Estate, a blunder was made. I admit there was a blunder made there, but it was not one which went in the direction of practically ruining a number of people who came to the estate. Possibly there was no purchase in connection with the life of Queensland that meant so much to so many people who came here and invested their money as did the purchase of Jimbour. Who were behind these investments? It is refreshing, sometimes, to turn up the columns of "Hansard" and find who were behind the Government at that particular time and who were moving them. What

do we find? At that particular time, I want to emphasise again, when the Labour party were behind the Government, the then Minister for Lands was out to squeeze every ounce from the unfortunate selector. I have said in this House before and I repeat it this afternoon, that one of the difficulties which the State has to face is to get people on the land. I am absolutely with the Minister in anything that will tend to ease the burden. But let us notice what the policy was. I am quoting from "Hansard," volume c. year 1907. What did the Minister say who was in charge of the Bill, or rather who was dealing with a motion which was introduced by the Hon. Mr. Philp at that time? He said—

"The Act says that when the land is being opened we must open it at 10 per cent. above the price per acre we pay for it. There were expenses connected with the acquisition of the property, and there is 10 per cent. to go on to it under a statutory direction, and the result is that I have to open that property to selection in order to prevent a loss falling upon the taxpayers of Queensland, through whose money it was acquired. I have to take care that we get over £4 per acre on the average in order to prevent such a loss occurring. That is my first duty in connection with a repurchased estate."

Then he goes on, further down in his remarks, to say—

"I am prepared to authorise the formation of groups upon it, and my object is—I said I tell you frankly—to get as high a price as I possibly can." I adopt, I told them, a different policy in regard to a repurchased estate of this character to that which I take in regard to the ordinary Crown lands, and I said, 'You can tell your clients that the man who comes to me and offers me the highest price per acre is the man who will receive the greatest consideration from me.' I went specially to the Southern agents, because they are men who have as their clients people who are accustomed to paying high prices for land. I am going to try and get £5 6s. for Cumkillenbar. That is a low price in a country like New Zealand, or in parts of Victoria, for land for an estate of this kind. Here in Queensland it is a high price."

If any difficulty or hardship has been brought about—I say a very great deal of hardship has been brought about—it is certainly up to the Labour Government to try and relieve it. I want to make the point perfectly clear that the Labour party sitting behind the then Government, with some of their members in the Government, were entirely responsible for the happening, and they themselves brought about something which has meant ruin. I regret to say, to many a man who settled upon Cumkillenbar.

Mr. BRENNAN: What about Gowrie and Cecil Plains.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member for Toowoomba does not like it. For the moment, we are dealing with Jimbour. We know there is a great deal of fireworks in what frequently comes from the other side from hon. members who speak on certain subjects. I am quite content in drawing the attention of the public to the fact that whilst

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the Opposition do not believe in leasehold they do say it is up to the Government to relieve these unfortunate selectors. We want further to have reported in "Hansard" this fact, that any trouble that has been brought about has been entirely due to the so-called friends of the people who were behind the Government of the day and were represented in the Government of the day, in the very high prices which were obtained for the land in the first instance. They were responsible for the high prices that were paid for that land.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Non-sense! Did not the Land Appeal Court decide it?

HON. W. H. BARNES: Here is the excuse—"Did not the Land Appeal Court decide it?" That is the way they always try to get out of things, by putting it on the other fellow. Is it not a fair thing for any Minister to take the responsibility?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: How can you take the responsibility of a court of law?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am not asking the hon. gentleman to take the responsibility of something which happened when he was not a Minister, but I am pointing out that the trouble was brought about through a party sitting behind the Government, who allowed this kind of thing to be done, and who are face to face with trying to relieve the unfortunate selectors.

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

#### COMMITTEE.

(Mr. Bertram, Marce, in the chair.)

Clauses 1 to 5 were put and passed without discussion or amendment.

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

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

### PROFITEERING PREVENTION BILL.

#### SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. MORGAN: I think this Bill has been brought forward by the Government with a deliberate intention of hoodwinking the electors of Queensland. As already has been proved by numerous speakers on this side of the House, and has not in any way been contradicted or refuted by members of the Government, an Act of Parliament is in existence which would have given the Government every opportunity to deal with profiteers as they desired. Had the Government of the day decided to operate in accordance with the present Act of Parliament, they could have been accused by the electors of Queensland of having allowed five years to go by without doing anything, although they really had the power.

Mr. W. COOPER: The Federal Government were responsible for that.

Mr. MORGAN: As I have already stated, they are deceiving the electors of this State, and leading them to believe they had no power in respect of the fixing of prices and the prevention of profiteering. This Bill has been brought forward for that particular purpose. The Secretary for Agriculture, in dealing with this particular matter, treated the House for a long period to telegrams

and other matters appertaining to countries in all other parts of the world with the exception of Queensland. The same may be said of the Minister in charge of the Bill. We have asked for concrete cases of profiteering, but those who have dealt with the Bill from a Government standpoint have been unable in any shape or form to bring conclusive evidence that profiteering is rampant in Queensland. I might say why are boots so dear as they are at the present moment; why is clothing, more especially ladies' apparel, so dear? If I were asked to give evidence to prove profiteering in the boot trade or in connection with soft goods, I would not be able to do so. The fact has been lightly passed over by a number of speakers of the effect of high wages and reduced hours upon these particular matters. In my opinion it is all important. By the time a hide has been removed from a bullock and is made into a pair of boots and sold in one of the retail shops in Queensland, that particular material has passed through at least six different independent trades. The cost of wages in every one of those industries has been increased, and there has been a reduction of the working hours. So that the hide has not carried only the increase so far as the bootmaker is concerned, but has carried the increase which has been given in connection with those six separate and independent industries through which it passed before the boots reached the consumer. The same thing applies to almost everything so far as wearing apparel is concerned. Likewise, in a

lesser degree, so far as our food-  
[5 p.m.] stuffs are concerned, it is the same. In respect to this particular matter, I intend to deal with the Bill more from the point of view as to how it affects the producer. We have in Queensland, and likewise in other States in Australia, producers who have by co-operation and amalgamation come together and formed associations for the purpose of endeavouring to obtain a fair living wage from the produce grown upon the farm. We have co-operative companies in respect to butter, cheese, bacon, and other matters. The producers have come together just in the same way as the unionists come together, and they combined for the purpose of bettering their conditions from their own point of view.

Mr. W. COOPER: Justly so.

Mr. MORGAN: The hon. member says "Justly so." We know that the unionists combined together for bettering their conditions. If it is a proper thing for the persons who sell their labour to combine together for the purpose of getting a living wage and a reduction in the working hours, then, naturally, it is just as important for the producers to combine in order to get a fair living wage out of what they produce.

Mr. W. COOPER: Quite right. But deal with the merchant and importer.

Mr. MORGAN: The hon. member says "Quite right"; but, unfortunately, this Bill will prevent the producers from getting a living wage out of their produce.

Mr. W. COOPER: No, there is nothing to fear from this Bill.

Mr. MORGAN: My friend has not read the Bill. For instance, at the present time the cheese manufacturers fix the price at which cheese is to be sold to the retailers at so much per lb. If this Bill is carried into operation and the cheese manufacturers

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meet together and decide that cheese is to be sold to the retailers at 9d. per lb., they are operating against the Bill and they are liable to prosecution.

Mr. W. COOPER: You are anticipating.

Mr. MORGAN: I would draw the attention of hon. members to what appertains at Mildura at the present time. There is an example laid down there for the benefit of the whole of Australia to show what can be done by amalgamation and co-operation so far as producers are concerned. That portion of Victoria at one time was looked upon as a wilderness and a waste, but at the present time one of the most prosperous settlements in any part of Australia exists there. You don't find there the producers living in homes like hovels, which you find existing in Queensland, and you don't find them right up against starvation, as a number of settlers are facing at the present moment in Queensland. The homes of the producers in Mildura are equal to any that exist in Australia, and the conditions of the people there are what they have a right to be. The producers at Mildura are prosperous, and are able to educate their children just the same as the city business man, and they are able to give their wives and families all the necessaries of life. Why is that? Simply because the producers there amalgamated and controlled the output of Mildura. In no part of Australia can the people who deal in Mildura dried fruits obtain those fruits on any better condition than those who live in Mildura itself. The price is always the same, so far as the consumer is concerned. The reason for that is that the Mildura people sell to the storekeepers direct, and the storekeepers are compelled to sell at the price fixed by the amalgamation.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: And compelled to buy from them alone.

Mr. MORGAN: The storekeepers cannot sell for more or less than the rate fixed. They are allowed a certain profit on every pound of dried fruits they sell. If a storekeeper is discovered to be selling dried fruits at a greater price than he contracted for, or if he is discovered to be selling those fruits at a lesser price than he contracted for, he is not supplied with any more fruit. The result of that is that the growers get a fair and reasonable rate for their produce, and the people of Australia all get the dried fruits at the one price. There is no suffering in connection with that particular industry. This Bill, however, will not allow the producers to amalgamate and sell their produce like that. If the manufacturers of butter, cheese, or bacon in Queensland fix the price for sale to the retailer, this Bill will operate and prevent it.

Mr. W. COOPER: You are absolutely wrong so far as the primary producers are concerned.

Mr. MORGAN: In connection with the high prices obtaining for food, and many other commodities to-day, we know that the prices are greater to-day than they were before the war, but there are many reasons for it. It will be admitted in connection with foodstuffs, and likewise in connection with hides, that there was a large accumulation all over the world before the war. It was the policy of different countries throughout the world to have a standby of that kind, but the war occurred, and what was the

result? Hundreds of thousands of people were withdrawn from the fields of production. Production went down considerably owing to the fact that during the war young men were withdrawn from the field of production, and naturally production suffered. That is one of the reasons why there is such competition to-day for foodstuffs, wool, hides, and all that sort of thing. It is because the demand is greater than the production. I think it can be honestly admitted by those who do not desire to make political capital out of a measure of this description that the high prices ruling in the world to-day have been caused owing to the shortage of production brought about mainly by the war. This Bill provides that commercial trusts are illegal, and under the heading of commercial trusts we have cheese manufacturing industries, and butter and bacon factories, graziers' associations, primary producers' associations, and farmers' unions; in fact everything, so far as amalgamation in respect to the producers of this State will come under that heading. But if the unionists hold a meeting at the Trades Hall they do not in any way come under the provisions of this Bill, although they demand a high price for their labour without seeing that the producer gets a fair price for what he produces. It is a great pity that Queensland is not self-supporting. Unfortunately, Queensland cannot support herself owing to climatic conditions. There are many items that it is impossible to produce here. But with regard to flour, butter, meat, and sugar—four staple articles of food—it cannot be said by any member opposite that there is any profiteering going on in connection with any one of those four products. The only profiteering going on in connection with any of those is done by the State itself. I would like to deal with the question of meat supplied by the State and by private shops in this State. I have gone to considerable trouble to find out exactly how matters are situated in Queensland at the present time. I have in my hand circulars issued by the Queensland State butchery at Brisbane and by the Queensland State butchery at Roma. I want to show the people of this State exactly what is happening, and I will quote the prices of meat at the State butchery in Brisbane, the State butchery in Roma, and the private shops, and I will prove to the people of the country that they are being treated partially by the Government in this particular matter. The Government give differential treatment, and they treat one section of the community worse than those in and around the large centres of population. In the Brisbane State butchers' shops a roast sirloin of beef costs 6½d. per lb.; at the Roma State butcher's shop 8½d., or 2d. per lb. more than Brisbane. The private shops in Brisbane sell it at 8d. per lb., or ½d. per lb. less than the Roma State butchery.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Scandalous!

Mr. W. COOPER: What would it be if the State shops were not there?

Mr. MORGAN: The prices I am quoting for Roma are for a period when the Government had a monopoly in that town, because no other butchers' shops existed there at all then. That is what I want the House to thoroughly understand. These are the prices at the block. For prime rib roast the price at the Brisbane State shop was 4½d., at Roma 6½d., and in private shops in Brisbane

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5½d. For chuck rib roast the price in Brisbane was 3½d., Roma 5d., and in private shops 4½d.

Mr. W. COOPER: Are there no private shops in Roma?

Mr. MORGAN: At the time I speak of there were none, but a short time ago a private person started a butcher's shop in Roma, and now competes against the State. The very moment that he commenced to compete against the State the State butchery slightly reduced their price. While they had a monopoly they charged dearer for their meat at Roma than they did in Brisbane.

Mr. MOORE: That was the time for them to ring it in to them.

Mr. MORGAN: I have got the figures tabulated here, and I will read them all to show the prices at the Brisbane State butchery, the Roma State butchery, and in the private shops in Brisbane—

	Brisbane State Shops.	Roma State Shops.	Privat- Shop.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Roast sirloin ...	6½	0 8½	0 8
Prime rib roast ...	4½	0 6½	0 5½
Chuck rib roast ...	3½	0 5	0 4½
Fillet steak ...	8	1 0	1 0
Rump steak ...	7½	0 10	0 10
Beef steak ...	5½	0 7	0 6
Topside ...	5	0 7	0 6
Corned round ...	5½	0 7½	0 7
Corned brisket ...	3½	0 6	0 4½
Gravy meat ...	5½	0 7½	0 5
Sausages ...	5	0 7	0 6
Mince ...	4	0 6	0 5

They are charging in Roma for gravy beef 2½d. per lb. more than the private shop charges in Brisbane. Now, the meat that goes to Roma is sent from the Charleville Meatworks, which is under Government control, and the net profit made by those works was £198 10s. 4d. But in order to show the true profit, I might mention that they supply the men with meals, for which they charge them 15s. per week. In connection with the supplying of the men employed in the Charleville Meatworks, there was a loss of £153; so that you will see those meatworks have actually made a loss up to the 30th June. I also want to show how the Government differentiate in connection with transactions of cattle. For instance, the State station sent to the Enoggera yards 1,904 cattle which were sold at an average of £14 per head. They treated at the meatworks, for the Imperial Government 7,756, and for the carcasses alone—not counting the hides and tallow—they averaged £12 17s. 4d. They sold 1,020 head of cattle as stores in Charleville to New South Wales buyers at £12 and £10 6s. per head. The Dillalah State Station was asked to supply the meatworks at Charleville with fat cattle. At that time they had something like 2,000 head of fat cattle, which they could have sold at £14 per head, but they were told to hold off for the purpose of supplying fats to the meatworks at Charleville. Up to the 30th June, 1919, they supplied 704 cattle, and the State Meatworks at Charleville only allowed the State stations £9 10s. per head, while at the same time the Government had sold store cattle to go to New South Wales at £12 a head, and had also sent to Brisbane cattle for which they got £14 net per head.

Mr. W. COOPER: That was done to give the people cheap meat.

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Mr. MORGAN: My friend here said it was done to give the people cheap meat; yet that meat has gone to Roma and has been sold at from a 1d. to 3d. per lb. dearer than the meat supplied by private butchers' shops; so that, notwithstanding the fact that the Charleville Meatworks obtained cattle at £9 10s. per head, which were honestly worth £14, and could have been sold at £14, they were not able to sell meat to the people at Charleville and Roma at a lesser price than the private butcher in Brisbane, although the private butchers were compelled to pay practically £16 per head to the Government.

Mr. CARTER: They might have been much heavier cattle.

Mr. MORGAN: I know they were not.

Mr. BRENNAN: How do you know?

Mr. MORGAN: I have good information. I want to tell the hon. member that while there were 2,000 fat cattle in Dillalah on a certain date which could have been sold to anyone else for £14 a head, they were not sold. The Charleville Meatworks only required something like thirty-five head per week. They were sent in drafts, each week or month as the case might be. The drought continued in that locality, and, owing to the fact that they were only going off in dribs and drabs, they gradually became poorer, and some of them to-day are not fit for slaughtering; they have become stores.

Mr. W. COOPER: That applies to all stations.

Mr. MORGAN: And yet we are told that the station-owners hold back cattle. We were told by Mr. Ryan that the station-owners formed rings; but here is an illustration where Dillalah had 2,000 head of fat cattle which could have been sold at Enoggera for £14 net, and they were not allowed to do so. They held them back for the Charleville Meatworks.

I also want to deal with the fish industry, and I do not think any member of the Government can show more grounds for accusing firms or individuals of profiteering than the figures I am going to quote here. They are as follows:—The Government buys from the fishermen and retail as follows:—Squire—Buy, 5½d. per lb.; retail, 10d., equal to 90 per cent. profit. Bream—Buy, 3d. per lb.; retail, 6d., equal to 100 per cent. profit. Garfish—Buy, 2½d. per lb.; retail, 8d., equal to 300 per cent. profit. Flathead—Buy, 4½d. to 6d. per lb.; retail, 9d., equal to 50 to 100 per cent. profit. Notwithstanding the fact that the Government made from 50 per cent. to 300 per cent. profit—the difference between the price they give to the fishermen and that at which they sell to the consumer—the fish industry in Queensland at the present time has shown an accumulated loss of £2,752 12s. 10d.

Mr. W. COOPER: It is only in a developmental stage yet.

The SPEAKER: I remind the hon. member that while the profits and losses with regard to the State fish business may be very interesting, I ask him to confine himself, not to what has been done, but to the principles contained in the Bill. The hon. member is not referring to the Bill at all.

Mr. MORGAN: I think you admitted last night, Mr. Speaker, in connection with a certain ruling that we are allowed a very wide scope, and apparently the Minister in charge of the Bill—

The SPEAKER: The hon. member knows that on the second reading he can only discuss the general principles contained in the Bill.

Mr. MORGAN: I want to show that notwithstanding the fact that it is apparent that there is a considerable amount of profit made in taking the fish from the fishermen and placing it in the hands of the consumer, profiteering cannot be shown, simply because the Government even then has made a loss. The point I want to make is that owing to high cost of distribution and to the fact that it is costing a great deal more to-day than it did years ago to get the article of consumption from the producer to the consumer, we are at the present moment called upon to pay these high and increased costs, and simply because there are certain industries in Queensland to-day where the prices are greater than prior to the war, those are the only arguments that have been used by hon. members opposite that profiteering exists.

Mr. PAYNE: Do you think there is any profiteering?

Mr. MORGAN: If I were honestly asked to prove that profiteering existed in connection with any particular matter, I am not in a position to do so. In my opinion—and I think it is the opinion of the average man who speaks on this matter—profiteering is occurring; but I say, let us go right from the commencement and follow the article till it reaches the consumer in order to find out if profiteering really exists. Where would there be a better opportunity of having inquiries held by a Commission than in the State fish industry, because there we can prove that fish is obtained in one instance at 2½d. and retailed at 8d. If that were done by an ordinary private individual there would be a cry raised immediately by the Government that profiteering must exist there, and if profiteering existed in that case then it must exist so far as the Government itself is concerned; but we find that the industry has made a loss, notwithstanding the high percentage of profit made in connection with the disposal of the fish, so I think that an inquiry would not prove that profiteering was occurring in that particular industry. An inquiry may prove that waste was occurring in the working expenses, or that this particular fish should be handled at a much lesser cost, and that the general management was at fault. Therefore, I think that before we go into this matter so far as a Bill is concerned, there should be more inquiries made.

Mr. FOLEY: Are you against the Bill?

Mr. MORGAN: I have asked hon. members opposite to give one concrete case of profiteering, but they have failed. They have read balance-sheets of shipping companies; but this Bill cannot deal with the shipping industry of Australia—

Mr. COLLINS: I will give you a case; the last man you employed you made a profit out of.

Mr. MORGAN: The Bill cannot deal with many other matters appertaining to industries outside of Queensland. It can only deal with industries in the State, and, that being so, we can only touch the fringe of the

matter. In other words, we cannot get right down to the roots. I have figures here to show that under the Act in operation at the present moment the fixed prices of certain articles of daily use were lower [5.30 p.m.] under the Denham Government than under the present Government. The "Gazette" shows that under the Denham Government the price of sugar was at one particular period fixed at 2½d. per lb. retail. The price of sugar on the 27th January, 1919, was under this Government fixed at 3½d. per lb.

The SPEAKER: Will the hon. member be good enough to explain what connection that has with this Bill?

Mr. MORGAN: I want to show that the Act under which those prices were fixed can do precisely the same as the Bill we are discussing, but the Government had power under the Control of Trade Act to fix prices, at any time from 1914 to the present moment, so that there is no necessity for legislation at all. There were only fifty items that the Federal Government touched.

Mr. BRENNAN: Was sugar one of them?

Mr. MORGAN: Yes, but, notwithstanding that fact, in January, 1919, since price-fixing under the War Precautions Act has been abolished, the Queensland Government fixed the retail price at 3½d. per lb. In 1914, the Denham Government fixed the price of flour at £12 per ton, and later the Labour Government increased it to £12 15s. per ton. They increased the price, no doubt, because it was necessary. I am not going to say that the increases were not justifiable.

Mr. BRENNAN: What is the price of flour to-day?

Mr. MORGAN: I suppose it is worth £14, if not more. I think the Act I have referred to could have been utilised to a greater extent, and if the Government are anxious to prevent what they term profiteering they have the machinery without introducing another Bill. I hope that the necessity for this Bill will not be found apparent, and that the Government will come to the conclusion that it is only duplicating legislation. The electors are being deceived by the arguments of the Government, and when the men in the street saw by the reports of speeches of members on this side of the House that the Government have had the power all along, a great many of them were surprised. They were led astray by the present Government, who were blaming the Federal Government and the War Precautions Act for the high cost of living in Queensland.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member has exhausted his time allowed him under the Standing Orders.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): The Government have been a long while considering what to do in this connection, and on that score, perhaps, they cannot be accused of introducing legislation of a hasty nature, and yet it strikes me, on looking through the Bill and discussing its principles, that very likely a great deal of it is on the extremely fishy and doubtful side. I, for one, am not one bit in sympathy with the remorseless profiteer, any more than any other man on this side. The leader of this party has made the attitude of members on this side perfectly clear, and if additional evidence were required it would be only necessary to look up the Bill which was introduced in 1914, which has been referred to again and again,

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and which received the confirmation of the then leader of the Opposition, Mr. Ryan. So that there is really no room to charge the Opposition, or the people they represent, with any want of candour, with any want of thoroughness, with any want of good intention in dealing with profiteering. I was exceedingly disappointed with a good deal that has been said during this debate. In the abstract we have had a great deal told us. The Minister for Agriculture last night went pretty well all over the world. He journeyed to France, and travelled through England. I cannot call to mind any country that he did not touch with extracts dealing with profiteering that it is said has been going on. We know full well that profiteering in many directions has been rampant, but what we want to know—seeing that this Bill has to do with the conditions that obtain in our own land—is what evidence exists that actually justifies the introduction of this measure and the carrying out generally of the principles embodied in the Bill. Everyone is realising that we have arrived at the point in our life—indeed, it has been with us all through—where infinite concern should be given to the establishment of our industries and the general building up of our position. There is boundless room for development. We speak over and over again about the wonderful attractiveness of our land and the opportunities it offers. And yet how is it that, as regards many things, we are practically at a standstill? Only recently figures have been handed to us which indicate that we are getting into arrears in agriculture and settling people on the land. It is, therefore, extremely wise that we should be careful lest, in introducing legislation of a far-reaching character, we might interfere with the general conditions that should go with the development of our life. We cannot develop without enlisting the confidence of the people. We cannot develop unless we secure to people a degree of success in all that they undertake. I maintain that the very best advertisement for any land is evidence that men are doing well on it—that they have succeeded. If you want to attract people from abroad, if you want to get people elsewhere to realise that Queensland is the place for them, the best way in which that will be impressed upon them is by showing them the fact that Queensland settlers succeed. We know the influx of people at the time when the Jimbour Estate was purchased. It occurred because many farmers in the State had been doing immensely well. We had been favoured with very much better seasons than for some time previously. We had advertised the State largely, and people from Victoria and elsewhere were flocking to our land because it was given forth as a truth and fact that the people on the land had been doing amazingly well. They came to us from all quarters. Since that period we have gone through years of drought, and there has been a setback, but, nevertheless, the fact remains that the encouragement for the people to take up Jimbour and other land was simply due to the fact that people had been doing well. What I am concerned about is lest we should do anything in this Chamber—lest any legislation should pass this House—which would have the effect not only of upsetting the hopes that we have regarding the future settlement, but also of deterring people from coming to our land.

It is of principles of the Bill that have not been referred to during this debate that

[*Mr. G. P. Barnes.*]

I wish to say a word or two. First, I want to speak regarding the application of the measure. I am not sure that we have monopolies in our midst—monopolies that the Government of the day will be audacious enough to attack. The monopolies which exist, such as shipping and concerns of that kind, are such that we have no great say, I take it, in their control. But when we come to the monopolies in our midst, the first is the Government of the day. They are the leading monopolists, and if anybody wishes for proof that monopolies are not good he will find abundant evidence in the monopolies which are worked by the Government or under their direction. The fish monopoly certainly takes first place. If all the monopolies are of the same character—and I am rather inclined to think there is danger in that direction; though there may be an exception—it seems that we will only have a number of undertakings which are ghastly failures and a terrific expense to the people of the country. The Hon. T. C. Beirne went to a lot of trouble in connection with this fish business and supplied figures which show how the monopoly is worked at a frightful disadvantage to the people. And the worst of the whole business is that not only is it worked to their disadvantage, but that a vast number of people are still unable to obtain fish.

Mr. BRENNAN: On what did he base his knowledge?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: On actual facts which have not been controverted. Now look at the following figures regarding prices: Squire fish 5½d., retailed at 10d., equal to 90 per cent. profit; bream 3d., retailed at 6d., equal to 100 per cent. profit; garfish 2½d., retailed at 8d., equal to 300 per cent. profit; flathead 4½d. to 6d., retailed at 9d., equal to from 50 per cent. to 100 per cent. profit; sea mullet 2¾d., retailed at 5½d., equal to 100 per cent. profit. I say in no sphere of the mercantile life in Queensland can there be anything that approaches that. Judging by their own experience, I can well imagine that they may have an idea that what obtains in the governing of commodities by themselves is the general rule in the governing of commodities outside. I think they are utterly astray. On account of their handling—whether it be of beef, timber, or any other commodity—we have abundant evidence that the price of the commodity has gone up. My argument is, that we have not to look further than our own roof in order to find loose shingles. The Government have ample evidence in that which is going on under their control to prove that monopolies are not good and are not desirable. The other monopolies that exist in our midst have to do with the man on the land to a large extent. Our butter, bacon, and cheese factories have to do with the man on the land. In an odd instance we have a co-operative milling company. All those things may be interfered with at any moment. I am afraid it is on those very industries the Government have their eye fixed. Have we any justification for speaking in that fashion? We know that the present Government came into power on the question of cheap food. I remember placards were placed all over the country. "Vote for the Denham Government and dear beef, dear butter, dear bread." Those are the very commodities to which I am referring, and they are the only monopolies which anyone

can say exist in our midst in connection with foodstuffs and things of that kind. Those are the things which this Government made use of in order to get into power. I am sure I am perfectly justified in concluding that, in the event of the Government carrying this Bill, if they themselves have not fully decided to carry out this purpose, there are plenty behind them who claim that, having returned the Government, they must define the activities of the Government, and it will be for them to indicate that they must give their attention to making bread cheaper—securing a cheaper loaf, cheaper butter, and cheaper beef. I maintain that, in so doing, we are going to strike at the industries which are going to make—and have heretofore made—for our greatness. Why should we lay ourselves out, in a measure of this kind, to throttle the very industries that are going to make for our best life? It is for us to give them every possible encouragement. There are hon. members on the Government side of the House, I am sure, who realise the extreme seriousness of the position we are in to-day. I would like the Treasurer to give his thoughtful attention to what reaction there will be. I notice that in one of the clauses "owner" includes, not only the person owning the commodity in question, but also every person having or claiming any mortgage, encumbrance, right, lien, charge, or other interest over any such commodities. Is the Treasurer a party to that kind of legislation being enacted? What is going to happen to our development? Who is going to lend money to anyone under such conditions? Not only the supplier to the butter factory, the cheese factory, the bacon factory, or the flour mill, but our very institutions—the Government themselves even—who provide the money, are liable under this definition, and may be considered the owner. I can conceive of no greater deterrent to enterprise than a clause of that kind. Hon. members ought to be downright ashamed of introducing a Bill having such a far-reaching influence. I am sure the Treasurer cannot stand up against a clause of that kind and many other clauses in this Bill, because they are going to deter people from engaging in enterprises, and are going to have an influence on capital. I call to mind a speech delivered by the Premier only a few months ago. It was on the occasion of the welcome given to the Commissioner for Railways when he returned. If the hon. gentleman would be true to what he realised on that occasion, we would have him enunciating a policy which would make the country. But a policy such as is indicated in some of the clauses of this Bill is going to down the country. The hon. gentleman declared on that occasion—

"In view of the fact that in such a place as Queensland, where there was a broad franchise, the workers would control the policy of the Government, it was important that they should be kept on the straight and narrow path. He hoped, for humanity's sake, that they would take the sane and rational view, and adopt the sane and rational course. Either the people, by gradually educating themselves to higher ideals, would accomplish the reforms they had in mind, or would resort to violence and revolutionary methods, and the latter was the course we had to fear. If this sort of policy were adopted, he went on to say, chaos could be brought about, and would set back the clock of the world for

centuries. There was no doubt that there was a very insidious policy, not only in Queensland and Australia, but all over the world. It was the belief of some people that by pulling down capitalism they could do something for the workers. This, he thought, was erroneous. No one could say what would come out of chaos. It was a question where Labour was going, and which course it would adopt."

The Premier made those extremely wise remarks on that occasion. I suppose, like other people, he has his lucid moments, and this was one of them. I say every man who weighs things as they are, and desires to see our land develop as it should, will agree with the Premier in the statements which he made on that occasion. But how can anyone agree with some of the principles that are embodied in this Bill? I have already stated I am not at all in favour of profiteering. But in whose hands will lie the decision by and by? For instance, I will take the commodity in which my own company deals. The great bulk of the wheat is purchased during the first three or four months of the season. If I read this Bill rightly, the men who make that purchase—whether it be a private or a co-operative company—will be subject to the charge that they are speculating. They have, of necessity, to lay in stocks for their own protection, for the carrying on of their own business. It can be understood that that will react again upon the man on the land. He is the seller of the wheat. He not only wants to secure payment for what he has had under cultivation and the harvest he has reaped finally, but he wants to get it in a place of security and realise upon it. According to this Bill, it seems to me there is a danger that that man will be deterred from so doing. It must be remembered that nearly every man who deals largely in the article of wheat is dependent for the time being for advances, on his banker, or some institution, in order to achieve his purpose. Yet we are told that the owner includes not only the person owning the commodity in question, but also every person having, or claiming, any mortgage, encumbrance, right, lien or charge, or other interest, over such a commodity. I say you are going to make it extremely difficult for men who deal largely in grain, and in any commodity, to operate at all, simply because they have a thing like this hanging over them. The speech of the hon. member for Cunningham was quoted here last night, showing the actual dealing of this Government in connection with a few thousand bushels of wheat which had been stored in a Warwick mill, in which provision had been made for the future. They came down and put their hungry hands upon it in order that they might take in hand its distribution.

(Sitting suspended from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.)

Mr. G. P. BARNES (continuing): Just at the tea adjournment I was remarking about the dreadful change in the Premier's attitude. He took a high ideal to himself at one moment, but it is an awful thing for this community that his expressions should really have been found in such clauses as are referred to in the Bill before us. There is only one way in which the price of commodities can be lowered. Certainly, the way the Government are going about the matter is not going to bring about that desirable state of things. No one in their senses to-day would, for one moment, countenance any increase in the

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cost of the necessaries of life: but unless we go on producing there is no chance of them being lowered. Production is the cry everywhere except in Queensland. In all parts of the world, and particularly in all parts of Australia, encouragement is being given to increased production, but when you come to Queensland it is just the opposite; and, instead of an encouraging voice here, you find this kind of thing which we have before us to-day. It is a great pity if a happy medium of things cannot be struck. There is no doubt that we require to deal with matters in some way, but to deal with them in such a comprehensive way and give anyone the extreme power to administer legislation such as is included in this Bill is going to be disastrous to all enterprises. Any man who looks forward to this Bill making goods cheap is going to be mistaken.

Mr. COLLINS: It is not as drastic as some of the Acts which you supported.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Anyone who thinks that this Bill will bring about that state of things, then the sooner he is disillusioned the better. Instead of encouraging people to produce, this Bill is going to discourage men to produce. Every man who has anything to do with country life will know that what I say is true. I think we ought to give more consideration to statements like that made by Mr. G. W. Shipley at the annual meeting of the Chamber of Manufacturers the other day. Mr. Shipley said—

“A salient factor to be persistently stressed is that in production, just as capital is useless without labour, so is labour dependent on capital. And of the two labour is the more helpless. It is stated that the war has been productive of great selfishness by profiteering on the part of one section, and by striking and the paralysing of trade by another. But the strikers who allege profiteering would be the first to repudiate their own action did they but realise that the true source of their troubles lay in the depreciated British pound sterling. The profiteering that hurts has been done by the few huge financial institutions and combines in the world, by the relatively few who control the reserve product of the world's industry, and not by those whose work consists in either distributing or creating fresh products. To injure the latter class by striking is tantamount to attempting to quench a fire with kerosene. State control so far, he added, offered but small indication of an effective amelioration. Legislation was undoubtedly the way out. Manufacturers, he held, must give of their best, produce goods of even quality at the lowest possible rates, and the public must be taught that only by supporting home industries could Australia ever hope to pay her national debt. The workers must be shown that the greater the production the greater the demands there must be for their labour, and that their best efforts must be shown in their work so that the high position Australian manufacturers had gained should be maintained.”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Why does he not make a comparison, and show what is done in the Federal sphere?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: You can use your mighty influence there.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: We will do it after the elections.

[Mr. G. P. Barnes.]

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The Minister, in his juvenile anticipation, is a bit visionary, both in this matter and in the other matter he refers to. I hope that that is only a passing feature and will not be realised. It will be a sad day for Australia if there is any chance of the Commonwealth Government being led away on the high road to bankruptcy. It is better for Queensland to go bankrupt than for the whole Commonwealth, and it is just as well for the people to understand that, when they are making a choice of leaders, they had better choose a sane man.

Mr. CARTER: Hear, hear! They will choose T. J. Ryan.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The people should not allow every Tom, Dick, and Harry to run riot with the funds of the Commonwealth or the States, as the case may be. I am sure of this: That there is nothing to be gained that way if we are going to do away with the high prices which have brought about the term profiteering. I can say that there has been profiteering and will always be profiteering. We are not going to put it down.

Mr. WEIR: You know something about it.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The hon. gentleman refers to the condition of things and charges me with profiteering. I say that, considering the volume of business that my firm handles in connection with wheat, the profits were only commensurate with the handling. That was given in evidence before the Royal Commission.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What did you make out of the war?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: We made nothing out of the war.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What did you make during the war?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: That is not the question. We have done no better and no worse than at any other time. According to the evidence given before the Royal Commission, supported by facts, the wheat purchases of my firm amounted to 281,745 bushels. When the war broke out we had actually in hand or reduced to flour 1,150 tons of flour. Of that flour we had sold for forward delivery the whole quantity except 169 tons, including 332 tons which we sold to the State Government at an exceedingly low price.

Mr. WEIR: Did you sell it at Warwick?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Yes.

Mr. WEIR: You also sold some land at Warwick.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I did not sell any land. I made an exchange of land, and it suited both parties. I don't think anyone gained in that direction. Any man going to Warwick to-day can satisfy himself whether it was a wise thing for the Government of the day to do what they did in connection with that land.

The SPEAKER: The hon. gentleman's time is being wasted.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Yes. It is unfortunate that this should have cropped up. The evidence is there and the hon. gentleman can see it. I am sorry that matters of a personal nature should crop up in this way. It is not fair that they should. Besides I have contradicted the thing again and again, and hon. gentlemen should accept my statement as correct when I mention it in this House. The only way to bring about a change in the present prices of commodities is to increase our production. Those who are cavilling about the high price of things have only to

remember that produce generally is at a high value just now. Take wool, for example. A great deal has been said about the cost of woollen materials; but, according to Press reports of the wool sales, we find that the sales held in Liverpool on 9th June, realised the following astounding figures for Australian wool:—67d. per lb., 66½d., 66d., 65½d., and 64d. per lb. With such prices for the raw material, how can it be expected that woollen goods will be anything else but a high price. It is absurd to expect the manufactured article to remain at a low rate when high prices are given like that for the raw material. In addition to that we know that the cost of labour has mounted up enormously.

Mr. COLLINS: Who got the benefit of those high prices of wool?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The growers of the wool, but I take it that they paid income tax on the increased income, and so the Government got a benefit out of it. It is far better for us to show that the people are doing well, and then the conditions will attract people here. We will get people here to develop our fertile lands and our grazing areas, and we will encourage manufacturers, and in this way we will bring about a sane state of things, and allow the producers to get a fair price for their goods. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. CARTER (*Port Curtis*): History invariably repeats itself. Any student of history will note that during every great war and for some time afterwards there is a great deal of profiteering. At no time does it entirely disappear, but continues on. It is accentuated by each struggle which takes place, and the greater the struggle the greater the profiteering. At no period in history has profiteering been so rampant and so world-wide as during the great struggle which has just taken place in Europe, nor has it continued for such a time. A few weeks after the war started we knew how profiteering was permitted even in the stationery business. People who held stocks of stationery for a considerable time immediately increased the price of stationery from 12 per cent. to 20 per cent. It has continued advancing since that period, and what applied to stationery applied to many other requirements. Profiteering is world-wide to-day. We read that in Italy, in one city, the populace took over the stores that distributed their requirements and sold them at reasonable prices; in France we find something similar, and in Japan we read of the rice riots because of the excessive profiteering. In Great Britain at the present time measures are being taken to prevent profiteering, and a similar Bill to this one is being brought in in the British House of Parliament; so it is useless for hon. members to say there is no profiteering. I think the Government are to be commended for so courageously bringing in this very timely measure at this period. I was very interested listening to the immense amount of evidence gathered, particularly on this side of the House, to show that there was profiteering, not only in other parts of the world but in Queensland and Australia. The evidence was astounding to any one who has been closely following the question. Speeches on the other side of the House also, in some cases, displayed a similar knowledge of profiteering, but on almost every occasion—and I am not surprised—attempts have been made by the speakers on that side to prove that there is no profiteering. That is easily

understood when we know the force that is controlling the other side of the Chamber, when we know whom they represent. One would naturally suppose that the body who control a certain number of electors are going to control those whom they have put in Parliament. The means are found by the profits of the huge insurance companies and almost every other big institution that benefits while it continues getting profits. One would naturally expect that people put into Parliament by those people would carry out their wish; indeed, they must carry out their wish, otherwise some one else would be found to take their place on that side of the Chamber and follow the platform they have pinned their faith to. That is the exact position, and so we find hon. members, not only trying to excuse profiteering, but attempting to make out that it does not exist. Only a few weeks ago, while the Prime Minister was on his way from Great Britain to Australia, he made a statement—I think it was at South Africa—that when he came out he was going to put an end to both profiteers and Bolsheviks. We have heard very little of the Bolsheviks, and we have heard nothing of the profiteer from the Prime Minister, since he landed, excepting excuses for them. He says he is going to deal with the profiteer in the dim distant future if he gets back to power; yet he had six months of Parliament during which he could have continued in office, with an absolute majority in both Houses, with absolute control; and he could have brought in almost any legislation seeing that the War Precautions Act ceases to be effective in a very short time; he could have brought in a Bill to entirely deal with this question, but there is only a promise of that. He could have dealt with the settlement of soldiers question, with the matter of granting a gratuity, but because he desires to leave these unfortunates entirely in the hands of that class of profiteer who makes wealth by buying bonds and other securities from people in times of their dire want, he is leaving it entirely that way. He is going to give them bonds that appear to be non-negotiable because he knows that they will sell for a very small amount, provided they get the cash in hand; so whilst he has power to deal with this very important question he is going to the country with promises to do something if he gets back again.

Mr. MOORE: You had four years to deal with it under the Control of Trade Act. What did you do?

Mr. CARTER: I will deal with what our friend says in a few moments. I say there is only one real way of dealing with the profiteer. There are many methods by which we can, perhaps, check profiteering more or less—by price-fixing and fixing wages; but the only true way of preventing profiteering is for the people to produce, prepare, and distribute their requirements, and this Government has started out in a whole-hearted way to do that with regard to State stations. There is a good deal of work in connection with it, and we know during the initiatory stages no business is the success it turns out to be afterwards when running along smoothly. What this Government are doing as regards State stations and State supply of meat will, in all probability, apply in other directions. I know it can be done with regard to other things. When the New South Wales Government started some State enterprises a few years

*Mr. Carter.]*

ago, amongst others they started a State bakery, and knowing something of the trade I took an interest in it, and studied their operations. With a capital of £10,000 they were in a position the first year to make a profit of something like £2,000, although they considerably reduced the price of bread. The second year they made a profit of something like £3,000. They were buying wheat at about 5s. a bushel, grinding it, making bread, and selling it to the public institutions at 10s. per 100 lb. delivered, that is 22½d. for a 2-lb. loaf, full weight. At that time bread was from 3½d. upwards from the private baker. That is an evidence of what can be done, and it is something on the lines of what the Government are doing as regards meat, and there is nothing to prevent the Government taking up the same line. Of course we know, as members of the Opposition have said, that it would require a great deal of money and time to get it into operation, but, my opinion is that that is the only goal we can look to, meantime we must take steps to more or less restrict profiteering. During this discussion we have been told that there is an Act on the statute-book that gives us entire power to do as we like, but we know that this is a war measure, we have only to read the title to see that.

Mr. VOWLES: Read the section.

Mr. CARTER: We do not need to read the section. The title says—

“An Act to make provision against undue restriction of the supply of goods or undue raising of the prices of goods during war.”

There can be no question about what is meant by that.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Go on.

Mr. CARTER: I am going to go on if our friend will be patient. Before we were prevented by the War Precautions Act, this Government began to operate under the Trade Control Act. During 1915 we took over butter when we discovered that it was in the hands chiefly of merchants, making huge profits. A great deal had been bought by the merchants from the factories at an earlier period for forward delivery. Prices advanced rapidly afterwards, and they were taking advantage of it. The Government then took control under the Trade Control Act. Other steps were also being taken under that Act until, in 1916, we were prevented under the War Precautions Act. The Federal Government stepped in and took control of the butter, and we know also that they fixed the price of sugar—that the whole sugar crop fell into their hands. They took the farmers' wheat—the power of price-fixing was entirely taken out of our hands. Almost every member on the other side of this Chamber has put forth views to try and lead people to believe that we had continuous power under the Trade Control Act. Under the War Precautions Act our efforts were rendered ineffective, and we had to abandon the control of trade after the Federal Government took charge. The hon. member for Toowoomba has been good enough to put into my hand a case dealing with this matter. When I read it I think members will clearly see that our power is entirely gone. The Minister controlling this Bill made a similar statement. The case is as follows:—

“APPEAL FROM A COURT OF PETTY SESSIONS OF VICTORIA.

“At the Court of Petty Sessions at

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Melbourne, before a police magistrate, on 12th May, 1916, an information was heard whereby Alfred Stephen Burvett, an inspector in the Department of the Commonwealth Treasury at Melbourne, charged that W. A. Farey, on 20th April, 1916, did, contrary to the War Precautions (Prices Adjustment) Regulations, 1916, made in pursuance of the War Precautions Act, 1914-1915, of the Commonwealth of Australia, in a proclaimed area—namely, in area (c), specified in the schedule to the said regulations—sell 4 lb. of bread—namely, two 2-lb. loaves of bread—at the price of 7d., such price being greater than the maximum price fixed by the Prices Adjustment Order, No. 1, under the said regulations for the sale of bread in the said area.” The defendant was convicted and fined.

“From that decision the defendant now appealed to the High Court by way of order to review.

“The material facts appear in the judgments hereunder.”

I am just going to give an epitome of that judgment. It is—

“At that court, held by Griffiths, C.J., and Barton, Isaacs, Higgins, and Powers, JJ. (Gavan Duffy, and Rich, JJ., dissenting), that the legislative powers of the Commonwealth Parliament, conferred by section 51 (vi.) and (xxxix.) of the Constitution include a power during the present state of war to fix within limits of locality the highest price which, during the continuance of the war, may be charged for bread.”

There is a clear case, and what applied there to bread applies to almost every other commodity. They had the power to control the prices of food throughout Australia, and that case clearly proves that. Therefore it is so much nonsense for members on the other side to say that during the operations of the War Precautions Act, after the Federal Government had taken over control, we could have done anything in the direction of controlling prices under the Trades Control Act. They know perfectly well that we were quite helpless—the only thing we could do was, possibly, to produce and sell some commodity at a price cheaper than they had fixed. We could not fix the price, because, if we did so under the Trades Control Act, there is no question about it that the people we tried to control would appear before the court and beat us under the War Precautions Act. Now they go so far as to say we can continue to operate under that Act at the present time. They know perfectly well—quite a number of them sat in this Chamber at the time the Control of Trade Act was passed—that it was a war measure, intended for no other purpose, and there is no section of the community which would have made such a noise as the Opposition had the present Administration attempted to control prices under that Act during the two or three months since the War Precautions Act has ceased to apply.

Mr. VOWLES: Read section 2.

Mr. CARTER: I do not need to read that section, because it is perfectly clear that hon. members know that it was a war measure intended to cease in its operations so soon as peace was declared. This Administration,

in their wisdom desiring to meet the excessive profiteering that is going on, brought in what they intend to be a permanent measure to deal with it. It is the duty of every Government to do something that will be stable. No operations under the Control of Trade Act, in view of the expiry of that Act, can be of a stable character, and therefore it was the duty of this Government to do something that would be effective, to bring in a measure to give them the power to do permanently what that Control of Trade Act would only permit during the operation of the war. And so we have this Bill.

There is another thing that should satisfy members on the other side. They had all agreed that the price of sugar was fixed by the Commonwealth Government. The control of shipping was also entirely in their hands. We were quite powerless. Hon. members know perfectly well that under the Control of Trade Act we have no power to do anything with it. Then again, we know that the Federal Government made an attempt to control the price of meat—in Sydney and Melbourne—outside of this State, because the prices they were fixing were higher than our prices. Mr. Watt, the commonly-styled "strong man," brought in a regulation to give them that power, and we know with what disastrous results to the Commonwealth Government. The meat rings got to work, and the Government had not the courage to attempt to control it. The squatters and other producers of meat were strong enough to get together and defy the Federal Government. The result was that they had to abandon the regulation, and their attempt to fix the price of meat. During last night's debate the hon. member for Drayton made some reference to the prices obtained under the State's handling of butter. I have gone to some trouble to collect some figures on this matter, because I think it is very necessary. The control of butter remained in the hands of the State until some time in 1916, when the War Precautions Act took it entirely out of our hands. The hon. member for Drayton said that the Government took over butter at 120s. and sold it for 180s. Now, the hon. member must know that that is entirely untrue. He knows that at no time did the State Government ever pay so low a price as 120s. to the producers of Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: A most unscrupulous statement.

Mr. CARTER: It was unscrupulous because he must know that it was untrue. He made a lot of bluster about his hatred of profiteers and his hatred of humbugs and hypocrites. What could be more humbugging or hypocritical than for the hon. member to make the statement that there had been huge profiteering on the part of this Government, which caused a loss of 60s. per cwt. to the producers of butter in the State of Queensland? He went so far as to say that they gave 120s. for butter.

Mr. MOORE: What grade was he talking about—first, second, or third?

Mr. CARTER: I do not know, but he used the simple term "butter," the inference meaning all butter taken over.

Mr. MOORE: What is the use of saying he made an untrue statement then?

Mr. CARTER: I say he made an untrue statement. I say that at no time did the Government pay so low as 120s. Now, I

propose to read from the report of the Auditor-General, which I think nobody will dispute—

"In July and August, 1915, the Department purchased and sold 1,511 boxes of butter.

"Of this 1,472 boxes were first grade, 1,172 being bought at 196s. per cwt., and 300 at 196s. less 2 per cent. That disposed of within the State was sold at 196s. per cwt.—196s. less 1½ per cent., and 196s. less 1 per cent. trade discounts. 747 boxes of first grade were sold in Melbourne at 225s. per cwt.

"The balance, or profit, on the transaction, was £563 5s. 9d."

Now, I wonder what the hon. member for Drayton has to say with regard to the taking of butter! It has been a constant cry that the State Government have robbed the producer of that butter. Now I propose to give a few figures—I am quoting largely from memory—of the prices given. The butter was taken generally at a higher price than was ruling in London during the latter part of 1915-1916—a better price than London parity, and the farmer therefore had nothing to lose. We know that during 1915-1916, the first year of the State Government's operations in butter, the farmers received a uniform price of 1s. 2½d. for the butter contents of the cream supplied to the factories. That was a higher price than was paid by any other State at that time. In the following year the Government were in a position to enable the factories to pay the farmers 1s. 4½d. per lb.

Mr. BAYLEY: About half the cost of production.

Mr. CARTER: On top of that there was a second distribution of profit, equal to £32,000, which amounted to another 1½d. per lb., therefore making to the farmers a uniform price for that year of 1s. 6d. per lb. Hon. members, therefore, will see that the year 1916-1917 was a year of record prices for butter in Queensland.

Mr. VOWLES: What did it cost to produce?

Mr. CARTER: It is of little importance what it cost to produce. That is not the point. One might as well fix the price of pineapples in Queensland by what they cost to produce in Tasmania. If anyone started to produce them in Tasmania would anybody here contend that we should have what it cost to produce in Tasmania? The people have lived during the last five years producing butter, and the price of cows and dairying land has gone up. There has been a general demand for it. This year has been the year when most butter has been produced during Queensland's history.

Mr. MOORE: We are living on Victorian butter to-day.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: What is to good of putting lies before the public? Absolute lies!

Mr. CARTER: I have just put before the House figures to show who is telling the lies, and when the hon. member reads his speech and the figures I have quoted from the Auditor-General's report—not from memory—he will know perfectly well who is telling lies.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am producing it, and I know what I am talking about.

Mr. CARTER: I might say, Mr. Speaker, that at the time when you were in office you did what no other State Minister had done

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for the farmers of Queensland—established a butter shop in London so that their butter might be sold at a better price, and there was no doubt that Queensland butter has been better advertised and sold because of that.

Mr. MOORE: He also made first-class butter second-class, which no other Minister has done.

Mr. CARTER: In my speech on the Address in Reply I quoted the prices which the Commonwealth Government gave to the farmers when they first took it over, or, rather, the price they fixed for export. I will repeat them. The first amount of butter exported after the Commonwealth Government took the matter over was paid for at the rate of 15s., less  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., or, say, 149s. net. They received 229s. in London. The cost of freight and marketing, all charges, was about 25s. then, making a London parity in Australia of 204s. Therefore they made a profit of 55s. Hon. members will say that the farmers got that profit back again. They know that is not true. They know that they got only 19s. back. After much controversy with the Commonwealth authorities they took steps to give the farmers a portion; but out of 55s. they gave them only 19s., and the other 36s. has gone somewhere other than into the pockets of the consumer or the producer. Either immense profiteering has been permitted, or the Commonwealth Government have allowed the Imperial authorities to tax the hardest worked section of this community—the dairy farmers—at a time when they were not imposing a similar tax on the producers of butter in Great Britain and Ireland, or Canada, or South Africa. I would like to mention a little more profiteering on the part of the Federal Government. The Federal Government took over the rabbit skins of the unfortunate rabbit—a very hard-worked section of the community who have to put up with a great many hardships in following their avocations. They robbed the rabbiters of as much as £250,000 of profit, which was allowed to go into the consolidated revenue. When inquiries were made, Mr. Massey Greene confirmed that. That was taken from the producers, and yet we will find hon. members on the other side getting on the stump at different parts of Australia and telling the people that the only robbers are the State Government of Queensland. This is the only Government which have given the farmers a fair deal. They have passed legislation such as no other State has given to them in any period of its history during the four and a-half years that they have been in power. (Interruption.) Hon. members know that perfectly well. The hon. member for Drayton is trying to drown these truths. His yodelling does not affect me. I heard one hon. member say something about wheat. We find that the Commonwealth Government, under the War Precautions Act, were in a position to take the wheat of the people of Australia, and at the time when the Canadian farmers—who were equally engaged in the deathly struggle in France, who were nearer to the seat of war, and who did not make such a great effort as Australia—got something like 9s. 2d. per bushel for their wheat, the wheatgrowers of Australia got 4s. 6d.. Then they tell us it is because of the cost of shipping. We know the cost of shipping did not come to that amount. At all events, the present Prime

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Minister of Australia, whilst he was in England upon the occasion before this last visit, purchased a fleet of ships which he told us was for the specific purpose of carrying Australian products to the English markets. What do we find? That that fleet of ships made over £2,000,000 clear profit. Yet they tell us the best price they could give the Australian wheatgrower was 4s. 6d. a bushel, while the Canadian grower got 9s. 2d.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Your Government seized it at 3s. 6d.

Mr. CARTER: If it cost that much to ship the wheat, they had given us the very strongest evidence of profiteering, not only by companies outside Australia, but also in connection with those ships owned by a profiteering Government run by Mr. Hughes. I want to refer to remarks which were made by the hon. member for Oxley. The hon. member went out of his way to try and smooth the difficulties of the profiteer. He said in effect that after all it is not so bad as it appeared to be, and no Act of Parliament could possibly stop it. We must accept that kind of thing. A few weeks ago, during the debate on the Address in Reply, the hon. member for Oxley said—

“I am one of those people, and I have never ceased to state it, who believe that the profiteering which is going on is most damnable.”

Then he goes on to say—

“There are numerous instances of profiteering in our midst. When the Bill comes forward dealing with the question I shall do all I can to assist the Government to frame a measure which will be reasonable and applicable to the present position.”

He was going to give his assistance and do all he possibly could to assist the Government. Yet we find him last night trying to persuade the members of this Chamber, and incidentally the people of Queensland, to believe there was not profiteering of a serious character, and no Act of Parliament could control it or anything be done to prevent it. At that time I said—

“The hon. member will say that the Bill is not reasonable and applicable. No matter if the Bill were perfection in itself, it would never be reasonable and applicable.”

That is the exact position. Hon. members on the other side of this Chamber get up and tell us they are going to assist the Government to do things. The hon. member for Oxley led the House to believe he was going to walk across this Chamber and talk and vote for the Bill. He also referred in the same speech to a motor combine. After telling us that profiteering is a negligible quantity in Queensland and could not be controlled by law, he told us there was a motor combine. There is a little history attached to that. The hon. member, after he got into this Chamber, commenced to go round and start what he called a cheap motor service. Like he usually does—and, I presume, as he has been doing all his life—he was looking out for a little soft spot to nestle into. Darra had gone, and the co-operative fruit produce business on the Blackall Range had gone. There were no more France days, and it looked as though there would be very few more war loans to travel for, and he thought he would get a

motor combine and give a cheap service to the people. He was going to get certain people who had motor-cars to join, and they would be supplied at cost price. After he had got going he went along to a company to see whether he could get supplies. They said, "Are you a member of the combine?" He said, "No." They said, "It will cost you £2 to join." He went along to join, but when he told them what he was going to do with the goods they said, "That will destroy our business. You cannot sell things for the bare cost; that is how we live." The result was he could not join them. They would not let him in. He became very angry, and said he would denounce them on the floor of this House. He has done so. I have heard that, when the motor combine was approached by the agent of the National Democratic Council for a small subsidy for the National Democratic Council funds, they said, "No." Asked why, they said, "Ask the hon. member for Oxley." No £100 was forthcoming.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Don't cry over it.

Mr. CARTER: I am not crying. The hon. member for Oxley will cry over it. We find hon. members here electioneering the whole of the time. They have made it their business, during the whole of this debate, to try and lead the people to believe that this Government had power to do—

Mr. BEBBINGTON: So they have.

Mr. CARTER: What a dying Act of Parliament would not permit them to do. They did not go out of their way to tell the people that the Commonwealth Government, with six months to live, with absolute power in both Chambers, had an opportunity of bringing legislation to control profiteering all over Australia. They were out on the platform when the Prime Minister was here the other day. I noticed the hon. member for Nundah. I think he was pulling a rope or something of that kind. He looks as though he would be a good person to pull a rope on a wagon. These people, though capable of that kind of thing, are not capable of telling the people the honest truth—that the profiteer is sucking the blood of the mass of the workers and making the workers discontented—making the workers take these extreme steps which they are compelled to take to try and live. Hon. members on the other side of the House are not asking the Federal Government to continue its days to pass legislation dealing with this question. The reason is that their ways pay in this House by reason of the subsidy which the National Democratic Council get from the insurance companies, the motor combine, and every other combine of that character. I can quite understand the anger of hon. members when they are exposed. I am pleased to think that this Administration, in their wisdom and courage, are taking the right steps, and I trust that the Bill will not only pass this Chamber, but that when it gets to another place the people there will treat it with sufficient justice to allow this Administration to have an opportunity of controlling the requirements of the people in such a way that at least they will be able to live.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): Practically the whole of the speech of a previous speaker was taken up with the cost of food.

Mr. CARTER: That is all this Bill is about.

Mr. MOORE: I am very glad to hear it. That is what I was afraid of, that it was the cost of food which was going to be dealt with under this Bill. We have had experience of the Queensland Government fixing prices in the cost of food, and it was a very bitter one. I would just like to refer to one of the things the hon. member was talking about—butter. He neglected to tell the whole truth. When he told us that the Commonwealth Government fixed the price he did not say it was the price which was recommended by the producers themselves. He did not say that when that butter went into cold stores in Brisbane, Melbourne, or Sydney, we got paid for it straight away. The Imperial Government took the whole risk of getting it away; whether it was there for twelve months, whether the shipping was there, did not matter. If it had not been for the sale to the Imperial Government we would not have been able to sell it at all. He leads the people to believe that we could have sold it in Australia. He knows perfectly well it could not have been got away and it could not have been sold here. He knows that the Imperial Government treated us in a very generous way.

Mr. HARTLEY: Oh, that is not right!

Mr. MOORE: It is absolutely right. He knows that exactly the same thing occurred in regard to the wheat—that the Imperial Government took the whole of the risk of getting it away, and that there are millions of bushels which have not been got away and yet have been paid for. What is the good of talking like that of price-fixing of food. We know that at the present time the farmers of Queensland have gone down in their income tax; that instead of paying 10 per cent. they have gone down to 4 per cent. We know that land values have decreased 50 per cent. There is such a shortage of butter that Queensland is being fed by Victoria butter to-day. Yet he talks about fixing the prices of food. He said he knew the people who put us into this House. I say we know also the people who put that side into the House, and we know the principles on which they act.

Mr. COLLINS: You look at the map of Queensland and you will see that we represent Queensland outside a little bit on the Darling Downs and a little black spot in the North.

Mr. MOORE: I know hon. members opposite represent 21,000 voters more than we do. I want to give a little quotation to show the trend of events at the present time. It is headed, "Hold Up!" "Threat by Unions," "Scheme to Reduce Prices," and says—

"A statement was circulated in Sydney to-day that a number of unions are about to launch a scheme for the holding up of foodstuffs until local prices are reduced. The unions primarily concerned will be those controlling transportation services and, it is said, there is a possibility of a move being made in the next few days.

"The scheme is said to be comprehensive and will probably include in the embargo meat and rabbits, wheat and flour, dairy produce, and leather and tallow.

"It is said the wharf labourers will be the first to be asked to act, and, in the event of their efforts being unsuccessful, allied unions are likely to be

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involved. The unions which would eventually be involved should the scheme develop according to schedule are the wharf labourers, seamen, transport workers, and coal miners."

Mr. HARTLEY: Where are you quoting from?

Mr. MOORE: This is from the "Daily Mail." It is in the "Standard," too. The hon. member said, "What did it matter what it cost to produce; that was immaterial." Of course, it is immaterial to the man in the city who wants to get cheap food, but it is not to the man in the country who has got to grow it. We have to recollect that when Mr. Justice Higgins was fixing the price of wages he fixed a minimum wage and said the men were not compelled to work for that, but they could bargain for as much more as they liked to get. What is it coming to under this price-fixing? They are going to put a stop to co-operative protection societies.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: No.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. member says "No." The principal clause in the Bill says it can be done, the Government can commandeer what people put on one side to keep a stabilised price. Does the hon. member know that it would have been impossible to carry on the dairying industry in Queensland had it not been for the co-operative societies stabilising prices? Does he know what was the position of dairymen in Queensland before we got those societies? Does he know what was the position before the Cheese Manufacturers' Association started?

Mr. BRENNAN: Before the Labour Government got into power you mean.

Mr. MOORE: Before the Labour Government got into power Queensland was a prosperous State. (Government laughter.) What is it to-day? Practically bankrupt [8 p.m.] rapt. What do we find to-day under a Labour Government? I would just like to quote what the Minister said when he was introducing the Bill. This is what he said—

"We are frequently told that low production is the cause of high prices. If that is so, how is it that to-day, in Australia, when production was never greater, the price of foodstuffs was never higher? That absolutely contradicts the argument that high production in itself would solve the question of high prices."

That is the voice of the Minister introducing the Bill. Listen to what Mr. T. J. Ryan said at the Exhibition the other night—

"It is found that in Australia, instead of production in wheat increasing, it has diminished. Between 1916 and 1918 the acreage under wheat had decreased from 12,484,000 to 7,990,990. Production has decreased under the regime of the present Federal Government, because it has failed to provide the same conditions for the primary producer of Australia as has been provided in other parts of the Empire."

Here we have got the Minister bringing in a Bill, saying that production is increasing, and we have Mr. Ryan saying that production is decreasing because the producers have not had a fair go. I will quote something more about the dairying industry—

"In general farming there was a decrease last year, as compared with

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1917, of 2,059 males and 205 females. In dairying there was a decrease of 1,033 males and 2,907 females."

Mr. BRENNAN: What caused that?

Mr. MOORE: The harassment of the primary producer by this Government.

Mr. BRENNAN: It was the drought. Be honest.

Mr. MOORE: It was not the drought last year. The drought is this year. In bringing in this Bill the Minister said that production was never higher, and yet as soon as we corner them they say that the drought is here, and that has caused the falling off in the farming industry. What was the object of the Minister when he introduced the Bill saying that production was never higher? He said that prices had increased, and that total production had increased, and that wheat was rotting in the South. What is the good of saying that sort of thing when we know that there has been a reduction? There has been a reduction in output, and that has caused an increase in prices. Because the farmers are in a serious position to-day they want to bring in a Bill to fix the price of their produce. I never heard of such a thing. They say that these powers will never be used, but they said the same thing before in connection with the Sugar Acquisition Act, and we know how they used the powers under that Act. Then the Minister got up and talked about the poor primary producer, and shed crocodile tears. He said—

"Then, again, the primary producers are subject to tremendous hardship and suffering on account of this profiteering. The primary producer to-day is being unfairly harassed, and the men who want to produce wealth are being prevented from so doing because of the profiteering that takes place."

The Government have been in office for four years. When they first came in they commandeered the farmers' wheat at Warwick, and fixed the price at 3s. 8d. per bushel, while the Argentine farmer was paid 8s. 6d. for wheat sent to Queensland. They made the farmers send their wheat to Brisbane, and forced them to take bad wheat of inferior quality in return, and they had to pay the freight from Brisbane into the country.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Hear, hear! That is correct.

Mr. MOORE: Then the Government fixed the price of butter at 146s. when 200s. could have been got for it in the South. The Government also put a stock embargo on to prevent stock from going into the other States. In that way they ruined the markets of Queensland, and ruined hundreds of farmers. What did they do that for? It was to get cheap meat for their State shops, and to prevent the cattle from going to New South Wales. The only benefit was to the American Meat Company and to the State meatshops.

Mr. BRENNAN: The Privy Council said we were right in doing that.

Mr. MOORE: The Privy Council did not say you were right. The Privy Council said they could not question the bona fides of the Government, because they expected that the Government would treat all members of the community fairly and honestly. They did not have any experience of a Labour Government.

Mr. BRENNAN: The Pastoralists' Union was behind Mrs. Duncan.

Mr. MOORE: The people will judge that when the times comes. Yet we have the

Minister shedding crocodile tears and talking about the poor farmer being harassed. What has the Government done to assist the farmer? The Government has done absolutely nothing. The Government put on a land tax which the farmers have to pay, and we do not forget that they put on the stock embargo so that they could get the meat at a low price for their meatshops. By that means they got meat at a lower price than any other part of the world. Yet we had Mr. Ryan getting up the other night and saying that the producers should get the world's parity. Why did the Argentine get a higher price than Australia for meat? We know that the meatworks were compelled to supply the State shops with meat at 3d. per lb., so what is the use of talking about giving them world's parity? When the farmers have an opportunity of forming co-operative associations and establishing the price of their products, and thus making a profit out of them, the Government brings in a Bill to say they shall not do it.

Mr. HARTLEY: What do you call stabilising prices?

Mr. MOORE: Keeping the produce at a price at which a man can live.

Mr. HARTLEY: Keep it the same all the time, no matter whether it is a good year or a bad year, and no matter what it costs to produce?

Mr. MOORE: The price will be fixed over an average of years. We know that when there are good times it is absolutely essential for a co-operative society to put by as much as they can. If you are going to stop buying altogether, where is the farmer going to find his markets? Is the Government prepared to step in and finance the farmer and give him an opportunity to hold his produce? The Government want the farmers to send their produce down here when there is a glut so that they can get the produce as cheap as possible. This Government will do nothing for the producer. It is different in New South Wales, where they give a man £2 a ton to conserve fodder, not to commandeer it. But here we are treated quite differently. Every farmer who grows foodstuffs knows that a good time comes when he must store it, and the only way to store it is to put it into the cold stores. Then the Government are able to come in under this Bill and commandeer it at a fixed price. The Government will say that the producers are holding it to keep up prices. Of course they are holding it to maintain prices. Are not the workers combining to maintain their own wages at the present time? And why should not the producers combine to maintain the price of their produce and get the best price they can? All through the piece the whole cry is to fix the price of food. Combinations for the protection of the community are supposed to be undesirable, but combinations which exploit the community are allowed to go by the board, so far as this Government are concerned. We know that many things are at an absurdly high price at the present time, but you cannot alter that by fixing the price of produce. You can fix the price of what the primary producer grows to-day, but you cannot make him grow it again. You found that out when you fixed the price of butter. The people in the country would not continue to milk because it did not pay them to do so. You can fix the price of what is on hand to-day, but I can assure you you will not fix the price of

what is to come, because the people will not produce it. The only way to bring down the cost of living is to enable the people to make a fair thing out of it in the country. You should not stop them from combining into co-operative bodies. They do not come to the Government and ask for assistance, but they put in their own money; yet you bring in a Bill like this to stop them from combining to stabilise prices. When you do that, then the cost of living is going to be higher than it ever was before. It is stupid and it is a wrong thing to induce people to go on to the land and settle if you are not going to enable them to combine to get a good price for their produce so that they can live. When a good time comes they must put by some of their products, and they should not be harassed as they have been by this Government. We are told by an hon. member that the Imperial Government were guilty of profiteering; but the producers of Queensland were well treated by the Imperial Government. The Imperial Government took all the risk when they bought the produce of the farmers for the use of the troops, and we were prepared to sell it at the price they fixed. When a profit was made out of it the Imperial Government returned 50 per cent. to the producers after taking all the risk themselves. Yet we are told that the Imperial Government were profiteering and made a big profit.

Mr. CARTER: So they did.

Mr. MOORE: This Government took butter for 146s. when it could have been sold for 188s. or 200s. Yet members opposite are trying to hoodwink the electors; but the people in the country know quite well what the Imperial Government did.

Mr. CARTER: They don't know. They listened to people like you.

Mr. MOORE: The dairy companies elected their own representatives, and they were quite satisfied with the deal that was made. The price fixed was a fair and reasonable one, and, although it was not incumbent on the British Government to give any of the profit, they returned £300,000 to Queensland. When we take into consideration that the British Government took all the risk, I consider we were generously treated. Had it not been for the Imperial Government, where would we have been to-day? Would the hon. member for Port Curtis have provided a market for our stuff? He would have been running about like a dog at a fair, wringing his hands and wondering what we should do. (Hear, hear! and laughter.) We were very thankful to the British Government for what they did at that time. At a time of crisis like that there was no suggestion by hon. members opposite of what they were going to do to help the producer.

Mr. CARTER: The Labour Government bought ships and that helped the producer.

Mr. MOORE: We know that the Federal Government are going to give the producers an opportunity to do something for themselves through the Massey Groene scheme, and immediately they do we have a Bill like this coming along to undermine it. Can anyone wonder that the producers are against this Government after the way they have been treated?

Mr. FOLEY: Do you really believe that this Government is out to ruin the producer?

Hon. J. G. APPEL and other OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Yes, yes!

*Mr. Moore.*]

Mr. MOORE: The actions of the Government prove it. It is not a question of "Do you believe it?" We know that 50 per cent. of the value on the land of the producers has been taken away by this Government. The Treasurer knows it himself through the land tax returns. Values are decreasing every year. The producers, instead of paying 10 per cent. of the income tax, are only paying 4 per cent. to-day. As soon as there is an opportunity for the producers to control their own industry under Mr. Massy Greene's scheme the present Queensland Government steps in and blocks it. If we are let alone we can control our own affairs, but if we are going to be interfered with, then agricultural production is not going to be increased in Queensland. It is going to deteriorate. The chairman of the Downs Co-operative Company, at the annual meeting last month, stated that the cheques paid for the year amounted to £100,000 less than was paid to the suppliers for the previous year. Those figures are indicative of what is going on all over Queensland.

And yet this Government bring in a Bill, and practically the whole trend of the argument on that side has been that the producer was a profiteer, and that the price of food must be brought down. There was practically only one item which the Minister stated did not have to do with food, and that was boots, in which connection they have to use hides. He mentioned companies like Goldsbrough, Mort, and Co. and Dalgety to show that they made huge profits. Well, they sold their wool in the open market of the world; and, if they are going to be prevented from doing that, how is Queensland going to develop? Are they going to restrict them sending their wool where they can get the best price?

The PREMIER: Why should not the producer, and not the middlemen, like Goldsbrough, Mort, and Co., get the best price?

Mr. MOORE: Does not the hon. member know that Goldsbrough, Mort, and Co. and Dalgety own several stations?

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: They do not own all the wool they sell.

Mr. MOORE: Is there anything wrong with their selling on behalf of the other people?—they get about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: Have you seen the 6d. pamphlet showing the wool profits?

Mr. MOORE: I do not need to see it. I say it would be far better for Queensland if the wool profits were double. But we find, instead, that the Minister brings up an argument saying what a splendid thing a Commonwealth note issue would be. Does not he know that the inflation of the currency in Australia has depreciated the value of money to such an extent that it is one of the main causes of the high cost of living. If we send £100 to America we only get \$37 worth back.

Mr. HARTLEY: That is a good reason why we should not send to America.

Mr. MOORE: Quite right; but there are a lot of things produced there that we do not make here.

Mr. HARTLEY: Then you have no faith in your own country's paper?

Mr. MOORE: That is not the question. The question is: Have other people got faith in it? Is the people outside who have not got faith in it, and it is owing

to the action of the various Australian Governments that they have not. And it is owing to a Bill like this that that faith is going to still more deteriorate. And that is something we have to reckon on; because, after all, if you are going to drain the country as it is being drained—and I think hon. members, especially the hon. member for Toowoomba, knows the condition of a large number of farmers in his own district—

Mr. BRENNAN: I am going to tell you about them in a minute.

Mr. MOORE: And all the public servants are getting continual rises, so that it looks rather like "to him that hath shall be given, and to him that hath not even that which he hath shall be taken away;" freights have been raised twice since this Government came into power. Then the Minister comes in and says the primary producer is being harassed; and we find the late Premier going to the Exhibition talking in the same strain. We find him going down South, and saying that the primary producer there has been made the butt for the whole of Australia; that he should have got better prices. But what do we find in Queensland? They fixed prices here so that the local farmer got 5s. 8d. for wheat, while the Argentine farmer got 8s. 6d.

Mr. CARTER: When was that?

Mr. MOORE: When the present Labour Government came into power. (Government laughter.) Then he goes out and says the wheat farmer has been unfairly treated. The arch conspirator goes round talking about how badly the primary producer has been treated, and yet no man had a better opportunity of altering the existing conditions of affairs. And look at what we have!

Mr. CARTER: You know he could not do anything owing to the War Precautions Act.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. member has the War Precautions Act on the brain. Did he fix the price of wheat at 3s. 8d. in Warwick under the War Precautions Act? Such a thing is an absurdity. Did he fix the stock embargo under the War Precautions Act? No, he took it under the Sugar Acquisition Act; and, when they saw that a case was likely to be made of it, they altered the agreement and took it under the Meat Supply for Imperial Uses Act, and said they did so to help the men in the trenches from going to be starved. The real reason was to cheapen the price of meat in Brisbane. He was taking poddy heifers at the border so that the troops could not be starved in the trenches. So he said, but it was really to disorganise things so that the price would go down in Brisbane. That is what the farmers on the Downs and the primary producers had to put up with. It is all very well for members to criticise the Federal Government and make electioneering speeches; but the farmers know what has been done for them by this Government.

Mr. CARTER: That is what we are going to tell them.

Mr. MOORE: It is a question of deeds not words. It is no use saying to the farmers, "If it had not been for the War Precautions Act we would have done something for you." I can imagine the member for Port Curtis saying that, "This War Precautions Act stopped us giving you 8s. per bushel for your wheat; it is a terrible thing." No doubt that is what he will tell them, but they will want to know what

[Mr. Moore.

assistance has been given them by this Government. Everything that I have enumerated so far has been against them. Could anybody say the stock embargo was for their benefit?

Mr. CARTER: Didn't you and others try to get the late Premier to take over the wheat pool in Queensland?

Mr. MOORE: Yes, and what is the result to-day? We have to go to South Australia for wheat; we cannot get it from New South Wales.

Mr. WELLINGTON: How many shares did you have?

Mr. MOORE: It is not a question of how many shares I had. I had the farmers' welfare at heart. But the late Premier was not statesman enough to see that it affected the farmers of Queensland. He could see no further ahead than what votes he would lose at one paltry by-election. He could not see that it was going to reduce the wheat-growing area in Queensland by a million acres in three years. He could only think how many votes it was going to affect on the other side, and said, let them take a referendum. Just imagine that in the middle of a harvest!

Mr. HARTLEY: We wanted you to state your mind; you did not know your own mind.

Mr. MOORE: Our mind was absolutely stated. The Minister for Agriculture asked for returns, and there was a two to one majority in favour. What happened is in the Agricultural report.

The PREMIER: Why did the hon. member for Cunningham oppose it?

Mr. MOORE: The hon. member for Cunningham was interested in a co-operative mill and it did not interest them. It was for the rest of Queensland we were asking. The Warwick mill need not have been brought in at all.

The PREMIER: What attitude did the member for Warwick take up?

Mr. MOORE: I am not concerned about that; but I do know that he was prepared to assist hundreds of farmers with wheat in his electorate at cost price, and stand out for twelve months for his money. You can get evidence of that from hundreds of farmers in his electorate.

Mr. WEIR: He wanted to secure votes.

Mr. MOORE: It was not a question of votes. It was a question of business ability. Because he has a mill he made arrangements so that he could get a fair return and wheat to keep it going; and if the Queensland Government had the same business acumen, they would lay out their goods in such a way that the producer would be assisted and not hampered. Instead of that, we find they give out £60,000 in four years in departmental relief for nothing, but when it comes to assisting the farmer, he has to pay 5 per cent. for it. We have the whole difference summed up in a few words of the hon. member for Port Curtis—namely, "What does it matter about the cost of production; it does not count."

Mr. CARTER: I did not say that. I said it did not affect the price at which butter should be sold.

Mr. MOORE: The only person it affects is the man who produces butter. It does not affect the man who buys it. But, if the man who produces it is not fairly treated—I have no hesitation in agreeing with the

late Premier that he is not being fairly treated—it is time that this Government did something to treat him fairly, and not bring in a Bill like this and say that the price of food is too high and must be brought down by fictitious means. The Secretary for Agriculture said he did not believe very much in price-fixing; that, he did not think, was going to cure the trouble. Then, what is the Bill brought in for? Every Bill that has been brought in has a dragnet clause, "We must have these powers, but we do not intend to use them." When the Sugar Acquisition Bill was brought in, it was suggested that it might be used for other purposes, but the then Premier said that it was unthinkable that such a thing should take place. But directly an opportunity occurred, and pressure came from the Trades Hall for cheaper meat in Brisbane, the Sugar Acquisition Act was put into force. If you can deal with profiteering without touching the primary producer; if you can control shipping combines so as to bring down the freights, I am very much in favour of it. But if it is only used to reduce the price of food and hamper the primary producer, I am dead against it. I want to see those people given an opportunity to bring down prices by greater production—by giving them assistance in every possible way—monetary assistance if need be.

Mr. HARTLEY: What is the good of greater production if you corner the market?

Mr. MOORE: Do the primary producers themselves corner the market? Hon. members want, when a good time comes, everything sent down here and sold straight out in the market—nobody must store anything to keep on his own account. No farmer, apparently, is to be allowed to store fodder on his own farm because, if a dry time comes, and his neighbour has not been so provident, they want to take that which he has got.

Mr. HARTLEY: The Bill does not affect the farmer; he can store as much as he likes.

Mr. MOORE: It does affect the farmer. Everything he grows is liable to seizure at a fixed price. Considering the speeches we have had to-night, I think we want some better evidence that profiteering of a nature which is not going to affect the primary producer can be dealt with. If they are prepared to give that evidence—so far, it has not been forthcoming—I am in favour of it. The interpretation clause distinctly refers to a place in which produce is stored, and a farm is definitely mentioned. So I think we have every reason to be afraid, because we know—although an hon. member on that side said he knew who controlled us, we know and had ample evidence of who controls them—and taking that into consideration, I would like some evidence of how they intend to control the profiteer who imports his wares into Queensland. If they are able to do that, and continue to do it, I have no doubt the Bill will be good, but if they are only going to exercise it in the direction of controlling food prices grown in Queensland, it is not going to be for the benefit of the State.

Mr. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): I do not intend to take up much of the time of the House, but I want to reply to some of the remarks made by the hon. member [8.30 p.m.] ber for Aubigny who has really misrepresented and distorted the whole of the intentions of this Bill. I think the farmers are perfectly satisfied that before

Mr. Brennan.]

1915 they had many years' experience of the conduct meted out to them by the Government then in power, with the assistance of the middleman. We know that the farmers got very small sums for their produce, but since this Government came into power—even if a few little errors have been made—they have so catered for them that at the end of the three years the farmers were so satisfied with the prices they were getting for produce that they had no hesitation in returning quite a number of members representing the farming industry. I was one of them, and the farmers in my electorate have told me that they are perfectly satisfied with the administration of this Government and the prices they have had since the Government came into power. I think that is the best evidence we can have against the crying, cringing, and crawling of hon. members opposite, whose stock phrase for the man on the land is "the poor unfortunate farmer," and coming in here with a tissue of falsehoods for the purpose of misleading the people of Queensland into the belief that the farmers are dissatisfied with the Administration. They are perfectly satisfied. Hon. members opposite know that the present hardships are brought about through causes beyond the Government's control, that is, through drought. Because the farmers are suffering hon. members opposite howl to the farmers, "Look at what the Government are doing. Now they are going to seize your produce under a Profiteering Prevention Bill." On one item alone I think the Opposition will agree that when the war was over there was in Australia sufficient leather to make boots for the whole world practically. France sent out a delegation—it came here purely for the purpose of securing portion of our leather for France, although under the guise of a party who were visiting Australia to see Australia. America had her representatives here. Every nation, Japan included, had its representatives. They took the leather away, and the result is that boots have gone up by about 50 per cent.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: To whom did the Government sell their hides in the North?

Mr. BRENNAN: The Government sold their hides, but the Federal Government allowed the exportation of the whole of the hides, and so leather went to an exorbitant figure. We know that under the wheat pool in New South Wales the farmers were not paid in full. They got so much in cash and they got scrip bonds for the balance—the good old bond Government. The farmers were so hard pressed that the capitalists have been gambling with the farmers' bonds, and in Brisbane I heard from one very influential man the other day, that the best investment in Australia to-day is the wheat bonds of New South Wales, because they pay something like 25 per cent. The same thing applies to the small war bonds that the people who were unable to afford them bought, because they were told they must do so if they were patriotic. We have scoundrels going round the country buying them up for £7 and £8 each.

The Opposition said that this matter of profiteering could have been dealt with by the State Government although the War Precautions Act was in operation. That is not correct, as is shown by the case of Joseph versus The Colonial Treasurer of New South Wales, to be found in volume xxv., Part I., of the Commonwealth Law Reports, 1918.

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Joseph was a broker who had good contracts in wheat on behalf of the shipping companies and others. He wanted to complete these contracts, but the Federal Government came in and said, "No, we are going to seize the wheat for the pool," and they prevented his getting the wheat away, and the shipping companies refused to ship it, and practically all the contracts he had with the different merchants in Queensland and New South Wales were broken. He brought an action against the New South Wales Government on the ground that he was interfered with in his business, but the High Court said, "This is a matter in which the State is exercising a prerogative under Federal control, and the Federal control being paramount the Federal Government can step in and break a contract. They have a perfect right to do so as against Joseph or anybody else, and he cannot say that he has suffered any damage in time of war." That is the exact position with regard to prices. The Federal Government fixed prices over and above the Queensland prices, and we have no power to fix prices lower, because the merchants always charged the maximum prices. It is no use the hon. member for Aubigny, or the hon. member for Drayton, or any other hon. member talking of the farmers as they do. They are well satisfied with the administration of this Government. They are more than satisfied with the new Co-operative Agricultural Production and Advances to Farmers Bill, as this is the first time that any Government has come along and put on the statute-book an Act that will enable them to help themselves in the best way they can. I think the Downs is very poorly represented here. Men come along who have been representing big towns. They have been crying and howling instead of trying to do something for their districts. They talk about the poor unfortunate farmers, and decry the fertility of the soil and the conditions on the Downs. The Downs is the most prolific of country, and I think that if members from there co-operated instead of howling in the House things would be very much better for the men engaged there.

Mr. BAYLEY (*Pittsworth*): I am heartily in support of any measure which can reasonably be expected to deal with any injurious trusts or combines in Queensland, but the first question for us to decide is whether any necessity exists for this Bill. It has been pointed out that an Act has been in existence for years past, which gives the Government all the powers they require; and even supposing that a Federal enactment prevented the State Government from interfering with profiteering, why have not the Government taken action during the months since that enactment ceased to operate? The Government have full and ample powers in this regard, and if at the present time they say they have no power, and this Bill is absolutely necessary, it only shows that they are going in for more window-dressing.

I am particularly interested in this Bill, so far as the primary producers of Queensland are concerned, and I maintain that this Bill presses them very hardly indeed. On the one hand, we find that the Department of Agriculture and Stock is ostensibly inviting them to store fodder, urging them to make ensilage, and so on in order that they may keep up their supply of dairy products and keep their cattle, sheep, and other animals alive in times of drought. Now we find them coming along with this

Bill and literally pointing a pistol at the farmer's head, saying, "If you collect any fodder on your farm we have the right to take it from you." That is the peculiar method the Government have of encouraging the man on the land.

A good deal has been said by the hon. member for Port Curtis regarding butter transactions since this Government assumed office. It is no use talking in the strain he adopted. It is a well-known fact that the Government commandeered the producers' butter at 50s. to 60s. less than they could have secured for it in the Southern markets. We know that the Victorian merchants were offering prices ranging from 184s. to 200s. per cwt., and the producers were forced to sell at 140s. to 146s. It is absolutely futile for members on the Government side to maintain that this is not correct. It is ancient history, and anybody who knows anything in regard to the industry knows that the figures I have quoted are absolutely correct. (Hear, hear!)

Exception has been taken by the hon. member for Port Curtis to the action of the Federal authorities in buying up many tens of thousands of rabbit skins, and he says that they have made a tremendous profit out of them. They paid what was considered at the time a very fair price for those skins, and they have made a large profit, but it is impossible to trace the origin of those rabbit skins. They were bought by agents all over the country in the various States, and it is absolutely impossible to trace them. How can this Government charge the Federal authorities with keeping back profits from people whom they have no possible chance of tracing?

I am glad to notice one good feature about the Bill—that is, that not only primary producers are affected. Hitherto the Government have fixed the prices only of those goods which have been produced by the farmer. The farmer has been penalised to a very great extent in the prices of his farming machinery, the cost of which at the present time is absolutely prohibitive in some cases. Very much of the machinery which is absolutely necessary to him is two or three times, sometimes four times, as much as in the United States, where so much farm machinery is manufactured. But the fact remains that this profiteering—we may well call it profiteering, and I am absolutely opposed to this form of business—is absolutely out of the hands of the State Government, and the men who are forcing up the prices of machinery are entirely outside the reach of this Bill. The only thing the Government can do is to offer all possible encouragement to the various industries, which will make it possible for the people of Queensland to secure their machinery and other articles at a moderate cost. This Bill is only window-dressing, and, in the main, very little good will accrue.

It has been admitted freely by men on the Government side that the main object of this Bill is to procure cheap food for the people of Queensland. We are glad to have that admission, although we have known all along that it is a fact. The farmers, as I have pointed out, have been penalised in many directions, when they purchase clothing and boots for themselves and their children, machinery or building materials, and so on. They have to pay very large sums indeed—far more than the articles are worth—but the Government have made no effort to

assist in that direction, but rather have penalised them in that they have forced them from time to time to sell their products at very much below the actual cost of production.

I notice that one clause of the Bill provides that any services which may be rendered to the people shall be affected by this Bill. I would like to know whether barristers, doctors, and other specialists, who charge exorbitant rates from time to time when they get the opportunity—or many of them—are to come within the scope of the measure. The Government have said nothing with regard to the matter. Some members of the medical and legal professions make as many thousands of pounds as the unfortunate farmers—I was going to say—make shillings, and until the present time we have not heard anything whatever of action being taken in regard to such professions.

I notice a great deal of power is vested in the Minister and in the Commissioner. We have no guarantee that the cost of production is to be taken into account. We may take it for granted that the Commissioner and the Minister will find their sympathies going out towards the men in the cities, in the towns, and in the mining centres—the people who, generally speaking, keep the present Government on the Treasury benches. Because of this fact, and the great powers which are vested in the Minister and the Commissioner, we will find once more that the people who are living in rural districts—those who are interested in primary production—will be penalised in order to give cheap food to the people who are living in the big cities. It is absolutely necessary, if this Bill becomes law, that a board should be appointed to fix the price of the farmers' products, a board on which the farmer shall have big representation because he is so very much interested. Unless some such provision is made under the Bill, we will find that the farmers, instead of being assisted, will be still more retarded in their work from time to time. We hear members opposite talking about the land values increasing, and production increasing. I am very sorry to have to admit that throughout the length and breadth of Queensland we find that land values have gone down, I am safe in saying, fully 50 per cent. On the Darling Downs, and in many other parts of Queensland, land which once was worth up to £7 per acre is now worth only £3 to £4 per acre. One of the causes is that we have a heavy land tax imposed on freehold land. Another reason is that the Government have introduced their system of leasehold tenure, and the people who, generally speaking, have little confidence in the Government; who object to the land tax which has been imposed, and who dread what is coming in the form of fresh taxation, say that while we have this Government in power they will go in for leasehold and make use of it until such time as we get a stable Government on which we can depend. At the present time freehold is a drag in the market. Those who are thinking of taking up land have no confidence in the Government, and very few will think of purchasing freehold when they can secure for a very small payment per year suitable land to allow them to carry on their farming operations.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Perpetual leases.

Mr. BAYLEY: When the time comes that we have a good, solid, reasonable, just, and

*Mr. Bayley.*]

wise Government in power, we will find that these people will immediately petition to have their leasehold land converted into freehold, because that is the tenure which is desired. At the present time leasehold is simply regarded as an expedient. We find that under this Bill it will be impossible, if the Commissioner or the Minister sees fit, for farmers to store any quantity of forage to tide them over a time of drought and scarcity. It will be possible under this Bill for the Minister to sell his produce—his hay, ensilage, maize, or any other crop—at the fixed price. A drought may come almost immediately. That man will be unprovided for, and may lose much of his stock on account of the action of the Government. It is highly desirable that the Government should take steps, before the Bill goes through this House, to see that such amendments are made as will give the farmer some protection, as will not force the primary producer to hand up the grain, the hay, or the ensilage which he has put by in order to save his stock in times of adversity and drought. Anything which will tend to cheapen the necessities of life to the people, so long as it is done in a just way, will be heartily welcomed by me. I am quite prepared to admit that the great advances which have been made, so far as the wages of the workers are concerned, are absolutely useless when we compare them with the extra cost of living. Large numbers of workers who are in receipt of wages have told me that they are poorer as regards their power of purchasing than they were years ago when they had only two-thirds of the wages they now receive. If anything can be done by this or any other Government to get over this difficulty I will be extremely pleased, because my sympathies are with the poor class more than with any other class of the community. Let there be justice to all, whether they are rich or poor, but any man who has any humanitarian feeling must have the strongest sympathy for the man who is down and who needs assistance. Members generally on this side of the House voice those sentiments, and we are prepared to give the Government all the assistance which lies in our power if they are prepared to give us a good measure which will be effective and just.

Mr. VOWLES: I have listened very attentively to a large number of speeches in this Chamber on the second reading of this Bill, and from the introduction by the Minister, I think, down to almost every individual speaker on the Government side, I am prepared to say that the only object they had in speaking was to do a little bit of electioneering and get into training for next month. (Government laughter.) Was that not very patent to-night when the hon. member for Port Curtis went through his facings, gesticulated, almost went wild in his denunciation of Mr. Hughes and all connected with him? This is not the place for fighting political battles or criticising Federal members in their actions. I always understood that on the second reading of a Bill hon. members in this Chamber were supposed to keep to the principles confined in the Bill and to debate them. To-night, hon. gentlemen on the other side have gone clean away from that. We have got to the position now that it seems to me we can discuss anything at all.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is a very comprehensive measure, you know.

[Mr. Bayley.

Mr. VOWLES: Has it anything to do with the Federal elections? Can the hon. gentleman point out—unless it is under the dragnet clause—something which affects the people of Queensland? This Bill is framed on the assumption that profiteering is going on in Queensland. Hon. gentlemen on the other side told us they were going to give us instances which would convince us that profiteering existed. Up to date no instances have been given. The only evidence of this profiteering was in regard to what is taking place outside Australia. The Minister for Agriculture last night went to a great deal of trouble to produce figures and schedules, and the returns of shipping companies, and to deal with American matters. He very carefully kept away from any reference to transactions of a similar class in Queensland, purely and simply by reason of the fact that he could not produce them. If profiteering is rampant, if the people are being exploited, I think every honest man, not only in this Chamber, but in Queensland, is out to see that those people are brought to book. Members of the Opposition do not escape these high charges. We have our families to keep. We have to clothe our children. We know that the prices are extraordinary. We want to protect ourselves as much as we do the community, because we are portion of the community. But we know that there is such a thing as a law of supply and demand; that if there is a shortage of any commodity the price of it naturally soars high because there is a bigger demand for it. We know very well that as far as boots are concerned the cost of production has gone up in every direction. Every person who handles the product, from the time the leather is taken off the beast's back to the making of the boot and the bringing of it into the shop, has had an increase of wages. All those increases in some way affect the price of the article. Then there was a shortage of material. We know, as far as that is concerned, that the Government themselves sold the leather from the State station to foreign buyers, and it has gone out of Queensland. Is that assisting to keep down the price of a commodity? Profiteering is the excuse for the introduction of the Bill, and it has been introduced for the purpose of an election. The whole object of this Bill is to be able to control the production of all the necessities of life. If we are going to have the Labour Government behaving to the producers in such a manner as this Government did in the early portion of their career; if we are going to have them taking away their commodities and selling them at a price which is less than the cost of production, I ask how on earth are you going to encourage those people to remain upon the land? We are told that the solution of the present trouble, and of most troubles, is to be found in increased production; that we should induce the people to till the land; that we should take the people out of the cities and place them upon the land in order to make ourselves self-contained by increasing the production of all that is necessary for our existence. But if you are going to have this class of legislation, if you are going to make the present producer of any article in the country sell it at whatever price he can get for it in the city for the purpose of giving cheap food to the workers in the city—at a price which is not fair to the man who is producing it—how on earth is he going to pay a fair rate of wages? He has to employ

men, he has to make a certain margin of profit to cover interest on his capital and to allow for depreciation. He has to do all that out of production. If you are not going to allow him, in the direction of co-operation, or in any other direction, to store his articles when there is a surplus and make provision for the time when there is going to be a slump, so that he can get a reasonable price all the year round, he may immediately cease to produce, and the man in the city will find that when the goods are not coming down from the country they will have to be obtained elsewhere, and he will have to pay a much greater price than ever he has done before. It was suggested to-night by the hon. member for Port Curtis and the hon. member for Fitzroy that the farmer was to be excluded from this Bill; that it was never intended to include him. I have here the Victorian draft Bill, and they specially exempt the farmer. Under the definition of "necessary commodity" they mention all the necessary commodities, and then say it does not include any prescribed agricultural product in the ownership or possession of the grower or producer thereof.

At 9 o'clock p.m.,

Mr. BERRAM (Chairman of Committees) took the chair as Deputy Speaker.

Mr. VOWLES: The farmers and the workers in Brisbane are dependent on one another. If the worker cannot get his supplies, then the cost of living will be dearer. The more we encourage the producer the more the worker will get his supplies of produce. So it is better for the worker in every way to encourage production. This Bill gives power to a Commissioner to commandeer all the stocks of food that a provident farmer may put by in good times and distribute it to the improvident farmer. The Bill sets out to make a maximum price. We have had a few instances and experiences of that in Queensland under the Control of Trade Act. We know what happened then, and the farmer knows to his cost. We know that as a result of the actions of the Government at that time that many dairymen went out of business and sold their cows. That was a bad thing for Queensland and for the country, too. Unfortunately, many female cows were butchered, with the result that production was gone for all time, so far as they were concerned. What is the principle involved in this Bill? Here we are going to have a Commission of one man who has the power of investigation, and in that investigation he has the right to call assessors to his aid. But when you come to sum up the whole position you will find that he is merely a political creature, because he first of all holds his office at the pleasure of the Minister. He has got no security of tenure for his office. In another portion of the Bill you are told that the Commissioner shall be subject to the direction and control of the Minister, so that it is a political job after all, with one man as a figurehead representing the Government. If a man's fortunes are to be impaired, and if the Government is to have the power to enter into a man's place and seize his goods, if the Government can enter upon any farm, or warehouse, or cold stores, surely there ought to be a board on which the man whose goods are seized can have representation and see that he gets a fair deal. (Hear, hear!) Further, there is no right of appeal. A good deal has been said throughout the course of this debate that this Government has not

the power to deal with price-fixing, but you know that that is not so. Ever since this Government came into power they had full power under the Control of Trade Act to deal with this subject. That Act is still on the statute-book. They have that power to-day to do all that they are asking to do in this measure.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: You were not satisfied with the operation of that Act.

Mr. VOWLES: When the hon. member for Port Curtis was speaking I asked him to refer to clause 2 of the Control of Trade Act. He said he would, but he skilfully avoided it. As he has not read it, I will do so. Clause 2 of the Control of Trade Act reads as follows:—

"This Act shall come into operation on a day to be named by the Governor in Council by proclamation published in the 'Gazette,' and shall remain in force during such period or extended period as the Governor in Council, by proclamation published in the 'Gazette,' from time to time declares."

Mr. CARTER: It is a war measure.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. gentleman may say the same about the Sugar Acquisition Act, but are you not working under that Act every day of your life? Although the war is over the Government have still got the power to act under the Control of Trade Act. The power remains until it is gazetted out by the Government. The regulations under the War Precautions Act in regard to these various commodities were proclaimed out of existence in May last, so that from May last this Government has had the power to regulate prices if it desired to do so. They had the same powers as they are asking for in this Bill.

Mr. CARTER: So have the Federal Government.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. member for Port Curtis was the chief offender in this respect when he said the Government did not have the power to deal with price-fixing. He said that the Government were powerless under the War Precautions Act Regulations. I would like to direct the attention of the House to an article which appears in the "Brisbane Courier" of the 5th August last dealing with the Royal Commission on coal prices. You will remember that at that time there was some trouble about coal at the Railway Department. I will quote the remarks of no less a person than the Hon. T. J. Ryan, Premier of Queensland. It has a very great bearing on the contention of the hon. member for Port Curtis this evening. This is what Mr. Ryan said—

"The Government does not admit its liability to comply with the recent Commonwealth order fixing the price of coal."

There we have Mr. Ryan saying that the Government does not admit its liability to be bound by the price-fixing of the Commonwealth Government so far as coal is concerned. That was in August. The proclamation issued by the Commonwealth in regard to certain commodities was issued in May, but another proclamation had been made in respect of coal, and here we have your infallible Premier and lawyer coming along and giving it as his opinion, directly contrary to the hon. member for Port Curtis to-night.

*Mr. Vowles.]*

Mr. CARTER: You know it is a war measure.

Mr. VOWLES: I know that is going to be the stock in trade of the Government during the Federal elections. It is just as well that the people of Queensland that we hear so much about should know that we have on our statute-book an Act which enables the Government to deal with this matter. I am going to move an amendment to give the Government an opportunity of making some inquiries into this matter. The Government have not given us any evidence of profiteering or of the existence of combines or monopolies in Queensland. What I desire is that a Royal Commission should be appointed to inquire into these matters and report to the Government. No doubt, in doing that, I will be told that I am guilty of delaying the passage of the measure. I do not think that even the most sanguine gentleman sitting on the Government side to-night imagines that this Bill is going to become law before the House rises, which I understand is going to be next Friday week. If the Royal Commission is appointed, they can collect all the evidence which would justify the necessity of putting this measure on the statute-book or not by the time the House meets again. The whole object of the forming of this Commission is to investigate.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It is to delay and protect the profiteer.

Mr. VOWLES: The whole object of the amendment is to have a Commission to investigate. That is the function of the Commissioner under the Bill. The Commission can make inquiries into the business of certain trading institutions and see whether they are behaving in a legal way or otherwise. We can judge by the report of the Royal Commission whether it is necessary to put the Bill on the statute-book or not. I therefore wish to move the following amendment:—

“That all the words after the word ‘Bill’ be omitted with a view of inserting in their place the words ‘be suspended until a Royal Commission be appointed—

(1) To inquire into the increased cost of living and the reasons thereof.”

That is just simply what the Commissioner will do under this Bill. He will make inquiries into the increased cost of living. Then my amendment reads on—

“(2) To inquire into the existence in Queensland of trusts, monopolies, and/or combines, and of profiteering generally.”

I don't think anyone will take any exception to that.

“(3) That the Government during such suspension exercise the powers vested in it under the Control of Trade Act of 1914 to prevent undue prices being charged to the public, and in any other direction it may be deemed desirable.”

If the Government is honest, and if this Bill is not brought forward for the purposes of the coming Federal elections to take place in the next two months, they will accept the amendment. I think all the speeches that have been made here on the Government side have been for the purpose of trying to sway votes. If not, the Government will agree to have the Commission appointed as I suggested. We are all personally interested in this matter. I see no reason why I should stand up here to support any combination or

organisation which is acting wrongly, and which is making use of any section of the community. If there is anyone acting wrongly, I want to see him brought to earth. I want to see reduced prices as much as anyone, but, first of all, I want to see an inquiry made to find if prices are unreasonably high or not. We have had many instances given where profiteering is going on, but when you come to sift them out you cannot find that there is any profiteering going on in Queensland. We have no control over the imported article. We must import as we do not produce ourselves, and we have got to take the article at the price offered to us. When we import, then everybody who handles that article naturally wants to make a profit out of it. We know quite well that if a man had a thousand pounds worth of stock before the war, if the price of that same stock rises 100 per cent., he has got to protect himself. If he sells at the old price, how on earth is he going to get back his business. He must keep abreast of the times or else he will never get his business back. We are told that retailers are making exorbitant profits. They cannot get rid of their stuff at a loss because when they buy again they have to pay an increased price. I think inquiry should be made, and if there is any profiteering going on it should be dealt with at once. For those reasons, I ask that a Commission be appointed. We want proper evidence. We do not want hearsay evidence. We do not want anyone to say that they heard profiteering was going on. We want to know exactly what we are dealing with, and trace those persons we hear so much about, if they are profiteering. I trust the Minister will consider the advisability of accepting my amendment, which is for the very purpose that the office of Commissioner is constituted—that is to investigate these matters—and he will be so many more months ahead when Parliament meets again, than if the Bill were allowed to fizzle out and Parliament adjourns—as we understand it will.

Mr. BELL (*Fasijern*): I beg to second the amendment of the hon. member for Dalby, and I hope the Minister will accept it. It is only delaying the Bill until proper inquiries have been made. We have listened to a great deal of argument, but have not had the proper definition of a “profiteer” from any member on the other side. Surely it is only right that more inquiries should be made before such a drastic Bill is put into operation! Since the late Denham Government passed the Control of Trade Act in 1914, this Government has taken advantage of it, in some measure, in the controlling of prices. Mr. Sumner was appointed comptroller, and fixed the prices of various commodities. I am sure that the Opposition have no wish to delay the passing of this measure or put any obstruction in the way. We would only be too pleased to assist the Government to find the profiteer. We know that prices have gone up considerably, possibly owing to the dry weather which Queensland has been experiencing for some years. It would be very unfair to the primary producers to fix the price of their produce when it is scarce, and when there is a surplus allow them to fix it themselves. The law of supply and demand would come in and fix the price when there was a surplus. It is very easy to make a statement, but it is a different thing to prove it, and we have had no proof, during this

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debate, to show where undue profits have been made, or how to stop it. We have had some experience of the Government stepping in to fix the price of commodities, and I suppose they feel in some way justified in doing this—possibly redeeming some of their election promises of 1915. At that time they told the people that if they were returned the cost of living would be reduced, but ever since they have been in power it has been increasing, and Queensland is to-day one of the dearest States in the Commonwealth.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: The dearest.

Mr. KIRWAN: Why delay the passing of the Bill?

Mr. BELL: Although this Government had power under the Control of Trade Act, they only used it when it suited themselves in fixing the price of farmers' produce, such as wheat. When the Government purchased the State stations, we were told that the stock from them would be used in the State butchers' shops, but we find that they have been using those stations to increase their revenue. Very few of the stock have been sent to the State butchers' shops, but have been sold at as high a price as could be obtained from the Imperial Government and the Southern States. The only way to cheaper living is to encourage production. (Hear, hear!) But a Bill like this is going to hamper the farmer. In the different districts of Queensland the farmers and their sons will tell you that they are jolly fools to be on the land; that they would be better off in a comfortable Government billet. In my own district many young fellows are leaving their farms and applying for Government positions.

Mr. KIRWAN: If one of them runs against you next election, you will have a rough passage.

Mr. BELL: The hon. member for Brisbane is not game to tackle me anyhow. (Laughter.) I have much pleasure in seconding the amendment moved by the hon. member for Dalby.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just rise, out of courtesy, to reply to the amendment of the hon. member for Dalby, and also to indicate the remarkable attitude of the Opposition. This amendment is a deliberate attempt to protect the profiteers—(Opposition dissent)—and public attention should be drawn to it, because it is simply a side-tracking amendment—a deliberate aim at destroying the Bill, to enable the profiteers to carry on for a further six or twelve months.

Mr. VOWLES: The House is going to postpone it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: No, it is not. The hon. member is presuming too much. I think he will find that the House passes this Bill before we rise to-night. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. VOWLES: This House, certainly.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Well, the responsibility of destroying the measure or delaying it will certainly not rest upon the Government.

Mr. SIZER: What is the use of having duplicate powers?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I want to point out that profiteering is rife in Queensland. And it is even admitted by

hon. members opposite. Let me quote briefly from the speech of the hon. member for Oxley last night. He said this—

“There is one sphere in which I think profiteering is rife in Queensland—that is in women's apparel.”

He gave several instances to show where profiteering is rife.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: He gave no instance.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Although he opposed the measure in several respects he gave splendid evidence. He gave figures which I am not going to quote, but which are embedded in the four corners of “Hansard.” He further said this—

“I am going to refer a little later on to instances where combines exist to restrict trading in Queensland.”

There is the evidence of hon. members opposite that combines exist and that profiteering is rampant in Queensland.

Mr. VOWLES: He did not say—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: This is what he said—

“There is one sphere in which profiteering is rife.”

He gave one instance, supported by figures in “Hansard.”

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: He was referring to motor oil business.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He was not referring to the motor oil business; he was referring to women's apparel. Then again, he pointed out that there were numerous instances of combines restricting trade in Queensland. Yet the hon. member for Dalby comes along with an amendment, deliberately aiming to destroy a measure which has for its purpose the object of controlling those combines and the profiteering which the hon. member for Oxley said exists.

I want to point out further, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Bill, if passed, will constitute, as it were, the Commission the amendment asks for. The Commissioner under the Bill, if it becomes an Act, will have power to make inquiries that would be made by the Commission the hon. member desires to see appointed. The fullest investigation will be made; and, if there is no profiteering, there will be no fixation of prices.

Mr. VOWLES: I want to find the cause as well, you know.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The Commissioner under the Act will have power to ascertain the cause; he will have the fullest power in every possible direction to do what can be done under the Commission asked for.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: And he will have power which the Commission would not have.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Yes. He would have power to deal with profiteering, which the Commission would not have. The Commission would only have to report to Parliament, and would then be faced with the responsibility of proving what was apparent to everybody in Australia, and which is apparent all over the civilised world. Italy, France, America—in all these places legislation is being passed to deal with the matter. The Interstate Commission proved that pernicious combinations exist, and that undue profits

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are being made, and yet hon. members say there is no evidence of a monopoly, combination, or profiteering.

Mr. VOWLES: You quoted the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, and you know their profits were made in Fiji.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I know that the profits of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, the shipping combine, and the tobacco trust, and all the great companies referred to by the Interstate Commission were partly made in this State. Further, I want to point out that this amendment is just in harmony with what has been done by the Federal Government. They say they will appoint a Commission to inquire into and investigate the question of profiteering and improper combinations in Australia. The Federal Government are going to appoint a Commission to inquire into something which they have had the power to do during the last three years or so, and which they refused to do. They protected the profiteer, and we know the reason why. It is because the profiteer has been, and is now, providing funds to return the Hughes Administration to power. I think the object of this amendment will be quite obvious to the people of Queensland. It is deliberately aimed at a measure which proposes to deal with an urgent and important problem—a problem which is responsible for industrial and social unrest, and general discontent in the community, and one that hon. members opposite generally, in an abstract sense, have admitted is a difficult one, and one which exists. Yet, when we have definite legislation to deal with this problem, we have this side-tracking amendment moved. I am certain that the amendment will meet with the fate it deserves. (Hear, hear!)

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Minister who has just resumed his seat has practically followed along the lines of his second reading address—that, after all, this is a measure which is really intended for electioneering purposes. He has not proved, either during his speech upon this amendment or during his previous speech, that profiteering exists in Queensland. He has dealt with certain

institutions, with those who have [9.30 p.m.] had to do, and are doing, the work of this State to-day, but he has not on any one occasion proved a single charge against an institution or corporation. He has merely said, speaking in generalities, that profiteering exists. Disguise it as he may, the fact does remain that no attempt has been made during the last three or four years, except in the early stage of the Government's administration, to use the Act which gave them ample power to deal with these things if they exist. They have simply tried to sidetrack the issue by laying at the door of the Federal Government charges that they have failed to do their duty. The fact remains that the Government of which the hon. member is a member have absolutely failed, if they believe profiteering exists, to tackle it. I want to ask every member if the amendment is not one which goes in the direction of getting full information? What has been one of the failures of our political life? Has it not been running off at a tangent and bringing in hastily legislation which afterwards has to be amended? If the hon. member believes these things, why does he ruthlessly turn down an amendment which touches the whole thing? I venture to say

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that the reason he turns down the amendment in so cavalier a fashion is that he believes that it will be found that in the main in Queensland there is very little profiteering. Let us look at the arguments he used. One was the shipping combine. I am not prepared to say that there is not a shipping combine, or that there is, but I want to ask the hon. member whether he has power to touch the trading of vessels to Queensland?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: We can restrict their Queensland operations.

HON. W. H. BARNES: One of the very faults of the Government has been that they have sought to restrict operations. They know from the very fact of the number of unemployed, and from their own Labour Bureau, that thousands are feeling the effects of the restrictions of operations.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: There were more under your Administration.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I say that it is absolutely necessary, in the interests of the State, that we should get the information which is obtainable. The hon. member has power to get it under the amendment, and yet, forsooth, he gets up and repeats his previous statements without giving one tittle of evidence to support his argument. I am responsible for my own utterances, and I say as a member of this House that if there is a profiteer, and if the lifeblood is taken out of any person or persons in the community, I am out to help hit those people. (Government laughter.) There is the vacant laugh of the hon. member for Bowen which indicates a vacant mind. And the laughter of hon. members is only in keeping with the generalities that have been indulged in by the Minister.

Reference has been made to the hon. member for Oxley. He, along the lines of the argument he developed last night—I do not often differ with a member on this side—referred to tomatoes, and suggested that there might be along the lines of the fruit industry an opportunity for nationalisation, although he did not use the word I am using. But what is the position in regard to that particular line? Is not the high price which is ruling entirely due to the drought conditions and the law of supply and demand? Is this House going to embark on any action which is going to have the effect of closing up the smallest person in the community? I wish every member would take the trouble to see what is going on in connection with these commodities, and I say that if you do close them up you are closing up many a small man and woman who are getting a living, and who from the very competition which exists are endeavouring to get fair values for those who produce. We have got to get right down to the bedrock of affairs in Queensland. Whether we like to look at it fairly and squarely, the fact remains that production is getting less and less, and I want to ask if that is good for Queensland? I say that any man who has the good of this State at heart must feel that it cannot prosper if you are going to drive people off the land. That is what is happening. I want to repeat what I previously said—that it seems to me that you have to deal with questions which are vital to the producer, not so much with the question of profiteering, but the question of enabling the man on the land to live. Let me give an illustration. To-day, in one of the streets of this city, I met a woman who had come from Gatton,

and had been eight and a-half years in the country farming with her husband. She said she had been forced to give it up. That is the position of many people in Queensland to-day. And yet this Bill is coming forward. What for? I venture to say very largely for creating more billets. There is in the Bill one clause which says that the person who shall be appointed as Commissioner is not under the control of the Public Service Board.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Did you not pass a similar Act in 1914?

HON. W. H. BARNES: We did; but the war was on—(Government laughter)—and we had to deal with the supply of troops with meat, and we rose to the occasion and did it, and so we did in connection with the Control of Trade Act, which the hon. member has not been game to bring into operation. (Interruption.) Hon. members on the other side have forgotten that these very things are sucking the lifeblood out of the community. What did one hon. member say in regard to this profiteering? He practically "let the cat out of the bag," and stated that he did not care if wheat became lower. What cares he or members on the other side, so long as they can play to the gallery and get the votes of the community? That is exactly what is troubling them. That hon. member said deliberately that, so far as the wheat producers were concerned, it did not matter very much if wheat prices came down. What is responsible very largely for the cost of living as we find it to-day?

Mr. CARTER: The profiteering by the middleman.

HON. W. H. BARNES: There is that noisy member from Port Curtis. Some commodities have been brought to the point of high prices because men for a time have struck—I speak of what I know, and if you have to pay £4 a ton to bring produce from Albury to Brisbane, when you could get it by steamer at a much less freight, we know that the man who consumes those commodities is the man who pays.

The HOME SECRETARY: Whose fault was that strike?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I know nothing about that. I have no sympathy with anything that is unfair, but when you have arbitration, why not abide by arbitration, or let arbitration go by the board? The hon. member asks me whose fault the strike was. I say it was the fault of hon. members like himself, who have preached to the gallery, who have led men to believe that they have been downtrodden and oppressed, and now those men have become an instrument that they cannot control.

The HOME SECRETARY: I tuned you up when you were giving only £1 2s. 6d. a week in the sugar-mills.

HON. W. H. BARNES: There are other profiteers you meet with. What is going to become of the man who is profiteering at gambling, who has his game of chance, and comes out some night winning hundreds of pounds? Is not he a profiteer? And yet, forsooth, we see these things glossed over.

The HOME SECRETARY: Barnes and Co., who corner potatoes and gamble in them—the people's food.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member has the temerity to say that a firm to which I belong have gambled in the people's food.

I say it is an absolute falsehood, and the hon. member knows it, and it is only an expression that would come from an hon. member of the class in which he is.

The HOME SECRETARY: You gamble in the people's food.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

HON. W. H. BARNES: Let me say that, if I do, he is at the same time a member of a Cabinet behind a State industry which is also gambling in the food of the people.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. W. H. BARNES: I will not admit the gamble, but I do admit that we have had in this House abundant proof of the prices that have been charged by the Government in their institutions—in the fish shops, in the refreshment-rooms, in their butchers' shops. They do it so that they may deliberately take down the weakest in the community. We have heard a good deal about the profiteering. Let me put another side of the picture. There was a time when, throughout the country, there was a cry of "Chillagoe." The Chillagoe people were said to have got at the throat of the community and sucked the very lifeblood out of it. We know that those people lost hundreds of thousands of pounds in developing the State. And would you call the man who, in days past, in this fair State of Queensland humped his "bluey," humped his swag, or followed the bullock-dray and went out to make this community what it is, and who got some benefit as a result of his determination and the hardships through which he went—would you call that man a profiteer? Of course, in a sense he was, but I say deliberately here to-night that it is a pity we have not more of that class of man in the community to help develop the State of Queensland.

The HOME SECRETARY: Why do you gamble in the people's food?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member knows a little more about mining and gambling in mining, and getting huge profits out of mining, if he will be personal and challenge me. (Interruption.)

The HOME SECRETARY: I am not battenning on the people's food like you are.

HON. W. H. BARNES: No, you are battenning on their credulity, and when they are easily led, of course "Barkis is willing" to do his part. Are there not other factors which have been producing what is happening to-day? Is not the weather a factor? Yet, why should the weather have been a factor? When the Government came into office—the year that they won at the poll, what was the cry which was raised? I happen to hold a placard in my hand. It is printed in red—a colour not unconnected with the policy which often has been disloyal. (Laughter.) Here it is—

"Vote for Barnes, and butter at 2s. per lb., bread at 5d. per loaf, and dear meat."

Mr. COLLINS: Is that in English or in German—that is what we want to know.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Fortunately, it is in English. Even the hon. gentleman who interjects can read it. It is a little difficult for him, sometimes, perhaps, to read things. It says—

"And vote for McMinn, the Labour candidate, and cheap food for the people."

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(Government laughter.) What is the position? Whereas the cost of living in Queensland was something like 24 per cent. when the Government came into power, it is now about 60 per cent. Yet we find that the cheques which have been drawn have not been honoured. Why? In an attempt to sidetrack the whole business they are bringing in a Profiteering Prevention Bill—as they call it—and are trying to make the people believe that they are out at last, after four or five years, to try and do their duty, as they conceive it, and are carrying out their promises to the people. May I remind hon. members again that they had the Control of Trade Act? Can any hon. gentleman sitting on the Treasury bench deny that they used it? They used it when they could squeeze the farmer, because he was not a big power in the community. They used it in other directions. Now, because there is a Federal election coming along, out comes a Profiteering Prevention Bill. They have the power still in their hands to carry out any intention in that particular regard. I am not going to delay the House further than to say this Bill is a sham and a humbug, and, in my judgment, it is only put before us to try at this particular time to make the voters believe that they are out to protect them in certain directions. Again I say, why do they not accept the amendment of the hon. member for Dalby, the deputy leader of this party, and allow necessary inquiries to be made? Then, if it can be proved that these things do exist, they ought to be got at by us as a united people for the purpose of assisting the people in Queensland.

Mr. SIZER: There is not the slightest doubt that if any sidetracking is being done it is being done by hon. gentlemen opposite to-night, and ever since they have been in power. Not one hon. gentleman can rise in his place and say the Government have not the power to do everything they can do under this Bill.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman must confine his remarks to the amendment.

Mr. SIZER: I will confine my remarks to the third portion. If the hon. gentleman doubts our sincerity I challenge him to issue a proclamation to-morrow under the Control of Trade Act. When you have the power required, why ask for more power?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must deal with the amendment.

Mr. SIZER: I say that this Bill might be delayed. I am as anxious as any other hon. member in this Chamber to deal with profiteering where it exists in Queensland. The hon. gentleman has admitted that it is a world-wide problem. Is this one Bill going to calm the whole world? Is it going to do anything?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the amendment.

Mr. SIZER: I am making the point why the Bill might be delayed. It is for the reason that it is a world-wide problem, and it is useless to contend that this Bill will completely destroy profiteering where it exists throughout the world. What we can do is probably devise a scheme whereby we can go into the intricate business of regulating State-manufactured articles without

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injuring the community; because it is the community generally which is going to suffer. At the end of a searching inquiry we might be able to introduce a measure which would effectively control profiteering. There is no need to duplicate legislation. When you have the power, why not use it? Do not attempt to mislead the people by saying you have not the power, when not one man sitting on the other side of the House can deny that they have had the power since 1914—that they have used it when it suited them, and have not used it since. They are now endeavouring to sidetrack the whole question. We challenge them to issue a proclamation to-morrow to deal with profiteering. When they show their sincerity we might be inclined to believe them.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted (*Mr. Fowles's amendment*) stand part of the motion—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 32.

Mr. Barber	Mr. Lloyd
„ Brennan	„ McCormack
„ Carter	„ Mullan
„ Collins	„ Payne
„ Cooper, F. A.	„ Riordan
„ Cooper, W.	„ Ryan, D.
„ Coyne	„ Ryan, H. J.
„ Dunstan	„ Smith
„ Filhelly	„ Stopford
„ Foley	„ Theodore
„ Forde	„ Thompson
„ Free	„ Weir
„ Hartley	„ Wellington
„ Huxham	„ Whitford
„ Kirwan	„ Wilson
„ Larcombe	„ Winstanley

Tellers: Mr. Riordan and Mr. Whitford.

NOES, 16.

Mr. Appel	Mr. Gunn
„ Barnes, G. P.	„ Hodge
„ Barnes, W. H.	„ Moore
„ Bayley	„ Morgan
„ Bebbington	„ Roberts
„ Bell	„ Sizer
„ Elphinstone	„ Swayne
„ Grayson	„ Fowles

Tellers: Mr. Elphinstone and Mr. Sizer.

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

COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Smith, Mackay, in the chair.*)

Clause 1 put and passed.

On clause 2—“*Application of Act*”—

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I move, on page 2, after line 5, to insert—

“(i.) Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions, nothing in this Act shall be construed to apply to farm or other agricultural produce grown on the farm or premises of the producer thereof while being held there whether for feed purposes or for sale.”

I am merely following the lines of the Victorian Act, the words of which are—

“Does not include any prescribed agricultural produce in the ownership or possession of the grower or producer thereof.”

It is very necessary here, as it is in Victoria, that the farmer should be exempt from this legislation. At the present time the farmer wants to be free to produce all the produce he can. He wants to be free to hold it in case he wants it for feeding his stock or to

obtain a higher price if he can get it. At the present time the average price that the farmer gets throughout the year [10 p.m.] is not a living wage. If the Commissioner can take his produce from his barn or from his store when he is waiting for the market to rise, then you are going to stop production altogether. With regard to the wheat industry, we know that it was the practice of millers to buy all the wheat from the farmer at one time, and if the farmer liked he could hold his wheat, but he cannot do so under this Bill.

Mr. COLLINS: The farmers are represented on this side of the House. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. BEBBINGTON: This Bill gives the Commissioner power to take all a farmer's stuff away from him. The Commissioner can take it irrespective of whether the farmer wants it for food purposes or anything else. Members opposite know nothing about growing produce. They never grew a bushel of corn in their lives, and they know nothing about it. If a farmer wants to store up any food that is necessary he should not be included in the provisions of this Bill. I know one or two farmers that have 80 tons of stuff who have 100 head of cattle, but under this Bill the Commissioner could seize this stuff.

Mr. W. COOPER: Nonsense!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The Commissioner has power to seize anything that the farmer has got stored up, because it says in the Bill "any article of food for man or domesticated animal." All this amendment asks is that while the stuff remains on the farm the farmer shall have full liberty to use that stuff as he likes. I ask for the same principle as the Victorian farmers have.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The amendment is absolutely unnecessary, because in the case where a business is carried on honestly and fairly there will be no interference with any industry in the State.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Under what clause has he got that security?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He has got that security under common sense and fairness.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Have your side ever used common sense?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Yes. The hon. member is not exercising that attribute now. The amendment is unnecessary, because the policy of the Government is to protect the farmer. The powers contained in this Bill are only there to interfere if commodities are improperly held for sale, and not in the case of foodstuffs stored as food or for genuine sale, as the amendment suggests. The hon. gentleman quoted the Victorian Act. Why didn't he quote the Tasmanian Act, which was passed by an anti-Labour Government? There is a long definition there which winds up as follows:—

"Any article or product recommended by the Price Commissioner by proclamation and declared by the Government to be a necessary commodity."

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Is that a war Act?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: No, it is a post-war Act. It was passed in 1919. In South Australia they have a similar provision. There is a comprehensive provisio

which is necessary to prevent litigation being raised on fine technical and constitutional points. The amendment is unnecessary. The policy of the Government will be the protection of the primary producer, as well as every other section of the community.

Mr. GRAYSON: I also support the amendment. We know that the farmers on the Darling Downs had their wheat commandeered by Mr. Hunter at 3s. 8d. a bushel when the price was 7s. 6d., and he compelled the Farmers' Milling Company to consign that wheat to Brisbane to the richest combine of milling companies in Brisbane.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Your own Government passed the Control of Trade Act which gave him that power, and you did not object.

Mr. GRAYSON: It was your Administration. The Farmers' Milling Company were prepared to grist that 7,000 bags of wheat in their own mill, but Mr. Hunter would not allow them to do it. What is the good of the farmers of Queensland trusting the present Governments to fix prices? Do you think they will trust the Government? I say, "No, certainly not."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I say, "Yes."

Mr. GRAYSON: Under this Bill the Commissioner or Minister can step into a man's premises in any part of Queensland and take his produce. I know farmers who store up a lot of produce. I know one man who has 100 tons of hay which is required for consumption. The Commissioner can step in and seize that hay, and that farmer's cows will die on his farm. Many wheat farmers, in the early part of the season when they thresh wheat, have had no barns in which to store their grain. If the Government are going to commandeer the wheat that the small farmers have stored waiting for the high price—and it is generally from 6d. to 1s. a bushel lower in the early part of the wheat season than later on—if the Government are going to do this, who will be at the loss? It will be the small wheat farmer. I have no sympathy with the man who has made undue profits out of the war, and would favour any stringent legislation that the Government might bring about to deal with a man of this description. But it is wrong for the Government to have power to interfere in any shape or form with the primary producer. We know what the Government did to the dairymen in commandeering their butter, and the farmers of Queensland will not forget it. To my mind the amendment is a very fair and reasonable one, and I trust the Minister will give it serious consideration.

Mr. BRENNAN: I want to point out that the directors of the farmers' mill in Warwick got their friends to get 3s. 9d. per bushel for the wheat, while the ordinary farmer only got from 3s. 3d. to 3s. 6d.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must connect his remarks with the amendment.

Mr. BRENNAN: I say we know very well that this Government would "play the game with the farmer," and there would be no necessity to doubt that. They would not do the things which have been done in the past; they would not prevent farmers coming into the pool.

Mr. Brennan.]

HON. J. G. APPEL: The Minister's appeal is based on the record of the Administration of which he is a member. He says there is no necessity for the amendment, because the record of his Administration is one which should cause the primary producer to have the most absolute confidence in the Government. If he bases his reason for refusing to accept the amendment on those grounds, all I can say is that the exploitation of the farmers by the present Administration is such as would cause them to view with suspicion any legislation which has not full and sufficient safeguards so far as their interests are concerned. Reference has been made to the State of Tasmania. We know that no such Administration has ever exercised the function of government in Tasmania or in any other State that the present Government has done. That is generally admitted. The action of the present Administration has caused the State of Queensland to be practically held up to contempt so far as the Government is concerned.

Mr. D. RYAN: That is a deliberate lie.

HON. J. G. APPEL: It is an absolute fact, and if hon. members on the other side, who profess to represent the primary producer, refuse to assist him by accepting this amendment, all I can say is "God help the primary producer." On every occasion the Agricultural Department, in giving instructions to our farmers as to the best methods to be adopted in connection with harvesting their crops, have advised them to go in for storing. Yet, under the provisions of this Bill, power will be given to the Director to impound and seize the stores which the primary producer has put by in times of plenty. The Minister refers to the record of his Administration as being a reason why this would not be done. If the amendment is not accepted, the primary producers have no friends amongst members on that side of the House, and absolutely no safeguards so far as those very products are concerned.

Amendment (Mr. Bebbington's) put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 15.

Mr. Appel	Mr. Gunn
" Barnes, G. P.	" Hedge
" Barnes, W. H.	" Moore
" Bayley	" Morgan
" Bebbington	" Roberts
" Bell	" Swayne
" Elphinstone	" Vowles'
" Grayson	

Tellers: Mr. Swayne and Mr. Elphinstone.

NOES, 31.

Mr. Armfield	Mr. Lloyd
" Barber	" McCormack
" Brennan	" Mullan
" Carter	" Payne
" Collins	" Riordan
" Cooper, F. A.	" Ryan, D.
" Cooper, W.	" Ryan, H. J.
" Coyne	" Stopford
" Dunstan	" Theodore
" Fihelly	" Thompson
" Foley	" Weir
" Forde	" Wellington
" Frece	" Whitford
" Hartley	" Wilson
" Huxham	" Winstanley
" Larcombe	

Tellers: Mr. Barber and Mr. Stopford.

Clauses 2, 3, and 4 put and passed.

[Hon. J. G. Appel.

[10.30 p.m.]

Clause 5—"Appointment of Commissioner of Prices"—

Mr. MORGAN: I move that the following words, in lines 49 and 50, page 4, be omitted:—

"At the pleasure of the Minister,"

with a view to inserting the words—

"For a period of two years."

I think that a time limit should be fixed for the appointment, and I think that the Commissioner should not be entirely under the control of the Minister or the Governor in Council. I think that a man who occupies such an important position should be a man of standing. The Minister, I think, will recognise that the amendment is reasonable. The appointment could be renewed from time to time, but for the time being I think two years is sufficiently long.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I would like to point out to the hon. member that almost every public servant in the State is under the control of the Minister. Take the Lands Department and other departments. The Minister controls those departments.

Mr. MORGAN: The Commissioner for Railways and the Commissioner for Police are appointed for a period.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: And the Commissioner of the Savings Bank is appointed for a period, and the hon. member is never done objecting to that principle. It is only a few weeks ago since I heard him object strongly. The hon. member is opposed to the principle in the Savings Bank which he wishes to conserve in this Bill. I would not be satisfying the hon. member himself by accepting the amendment. It is a matter of Government policy, and the Government would be responsible for what was done under the Act.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. MORGAN: I move the insertion, after the words "Governor in Council," in line 53, page 4, of the words "not exceeding one thousand pounds per annum." I think that Parliament should fix the salary of the Commissioner.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The amendment is unnecessary. It is only overloading the Bill. I can tell the Committee that it is not the intention to appoint a Commissioner at a salary exceeding £1,000.

Amendment put and negatived; and clause put and passed.

Clauses 6 to 19, both inclusive, put and passed.

Clause 20—"Powers of Commissioner"—

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I move the insertion, after line 51, page 11, of the following words:—

"Without prejudice to the last preceding provisions, there shall be constituted a board of advice consisting of six representatives of the cheese, butter, and bacon industries chosen in the manner and for the term of office prescribed by the regulations by the respective industries as follows:—

Two representatives shall be chosen by the co-operative cheese factories;

Two representatives shall be chosen by the co-operative butter factories;

One representative shall be chosen by the co-operative bacon factories; and

One representative shall be chosen by the proprietary bacon factories.

It shall be the duty of the Commissioner to obtain the advice of the said board upon matters relating to the fixing of declared prices for any of the aforesaid commodities, and he may obtain such advice by calling a meeting of the said board or by such other means as he thinks proper, and he shall have power to accept or reject any advice so obtained:

"Provided always that he shall not fix the declared price of any of the aforesaid commodities at a less sum than the cost of production of the commodity in question as proved to his satisfaction by the said board."

I realise that the industries dealt with in that amendment are our greatest industries, especially for export. Outside of our grazing industry they are the only ones which produce articles we can export. In our secondary industries we cannot make a billy-can in competition with the outside world.

Mr. HARTLEY: They can export billy-goats, if they cannot export billy-cans.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: If they could, the hon. member would have been exported long ago. (Laughter.) Therefore, we are confined to exporting our own produce; and I think, what between butter, cheese, and bacon, it means nearly £3,000,000 a year to us, and probably a great deal more if we took into account our local consumption. I remember that in 1909 and 1910 we had eighteen cheese factories in Queensland, and they manufactured more cheese than we could use. The industry was lagging, and was nearly ruined. There was no Cheese Manufacturers' Association to manage matters. The factories were at one time full up with cheese for which there was no sale. The hon. member for Pittsworth and I were sent down here, and there was a strike. Those eighteen factories decided that they could not go on any longer. We practically closed them up, and not a cheese was to be sold until we got what was a living wage. The hon. member for Pittsworth and I arranged with the merchants here that we could not live under 6d. per lb., and we would not supply cheese at less. We went back and informed the executive. They said, "Yes, better close up than go on as we are doing." There were, perhaps, 20 or 30 tons of cheese in each factory for which there was no sale. After that arrangement we formed the Cheese Manufacturers' Association, and called for tenders for our cases and other things in a wholesale way. There was no waste, and we arranged for the whole surplus to be shipped. To-day, instead of there being only eighteen factories, there are about 100 co-operative factories. There may be two or three privately-owned factories, but they pay the same price as the co-operatively-owned factories, so that they are practically on the same footing.

Mr. BRENNAN: Who owns the Glencoe Factory?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The owner of that factory, who sits on this side of the House, has always paid the same price as the co-operative cheese factories. He has also offered that factory to the farmers on any terms whatever any day they like to take it over. If that is not fair, I do not know what is. But they are too well treated.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Realising the extent of these industries, is it not too much to ask that they should be put in the hands of one Commissioner, possibly a man who knows absolutely nothing about them?

Mr. BRENNAN: You gave them to Massey Greene.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: We did not. The scheme is worked by the farmers themselves, and the hon. member ought to know that representatives have been elected by the industry in Queensland. I want in this Bill the same principle as Mr. Massey Greene is giving us under the Federal control.

Mr. ROBERTS: And they went in voluntarily.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Yes. I say that practical men representing the industry would be of great assistance to the Commissioner. When he was in doubt, would it not be a great strength to him to have representatives of the industry to advise him?

The Commissioner might be a very good lawyer or business man, but know absolutely nothing about the producing industries. I am quite certain they are not going to give the Commissionership to a farmer or dairyman.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: How do you know?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: They have too many men hanging round the corner waiting for the job. That is why I know a farmer is not going to get it. Queensland is dependent upon this industry. The hon. member for Pittsworth and myself have saved the producers of Queensland thousands of pounds by assisting to establish the Cheese Manufacturers' Association. (Government laughter.) This Government proposes to wipe out at one blow institutions like that.

Mr. BAYLEY: I have much pleasure in seconding the amendment which has been moved by the hon. member for Drayton. It is absolutely necessary, if the primary producers who are dairymen are to have a fair deal. They understand their requirements, and they will be in a position to give very great assistance indeed to the Commissioner. If a board is appointed on the same lines as the board which has been elected by the dairymen of Queensland and the other States to assist Mr. Massey Greene in the operations he is conducting, it will be a great thing for the primary producers of Queensland—it will be a good thing for the dairying industry, and for the State itself.

Amendment put and negatived; and clause 20 put and passed.

The remaining clauses of the Bill were put and passed without discussion or amendment.

The House resumed. The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN reported the Bill without amendment, and the third reading was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—That this House do now adjourn. The business to-morrow will be the notice of motion of which I gave notice this afternoon: then the consideration in Committee of the desirableness of introducing the Main Roads Bill, and then the second reading of the Liquor Act Amendment Bill.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at ten minutes before 11 o'clock p.m.

*Hon. E. G. Theodore.]*