

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

FRIDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 1920

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FRIDAY, 19 NOVEMBER, 1920.

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

APPROPRIATION BILL, No. 2.

ASSENT.

The SPEAKER: I have to report that I this day presented to His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor Appropriation Bill, No. 2, for the Royal assent, and that His Excellency was pleased, in my presence, to subscribe his assent thereto in the name and on behalf of His Majesty.

A message was also received from His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor assenting to the said Bill.

PAPER.

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

Rules, dated 8th October, 1920, of the Land Court under the provisions of the Land Tax Act of 1915, as amended by the Land Tax Act Amendment Act of 1920.

QUESTIONS.

WESTERN RAILWAY STATISTICS.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. What was the reason for the down Western mail train arriving in Toowoomba sixty-five minutes late on the morning of 12th November?"

"2. What was the income and expenditure in *re* running of rail motor between Willowburn and Wyreema—(a) six months ending 30th June, 1918; (b) same period ending 30th June, 1920?"

"3. Receipts and expenditure in running of rail motor, Charleville-Cunnamulla, for recent twelve months' period?"

"4. Number of men employed in goods sheds at Roma Street, Toowoomba, and Charleville, respectively, in—(a) October, 1913; (b) October, 1920?"

"5. Has railway business in said places increased in volume in October, 1920, as compared with October, 1913; if so, by approximately how much?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Larcombe, *Koppel*) replied—

"1. The information can be obtained on application to the Commissioner for Railways.

"2. (a) Revenue, £317 16s. 7d.; expenditure, £399 12s. (b) Revenue, £630 17s. 2d.; expenditure, £670 1s. 7d.

"3. The latest figures immediately available are for twelve months ending December, 1919—Receipts, £941; expenditure, £509. The receipts include through bookings from stations on the Cunnamulla line to destination (Toowoomba or elsewhere).

"4. Roma Street—October, 1913: No record. Pay sheets destroyed after six years. October, 1920: 196. Toowoomba—October, 1913: 44. October, 1920: 45. Charleville—October, 1913: 5. October, 1920: 6.

DEVELOPMENT OF STYX RIVER AND BARALABA COALFIELDS.

Mr. FORDE (*Rockhampton*) asked the Premier—

"In view of the favourable reports received regarding the coal deposits at Styx River and Baralaba State coalfields in the Central district, and the fact that the Styx River coal has been proved by the Rockhampton Gas Company to be equal to the best Newcastle coal, will he arrange with the Secretary for Mines to have these fields developed with the least possible delay, and thus create employment for hundreds of miners, as well as make available an unlimited supply of excellent coal for the Railway Department and other consumers?"

The PREMIER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*) replied—

"The development will be proceeded with as expeditiously as possible."

MR. BROPHY'S REPORTS—PROPOSED IRON AND STEEL WORKS.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*) asked the Premier—

"Will he lay on the table of the House the various reports of Mr. Brophy, manager of the State iron and steel works, regarding the site of the proposed works?"

The PREMIER replied—

"The matter will be considered."

Mr. CORSER: You were considering it all last session.

PARLIAMENTARY REFRESHMENT ROOMS TARIFF.

Mr. PETRIE (*Toombul*) asked the Premier—

"Seeing that the loss (according to the Auditor-General's report) incurred by the Parliamentary Refreshment Rooms for the year ending 30th June last, amounts to £1,300 10s., as against £1,108 3s. 8d. for the preceding year, will he give instructions to the Refreshment Rooms Committee to have the tariff raised, with the object of adjusting the receipts with the expenditure?"

The PREMIER replied—

"This is a matter which should be decided by the Refreshment Rooms Committee."

REDEMPTION OF DEBENTURES AND STOCKS FALLING DUE.

Mr. PETRIE asked the Treasurer—

"1. What provision is he making towards redeeming the debentures and stocks falling due within the next five years, viz., due in 1922, £2,828,750; due 1924, £13,140,634; due 1925, £12,007,200; total, £27,976,584?"

"2. In the report of the Auditor-General, dated 4th August, 1920, on the Public Debt Reduction Fund, it shows that there were no surplus receipts

appearing in the Treasurer's annual statement of the receipts and expenditure of the revenue account for the financial year ending 30th June, 1919, and that there were no transactions in connection with the Public Debt Reduction Fund during the year ended 30th June, 1920, and as the total amount received since the inception of the fund—viz., £1,161,554 7s. 10d.—has been invested by the trustees in Queensland securities, which, after transferring interest (£4,150 16s. 10d.) to consolidated revenue, only now leaves a balance of 18s. 9d. to the credit of this fund, does he not think the Government Loans Sinking Fund Temporary Suspension Act of 1917 should be repealed, and the Sinking Fund made operative again?"

The TREASURER (Hon. J. A. Fihelly, *Paddington*) replied—

"1. The Premier anticipated being able to make satisfactory arrangements for conversion loans during his recent visit to London, but, owing to the hostility displayed by certain London financiers, it was considered that the time was inopportune. The matter is still receiving consideration.

"2. No; the Act does not operate beyond the financial year in which peace is proclaimed."

PROVISION OF WORK FOR UNEMPLOYED.

Mr. PETRIE asked the Premier—

"1. How many deputations of the unemployed have waited upon him or his Ministers during the past three months?"

"2. How many of such deputations has he (or his Ministers)—(a) Refused to see; (b) told that they were in the pay of the Tories; (c) ejected the leader of?"

"3. Has he as yet provided any of the work which he promised the unemployed in November, 1919; if not, is it still because the Home Secretary has not secured the picks and shovels which he had failed to get in January last?"

The PREMIER replied—

"1 to 3. During the last three months Ministers have received a number of deputations from the unemployed, and at all times have done their best to relieve the situation. There are good grounds for suspecting that prior to the elections the unemployed situation was exploited by Tory newspapers for political purposes."

(Opposition laughter.)

PAYMENT OF INTEREST AND STORAGE CHARGE.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*) asked the Minister in Charge of State Enterprises—

"1. Has the matter referred to in the Auditor-General's report for the year ended 30th June, 1919, page 14, re interest and storage charge, been finalised?"

"2. If yes; when, and how?"

"3. What sum of money was involved in the calculation—(a) On account of interest, (b) on account of storage?"

"4. To what account, and to what year, has the amount been charged?"

The TREASURER replied—

"1. Yes.

"2. By agreement with the meat companies under date 8th April, 1920.

"3. (a) Interest, £6,210; (b) storage, £33,138.

"4. To reserves specially set aside for this purpose as at 30th June, 1919. It must be remembered that the Government contested a substantial proportion of the companies' claim, and an agreement satisfactory to both sides was subsequently arrived at, so that litigation would be avoided."

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS SUPPLIED TO MEMBERS PRIOR TO ELECTION.

Mr. G. P. BARNES asked the Premier—

"1. Were Labour members (to the exclusion of Nationalist and Country party members) supplied by the Chief Secretary's Department and other departments with the special report of the Commissioner for State Enterprises and the Price Fixing Commissioner, issued just prior to the State election?"

"2. Under whose instruction was this done?"

The PREMIER replied—

"1. No 'special' reports were issued either by the Commissioner for State Enterprises or the Price Fixing Commissioner. As in the case of other public officials occupying analogous positions, these officers are called upon to render annual and other reports to their responsible Minister in regard to the working of their respective Acts. Such an annual report was recently made by the Price Fixing Commissioner, and this was made available to the public through the medium of the Press. The Commissioner for State Enterprises, in accordance with the provisions of the State Enterprises Act, also submitted a statement of the financial position as affecting his department, and this was available to all members of Parliament.

"2. See answer to No. 1."

EMPLOYMENT OF DEFEATED LABOUR CANDIDATES.

Mr. WALKER asked the Premier—

"1. Which of the defeated Labour candidates at the last State election are now in the employ of the State Government?"

"2. Which of them were in the State employ prior to contesting the election?"

The PREMIER replied—

"1 and 2. All candidates defeated at the recent elections who had resigned from the public service to qualify as candidates were reappointed to the service on application."

Hon. W. H. BARNES: That is not correct. What about Mr. Lodge? He was offered a minor position.

PAMPHLETS ADVERTISING THE STATE.

Mr. WALKER asked the Premier—

"Will he lay upon the table of the House a list of the pamphlets 'advertising the State,' which are specified in the Auditor-General's report as having cost a sum exceeding £3,000 to produce?"

The PREMIER replied—

"Yes. I lay on the table a list of the pamphlets."

COST OF PREMIER'S VISIT TO ENGLAND AND OTHER COUNTRIES.

Mr. WALKER asked the Premier—

"1. What was the cost of his recent visit to England and other countries recently, inclusive of the expenses of his family and staff?"

"2. Did he visit any other country besides England; if so, what countries?"

"3. If so, were such visits made at State expense, and what was their purpose?"

The PREMIER replied—

"1. £3,730 15s. 4d.

"2 and 3. I visited certain European countries at my own expense."

UNLICENSED STREET BOOKMAKERS.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*) asked the Attorney-General—

"1. Has his attention been drawn to the fact that several persons have recently been defrauded of money by unlicensed street bookmakers?"

"2. If the powers of the police are not sufficient to regulate the present indiscriminate and unlicensed betting which takes place in Elizabeth street, and in other public thoroughfares in Brisbane, will he introduce legislation during the present session to give them sufficient powers?"

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*) replied—

"1. Yes.

"2. The matter will receive consideration."

USE OF GOVERNMENT PROPERTY FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES.

Mr. MAXWELL asked the Premier—

"1. By whose order were the flag poles on the new Queensland Government Savings Bank made available for the purpose of carrying a party advertisement on 9th October last, advising electors to vote Labour?"

"2. Is it within his memory that a Government, of which he was a member in 1917, ordered the Railway Department to break a signed and stamped contract which it had made to place Nationalist propaganda on railway hoardings, on the ground that Government property must not be used for political purposes?"

"3. Was the advertisement on the Government Savings Bank erected by Government employees, or with the help of State Government employees?"

The PREMIER replied—

"1. By permission of the Premier.

"2. The Nationalist propaganda referred to was scurrilous and misleading.

"3. Not to my knowledge."

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Oh, oh! and laughter.

CREW AND OFFICERS OF "DOUGLAS MAWSON."

Mr. KING (*Logan*) asked the Treasurer—

"1. What crew and officers are carried by the steamer 'Douglas Mawson'?"

"2. What amount of overtime was paid—(a) To officers, (b) to members of the crew up to 30th June last?"

The TREASURER replied—

"1. One master, one mate, one second mate, one chief engineer, one second engineer, one third engineer, six seamen (A.B.'s), three firemen, one cook, one steward; total, 17.

"2. (a) Officers, £166 6s. 7d.; (b) crew. £278 3s. 11d."

MOTOR CARS OWNED BY STATE.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*) asked the Premier—
"1. How many motor-cars are owned by the State of Queensland at the present moment?"

"2. How many were owned by the Queensland Government on 31st December, 1914?"

"3. What was the cost of annual upkeep of State motor vehicles in Queensland in—(a) Financial year 1914-15, (b) financial year 1919-20?"

The PREMIER replied—

"1 to 3. This information will be obtained."

SURVEY OF TRAM EXTENSION TOWARDS ASHGROVE.

Mr. KERR asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. Is it a fact that, just prior to the elections—that is, prior to the 9th October, 1920—a trial survey or any other survey was made in relation to an extension of the tramway service along Waterworks road towards Ashgrove?"

"2. If so, what was the object of such survey?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

"1. Yes.

"2. The survey was the result of a promise made by the Government to a large deputation which requested the survey in anticipation of the Government assuming control of the tramways."

LEGAL FEES, IMPERIAL MEAT ACCOUNT.

Mr. FLETCHER (*Gladstone*) asked the Premier—

"1. To whom were paid the legal fees of £13,816 3s. 6d., as shown in the Imperial Meat Account for 1920?"

"2. For what services were the fees paid?"

The PREMIER replied—

"1 and 2. A return will be tabled."

ANTI-LABOUR CANDIDATES EMPLOYED BY GOVERNMENT.

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*) asked the Premier—

"1. How many State Government employes contested seats in the interests of parties other than the Labour party?"

"2. How many of these candidates have applied for and have been refused reinstatement to their former positions?"

The PREMIER replied—

"1. Five.

"2. All these candidates have been reappointed to their former positions with the exception of Mr. Lodge, who

contested the Fitzroy seat. This candidate was offered a position by the Commissioner for Railways at another centre, which, so far, he has not seen fit to accept."

Hon. W. H. BARNES: At a lesser salary.

PAYMENTS TO MR. C. J. ROSS FOR SUPERVISING STATE MEAT SHOPS.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*) asked the Minister in charge of State enterprises—

"What amount was paid to Mr. C. J. Ross for supervising State meat shops since their inception?"

The TREASURER replied—

"£950."

SALES BY STATE PRODUCE AGENCY.

Mr. MORGAN asked the Minister in charge of State enterprises—

"1. What was the value of produce sold through the State Agency on consignment during last financial year?"

"2. What was the value of produce purchased by the State Agency outside Queensland; also within the State?"

"3. What money was received for produce sold that had in the first instance been purchased by the State Produce Agency?"

"4. What amount was received from other State departments for produce sold to them?"

The TREASURER replied—

"1. £43,012 10s. 11d.

"2. Outside Queensland, £77,570 3s. 6d.; within Queensland, £50,517 8s. 5d.

"3. £104,564 17s. 9d.

"4. £21,671 2s. 1d."

BUILDINGS OCCUPIED BY MR. WALLBANK AT MILES.

Mr. MORGAN asked the Secretary for Railways—

"What is the number of rooms, and dimensions of same, of house built at Miles, and now occupied by Mr. Wallbank. The total cost of same—(a) building material, (b) wages paid?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

"Three rooms, each measuring 12 feet by 10 feet, verandas front and back, bathroom on back veranda, galley measuring 10 feet square. (a) Material, railage, and use of tools, £192 19s. 3d.; (b) wages, £187 3s. 10d."

INQUIRIES BY COMMISSIONER FOR PRICES.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*) asked the Premier—

"1. Has he read a copy of the fifty or more questions submitted to dairymen on transactions extending over six years by the Price Fixing Commissioner?"

"2. Why was the dairyman selected as a profiteer and asked to give a return for six years, including values of land?"

"3. Are business men asked to give the same information? If not, why not?"

"4. Is he aware that a farmer is compelled to sell a cow's hide for the same price that he pays for a pair of boy's boots—that is, often under 20s.?"

"5. Is he also aware that out of a 2 lb. tin of pineapples sold by the State and other canneries at 1s. 5d., the grower receives only 3d.?"

"6. Will he ask the Commissioner to inquire into these matters: also that, in any inquiry into the cost of primary products, farmers shall be allowed the same hours of labour and the same rate of overtime and wages as allowed to skilled workers, including Saturday and Sunday?"

The PREMIER replied—

"1 to 6. These matters will be inquired into."

GOVERNMENT RELIEF DURING LAST YEAR.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*), in the absence of Mr. T. R. Roberts, asked the Home Secretary—

"1. How many persons have benefited by the receipt of Government relief during the year ended 30th June last—(a) families, (b) single persons?"

"2. What amount of money has been distributed as Government relief during the period mentioned—(a) metropolitan area, (b) other districts?"

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*) replied—

"1 and 2. Full information will be given in the annual report which will be laid on the table of the House at an early date."

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING.

Mr. FRY, on behalf of Mr. T. R. Roberts, asked the Premier—

"1. Whether the article headed 'The Maranoa District (South-Western Queensland), Its Wonderful Resources, and its Illimitable Possibilities,' and similar matter have been published in newspapers and paid for as Government advertisements?"

"2. If so, what amount was paid last financial year to the 'Brisbane Courier,' 'Daily Mail,' 'Telegraph,' and 'Daily Standard,' respectively?"

The PREMIER replied—

"1. Yes.

"2. The information will be compiled."

RAILWAY COMMUNICATION BETWEEN ROCKHAMPTON AND MACKAY.

Mr. FORDE (*Rockhampton*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. What mileage of railway is open for traffic between Rockhampton and Mackay, at the Rockhampton end?"

"2. What mileage of railway is open for traffic on the North Coast Railway, between Mackay and Rockhampton, at the Mackay end?"

"3. What mileage of railway has yet to be built to link up Rockhampton with Mackay?"

"4. When does he expect that the North Coast Railway will be completed from Rockhampton to Mackay?"

"5. Will he urge that everything possible be done to expedite the completion of the above-quoted railway?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

- "1. Rockhampton to Wumalgi, 95 miles.
- "2. Mackay to Carmila, 61 miles
- "3. 43 miles.
- "4. December, 1921.
- "5. Yes."

BABY CLINICS FOR ROCKHAMPTON.

Mr. FORDE asked the Home Secretary—

"Will he expedite the establishment of the proposed baby clinics in Rockhampton?"

The HOME SECRETARY replied—

"Steps are being taken to establish clinics in various centres. Rockhampton is one of these centres, but it will take some time to organise the service and erect suitable accommodation."

SPEECH BY REV. FATHER MACGINLEY.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*) asked the Secretary for Public Instruction—

"1. Has his attention been drawn to a statement in the 'Daily Mail' newspaper of 18th November, 1920, in which the Rev. Father McGinley, when speaking on education at Childers, is reported to have expressed himself as follows:—

He strongly advised them not to send their children to the State schools where the boys and girls lost their morals and their faith. To hell with the State schools!?"

"2. Does he consider that the statement as reported, if correct, was one that should have been made?"

"3. Will he take steps to ascertain its correctness?"

"4. Should the report be found, after inquiry, to be substantially correct, will he take immediate steps to deal with the matter and to prevent a repetition of such utterances?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. J. Huxham, *Buranda*) replied—

"1. Yes.

"2. No; nor is it the opinion of his ecclesiastical superior. I quote for the hon. member's information the following remarks by Archbishop Duhig which appeared in this morning's issue of the Brisbane 'Daily Mail'—

Archbishop Duhig, before leaving Brisbane last evening for Gayndah, stated that he had seen the report in the latest issue of the 'Daily Mail' of a speech claimed to have been made by the Rev. Father McGinley.

The Archbishop stated that if Father McGinley had made any such statements, he had expressed his own individual views, and that Father McGinley was alone responsible.

His Grace could not endorse either the sentiments or the language in which the views were expressed. He considered that people should not discuss any matters at all unless they discussed them calmly.

"3. No good purpose can be served by taking further notice of the alleged utterance. (Hon. W. H. BARNES: Afraid!)"

"4. No law has been infringed."

STORAGE ACCOMMODATION AT PORT ALMA.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*) asked the Treasurer—

"1. Is it a fact that some of the storage accommodation at Port Alma is being removed?"

"2. If so, for what reason?"

The TREASURER replied—

"1. I have no knowledge of the matter. Storage accommodation at Port Alma is under the control of the Rockhampton Harbour Board.

"2. See reply to No. 1."

REPORTS ON TRADE ENTERPRISES.

Mr. FLETCHER (*Port Curtis*), without notice, asked the Minister in charge of State enterprises when will the reports of the Commissioner for Trade and the Auditor-General on the transactions of the State enterprises for the year ended 30th June, 1920, be made available?

The TREASURER replied: The Act requires that the Commissioner shall present his report to me some time in September—I am not sure of the date. I spoke to the Commissioner about it some few days ago, and he advised me that it would be utterly impossible to supply the report in September in any year, and that the Act should be amended. At all events, I expect to have the report in a fortnight or three weeks, and, if the hon. member so desires, I will let him know to-morrow the exact date when it will be available.

APPROPRIATION BILL, No. 2.

RETURNED FROM COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Council returning this Bill without amendment.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

The TREASURER: I desire to ask permission to make a personal explanation.

The SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the Minister be allowed to make a personal explanation?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The TREASURER: Fortified by the convincing evidence that "someone had told him," Mr. Macgregor, the member for Merthyr, yesterday made a statement in this Chamber concerning myself that, if unanswered, might be accepted as truth. I will not bother repeating the statement, but I want to inform the House that during the last three weeks of the late campaign I addressed the undermentioned meetings on the dates and at the places mentioned—

Monday, 20th September—Torbanlea and Howard (two meetings); Tuesday, 21st September—Childers; Wednesday, 22nd September—Gin Gin; Thursday, 23rd September—Maryborough and Newtown (two meet-

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ings); Friday, 24th September—Gympie; Saturday, 25th September—Forest Hill; Monday, 27th September—Ipswich; Tuesday, 28th September—Cambooya; Wednesday, 29th September—Stanthorpe; Thursday, 30th September—Swan Creek and Warwick; Friday, 1st October—Toowoomba; Saturday, 2nd October—Dalby; Monday, 4th October—Albion and Spring Hill (two meetings); Wednesday, 6th October—Clarence Corner and Kangaroo Point (two meetings); Thursday, 7th October—Paddington and Ipswich road (two meetings); Friday, 8th October (the night preceding the elections), William street, City; Berry street, Spring Hill; and Toowong (three meetings).

The campaign committee were notified from Toowoomba on 1st October that on account of a heavy cold it might be necessary to reduce metropolitan meetings during the last week to one meeting per night, and they were instructed to cancel the meeting at Merthyr on Tuesday, 5th. They were also instructed to cancel one of the three meetings (Hawthorne) on Monday, 4th, and to allow Albion and Spring Hill meetings to stand, and not to advertise Friday's meeting at Toowong until further advised. This letter was duly acknowledged on Monday, 4th. In addition to the above programme, organising work of an extensive and varied character, well known to my party, fell upon my shoulders, and I venture to say that the record is not a discreditable one. I would add that this is the first personal explanation I have had occasion to make in the House, and it is rendered necessary only on account of the poisonous slanders of irresponsibles who associate with whisperers and brazenly publish malicious falsehoods, well aware of their mendacity. (Opposition laughter.)

WHEAT POOL BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): In rising to move the second reading of this Bill, which is a Bill of some importance to the country, I wish to relate briefly the circumstances leading up to the necessity for the passing of such a measure. In March, 1917, certain correspondence took place between the Government of Queensland and the Prime Minister and the Federal Wheat Board concerning supplies of wheat for the current year until the new harvesting took place, and the Federal Wheat Board told the Government of Queensland that the price of wheat was 7s. 8d. per bushel, and that the Queensland Government must state how much they required. That was the price they had to pay for it in the South, and the Queensland Government were told to state definitely how much they required; or, in other words, to guarantee the Southern Federal Wheat Board 7s. 8d. per bushel for all the wheat bought up by Queensland up to the time of the harvesting of our own crop. There was considerable correspondence on the subject, some of which was with Senator Russell and the Prime Minister. With regard to the sugar agreement, I might mention that we did not demand what is called world's parity for our sugar, even though we were the real sugar-producing

State in the Commonwealth, but after some correspondence and negotiations a reasonable price was arrived at for the supply of sugar; and, seeing that we had dealt in a generous way with the consumers of sugar in the South, it was thought that this peremptory demand by the Southern Wheat Board of 7s. 8d. per bushel—a high price at that time—without consulting us as to whether it were worth that or not, was somewhat dictatorial. However, we finally had to agree to take wheat for our requirements at that price, or go without. Bear in mind, we were refused the right to join the Federal Wheat Pool. Following on this treatment it was thought that, as Queensland has sufficient land to produce all the wheat we require for ourselves, every effort should be made to make this State self-supporting. While I claim no originality for the idea of guaranteeing prices, I would like to say that the Labour Government of Queensland is the first Government in this State that has introduced the guaranteeing of prices for agricultural products, and, after inquiring into the question of the possible prices and possible supply of wheat throughout the world, it was quite safe, in my opinion, to guarantee our own farmers 8s. per bushel for all the wheat they can produce during the coming season. I think that was a wise move, and, although I am not

not going to say that either that [4 p.m.] guarantee of 8s. or the additional concession of supplying the needy wheat farmer with seed wheat at cost price, and giving him time to pay for it, has been the sole cause of the result, I do claim that those two considerations taken together are, to some extent, responsible for the increased crop. I think every honest person will give us credit for that. I went fully into the question of how much we could afford to guarantee. I think I should remind the House that the Federal Government was satisfied that 5s. per bushel was all they could guarantee to the wheatgrowers during the current season. The Labour Government of New South Wales went one better, and added half-a-crown to that figure, making the guarantee 7s. 6d. for all the wheat produced in New South Wales, which is a large producing State—I suppose a State which produces ten times as much wheat as we do. After giving full consideration to the matter, Cabinet decided that for this season's wheat we should guarantee 8s. per bushel, and I make no apology to the consumer or the producer either, because I think we should all look just a little bit further ahead than the immediate present. I am satisfied that if you want a man to do a certain thing, you must give him some encouragement, and one of the best ways to encourage the man on the land to grow crops is to ensure him a payable price for his commodity, I do not care whether it is butter, or sugar, or cheese, or maize.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Or fruit?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Or fruit. Anything the civilised man requires to keep him alive, the people who produce it should be encouraged to produce, otherwise we cannot expect him to go on producing it. That opinion is fortified by a good many years of practical experience on the land, notwithstanding the remarks of one of the new members in this House, who questioned my experience as a farmer.

Mr. PAYNE: You have forgotten more than he ever knew.

[Hon. J. A. Fihelly.]

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: As the hon. member for Mitchell says, I have forgotten more about farming than the hon. member for Wide Bay has ever learned or is likely to learn. (Opposition laughter.) Probably that is true of many so-called farmers who enter this House.

MR. CLAYTON: Not many.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I would challenge the hon. member to a test of any work on the farm—ploughing, axe work, or anything else—a public exhibition on the farm at any work he likes to choose.

MR. CLAYTON: Come on!

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I have had experience on the land myself, and I have long since arrived at the conclusion that there is nothing—not even mining, even when carried on by common-sense practical men—more speculative than farming in this country. That being so, it becomes necessary for a Government having common sense and foresight, as this Government have, to do something practical to encourage the farmer to produce and keep on producing on the land. Instead of coming to this House and wasting a lot of time with long speeches and diatribes about “the poor, unfortunate man on the land,” we have endeavoured in a common-sense way to do something. (Hear, hear!) I say again that I make no apology to the consumer of bread, or the producer of wheat of this State, for having recommended the Cabinet to guarantee 8s. a bushel for the present season, because I am quite satisfied that that price will not have the effect of causing the consumer to pay anything more than he would by importing wheat from the other States. I took the same view with regard to sugar. I recognised that sugar must bring a high price, as compared with pre-war days, perhaps I should say the bad old days of black labour, but I recognised that the alternative probably was to pay £60 or £70 a ton for sugar grown outside by cheap, perhaps black, labour. It was necessary to look ahead, and I am one of those who try to look ahead, and I considered what would be the position at the end of the three years' period of the sugar agreement. I thought it a wise thing that the people of Australia, particularly of Queensland, who benefit most, should give the producers a fair and reasonable price in order to encourage them to produce sugar.

MR. MORGAN: You do not believe in sweating the farmer?

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not, but I go further. The great difference between me and the hon. member is that whilst I do not believe in sweating the farmer, I do not believe either in sweating the city worker. (Hear, hear!) I do not believe in sweating any worker, and I hope I shall go out of politics before I take sides with one section of the workers against another, whether wage-earner or farmer. That is the great difference between the party on this side of the House and the party on the other side. The Labour party, as their objective says, stand for securing the full results of their industry to all producers.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MORGAN: Yet you are supported by one class.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, the workers and producers. If the hon. member would read our platform, he would

find that the Labour party's objective—as the objective of no other party in politics in Australia—stands for securing the full results of their industry to all producers, not only to the primary producers, but to the secondary producers also—to the men who are in the cities as well as the men who are in the country. (Hear, hear!) These men who talk so much about the farmers—when you come to analyse their private careers—are very often found to be men who farm the farmers and sweat the wage-earners.

MR. RYAN: Employ Chinamen!

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: When the farmers want a leader, instead of getting a practical farmer like the hon. member for Drayton, who, I do understand, knows something about producing cheese—although, strange to say, he never talks about cheese in this House, but always about butter, notwithstanding that I am told by one of his friends who does not always agree with him, but nevertheless belongs to the same faith, that he has never produced a pound of butter in his life.

MR. VOWLES: I rise to a point of order. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, whether the Minister is dealing with the second reading of the Bill. If we are going to have this sort of thing, I shall claim the same kind of latitude in reply.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I was saying—

MR. BEBBINGTON: You were telling deliberate untruths.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am prepared to admit, Mr. Speaker, that I had been led astray by interjectors.

THE SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member for Drayton to withdraw his remark that the Minister told deliberate untruths.

MR. BEBBINGTON (Drayton): I withdraw it. It may not have been deliberate, but it was an untruth.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: If the hon. member for Drayton will permit me, I will continue what I have to say.

MR. MORGAN: Why do you want to be nasty?

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not want to be nasty at all; there is nothing further from my mind. I have been drawn off the track somewhat by interjections. I was going to say that, after all this talk about a farmers' party, they should elect a practical farmer to be their leader.

MR. CORSER: You said that at election time.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I believe that the hon. member for Drayton knows something about the production of cheese, and that the reason why he talks so much about butter in this House is because he wants to divert attention from the question of cheese.

MR. BEBBINGTON: The leader is the choice of this party, and we have that right, not you.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I want to lead up to the necessity for this Bill, for the guarantee which the Government gave involved some further action on their part. The farmer, of all men probably in the community, is generally against compulsion, and—since I believed all the time that the best way to handle this wheat crop

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is by means of a pool, and that no pool can be successful unless it is a compulsory one—I was very pleased to be fortified by the deputation which, introduced by the leader of the Opposition, waited on the Premier and myself from the farmers and wheat-growers, and urged that the pool should be compulsory. No time has been lost in framing the Bill, no time has been lost in this House so far as the Bill is concerned, and no time has been lost by myself in making all the preliminary arrangements. Following on that deputation, it became necessary for the Premier to go South to endeavour to arrive at some basis as to what was going to be the price of wheat for Australia during the current year. Now, the guarantee of 8s. a bushel to the farmers gave us an interest in this matter. I think I might say that the Premier, Mr. Theodore, delayed his visit to the Southern States one day in order to receive the deputation to myself, led by the leader of the Opposition, to urge upon the Government the establishment of a wheat pool. We know from the representations made that a wheat pool is acceptable, not only to the Government, but to both sides of the House, and I am satisfied that the wheat pool will be a success. A conference was held in Toowoomba on the 22nd October, and the farmers' representatives decided on a wheat pool. A deputation waited on myself and the Premier on the 26th, and the Premier of Queensland left for the South on the 27th to finalise matters in connection with the Australian price; and, as hon. members are aware, from Press reports, a recommendation was made by the Australian Wheat Board to the Prime Minister, who referred it to the Premier's Conference, that 9s. should be the price for f.a.q. wheat on a seaport basis for Australia during the current year. That is 1s. a bushel more than the guarantee that has been given by the Queensland Government. That is for prime milling wheat, though I do not think there is very much difference between prime milling and fair average quality wheat, so in my opinion the Government were justified, from every point of view, in giving that guarantee, and to some extent that guarantee was responsible for us having a record crop. There is a record crop this year.

Mr. VOWLES: You gave the guarantee after the seed was put in.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No; that is not true. The statistics show that the crop will exceed 4,000,000 bushels. That is not sufficient for our own requirements, but, I hope, as time goes on, that we will produce not only all the wheat necessary for our own requirements, but that we will be able to export, because I am satisfied that there are hundreds of thousands of acres in the western part of this State suitable for wheat-growing.

Mr. CLAYTON: Will you encourage them to go on growing?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is the kind of interjection you might expect from a gentleman who has not paid any attention to political economy. He interjects in a vague way about encouraging the farmer. I say this Government have, in a practical way, encouraged wheat-growing in a way no previous Government have ever attempted to do—by guaranteeing a price.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Question.

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The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Taking the price for the last twenty years in Queensland, the average is something less than half what this Government have guaranteed, namely, 8s. The hon. gentleman interjects about encouraging. Well, let them come along with some practical scheme instead of talking about the poor farmer, or indicate to the House and the country through "Hansard" where their Government have done anything half as good as we have done.

Mr. CORSER: This is their scheme.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am very pleased to know that the hon. member interjects that "This is their scheme," meaning his party endorse the pool. I say this scheme was absolutely necessary owing to the fact that this Government had guaranteed 8s. per bushel, which is our scheme. That is a guarantee no previous Government ever attempted to give. All the guarantee they ever gave to the farmers was the railway guarantee and a lot of promises at election time.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: No. They gave money to the farmers to plough the land and put wheat in. You never gave them a cent.

The SPEAKER: Order! I would ask the hon. member for Drayton to refrain from interjecting. He will have an opportunity later of speaking on the question.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Briefly, the objects of the Bill are to take power to appoint a board. I think I might mention here that when the deputation waited on myself and the Premier we agreed that the representation on the board should be as urged by the deputation, and that will be carried out. The board will consist, although it is not mentioned in the Bill, of five representatives of the growers, who shall be growers of wheat, one financial man—I am asking the associated banks to take up the question of nominating such a man—and a chairman, who, in my opinion, should be a Government official. That is not laid down in the Bill either.

Mr. MORGAN: Why don't you include the number in the Bill?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There is no occasion to do so, for this reason: I have already promised that to the leader of the Opposition, and I am in the habit of keeping my promises, as hon. members of this House will agree.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: This board will be going on for years.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I promised the leader of the Opposition that I would agree to the resolution passed at Toowoomba, and that is quite sufficient for the farmers and for this House. The Bill, briefly, provides for the establishment of this board, and it will be compulsory for the whole of the f.a.q. wheat of Queensland to come under the board. The board will have ample powers. They have a free hand practically to handle the crop and finance the scheme. I should say that while the Premier was in the South he consulted the Prime Minister. I raised the question on the deputation that waited on me and pointed out that under the Constitution it was impossible for the Commonwealth Government to leave Queensland out of the guarantee of 5s. The Prime Minister assured the Premier of Queensland that Queensland would come in for the guarantee of 5s., which

means that 2s. 6d. will be paid on delivery and 2s. 6d. will be paid by certificate, which will be payable on the 30th April, so that in practice 5s. will be available for the financing of the scheme. I might mention that, although it is not laid down in the Bill, the board will have power to deal with the matter of payments by the millers. I find that in the case of some of the Southern wheat pools they insisted on the miller paying in advance, and I am satisfied that the 5s. guarantee by the Federal Government is quite sufficient to finance the scheme. The difference between the 8s. guaranteed by this Government and the 9s. agreed upon by the Premiers' Conference may amount to about £200,000. I do not know what the expenses will be. That will be a matter for the board. The fees of the board are really a matter that I have reserved to myself, but I have no hard-and-fast ideas about that. The duties of the board will be heavy. They have a very big job in front of them, and I have no reason to doubt but that the farmers, in selecting their representatives, would select the very best men they can secure. The board will be agents for the farmers to carry out a huge co-operative marketing scheme. They will have to appoint servants, agents, and officers, and pay them whatever they consider a reasonable reward for their services. They have power to take control of the grain sheds of the State. That is absolutely necessary. I might mention that the Commissioner for Railways has made arrangements with several individuals to lease the grain sheds, but I am satisfied there will be no difficulty in the handing over of these grain sheds to the wheat board when appointed, because the whole of the farmers in the wheatgrowing districts are interested in this scheme.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: There are other crops to consider.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There are other crops, but the wheat crop is the most important crop. The wheat crop provides food for man.

Mr. MORGAN: Doesn't maize?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: What about barley?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: This is purely a wheat Bill. If the hon. member wishes to make it more comprehensive, we can discuss all the details frankly and honestly when we get into Committee. There will be no objection to paying reasonable compensation to those persons who have leased the grain sheds. I am satisfied that there will be no difficulty about that at all. Any contracts which have been entered into since it was decided to form the wheat pool may be nullified. If contracts were entered into through any misrepresentation or misunderstanding, then they can be nullified. That is very necessary. My sympathy is with the farmer, who does the work and takes all the risks. If the speculator has been at work, I have given him due warning that all contracts may be nullified.

Mr. MORGAN: What if the contracts are not to the detriment of the wheatgrowers? What will happen then?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They must be to the detriment of the wheatgrowers. Proper accounts shall be kept by the board, subject to inspection by the Auditor-General. I do not know that there is any necessity for me to give any sort of

a lengthy speech with regard to the provisions of this Bill. It is a simple scheme. The Bill was drafted several times before it met with my approval. The first draft was somewhat on the lines of the Southern Acts. The Southern Acts, however, are more comprehensive, because they deal with large quantities for export, and the board there is more of a permanent institution. In the South the board does not only deal with one season's crop, but deals with exports from year to year. This scheme is a very simple one. No doubt, the leader of the Opposition has gone through the Bill very carefully, and I think he will agree that it is a simple scheme, because every power necessary is given to the board—and it will be practically a board of growers—to carry out the scheme for the growers. There are no restrictions, as the Government will not interfere in any way with the scheme. The finances are arranged for in the Prime Minister's promise, and there should be no difficulty on that score. I think that the scheme generally should be a success. I have much pleasure in moving the second reading.

Mr. MOORE: I listened with a good deal of interest to the second reading speech of the Minister for Agriculture. He seems to have taken a great deal of credit to himself and his Government for the common-sense view taken by the Government, but it is an extraordinary thing that that common-sense view synchronises with the rise of the Farmer's party. It was only when the Country party saw the necessity of looking after their own affairs that the Government commenced to take a common-sense view.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What about the guarantee?

Mr. CORSER: You were against a guarantee, as you voted with Denham.

Mr. MOORE: I am satisfied that the guarantee was the only possible thing to be done by the Government. We in Queensland had gone down to such a lamentable extent that it looked as if we were going out of the industry altogether. Something had to be done.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Tory Government did nothing when it went down in Victoria.

Mr. MOORE: It only went down in Victoria under the Federal Government. We found that something had to be done in Queensland to encourage the wheatgrowers to go on with the wheat industry, and the Government gave a guarantee. They knew when they made the guarantee that the wheat would be worth more than 8s. per bushel when the harvest came. When the harvesting was started we found that absolutely nothing at all had been done by the Government in connection with paying the guarantee.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: This Government are in the habit of keeping their promises.

Mr. MOORE: That is all very well, but the farmers had started the harvest and there was nothing done by the Government towards paying the 8s. per bushel guarantee. When the farmers found that no arrangements had been made, they took the matter into their own hands. They held a meeting in Toowoomba and formed a deputation to the Minister. They suggested to the Minister that a wheat pool should be formed.

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He saw the wisdom of the suggestion and accepted the position as laid down by the wheatgrowers, and brought in this Bill.

Hon. J. H. COYNE: Didn't the Government promise 8s. per bushel?

Mr. MOORE: Yes, the Government promised 8s. per bushel. I don't deny that. I am not taking any credit away from the Government for guaranteeing 8s. per bushel. But anyone could guarantee 8s., seeing that there is a shortage of wheat all over the world.

Hon. J. H. COYNE: It was guaranteed five months ago.

Mr. MOORE: The Minister for Agriculture takes credit for looking ahead and the Government merely looked ahead. The farmers looked behind, and see what has happened during the regime of the present Government and under the late Government. The farmers remember when they were offered a guarantee of 3s. 6d. per bushel for their wheat in Queensland, while, at the same time, the Government were paying 8s. 10d. per bushel for wheat coming in from other places. We found that the wheat lands were going out of cultivation, and something had to be done. I am glad that the Government took a reasonably sensible view of the situation, and agreed to pay a guarantee of 8s. per bushel. I do not think there is anything wonderful in the Government doing that. All the same, they have not made any arrangements at all to pay the guarantee of 8s. per bushel.

Hon. J. H. COYNE: The arrangements are made.

Mr. MOORE: The guarantee was given in June. I congratulate the Government for giving the guarantee, but I condemn the Government for not making arrangements for paying it when the harvesting started. What would have happened if the farmers did not hold that meeting and come down and ask for the formation of a wheat pool?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Cabinet discussed it before you came down. We were not going to tell you everything.

Mr. MOORE: But the Government did not make arrangements to pay the guarantee. They may have discussed it, but they did not do anything by the time the harvest started. The farmers were forced into the position of having to hold a meeting at the busiest time of the year, and they had to come down and ask the Minister to form a wheat pool.

Mr. GILDAY: You opposed a wheat pool some time ago.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. member for Ithaca does not know what he is talking about.

Mr. GILDAY: I know more about wheat-growing than you.

Mr. MOORE: I am not talking about wheat-growing, but about the wheat pool. You said I objected to go into the wheat pool. I can produce the letters which I wrote to Mr. Ryan, asking him to keep the wheat pool open so that the wheat farmers would have an opportunity of getting into it.

Mr. GILDAY: I do not mean that you personally opposed it; but the farmers growing wheat were opposed to it.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. member for Ithaca is wrong again. He is always wrong. The Minister for Agriculture, in order to find out

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how the wheatgrowers stood, asked them to take a referendum on the question, and twenty-nine voted in favour of entering the pool, eleven against, and seven did not vote at all. That is what he calls being against it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Don't you know that the Prime Minister would not let Queensland form a wheat pool?

Mr. COSER: It was open for Queensland to come into the pool.

Mr. MOORE: It was open for you to come in. We asked for it. I can show you the correspondence in 1916.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: In 1917-1918 it was refused by the Prime Minister.

Mr. MOORE: The year after, when the growers wanted to come in, the Premier said it was too late. The Queensland Government was too shortsighted in its policy to take advantage of the pool when it was first offered. They did not know whether it was going to be a success or not, and consequently thought there might be a few votes lost.

Mr. HARTLEY: The growers would not come in.

Mr. MOORE: I tell you that they wanted to come in.

Mr. HARTLEY: After you made it too late by your own delay.

Mr. MOORE: The Government asked for a referendum of the farmers at the busiest time of the year.

Mr. HARTLEY: The hon. member for Cunningham would not have it.

Mr. MOORE: The member for Cunningham did not represent all the wheatgrowers in Queensland. He did not know if it was a good thing for the wheatgrowers of the State or not. The Government were not game to take it on themselves, and that was why they sent round and had a referendum of the farmers on the question.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: The member for Cunningham represents more wheatgrowers than you do.

Mr. MOORE: It does not matter whether I represent any wheatgrowers or not. I have the interests of the farmers at heart, and if I considered it a good [4.30 p.m.] thing for the wheatgrowers to go in for a pool, I would not ask for a referendum, but would take the responsibility on my own shoulders to go in.

Mr. HARTLEY: Why didn't you form a wheat pool outside the Government?

Mr. MOORE: The Government are not doing anything much in this really. (Interjections.)

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MOORE: I am pleased to see that the Bill has been brought forward to-day. The forming of a wheat board is a very big thing. The Commonwealth Government has come to the rescue in the way of finance in a great measure, and, although Queensland did stand out in the past, they now have the opportunity of securing the assistance from the Commonwealth Government.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: When did the Commonwealth Government make arrangements in connection with their money?

Mr. MOORE: When the conference was in Melbourne.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Since your deputation?

Mr. MOORE: Yes.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Commonwealth Government made no arrangement as regards the 5s.

Mr. MOORE: They did. I say the Queensland Government should have made some arrangements when guaranteeing 8s. per bushel as to how they were going to pay it. Besides, the wheat harvest takes place earlier in Queensland than it does in the South. In Queensland, the harvest had already started before this Government commenced to do anything. It is no use your saying, "Look at the wonders we have done," when the position is such as it is.

There are many things in the Bill which want a good deal of discussion in Committee. I would like to have seen, for instance, that the board was made definite. The Minister can put as many persons on it as he cares to. We know that very often outside pressure is brought to bear on Ministers to put other people on. We want this pool to be run by the growers. We do not want to run it selfishly, but we do want the board to consist of the men who grow and produce the wheat—we want the pool run in the way most profitable to these men.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You said just now that you want it run by the growers, and in the next breath you say you want it run by the Government.

Mr. MOORE: We do not want the Minister to put on the board men who have not the same objects in view as the growers had in asking for the pool.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You have my promise in regard to the board.

Mr. MOORE: I am quite agreeable to accept the Minister's promise, but we do not know how long he is going to be Minister. He may be overruled by Cabinet. We have known Ministers to be overruled by a vote in the caucus. Consequently, I do not think anything would have been lost if it had been definitely stated in the Bill whom the board was to consist of. If it were to consist of five growers, a financial expert, and a Government nominee as chairman we would have been perfectly satisfied. I do not suggest for a minute that the Minister is going to break his promise, unless any unforeseen circumstances occur, but I think it would be much safer to have it definitely stated.

We would also like to see a provision made whereby if anything should happen to a member of the board that the man who is nominated in his stead should be a man from the district which the first man represents.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That could not be laid down in the Bill.

Mr. MOORE: You can lay down anything in the Bill in detail so that there will be no misunderstanding. The farmers naturally want to know where they are when there is a wheat pool established. We also think that all wheat should be accepted by the pool. There is going to be a considerable amount of unmillable wheat this time—the estimates vary from 15 per cent. to 25 per cent.—and if there is going to be

4,500,000 bushels harvested, and bad weather sets in, we may have 1,000,000 bushels of inferior wheat. There should be some arrangement made for this. Second quality could be exported at a profitable price.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That would be tying the hands of the pool.

Mr. MOORE: It is not a question of tying the hands of the pool. The board is allowed to give exemptions for all second-quality wheat, and it is only reasonable that when the pool is going to manage the wheat business it should take the responsibility of accepting all wheat, whether second or milling; and, if there is going to be export of second wheat, the pool would have the opportunity of getting it down to Brisbane in the most economical way, and of exporting it at the best price they can get. If it is not suitable for milling in Queensland, I do not think the Minister should see anything unreasonable in providing for the pool, or board, to do the best they can with it.

Mr. HARTLEY: How would that affect the price?

Mr. MOORE: Second-class wheat can be sold in the East to-day at a better price than fair average quality. It will mean a bonus to be distributed by the pool among the farmers. The pool undertakes to sell in the best way they can. If it is all going to be left to be sold in Queensland as fodder, it is likely to create an unsatisfactory position.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What quantity of second-class wheat would there be?

Mr. MOORE: I do not know that definitely, but the Estimates show 15 per cent. to 25 per cent.—it may be 20 per cent. It may be about 1,000,000 bushels.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: How about storage?

Mr. MOORE: Storage has to be provided for the wheat, in any case. There will have to be stacks built. I think the Commissioner for Railways anticipates that stacks are to be built at the various railway stations. There is a good deal of storage available, and besides, all the wheat is not going to come in this month or next month; the last of it may not be in until probably May or June. It is going to be a continual operation, and it won't require such a vast amount of storage as would be required in New South Wales. Therefore, the storage won't be such a big item as the Government anticipate. I think it is very important that the Minister should recognise this question of second class wheat. I think the Minister said that compensation would probably be paid regarding grain sheds. The Commissioner for Railways leased them to individuals or co-operative companies to take them over, and now that there seems to be an opportunity of, perhaps, recovering a little for storage, they have to give them up; so I think it only reasonable if the contract is to be broken—I do not believe in breaking contracts if possible—but if it has to be done, I think it would be better to see that they have an opportunity of getting compensation to pay them for out of pocket expenses and losses. I also think it is not fair that the wheat should take up the whole of the grain sheds to the exclusion of everything else. These sheds were put up for

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grain sheds, and the men who are growing barley should have a portion of them for the purpose of storing their crops. A lot of barley comes in at the same time as the wheat, and those men should have the same opportunity of sheltering their crops as the wheatgrowers have. We come to a clause, then, that might cause a great deal of hardship in some cases, and that is clause 18, under which the Government will take out their money first. As we know, some of these wheat liabilities go back to 1902. Many of them go back eight or nine years. It says here that any mortgage which has been incurred by a farmer since receiving an advance from the Government shall not be taken notice of until the Government's claim has been satisfied. The Government have the right to take the whole or part of the money to satisfy their claim. From this year's crop we say they should take only a portion of their claim. The Government's liens or mortgages are not registered, and a man who lends money to a farmer cannot tell whether he has received a loan from the Government. He lends in good faith, and then the Government are to be in a position to step in and take the whole of the proceeds of the wheat to clear their liability, and leave these men in the lurch. It is only a reasonable thing that the Government should be in the same position as these other individuals; they should not have a prior claim.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is not a hard and fast clause.

Mr. MOORE: If we can rely on the Minister administering it in a fair and reasonable way there will be nothing to complain about.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You can rely on that.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: Considering it is our scheme.

Mr. MOORE: Considering it is the scheme of the wheatgrowers, they are quite prepared to carry it out in the best way that they can. They do not want the Minister to step in and take the whole of the proceeds. We know perfectly well that District Court summonses were issued against certain men, and they were put in a state of anxiety when they had nothing with which to pay.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You must admit that some of them who could pay would not pay.

Mr. MOORE: I admit some of them could pay; and there are some of them the Government will never get anything out of. I do not agree with any farmer getting out of his liabilities. I do not want the Government to give them those. I only want reasonable treatment. If an individual comes to the assistance of a farmer and helps him to get his crop, he should not have to take a back seat to the Government. There is a clause here the Minister did not touch on, and I would like an explanation about it—clause 23. If there is no price fixed, how can there be a difference between the price fixed and that stated in the notification? It seems to be a most extraordinary clause. The Minister has put it in for some particular purpose, I suppose.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The object of that clause is to prevent cornering in wheat, bran, and pollard.

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Mr. MOORE: There can be no cornering in wheat when all the wheat has to go through the pool; and there is no other fixation of prices. The selling price is fixed, and it has to be sold to the mills by the board. I do not know what that clause is for.

Mr. HARTLEY: The purchasing price to the farmer is fixed, but the selling price from the wheat board outward is not fixed, under this Bill.

Mr. MOORE: All the expenses have to come off the 9s. a bushel, and this is what has to be charged to the miller. The Premier said the price of flour is not to go up. If the board is going to charge 10s., 11s., or 12s. it would go up. We consider, also, that the price should be paid at country railway sidings, not at seaboard rates.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is the basis of all Southern pools.

Mr. MOORE: The man growing wheat at Roma will be in a worse position than the one growing it at Toowoomba. We think the farmers should get the same price all over Queensland. The man who happens to be far away from civilisation growing wheat should not be penalised because of that, but should get the same price as the man who happens to be close to the coast. I do not know whether the whole of the rates have to be pooled before the final dividend is made—whether the board takes all the wheat and deducts all the charges. We have a differential system of railway rates for wheat and flour coming down. There is going to be a good deal of difficulty when you have a place where one mill can sell their flour in Brisbane a good deal cheaper than another. A seaboard basis in Toowoomba and a seaboard basis in Roma is the difference in the railway freights.

Mr. PETERSON: Do you think the Toowoomba grower would agree to that suggestion of yours as against the Roma grower?

Mr. MOORE: I think so; yes.

Mr. PETERSON: It will mean a reduction for him if the expenses have to come out of the pool.

Mr. MOORE: Of course, it will mean a slight reduction. It is not a question of one wheatgrower getting ahead of another wheatgrower. We have gone into this co-operative pool, and all we want is fair treatment for all the growers, but the Bill is framed in such a way that it appears that there may be discrimination. This matter is one which should be very carefully watched. The board will have a very hard task in front of them, and we should see what they have to do is clearly stated in the Bill. We want to show the Minister that with our assistance he can probably make this Bill a better Bill than it is at the present time, and I hope the hon. gentleman will be reasonable when the measure goes into Committee. I trust he will accept reasonable amendments from this side of the House. I hope he will not take up the attitude with regard to any clause that the provision has been introduced by the Government and cannot be altered. The object of this House should be to make the Bill the best possible Bill that it can be made.

Mr. HARTLEY: It will be a bad Bill for the worker.

Mr. MOORE: The worker does not come into this Bill.

Mr. HARTLEY: The worker will come in afterwards.

Mr. MOORE: The Bill deals with wheat-growers, and we want to make it a satisfactory Bill.

Mr. WEIR: Our men want to be protected as well as your men.

Mr. MOORE: The men the hon. member refers to are protected, as they have a guarantee that their wages will be raised as the cost of living goes up. When the butter-makers asked for an increase in the price paid them for their butter, certain persons objected to their getting any increase, as that might affect the workers.

Mr. WEIR: I am not taking exception to you getting an increased price if you can prove that an increase is necessary.

Mr. MOORE: There is no need to prove the case. If a body of men apply for an increase in wages, we do not find the employers and persons outside coming in and endeavouring to prevent them getting what they desire by cross-examining their witnesses. Why, then, should they object to butter-makers getting an increase in the price paid them for their commodity? Who produces the butter?

Mr. WEIR: We eat it.

Mr. MOORE: That is true, and every time an endeavour is made to increase the price you endeavour to cut down the price.

Mr. WEIR: No, we don't. What reason is there for increasing the price of butter at the present time?

Mr. MOORE: A judge in New South Wales has reported that the cost of production has gone up, and that on that account the butter-makers should get an increased price for their manufacture in order that they may make a living. But we all know which way the sympathies of the Government lean, and which way the sympathies of the price-fixers go.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is very unfair; it is a reflection on the price-fixers, who are more honourable men than you are.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MOORE: An hon. member opposite says that the workers are coming into this question of fixing the price of wheat.

Mr. HARTLEY: That is not the point. The worker is going to come in where he is affected by the price fixed.

Mr. MOORE: That is not what you said.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must address the Chair.

Mr. MOORE: I think I should be allowed to reply to an interjection. However, I have not much more to say on the second reading of the Bill. I hope that when the measure goes into Committee the Minister will accept reasonable amendments, because amendments can be made in the Bill which will make its provisions plainer and more easily workable. I do not suppose that the Minister is going on with the Bill in Committee this afternoon.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: By special request, the Bill is going through this evening.

Mr. MOORE: That is not stated on the business-paper, and we on this side certainly

did not expect that procedure to be followed. If the Minister is really so anxious to get the measure through to-night, I do not suppose there will be any difficulty in getting it through, but I think members should have a reasonable opportunity to amend the Bill. I did not expect that the Committee stage would come on until some time next week. The Council have adjourned till Wednesday next, so that there need be no violent hurry to pass the Bill this evening.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We want to get the Bill through without delay.

Mr. MOORE: Of course, we understand that; but I would ask why should the passage of the Bill be hurried in the way suggested when the Council have adjourned till Wednesday? There is no need for the hon. gentleman to try to make political capital out of a Bill of this kind, which has been introduced for the benefit of the wheat-growers. We on this side of the House are trying to assist the Government in every way we possibly can to make it a good Bill, and I ask the Minister to be reasonable and to accept reasonable amendments.

Mr. VOWLES: With regard to the statement of the Minister, I should like to say that I know nothing of a request to put the Bill through this evening. After the formal business was dealt with, the Premier asked me if we would be prepared to put this Bill through this evening, and I told him "No." If the hon. gentleman in charge of the measure has any arrangement to make with regard to that matter, he should make it through me. This Bill was brought forward at the request of members of the Opposition, including myself, and that fact has been stated to the House by the Minister. A meeting of representatives of wheat-growers took place in Toowoomba some time back, and certain resolutions were agreed to by those representatives. Afterwards, by arrangement, a deputation from those representatives met the Premier and the Secretary for Agriculture in Brisbane. The deputation submitted to those gentlemen the resolutions passed by the representatives of the growers, and discussed with them the details of what they considered should be the constitution and work of the wheat pool. We made

it fairly clear that we were not [5 p.m.] there with any political intention, but for the purpose of trying to face the position which had arisen, and for which no provision had been definitely made, and, knowing that the Government was harassed as far as the financial position was concerned, we thought we could put an alternative scheme to them which would be worth while. It has been stated by the Secretary for Agriculture that the mention through the public Press that a guarantee for this year's wheat yield was the means of the crop being increased. I shall be very pleased to know that it is so, but I would like to remind the Minister that, when he was asked in May last to provide further seed wheat for the farmer, he said that the time was too late, because any grain grown from that wheat sown in May would only be good for fodder. The promise of this guarantee was only made in June, so I do not see how one statement is consistent with the other. However, we are not here to quarrel over this thing, or to make any political capital out of the matter; all we want to do is to help the Minister to settle the conditions and the

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terms of the Bill, so that it will be a workable one and suitable to the farmer.

I am sorry that the Bill does not make provision for the number of persons who are to constitute the board, although, strange to say, it tells us a little later on that a quorum of the board shall be three members: it does not tell us the number of members or who are to constitute the board. I can quite understand that there is a reason for that, because, although on the face of it this measure is put on the statute-book for this season, and for wheat, yet in a certain class of Bill provision is made whereby the Governor in Council, by proclamation, can adopt this Bill for any future season, and I think the reason why the individual names are not mentioned is because there will be a change made; but, at any rate, I think the number and their qualifications should be definitely stated. In the request put before the department and the Minister, we asked that there should be a Commission of seven, five of whom should be farmers, one particularly being a representative of the co-operative institution in Warwick, and I hope that, as the Minister said that he was going to take a good deal of notice of what the deputation wanted, he will see that that part of the Bill is worded so as to meet, as far as possible, the views of the farmers. There are one or two little things I would like to place before the Minister, as it will save delay in the Committee stages. First of all, it is provided that the whole of the wheat crop of Queensland is acquired under the Bill. It provides, on page 3, that "all wheat shall be delivered to the board or their authorised agents." Clause 9 states—

"The board shall not refuse to accept from any grower any wheat of fair average quality (not being old wheat or blended wheat), provided that such wheat is delivered in accordance with this Act."

That only refers to a certain class or quality of wheat, f.a.q. wheat, and there is an inference there now that the board is not bound to accept any wheat other than f.a.q. wheat.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not think that is so.

Mr. VOWLES: That view of the matter seemed to be taken by one of the Ministers, on the ground that it was not desirable because it would take up too much of the space required for millable wheat. If you do not do that when you get a little wheat just below f.a.q., and are going to leave it open to indiscriminate sales, then you are going to leave possible the jobbing about of that wheat which subsequently may be released for milling. I think it is desirable that no wheat should be allowed out of the pool except for gisting purposes, and should be reserved for export, because I think there is a market for it to-day. Then provision is made whereby growers may exchange wheat with other growers for seed wheat purposes. I do not see that any provision is made in the Bill whereby the licensed sellers of seed under the Pure Seeds Act have the power to deal in seed wheat. I do not know whether that is intended. If that power is extended to them—and I do not think it is there—the question arises whether it is possible for them to buy seed wheat and sell it at a price about the price of millable wheat. It appears that they are now prohibited from doing that. I would like the Minister to inquire as to whether

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seed vendors, if they have that power of selling as vendors of seed wheat, can sell at a price up to 9s., which is both the minimum and maximum price. When the deputation came to Brisbane the guaranteed price was going to be 8s. per bushel. I do not think the Minister would have been at that deputation at all if it had not been that we stopped him in Brisbane by special request. He discussed the situation which would arise under the scheme, but while he was away down South it was decided that it would be more equitable to fix the minimum price for millable wheat at 9s. per bushel. Our request was that 8s. a bushel should be the minimum price, but it is made the general price. Then the question arises as to whether growers in distant places should be saddled with the whole of the freight on their wheat, or what would be equivalent to the cost of removing their wheat to the seaport. In my electorate we are 50 miles on the western side of Toowoomba. The wheat is bought on the basis of delivery on the rails, or at the flour mill in Dalby. Why should those growers be charged with the cost of freight from Dalby to Brisbane and sending it back again, because I presume that that will have to be charged too? Why should they be charged with that price, when they, and the millers, too, are penalised by the fact that the millers in the Warwick district have a preferential rate and can sell at 5s. a ton cheaper in Warwick than the Dalby mill can sell at in Toowoomba, simply because the direct line from here to Sydney is in competition with the boat service and they receive a preferential rate as against us.

The hon. member for Auburn has referred to the advances made by the Government in the past, and the lien which the Minister may have over the funds of the wheat pool to the prejudice of other persons' security. In the first place, the grain sheds which have been erected through the country have not been erected solely for the purpose of storing wheat, and where arrangements have been entered into for the leasing of them, I think that there should be no repudiation of existing leases. If there is to be any alteration in the term of those leases, there should be reasonable compensation. At the same time some provision should be made so that other crops can be housed as well as wheat in those places where the properties exist.

The other matter is the claim of the Government to be paid now for money advanced in the past in respect to seed wheat and for ploughing. We know that in many cases advances have been made up to seven and eight—even nine—years ago, and the payments have not been returned to the Government, for the reason that the crops have failed in succession. Now that the crops are coming on and there is going to be a return to the farmer, the Government ask that they should have the right in the first place, if they so desire, to step in and claim their pound of flesh, even above securities—such as crop liens—which have been registered. I must say that it is not a question of taking the lot, because the clause says—

"The board shall treat the amount of such advance, or such part thereof as the Minister may demand, as a first charge upon all moneys which may be payable to such grower by the board."

I take it, from the remarks of the Minister, that he is going to be moderate in his demands and not unreasonable. I sincerely

hope that that will prove to be correct, because this Bill will be the authority for future pools, since power to revive the pool by proclamation is contained in it. I think that that clause is going to have a very detrimental effect on the production of wheat. No bonâ fide mortgagee will be entitled to come along in the future and lend a farmer money for the purpose of growing a crop if he should happen to be in that unhappy position that he owes money borrowed in the past from the Crown. Can you expect a private individual to come along and find the seed and the money for harvesting when he knows that when the money for the crop is at hand it may be taken from them by a person who has never been registered as a mortgagee, and who has never given notice to him to give him a claim against the farmer or the land?

Mr. WEIR: How do you treat your clients?

Mr. VOWLES: Fairly.

Mr. WEIR: That is a change.

Mr. VOWLES: I am not going to be led off the track by the hon. member. I know that if we talk at one another there is likely to be a clash. I am trying this afternoon to deal with the interests of the farmers.

Mr. HARTLEY: What sort of a farmer are you?

Mr. VOWLES: I am a pretty good sort of farmer. So far as I can see, the only farmers appear to be on the other side of the Chamber. I heard one gentleman offering to take somebody on at woodchopping. Well, I know something about that, and if he likes to have an exhibition with a little silver coin collection for the hospital I am prepared to see it through. (Laughter.) But we are getting away from the question—and I notice that when one is getting on to something in which there is a good deal of soundness the friends of the Government come along to lead you off the track. That principle embodied in the Bill will prevent the farmer from being financed in the future, unless some definite arrangement can be made between the farmer and the Government in respect to his other liabilities. Here the farmers have undertaken to pay; in many cases the lenders have promissory notes, and in other cases they have taken out judgments, but have never attempted to put them into effect or realise their debts; they have allowed them to be considered as to some extent abandoned. Now another individual has come along—I know many cases where farmers have been financed for the purpose of getting their crops off and into the bags—and the man who has paid the money has to play second fiddle to the Government, which has had a debt lying dormant for some years which they have never attempted to collect. But since they see an opportunity of getting their money because a pool is being formed—

Mr. WARREN: They never collected it, because they were too poor.

Mr. VOWLES: It was never mentioned before the election, anyhow. I agree with the hon. member for Aubigny that this is mainly a Committee Bill, and when it gets into Committee we propose to move certain amendments. I did hope that we would get some explanation from the Minister. He tells us that it is all right. Probably it is.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What do you want?

Mr. VOWLES: I want to know, for instance, whether the Bill covers all the wheat or not? Surely that should be made very definite.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Do you think there should be no discretion in the board at all?

Mr. VOWLES: The board has a certain discretion as to seed wheat. I understand that about 300,000 bushels will be required for seeding purposes, and if the farmers like to exchange it amongst themselves without its coming into the hands of the pool, they may do so by permit, but if the pool is going to acquire the whole of the wheat it should be definitely stated. If the board is not bound to accept anything but fair average quality wheat, that also should be stated definitely.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: In other words, it should not be left to the discretion of the board?

Mr. VOWLES: If it is not definitely stated in the Bill there is a strong inference that it is intended to acquire only wheat that is suitable for milling purposes. I want these matters cleared up now; the board should not be entitled to settle that matter, for instance. We are giving them certain powers. We say to them, "We give you statutory authority to obtain the whole of the wheat harvested in Queensland. You have to pay, for fair average quality wheat, 9s. a bushel, less certain charges, and carry on and clear up." Anything under that quality they have to market at the best price possible—that was the request to the Minister by the deputation, and that is what we were told was going to be done. Now it appears that it is being left to the discretion of the board, and in that case you are going to get into an unhappy position where wheat approaches almost to fair average quality. If there is no ready market it may get into the hands of millers and be gristed for food and sold at a higher price. It is in order to obviate that position and put the matter fairly clearly, that I am putting these matters before the House. If the Minister can give an explanation of the matter at this stage, probably it will save a good deal of time when we get into Committee.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (Warwick): I am sorry that matters not altogether relevant to the very important matter before the House this afternoon have been introduced into the debate. I can assure the House that this in no way represents the very happy state of things that existed when the matter was introduced to the notice of the Chief Secretary and the Minister. There was not then a sign of a discordant note, and I think it is to be regretted somewhat that matters not quite in line with the subject of the wheat pool were introduced here this afternoon at all.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: That is Mr. Moore.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I am not going to attach blame to anyone in that connection, but I do say that this matter is so important and is so far removed from being a party question, and was so treated in that spirit by the deputation, that there is no need for this divergent thought. The main thing is to set to work and make the wheat pool just as big a success as it can possibly be, in the interests not only of the grower but also of the consumer. I think, perhaps, I

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should clear up one or two matters before I get right on to the question at issue. The question of the right or wrong of not going into last year's pool is a matter on which the people have a very divided opinion. All the people on the Downs were distinctly opposed to the formation of a pool last year, and I think they showed their wisdom, because they did very much better, on account of the limited supply of grain last year, in having nothing to do with a pool. But what is the position to-day and what has been the position for many months past? Largely due to the good offices of the Department of Agriculture, wheat was secured during the latter months of the year at a rate equal to 7s. 8d., but our people would not have been content with 7s. 3d. They have done very much better, and whilst I cannot say for the moment what the average price paid to the Queensland grower for last year's wheat really was, I do know that the wheat standing in our mill to-day, reserved with the object of having old wheat to mix with the new, cost the firm 9s. 4d. per bushel, so that you will understand the farmers decided distinctly in their own favour in having nothing to do with a wheat pool last year. But the only thing that could be done this year was to follow out the suggestion for the formation of a pool, and, except in perhaps just an odd instance, I know of no one against the pool. The growers were gratified, of course, that the Government came along with a guarantee of 3s. per bushel, but in no instance does the grower think that the Government ran any stupendous risk in giving such a guarantee.

Mr. HARLEY: Was the formation of a wheat pool part of your policy?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I cannot say that it was. When the Premier and Minister for Agriculture were approached on this question, they wisely suggested that they would like to know what the mind of the people in the country was with regard to it. What was done then? Those who had sufficient interest in the matter went over the land. I went to as many meetings as I could and addressed the farmers, as I did during the election, and enlightened them regarding what had taken place in connection with the deputation and the wisdom or otherwise of the formation of a pool. The only question discussed at those meetings was the formation of a pool, and at those meetings I heard no dissenting voice; but, strangely enough, when I was in Warwick, after having visited Brisbane, the very first man who came across me denounced me and everyone else for having anything to do with the formation of a pool. I am glad the Minister referred to the fact that the best way to encourage the growing, not only of wheat, but of every other commodity, is to see that the farmer receives a full reward for his labour. I do not want to introduce one thought that is of a discordant nature, but that is just where this party and those opposite have disagreed. We say that the man on the land who has to contend with weather conditions and pests has a right to receive the full reward of his labour. He has no fixed wages. If you like to go back for several years, so far as wheat is concerned, you will find that he received nothing in return for his work, and if he is going to get a fair thing this year, even then he is not going to get what would have been due to him had he been paid ordinary wages. That is what hon. members opposite ought to remem-

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ber. Although he may get a big price for his product, in many instances it may still mean a loss to him. If a man gets a high price for his produce it does not say he is getting rich. I think, from some interjections I heard just now, there is a thought that the price to be obtained for wheat this year is excessive, and that in consequence the consumer may have to pay a higher price for his loaf. I scarcely see how it would have been possible to give a lower price than that fixed upon, that is if a fair and righteous thing is to be done to the man who produces. I do not think an excessive price for the loaf of bread is going to be the case during the present year. We have to remember that our distance from the markets of the world, with the high freights at present ruling, is the heaviest handicap our producers can possibly have, and that is where the consumer comes in. Distance makes the Australian parity the lowest parity of any country in the world.

Mr. BULCOCK: What will be the price in six months' time?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I do not know. Why, then, should the consumer be afraid when he is protected to the extent he is? According to the Prime Minister, the whole wheat crop of Australia could be sold to-day for 10s. a bushel, and we do know that some sales have been made of wheat equal to 15s. a bushel abroad. As far as I am concerned, I would advise the formation of a pool, because a flat rate may turn out best, but if it were my own personal matter I would seize the opportunity there is to-day, and say that the farmer should enjoy export parity for his wheat. That would be the right thing. You are ready to [5.30 p.m.] have export parity when the man is helpless and cannot help himself, but you are not prepared to have export parity when values are high. According to the law of averages, the thing will right itself in the end, and that is why I think that the law of supply and demand should regulate these things. As far as I can see, I think that values will be lower towards the end of the year.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You fully expect that, don't you?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I am inclined to believe that. It is on that score that I advocated the other day, when speaking to the Minister, that we should seize the opportunity of getting rid of our stuff as soon as possible and getting the highest value we could for it. I believe it would be a wise thing to do that. This year there will be a fair proportion of the wheat grown in Queensland which will not be millable at all. The man on the land knows how difficult it is to harvest all his wheat in millable condition. Anyone going through the wheat districts will see the tangled condition of the wheat areas, and in some cases a farmer wants the heart of a lion to undertake the job of sifting the wheat. A good deal of it will be found to be not millable at all, and it would be a right thing to see that all that wheat is pooled. Every bit of it should be taken in hand and exported with the least possible delay if markets can be secured for it.

Mr. BULCOCK: Has it not to be graded?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: That is a very pertinent question. I am inclined to think that

in dealing eventually with that class of wheat it may be essential to grade it, and see that it is all sent out as an even sample.

Mr. BULCOCK: The board would do that.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The men who have been selected to represent the farmers are the men who will suit the farmers and will look after their interests in every way. They will see that the interests of the growers are protected, and the best results will be brought about for their benefit.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: If that is so, you agree that they should be given a certain amount of discretion?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I do. I am inclined to think that the Bill gives them a very wide discretion. I do not think there should be any limitations regarding the reception of wheat that might be of an inferior nature. That should be taken into account. Everywhere that I addressed meetings the people spoke to me in that connection. Provision will require to be made by those in the business to take the wheat to the port or to the spot where it is to be dealt with. Akin to that is the question of the appointment of a manager by the Government. They want a man for this position with full business knowledge. He must have a knowledge of shipping generally, and also a knowledge of the markets of the world, particularly the Eastern markets. Unless we get a manager who has the insight and foresight and general knowledge, we are going to find it difficult to deal with a great deal of the wheat. If the wheat is wisely and faithfully handled, then it will be the means of bringing to the growers dividends in excess of the 8s. per bushel that has been guaranteed. A discussion took place a little while ago regarding the pooling conditions generally. I take it that the 9s. per bushel will be the price paid by every miller, no matter at what centre the wheat is railed. As some of the wheat will have to be supplied to the mills on the Downs, the millers there will need to be allowed railage on that portion of the wheat which is sent there, otherwise they will be at a disadvantage compared with the Brisbane millers. If they are not allowed the railage, the millers on the Downs will have to shut up, and that will mean that a large number of people in the State will not be supplied with flour. The cost of railage is not as great as some hon. members might imagine. The long-distance freights are exceedingly low as compared with the short distances. Take districts such as Yangan and Swan Creek; the railage from there to Brisbane is 12s. per ton. From Goondiwindi to Warwick, a distance of 139 miles, the railage is 13s. 6d. per ton, so no great injustice is going to be done to the wheatgrowers who live at greater distances. The pool will have to be extremely careful as to how they handle wheat at a distance. It would be better to send the wheat direct to the spot where it is to be used. For instance, the railage on wheat from Inglewood to Warwick is 8s. 2d. per ton, while from Inglewood to Brisbane it is only 13s. If, however, the wheat is first railed to Warwick and subsequently sent on to Brisbane, the cost will be something like £1 0s. 2d. per ton. So that it will be wise to decide early in the day that all wheat should be sent direct to the spot where it will be gristed into flour. The same thing applies to Toowoomba and Roma. In the Roma district they will have a particularly small crop this year, and it

may transpire that they will require all the wheat grown in the Roma district for their own consumption. But from Goondiwindi, where there is no mill, the wheat will gravitate to Brisbane.

Mr. MORGAN: Warwick should be the head centre for the Goondiwindi wheat.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: In New South Wales they are a long way ahead of us in the matter of sending wheat to different centres. They take that into consideration. In the event of wheat, say, from Goondiwindi or Inglewood, being consigned to Warwick, when it is dealt with again that is taken into consideration, and the difference then works out at only a matter of 1s. per ton. That is how they do it in New South Wales, but we have no such liberal arrangement. If that could be brought about, then that difficulty is solved.

The farmer has been anticipating 5s. as cash deposit on his wheat, and I know, on account of the extreme cost of harvesting this year, that less than 5s. is disappointing to him. He is to receive 2s. 6d. on delivery and 2s. 6d. in four months' time, or on 30th April. That certificate can be discounted. Several members of the House and myself yesterday approached a bank to ascertain what would be the actual discount on such a bill, and we find that it would amount to about two-thirds of 1d. per bushel; so the charge is not going to be a very great one. I think I mentioned this matter to the Minister, but if the banks, as well as the merchants and others, will only come to the rescue in this matter and discount at that rate, the farmer is not going to complain. Efforts are being made—and I trust successfully—in the direction of getting a further advance on the remaining 3s. per bushel, and I do not think there should be any great difficulty in obtaining it; at any rate, the financial institutions are being approached in that direction, and we have good reason to hope that what is desired will be accomplished.

I have been asked if I think with regard to wheat purchased in March the second instalment will be paid on 30th April. I imagine, from the way in which it has been put, that, whether a man delivers wheat in November, December, January, February, or March he will receive the first 2s. 6d., and then the other 2s. 6d. on 30th April. The Commonwealth undertake that. That is the way I read it, otherwise I should imagine a statement would have been made to the effect that 2s. 6d. would be paid on delivery and 2s. 6d. in four months' time, or 120 days. But 120 days is not mentioned. The Commonwealth, under the pool agreement, are making their second instalment payable to everyone who delivers fair average quality wheat on 30th April. That is how I read it. The powers under the Bill, as already stated, seem to be very considerable. I am not sure whether the board will have power to deal with the export of flour, bran, and pollard. Perhaps the Minister cannot be too clear on that—it may be a matter of consultation with others. But there is evidently a trade that can be done in flour, and I think in bran and pollard, with the South Seas, and perhaps with Eastern nations, which would enable us to realise a very much higher price in the aggregate for our crop than otherwise, and furnish a better dividend for the people or for the grower.

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I desire to emphasise, once more, the wisdom of all wheat of every grade coming into the pool. It would be manifestly wrong and injurious if by any means any portions are cut off and allowed to filter into the markets anyhow at all. You have already evidence of that. New wheat is being sold in the market to-day at 8s. 7d. per bushel, and the grower will receive probably only within 1s. of that when expenses have been deducted.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: It is being sold at 8s. 3d.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I am told it is 8s. 3d.

Mr. BULLOCK: Does that figure include the profiteering charges?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Oh, no! No one works for nothing these days. I have never known even a member of Parliament to work for nothing; they all want to be reimbursed for their services—even the middleman, or even the State agency. However, I do not know what total charges the grower would have to pay, but out of that 8s. 3d. he possibly will only receive 7s. 3d. The hon. member for Dalby and other members who have spoken referred to many matters which I think I need not touch upon. Most of the other matters can be dealt with better in Committee, when opportunity will be given for the introduction of amendments. I am very glad that the Government have shown such expedition in bringing forward this Bill to-day. They have lost no time, and I hope all members on this side will rally to the assistance of the Minister to push this matter through as quickly as possible. I am advised by letter to-day that the wheat will be rolling in at any moment, and we are not ready for it. It only means a week's fine weather and the pool will have to be at work; and it cannot get to work until this Bill is a completed thing. Regulations will have to follow, because I imagine there is a great deal outside what is in this Bill; there is a good deal of fixing up to do, which will take time, and there is not an hour to lose. The wheat is being threshed, and until the whole of the arrangements are completed farmers will hesitate what to do. Thousands of bags are being stripped, and much of it is lying in the open. Some of the wheat might find its way to the wrong centre, and that is going to interfere finally—because it will be a first charge against the 9s.—with the ultimate dividend to be paid to the grower.

Mr. MORGAN: I am in a different position to a great number of those who represent wheat-growing districts. There is a certain amount of wheat grown in my electorate, one district being in the Goondiwindi portion and the other in the Miles and Dulacca districts. Only recently I received a letter from a representative of a number of wheatgrowers asking me to oppose the formation of this pool. I do not feel in any way justified in opposing the pool, as I am not able to suggest anything better for these people. Why they want me to oppose the pool I cannot understand. In my opinion, the only thing for the wheatgrower of Queensland, so far as this season is concerned, is the formation of a pool: it is the only way in which he will be likely to get the true value for the wheat he has grown.

I have gone carefully into this Bill and I have come to the conclusion it will be

[Mr. G. P. Barnes.]

necessary to introduce certain amendments before it will be satisfactory to the majority of the wheatgrowers of Queensland. I admit that, generally speaking, the Bill is very fine; but, like all Bills, it is necessary to have it discussed first of all on the second reading, and eventually in Committee to have amendments moved and to decide whether they are satisfactory or not. I hope and trust the Minister will not, under any consideration whatever, make this a party Bill. All the representatives of the wheat areas of Queensland are on this side of the House.

Mr. SMITH: You are commencing to make the Bill a party matter yourself.

Mr. MORGAN: No. I admit I made one error, because the hon. member for Maranoa is representative of a very large wheat-growing area.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Toowoomba is the centre of a large wheat-growing area.

Mr. MORGAN: Toowoomba is only a town. I hope every member will try to make this as satisfactory as possible from all points of view, in order to give the people forming the pool the opportunity of carrying out the measure with as little friction as possible so that eventually it might be a success. Amendments coming from the Opposition are generally not taken into consideration at all. Some Ministers say "Accept nothing from the Opposition, no matter what it may be. If it comes from the Government benches, well and good." I hope that will be departed from on this occasion. I want to draw the attention of the Minister to clause 3.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will not be in order in dealing with the Bill in detail.

Mr. MORGAN: I want to draw the attention of the Minister to a statement made by himself which may be misleading—that this Bill applies only to the 1920-21 crop. There is a proviso in this Bill which gives the Governor in Council power, if so desired, to extend this Bill to crops for other periods.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Do you not think that is a wise provision?

Mr. MORGAN: No, I do not. If it is necessary to extend the Bill to cover other years, Parliament should decide the question: it should not be left entirely to the Governor in Council. We are agreeable, on behalf of the wheatgrowers, to approve of the Bill for this particular year: but I do not know if the farmers have been asked whether they are in favour of this Bill being extended year after year. I am very doubtful if they would be. Then, regarding the number of men who are to comprise the board. There is no objection to the Minister stating in the Bill definitely that five shall represent the growers, one the financial institutions, and the other the Government. I think the Bill should state that the board shall consist of seven members. Regarding the remuneration of members of the board, I do not think it should be left to the Minister. He should be glad to get out of the necessity for fixing the remuneration. In fact, this is one of the questions asked when you go amongst the farmers—what remuneration are the members of the wheat board going to obtain? I think the Bill should state what payments the board are to be entitled to. We have done it in other

matters. When we had a Bill in connection with the Agricultural Bank, we stated what remuneration the trustees should be paid, and the same thing should apply in connection with this particular Bill.

(Sitting suspended between 6 p.m. and 7 p.m.)

Mr. MORGAN (continuing): The Minister in charge of this Bill made the remark that the present Government have done more for farmers in regard to wheatgrowing than any previous Administration. I remember that

[7 p.m.] in 1914, when the great war broke out, the members of what was then known at the "Farmers' party" waited on the Denham Government and asked them to take certain action with the view of encouraging the farmers to go in for the cultivation of wheat. The result of that interview was that the Denham Government not only provided the farmers with seed wheat, but also agreed to advance them up to £1 per acre to enable them to proceed with wheat cultivation. Unfortunately, in 1915 there was a drought, and though many farmers had sown wheat, very few crops matured, and very little wheat was harvested.

Mr. HARTLEY: What price did Messrs. Denham and Barnes pay the farmers for their wheat?—4s. 6d. per bushel.

Mr. MORGAN: That was not the fault of the Denham Government.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What is the title of the Act under which that assistance was given?

Mr. MORGAN: I do not think there was any Act passed dealing with the matter. The Government acted on a Cabinet minute, and the matter did not come before the House. I dare say the Under Secretary of the department will remember the matter, as I interviewed him in regard to it on several occasions. The Cabinet decided to advance the farmer an amount up to £1 per acre for the cultivation of the land. Some of that money, I regret to say, has not been paid, and is still owing to the Government. There is one provision in this Bill which will enable the Government to take from farmers any amounts due for advances made to them by the Government during many years. I do not think that is fair, and in my opinion that provision should be amended. Certainly, I do not think it is fair that the Government should be allowed to interfere with the first half-crown paid in cash to a farmer, because he will require a certain amount of money to pay for the harvesting of his crop. When I came here from Victoria I intended to go in for the cultivation of wheat, as I believed that Queensland would be the great wheatgrowing country of Australia. But I realise now, after my experience, that I was mistaken in that view. I am satisfied now that, owing to climatic conditions, Queensland will never become a great wheatgrowing country. There are certain seasons when there is no wheat crop at all, and in other seasons storms of hail destroy the crops, and the wheat is not harvested. The people who came to Queensland with the intention of going in for wheatgrowing are comparatively poor men to-day, while those who engaged in dairying have been fairly successful. At any rate, dairy farmers have not suffered to the same extent as wheatgrowers. It would be a disastrous thing for any farmer to depend upon wheat as his principal crop,

though it may be a good thing for him to sow a certain quantity of wheat every year. There is one clause in this Bill which savours of repudiation. The Minister stated that under that clause, if some poor, unfortunate farmer sold his wheat before the wheat pool came into operation, the board would have power to annul the sale. I do not know that there are any instances in my district in which farmers have sold their wheat, but I may mention that at Miles some farmers came to me and asked me if I could get them 7s. per bushel for their wheat, and when I told them that a wheat pool was likely to be formed which would assure them 9s. per bushel for their wheat, they said they would sooner get 7s. per bushel to-day than wait to get 9s. per bushel in the near future. A great number of farmers have assured me that if they could get 7s. per bushel for their wheat they would be satisfied. Millers will not accumulate large stocks of wheat under this proposal, as that would involve having considerable capital outstanding and lying unproductive. Naturally, millers will only buy from week to week or month to month, so that a great number of farmers will have to wait some months before they can sell and realise on their crops. That would be objectionable. The pool does away with all that. Under the Bill, every farmer will receive half-a-crown on delivery, and, eventually, another half-crown, payable at the end of April. The second payment, as the Minister told us, will be cash. There will be a little exchange, but the farmer will eventually get nearly 5s. a bushel in cash.

Then there is a principle of repudiation in this Bill. (Government dissent.) I object to the repudiation in respect to the Land Act, and the people at the other end of the world who finance us likewise object to repudiation, in respect to a Government contract or any other contract. We object to the repudiation in connection with the Land Act on principle, not only because we said that the grazier could not afford to pay more rent, and the people on 9th October last voted against the repudiation Act.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: That is why you got a majority.

Mr. MORGAN: That is why we have Mr. Jones, from Kennedy, here.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Is that where the whispering has been going on?

Mr. MORGAN: There has been just as much whispering going on in other electorates. The whispering is not confined to one particular party. Just as I object on principle to an agreement being broken in respect to one particular section of the community, I object to it being broken in respect to all sections of the community.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Even if the farmer had been robbed?

Mr. MORGAN: My friend only makes that as an excuse. We do not know of any farmer who has been robbed. If any farmer has sold his wheat already for 7s. a bushel, he would not in any way wish that contract to be nullified. He would be satisfied with the 7s. sooner than to come under the Bill with the object of eventually getting 3s. He would be satisfied if he got 7s. cash.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Don't you believe it.

Mr. Morgan.]

Mr. MORGAN: If the Government, instead of establishing a pool at all, would give the farmers 7s. a bushel for their wheat, the farmers would take it in cash. This proposal means 2s. 6d. on delivery, and they have to wait three months before they get another 2s. 6d. The farmer is compelled under this Bill to put it into the pool, whether he likes it or not.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You know that they are getting 9s. under the pool.

Mr. MORGAN: You know that under your Bill you are not giving them 9s. cash. The interest on 7s. alone is worth another 6d. over seven months. I intend to oppose the repudiation in connection with this clause. There are farmers at the present time who have agreements with the Railway Department with regard to certain numbers of bags placed in the sheds. A farmer might have a number of bags of barley or oats to put in the space. You come along and say you are going to break the agreement with the Railway Department. He will have to go elsewhere and will not be able to store his barley or oats.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must address his remarks to the chair.

Mr. MORGAN: You are going to compel him to break his agreement. As far as I am concerned, I am not for repudiation in any respect, no matter whether at one particular time the repudiation suits me or at another time goes against me. Some people believe in repudiation as long as it is against the other fellow, but the moment it touches themselves they do not believe in it. They are not against it on principle, but only when it affects themselves. I am not one who is in favour of legislation to-day because it suits me, and against it to-morrow because it is not what I desire.

There is another matter with regard to the pool. No doubt, we must be prepared to leave a good deal to the board itself. Everything cannot be stated in the Bill in detail, and we must be prepared to leave a good deal to the board.

The TREASURER: Your own nominees will be on the board. Your own people will not inflict hardship on you.

Mr. MORGAN: I agree our own people will be on the board. I believe the men who are appointed will do their duty in every respect.

The TREASURER: You don't believe they will inflict hardship on a farmer who happens to have some space in a railway shed?

Mr. MORGAN: If a farmer has a space, and is prepared to allow it for the storage of wheat it will be all right, but he is compelled under the Bill.

The TREASURER: If it affects the value of his lease he will be indemnified.

Mr. MORGAN: The moment the board decides to take space they must take it from every farmer. They cannot make fish of one and flesh of the other.

The PREMIER: The board will act with discretion.

The TREASURER: The Minister consulted with the Commissioner for Railways, and the Commissioner said there would be no difficulty.

[*Mr. Morgan.*]

Mr. MORGAN: I am against the provision being in the Bill. The Government are putting it in as a sort of trap. They want to catch us, and to say that our objection against repudiation was all humbug. They want us to vote in favour of this Bill, and then they will tell us that it is exactly the same as the repudiation Act. They want to put members here in a false position, and to say to the people that we are not sincere in our opposition to repudiation, generally speaking.

The TREASURER: You know very well that you could delete that clause and leave the board to get storage space.

Mr. MORGAN: That is not so. We know that the great bulk of the storage space will be occupied by wheat. Even if the repudiation affects only one individual I am against it. This is a Bill which the Government knew we wanted, and that we were prepared to sacrifice a great deal for, and, knowing that, they are bringing in repudiation, and expecting us to swallow even that.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Can't you trust the board?

Mr. MORGAN: It is not a matter of whether the board exercises the power or not, it is a matter of principle. It is the fact that there is repudiation in the Bill that we have to think of, not whether the board will exercise the power. I am not in favour of giving the board power to repudiate, any more than I am in favour of giving the Labour Government the power of repudiation. The bulk of us have to buy our flour. We do not actually produce it or grist it. Even if we have wheat we have to take it to the mill or the pool and buy our flour. I think there is a provision in the Victorian measure—if it is not still in existence it was in existence during the first pool—to the effect that the farmer could reserve a certain quantity of wheat, take it to the mill and have it gristed into flour and the by-products, for use for his own purposes. The farmer in Queensland may desire to take in 15 or 20 bags to have it gristed into flour and bran and pollard, but this Bill does not provide for anything of the sort. He has to deliver every bit of his wheat to the pool.

The TREASURER: The board may promulgate a regulation; they have full power to do so.

Mr. MORGAN: The Bill does not provide it.

The TREASURER: The board have full power to deal with by-products.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Subject to the Price Fixing Commissioner.

Mr. MORGAN: This Bill provides definitely just what the board may do in respect to certain matters. One farmer can sell a certain amount of seed wheat to a farmer; that has not to go into the board. That is a very good proviso. If the wheat is not of fair average quality, the farmer can, with the permission of the board, dispose of it to anyone who desires to buy it. The board may give that permission to an individual or to the whole of the farmers of the State. But, on the other hand, the Bill provides that every bit of wheat that is of milling quality must go through the board.

The TREASURER: Exactly; but cannot the board deliver it to the farmer as well as to the mill?

Mr. MORGAN: Once he has delivered to the mill, the farmer does not want to take it back. We know perfectly well that the season is one of the finest we have had for many, many years, and the by-products are likely to be very little used during the next few months. The demand has practically ceased, and if the prices are anything like high, and other fodder is cheaper, they will not be used at all. That is a matter which deserves a very great deal of consideration, so far as export is concerned, and it would be a very good thing if the board had power to export the by-products.

The TREASURER: It will, and it also has the co-operation of the Commonwealth board as regards shipping.

Mr. MORGAN: The Queensland pool cannot ship one grain of wheat without getting permission of the Southern board.

The TREASURER: That is merely formal.

Mr. MORGAN: It will not be very formal if they find that it enters into competition with their wheat. For this particular year I do not expect much difficulty, because, although the crop will be a big one, we in Queensland will not have more than about two-thirds of our own requirements. Even on this occasion we are not likely to have enough to feed the people of Queensland for twelve months.

Generally speaking, I am supporting the Bill. As I have already stated, amendments are necessary, and I hope when they are circulated a keen interest will be taken in them by members who have the welfare of the farmers at heart, and that we shall be able to record our votes freely. Let us deal with this Bill as with a non-party measure. Let every man vote as he thinks right, without being bound hand and foot by the particular party which introduces the amendment, or by the two parties who may be in possession of the Opposition benches. Personally, I am going to exercise a vote on every clause or amendment just as I think proper, and I hope everyone else will do likewise.

The PREMIER: I am very much disappointed at the attitude taken up by the hon. member who has just sat down. The Government have done their best in regard to this particular Bill to meet the wishes of the wheatgrowers, taking into account the consideration due to the general community. The Minister and myself, who were charged by the Government with the duty of meeting the deputation representing the wheatgrowers, have endeavoured to meet them on every point where it could possibly be done, taking into account the interests of the community. Members on the other side, especially those recently elected, have promised the Government every assistance if we bring forward measures in the interests of the farming community. This is brought forward solely in the interests of the farmers, with due consideration of the factor I have mentioned.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER interjected.

The PREMIER: I am very pleased to hear that; but, at any rate, the hon. member for Murilla has just made a violent attack on the Bill.

Mr. MORGAN: I did not.

The PREMIER: The hon. member may not in his own mind know the nature of the attack he made; but, nevertheless, it is cal-

culated to embarrass the Government in respect to the measure.

Mr. MORGAN: In what way?

The PREMIER: In the way that it calls public attention to the measure, misconstrues the intention of our proposals and the meaning of the clauses, and places upon it a construction which is calculated to poison the public mind.

Mr. MORGAN: If I have misconstrued it, the public will know, and no harm will be done.

The PREMIER: That is an extraordinary suggestion. I am one of those who are inclined to say that misconstruction is harmful. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. MORGAN: It is only your word that I have misconstrued it. You have to prove it.

The PREMIER: I am going to prove it; that is why I rose. The hon. member, by misconstruing the motives of the Government, by imputing evil motives to the Government, by trying to make out that we have with sinister motives introduced the proposal with a view to working a confidence trick on the Opposition—that is the inference from his remarks—is damaging the chance of getting this Bill through. The hon. member says we have imported into this Bill a repudiation clause relating to the power of the board to take over all storage, notwithstanding that some recent leases have been made—with a view, he says, of getting the endorsement of Parliament of certain action on our part. This he calls repudiation. That is nothing more than an attempt to drag violent controversies into this House with respect to a measure that should not be a subject of controversy. I shall show directly that there is ample justification for this Bill as it stands, and that examples exist in similar measures in other States dealing with precisely the same thing, and giving to the authorities controlling the pools similar powers.

Mr. MORGAN: Are those clauses, 11 and 12, repudiation?

The PREMIER: Those clauses may be a necessary modification of contracts entered into.

Mr. MORGAN: Are they repudiation?

The PREMIER: You can answer that yourself.

Mr. MORGAN: Yes or no?

The PREMIER: You call everything repudiation that does not suit you, and by calling this measure repudiation, by launching a charge of repudiation against this Bill, you imperil its passage. That is why I say you are making a vital attack upon it.

[7.30 p.m.]

Mr. MORGAN: If it is true, I have a right to do it.

The TREASURER: What if it is not true?

Mr. MORGAN: He does not deny it.

The PREMIER: This clause makes provision for the necessary modification of any existing contracts. Therefore, the hon. member charges repudiation against the Government, but the Bill must go through with those provisions in it. I do not say that that clause must pass as it stands now, but with similar plenary power on behalf of the board. The board must be charged with full powers if their operations are

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to be successful, and Governments in the other States have seen the necessity of vesting in their boards similar powers. In the Victorian Act, known as The Wheat Marketing and Transportation Act of 1920, there is very drastic power which abrogates, to the same extent, and in a similar manner, contracts which were in existence, the same as this Bill seeks to do. Clause 8 of that Act reads—

“Every contract which is made in Victoria, whether before or after the commencement of this Act, so far as it relates to the sale of Victorian wheat or flour for delivery in Victoria . . . shall be void and of no effect.”

Hon. W. H. BARNES: I do not think the cases are analogous.

The PREMIER: That is one provision with regard to the sale of wheat and flour, and it nullifies any contract entered into. The Act further says—

“Any transaction or contract with respect to any wheat or flour which is the subject-matter of any contract or part of a contract which is by this section declared to be void shall also be void and of no effect.”

That is another provision and they are very necessary plenary powers in the hands of the authority in order to make the pool effective. The rendering void of these transactions deliberately entered into before the Act was passed, is an act of repudiation if you like to call it so.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: I think you will find that what applies properly to Victoria does not apply here.

The PREMIER: It does not matter whether it is the same thing or whether it is analogous in regard to the contracts with which we are dealing, the fact is they take power to nullify agreements and contracts entered into. That is all this Bill does. The New South Wales Act provides—

“Notwithstanding anything in the Liens on Crops and Wool and Stock Mortgages Act, 1898, or any other Act, or any rule or law to the contrary, a person claiming to be entitled to any such mortgage, charge, lien, or other encumbrance, or claiming to be the true owner of such wheat, shall not be entitled to claim, as aforesaid, for the amount payable in respect of such wheat, or any part of such wheat, unless he has given notice in writing in the form and containing the particulars prescribed to the board of such mortgage, charge, lien, or other encumbrance or claim of ownership, and then only for such portion of such amount as has not been paid to other persons at the time of the receipt by the board of such notice.

“Every grower of wheat which is subject to any mortgage, charge, lien, or encumbrance referred to in the last preceding section, or in respect of which or of the crop from which the same was harvested, he has entered into any contract in derogation of his title to sell such wheat as the absolute owner thereof shall, etc., etc.”

Therefore, it absolutely abolishes the right of a particular contract or in regard to the purchase and sale of any wheat entered into before the passing of the Act.

Mr. MORGAN: Do they interfere with the lease of any grain shed?

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The PREMIER: I have pointed out that in other Acts dealing with precisely the same subject as this, they had to include power not only to limit the operations of a contract, but to nullify contracts and entirely dispossess the owner under such a contract for the obvious purpose of giving full power to the board that has control of the pool. When I point out that that has been the case in other States the hon. member asks: “Do they interfere with the lease of any grain shed?” What is the difference in effect? What is the difference in principle? The hon. member says the only thing he urges against this Bill is that it savours of repudiation.

Mr. MORGAN: So it does.

The PREMIER: It does not savour of repudiation.

Mr. MORGAN: I do not care for it in the other States.

The PREMIER: It appears the hon. member would prefer the farmers and the community to suffer injury rather than that his exaggerated opinions should be violated. There is no intention on the part of the Government to impart into this anything extraneous or of an unnecessary character, and this clause was actually recommended by the Crown Law Department who had charge of the drafting of the measure. They said that in order to give the board proper power it was wanted here more than in Victoria and New South Wales. The power is wanted here because in the South they have better provision for the storage of grain than we have in Queensland, and in order to give the board effective power they should be given complete control over what storage is available, and it was pointed out by the Agriculture Department that, as the board has to accept responsibility when the wheat is delivered into its charges it should be given the means to store the wheat. The board has to accept all responsibility.

Mr. MORGAN: Did the deputation ask for that?

The PREMIER: The deputation asked us to draft a Bill and pass it through giving the necessary powers. Some members of the deputation no doubt are here, and they can speak for themselves. It is to be understood that under this measure, and under any scheme of a pool controlling wheat for this season in Queensland, the farmer must deliver his wheat somewhere, and the deputation agreed that they should deliver the wheat at their nearest siding, and from that point the board should take control. If that is the case, so soon as the farmer brings his wheat to the siding, he loses control of it, because he delivers it into the charge of the wheat board. Therefore, it is not necessary for the farmer to provide storage accommodation at the siding or elsewhere, except on the farm. No individual farmer has a necessity for any storage in Queensland under this arrangement. All he need do when he has harvested his wheat is to bring it into the siding, and from that moment the board takes charge and full responsibility, and is responsible for the storage and safeguarding of the wheat. It was known to the department that a number of leases in the ordinary course of events had been entered into. No one blames or makes any charge against the farmers or commission agents or brokers and others

who leased those sheds. That was only a measure of precaution, as they did not know what was proposed, but it is necessary to relieve them of their leases of the sheds, not with any desire to cause loss to those who leased the sheds. They will be compensated, because the farmers and Government representatives will see that no farmer who has a lease will suffer any detriment because the board has to take over the lease. All that will be necessary will be to transfer the lease from that individual to the board, and yet hon. members stand up here and make violent charges against the Government and impute dishonest motives, and in that way do damage to the proposal before the Chamber. I appeal to hon. members, especially to those representing wheat districts, who must see the necessity of the board having full plenary powers, especially in regard to storage—because some of the wheat will have to be stored for twelve months—to see that the Bill goes through. The Minister indicated earlier that he hoped the Bill would be received calmly and without heat in this Chamber, and stated that any suggestions likely to improve the Bill would be reasonably considered by himself, as representative of the Government in charge of the measure, and he has never taken up the stand that the Bill is unalterable. We invite criticism and we invite suggestions, but I want to say that, if any member gets up here and tries to make political capital in connection with the Bill, he will not assist the measure.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I want to tell the Premier that I think the Minister himself is responsible for any heat that has been introduced into the discussion, because he spent something like twenty minutes accusing the leader of the Opposition and myself of being practically what we ought not to be, and were taking up a position that we were not entitled to. I want to thank the Premier for meeting the deputation in Brisbane. When the deputation came to Brisbane, we found that the Premier had made arrangements to go to Melbourne, but he saw the importance of the subject, and he agreed to wait until the following day in order to meet the deputation. (Hear, hear!) That deputation was one of the best I have ever been on.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It was very successful.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Everything was talked over and a decision come to, and there was not the slightest word of politics or anything else mentioned that would interfere with the deputation.

The TREASURER: It was a common-sense deputation.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Yes; a common-sense deputation. I was surprised when the Minister for Agriculture opened his remarks to-day by accusing the leader of the Opposition and myself of being practically what we ought not to be. The leader of the Opposition was elected by this party, and we are responsible for our leader, and not the Minister for Agriculture. Members opposite have the right to elect their leader, and we have the same right so far as electing our leader is concerned. Then, the Minister accused me of taking up a position which I ought not to have done. The Minister made certain statements about me, but I wish to say that, so far as the dairying industry is

concerned, I had half-shares in the first cheese factory on the Downs. I was the first to send cheese north of Brisbane, and I owned the first cream separator that ever came to Queensland.

Mr. GILDAY: We don't want your history.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The Minister accused me of not being a *bonâ fide* dairy farmer.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I referred to butter.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I can prove that I have always been a dairy farmer. So far as this Bill is concerned, we have every confidence in the members who have been elected to the board. Those men are the picked men of the wheat districts, and they are trusted men. But we must not forget that if we put this Bill upon the statute-book it may remain there for ever, and the wheat board, as constituted, will be used in parts of the country where they don't grow wheat at all. The Minister said that he was the only one who had ever brought forward any practical measure in regard to production. The Minister must have a very short memory. In 1914, at the request of the farmers' party of that time, the Denham Government offered to find £1 an acre for the cultivation of land for wheat, and pay for the seed wheat for planting.

Mr. W. COOPER: The Upper House turned it down.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: No, it did not. Since that date the sum of £14,250 6s. has been paid to the wheatgrowers from one account, and £20,919 19s. 2d. was paid as advances to farmers to assist them to put in their wheat. What was the result? Taking the figures from the agricultural returns, I find that on 30th June, 1914, we had 127,050 acres of wheat under cultivation, and that year 1,585,087 bushels of wheat were produced. This year we have only got 31,000 acres—or less than one-fourth—under cultivation as compared with 1914.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We will get 4,000,000 bushels of wheat this harvest. What do you think of that?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You don't know what you will get. I know that it has been a good season. I want to remind hon. members that in 1914 the farmers got 4s. 6d. per bushel for their wheat. I remind the hon. member for Fitzroy that when the 1915-1916 crop was harvested this Government was in power. The previous Government had bought two cargoes of wheat, and this Government had bought one cargo to follow. The imported wheat was very inferior wheat, and, I suppose, many of our citizens will remember the flour made from it as long as they live. That accounted for the bad bread that had to be supplied for months. The Government paid 8s. 6d. per bushel for that wheat from the Argentine.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: Denham bought that.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: No, he did not. (Government dissent.)

The SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. member will connect his remarks with the question before the House.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I want to show that it is necessary that we should have a pool.

Mr. STOFFORD: You have got a pool. What are you stonewalling for?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: In 1916, the Labour Government, which is practically the same

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Government that we have got to-day, fixed the price of flour made from Argentine wheat and the price for flour made from local wheat. The Government fixed the price of flour made from Argentine wheat at £20 per ton, which is about 8s. 6d. per bushel, and it was inferior wheat at that. The price of local flour was fixed at £9 per ton, or a little over 3s. 6d. per bushel.

Mr. FRY: Were those two prices operating at the same time?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Yes. You will find it in the "Gazette" of October, 1916. Fancy this Government paying 8s. 6d. for the Argentine wheat while they only allowed the drought-stricken farmers of Queensland a little over 3s. 6d. per bushel!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Did the Government make any profit out of that wheat?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am not talking of the profit and loss part of the transaction; but I say that this Government deliberately, by proclamation, signed by the Governor in Council, in the "Government Gazette" of October, 1916, deliberately fixed the price of Argentine wheat at 8s. 6d. per bushel.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: A wheat pool is very necessary, if we are going to have any production of wheat at all.

Mr. SMITH: Are you supporting the Bill?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Yes, certainly. I want to show how the production of wheat is going down. In 1914, we had 127,000 acres under wheat cultivation in Queensland, and to-day we have only got 37,409 acres. If we take the five States of the Commonwealth which grow wheat, we find that in 1916 there were 12,484,512 acres under cultivation, while this year there are only 6,379,560 acres under cultivation. There is a decrease in all the States. In 1917, there were 11,532,828 acres under cultivation in the Commonwealth; and in 1918, 9,774,658 acres. In 1919, there were 7,990,000 acres; and in 1920, the acreage under wheat was 6,379,000. That shows how the cultivation of wheat is going down. It has been reduced by nearly one-half, and there is just the possibility that if the consumer is going to complain about having a fair thing now and paying a fair thing for his loaf, that the cultivation of it may go down altogether, and, instead of having some millions coming in, it will be going out.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Give us the comparative acreage in Queensland during those years.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Certainly I will. In 1916, the acreage was 93,703; in 1917, 227,778; 1918, 127,815; 1919, 21,637; and in 1920, it was 37,409.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There is an increase of 16,000 acres this year.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: This year it is only about 25 per cent. of what the acreage under wheat was in 1918-1919. Therefore, we must give some encouragement to the grower, and I will say this, that if the people want wheat grown under the old slavery conditions, they will have to grow it themselves. The farmer is getting more sense; he has resolved that he is not going to be a slave to the cities any longer, and if the people want cheap bread and food, they in the city will have to change places with the farmer. If you are going to have a reasonable loaf,

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you will have to give the farmer a reasonable price for growing it—something like the same class of wages that you are getting yourselves while you are working in the cities. The Premier has made a very good bargain, not only for the consumer, but also for the producer—he has made an excellent bargain. Before there is any wheat harvested in Queensland the wheat is costing 9s. 4d. per bushel. The Premier said that there should be no rise in the price of bread through the operations of the pool, because the millers will be able to get their wheat just as cheaply as they have been getting it previously. We shall be using hundreds of thousands of bushels of wheat for fowl food, which will be very much better wheat than what we could import from Argentine. Another thing is that the Government, on behalf of the consumer—because I presume the Premier has made that bargain on behalf of the consumer as well as the producer—is getting wheat at 25 per cent. under its present price.

Mr. KIRWAN: How do you think they would get on if there was no wheat pool?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: If there was no wheat pool, a good portion of the wheat would be shipped from Queensland, and you would have to buy your wheat from the South, which would cost you considerably more than it is doing now.

The TREASURER: Don't you know that the Commonwealth wheat pool control all the shipping. Three years ago, although we had not produced enough for ourselves, we could not import from Singapore and New Zealand. The wheat pool would not allow them to send their wheat over here.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Does the hon. gentleman mean to say that if the millers would not give a reasonable price for the wheat, the producers would not appeal to the Commonwealth to send a ship to take it away? That is exactly what would happen. The hon. member may as well say that if there were no wheat pool the farmers would offer their wheat at any price.

Mr. KIRWAN: So they would.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: And that is what you want.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: We do not.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You do. You starving brutes! (Interruption.)

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. F. A. COOPER: Mr. Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member for Drayton in order in calling hon. members on this side of the House "starving brutes?"

The SPEAKER: I did not hear the hon. member use those words, but if he did so, I must call on him to withdraw.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I said they wanted the farmers to sell their wheat at any price.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: Mr. Speaker, I wish to know if the hon. member has withdrawn.

The SPEAKER: Will the hon. member withdraw the expression?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I withdraw if you wish me to, Mr. Speaker. No one who looks at the hon. member for Brisbane would accuse him of being starved. (Laughter.)

It is unfair that the farmers should be placed in the position of having to sell wheat at any price to clear off their debts.

The Minister has made a great fuss about the wheat guarantee. It is very good, but without a wheat pool the wheat guarantee was absolutely useless to the man who could not sell. The Minister gave a guarantee which he had no money to back up. It is just like a man giving a promissory note when he has no money in the bank to meet it. The Minister gave a guarantee when he did not have a shilling to back it up.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The whole credit of the State was behind it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You had no intention of paying or buying anything.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The hon. member told us distinctly that it must be thoroughly understood that the Government had no intention of buying wheat or making advances on wheat. If that be so, it is all very well to give a guarantee to the man who can sell his wheat, but what good was a guarantee to a man who could not sell? A guarantee is no good unless you have money to back it up. (Government interruption.) It is just the same as giving a cheque to the bank when you have no money there to meet it. If the Government were in a position to make advances, it would have been all right. One

[8 p.m.] provision which should be in the Bill is that the pool shall take over control of all wheat. We are going to have from 20 per cent. to 25 per cent. of damaged wheat.

Mr. GLEDSON: The member for Murilla is against you on that.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am not considering the member for Murilla, I am considering my own people. If hon. gentlemen could see the crops lying down flat on the ground and the rain coming in they would wonder how there was going to be any garnering. I am glad to say that the fine machinery which is on trial now, and which is doing perfect wonders in harvesting, is made in Australia by Australian workmen. (Hear, hear!) The American machines cannot compete with them, and it is a credit to Australian workmen: and I am glad to say it. If it were not for the splendid machinery a very big portion of the crop would be lost altogether. I want to put it to the Minister this way— if the crop is 4,000,000 bushels, and you are going to have 1,000,000 of second-class wheat knocking about that nobody wants to buy and everybody wants to sell, what is going to be the position?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What do you suggest?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I will tell the Minister what will be the position if that happens. A good deal of that second-class wheat will be bought up cheaply and the speculator will make a lot of money out of it. Another thing is, that a good deal of that wheat will probably find its way to the mills in some way or other and be made into flour, and the consumer will be paying the high price for flour made from second-class wheat. I will give the hon. gentleman what is my remedy. Compel the pool to purchase all the wheat. If they are going to buy any, let them buy the lot—control the whole of the wheat crop. There certainly will be a market for two or three cargoes of wheat in China and Japan. That second-class wheat could be cleaned and shipped away, and we

would get the money for it instead of keeping it here to go to waste. The Government, in conjunction with the wheat pool, can get a steamer to take away that second-class wheat to the East. Let us get the money back here and have it instead of having the second-class wheat rotting about the place and probably being made into bread, the consumers thus paying the first-class price for flour which is only second-class. In the interest of the consumer, in the interest of the State, and in the interest of the wheatgrower, that wheat should be got away as quickly as possible. There will be a certain demand for a quantity for fowl feed—probably a few hundred thousand bushels. It is not old wheat; it is all good, and perfectly clean. Another thing is, I do not think the pool should be a debt-collecting agency for the Government. Under this Bill the Minister makes the pool a debt-collecting agency for the Government for all debts standing over for a considerable number of years. I do not think that is right. It is stated in one portion of the Bill "The board shall not be deemed to represent the Crown for any purpose." If it is not to be deemed to represent the Crown for any purpose whatsoever, why should it be an agency to collect the Government's debts which have been remaining out several years?

The TREASURER: Supposing the farmer owed £200 for seed wheat. He was a prosperous man and got £500 or £600 for his crop. Should not he pay something to the Government?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Supposing he owes £200 to the Government, £300 to his store-keeper, and £200 to his landlord. The Government will get their £200 and nobody else will get anything. I can quite understand that the Government want their pound of flesh first, irrespective of anybody else. I think the Government have a right to get a share, but not the full amount of the debt.

The TREASURER: Move an amendment on those lines.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Certainly, I will. There is another thing and I will have done for this evening. I want an assurance from the Minister that there is to be no selling agency in connection with this pool.

Mr. GLEDSON: You said just now a guarantee was no good to you.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: That was in regard to money. I am speaking of his word now. I do not know whether I would be right in accepting his word, for the reason that it would be good only so long as he was in his present position. Some members of the board already have admitted there should be no selling commissions, and no selling agents.

The TREASURER: If the board decide that, it settles it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The board have not met yet. Then there is another thing. This Bill will remain on the statute-book after the present board have gone. This board is only to operate until next December, and we do not want to take any risks. We want an amendment of that provision to include a proclamation.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Bill can be extended by proclamation.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Oh, yes, the Bill can be extended. It is no use our talking about a board or the Minister's word,

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because this Bill will be on the statute-book when the present board and the present Parliament have passed away. The worst things that happened down South—and some of them were a disgrace to any Government—

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: And all National Governments.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Well, there is a case coming on which is a great reflection on the Labour Government.

The TREASURER: Wait for it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Yes, we will wait. You have only to go back to the last election to find things bad enough about yourselves.

The SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. member address the Chair?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Certainly, Mr. Speaker. We will not have any selling commissions. Unless that is put in the Bill and understood, it is quite possible to get a selling commission.

The TREASURER: But, surely, a board nominated practically by the farmers—and I include you—

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am not on it.

The TREASURER: I include you as being on it. Surely they will not have these obnoxious selling commissions if they have control?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: These things have happened down South, and that is the reason why we insisted on the farmers controlling their own business, and having a majority on the board.

The TREASURER: You did not insist; we said they should have the majority.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You said so after we had insisted on it. I admit you were very good and met us in every way possible, but we would not have had anything else. That is straight. Surely the men who produce the stuff should have the say in selling it? Why should we hand over the selling of our stuff to a lot of politicians? I suppose they are as honest as ordinary men are, but I claim that the man who grows the stuff has a right to sell it. That is the reason we insisted that the farmers should have a majority of representatives on the board. The Treasurer has suggested that if we had suggested this earlier the Bill would have been introduced earlier. Surely it is the business of the Government to take up the matter. Yet the Government made no attempt whatever to form a wheat pool until the farmers requested them to take action in the matter. I intend to propose an amendment which will make it impossible for any selling commission to be given to the board.

The TREASURER: I think that will be a very good amendment.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am quite sure the Minister will agree to such an amendment.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): Mr. Speaker—

Mr. KIRWAN: Where is wheat grown in the Burnett?

Mr. CORSER: I heard the hon. member speak on wool. Well, there is no necessity to say where wool is grown in Brisbane. (Loud laughter.) I rise to support the second reading of the Bill, and to compliment the farmers—the wheatgrowers in particular—on the way in which they represented this matter to the Government. I also thank

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the Government, on behalf of the farmers, for introducing this measure in their interest.

Mr. PETERSON: Then, why stonewall the Bill?

Mr. CORSER: There is no stonewalling on this side of the House, but we are not going to be dictated to by members on the other side. Statements have been made during this discussion for political purposes. The hon. member for Murilla mentioned that he objected to a certain provision in the Bill, and the Premier, in replying to his remarks, tried to lead the House and the country to believe that that hon. member, who represents a wheatgrowing district, was opposing the Bill and appealing to members on this side to oppose the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He opposed a vital principle of the Bill.

Mr. CORSER: It is not a vital principle of the Bill. The hon. member for Murilla said that one provision in the Bill savours of repudiation, but at the same time he told the House that the farmers in general are in favour of the Bill. There was, therefore, no occasion for the Premier to try to blackball the hon. member for expressing his opinions in regard to any particular provision in the measure. The hon. member for Murilla supported the Bill, as I am doing at the present moment. I do not know why the Government allowed the Council to adjourn and thus delay the passing of the Bill till next Wednesday. Wheat is coming into the market at the present time, and the Government have made no provision to deal with that wheat.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Why not let the Bill go through now?

Mr. CORSER: What is the use of it going through now, since it cannot become an Act this week? The Bill cannot be finally dealt with until next Wednesday.

Mr. POLLOCK: You must know that the Upper House has control of its own business.

Mr. CORSER: I know that we have no control over it.

Mr. POLLOCK: It is an independent House.

Mr. CORSER: I admit that this Bill is in the main a good Bill, but there are certain provisions in it that I do not like. One principle that I should like to have included in the Bill is the principle that the producers, the workers in the bush, should have as much say in the matter of fixing the value of their work as the workers in the cities have. Those engaged in industries in the cities have a say in the fixing of the price paid for their work, and I contend that primary producers should have the right to the same say in fixing the value put on their labour. I claim that the primary producers should have the right to fix the rate of remuneration for their work. Why is there not embodied in the Bill a provision enabling the primary producers to fix the price for wheat and other crops? I believe in the representation of primary producers on a price-fixing board, just as we have representation of the industrial workers on tribunals which fix the price paid for their labour.

The TREASURER: Do you want representation on the board?

Mr. CORSER: Yes, we want fair representation. We want the same representation as the industrial worker wants on a tribunal fixing the rate of his wages. Fair representation is all the primary producer wants.

It is not sufficient that the Premiers of the various States should have the right to fix the price of wheat for this year. This Bill should provide that in all future cases the primary producer—the wheat grower—shall have an opportunity of expressing his views as to the price which should be paid as a return for the labour employed on his farm. That is what is claimed in the present inquiry which is going on for the fixation of the price of butter. There is no representation whatever for the worker who is interested. That is a feature of this Bill that I do not altogether believe in, and I would have liked to have seen it broadened to enable fair representation in all cases in each year when the matter of the fixation of the price of wheat is to be determined.

Mr. POLLOCK: Will you give the consumer representation?

Mr. CORSER: I think that the consumer has fair representation now.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: What about the worker that harvests? How are his wages fixed?

Mr. CORSER: In any way the Government likes to determine that they should be fixed, but it is not for the Opposition to say. It is for the Government to ask themselves how those things are fixed.

The TREASURER: Will you allow the consumer to fix the price of everything that he consumes?

Mr. CORSER: No more than I would allow the primary producer to fix the price of all the things that he produces; but I say that he should have full representation.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What do you mean—balance of power on the board?

Mr. CORSER: I mean that he should have just as much representation as is enjoyed by the industrial worker on the board. As representing a country electorate, I was hopeful that when the Bill was introduced the Government would make it so broad as to include the possibility of a maize pool.

The TREASURER: Why not move an amendment?

Mr. CORSER: I might say that an amendment is printed to that effect, and I hope it will be possible to broaden the Bill so as to enable us to deal with such products as maize. It is astonishing what amount of maize is grown here. In 1918 only 104,000 bushels of wheat was produced, which shows what a poor season that was compared to the present season, in which it is stated there may be 4,000,000 bushels of wheat. But in 1918, while only 104,000 bushels of wheat was produced, we had a crop of 4,000,000 bushels of maize, and with a good season that amount may be increased. The Burnett district produces a very great proportion of the maize that is grown in Southern Queensland. The maize growers have to meet the same troubles and difficulties as the wheat-growers. Although we may raise a large amount of maize we are not a big maize-consuming people. The Maize Products Company of Victoria is certainly assisting us in that direction; but there may be a great deal of trouble ahead for the maize producer in Queensland unless we make provision for a pool to assist him, so as to deal with the tremendous amount of maize, and machinery should be provided under this Bill to fix a

price which will give the grower of maize a full return for his labour, with something perhaps to compensate him for the losses in years of drought he has gone through. It is my intention to try to broaden the Bill so as to protect any product which farmers are engaged in growing by enabling them to work together in a pool. The Secretary for Agriculture claimed that members of the Opposition generally liked guarantees—the guarantee principle on a railway, for instance.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No, I did not suggest that at all—guarantee for crops.

Mr. CORSER: When we were on the Government benches, unlike the present occupants, we opposed the then leader of our Government. In 1914 I moved an amendment to abolish it, and had the then Labour party supported the amendment of the farmers' section—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We did.

Mr. CORSER: We would have defeated the Denham Government on that occasion and have wiped it out for all time. "Hansard" for 1914, page 1091, shows the division list, and the members of the Labour party, as voting for the Denham Government on that occasion against the primary producers' representatives who were endeavouring to amend the conditions in the respect I have mentioned. Only three members of the Labour party voted against the Denham Government on that occasion—namely, Messrs. Bertram, Gillies, and Theodore. The Secretary for Railways voted with Mr. Denham. (Opposition laughter.) Thirteen other members of the Labour party voted with him, but had those fourteen members voted with the farmers' representatives on that occasion there would have been an earlier defeat of the Denham Government and the earlier rise to power of the Country party that has had to fight a lone road since that time. In 1914 the Labour party could have abolished it. When they did abolish it they put a land tax on.

The TREASURER: I find that Mr. W. H. Barnes, Mr. Petrie, and your father voted against you. (Laughter.)

Mr. CORSER: We have heard about the sins of the father. (Laughter.) If there was anything in the arguments of gentlemen who were on those occasions taking some of our members to the other side, they certainly might have succeeded then, but they have never again been able to secure any members of the Country party or to take them away on false pretences.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: We don't want them.

Mr. CORSER: No, but you certainly wanted the ghost at election time to get where you are. The Country [8.30 p.m.] party regret that the Government have enabled the other place practically to go into dissolution so that we cannot deal with this matter finally till next Wednesday, although the opportunity presented itself to get through all stages of the Bill to-night.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: There is a stone-wall here to-night.

Mr. CORSER: There is no stonewalling. We know that if it passes to-night it cannot go to the other place, so that there is no opportunity of finalising the matter. The

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measure has my support and the support of all the members of the Country party, and they are particularly anxious to get it through, and would have liked to finalise the thing yesterday or to-night.

The TREASURER: Your leader would not stand it.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: It could have been through at 4 o'clock.

Mr. CORSER: At 6 o'clock last night, if the Government wanted to deal with it, it was their place to say that it would come on to-day.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There is no time like the present.

Mr. CORSER: There is no time like the present! The hon. member would like to take all control out of the hands of the Opposition and force things through without discussion, as the Government attempted to do by wiping out the Address in Reply, depriving new members of an opportunity of even speaking on Supply.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CORSER: I am in favour of this Bill, and I am only sorry that the Government have not arranged that it could go through the other place to-night.

The TREASURER: The Bill that is introduced here to-night is really necessary from a Governmental point of view, on account of the difficulties which arose on the last occasion when we had a good wheat season in Queensland. We well remember that on that occasion, although we did not harvest enough wheat to fill our own requirements—

Mr. MORGAN: Never have!

The TREASURER: Although it was a good season, we were not able to produce enough for our own requirements, and we were not permitted to export even to New Zealand or Singapore, New South Wales wheat was flooding Queensland. The grower could not find a market for his own product, for the Wheat Board, controlled by the Commonwealth, would not buy or permit export. We have to find some remedy. We are endeavouring now to erect machinery that will give an ample and full remedy to the producer. Some time ago—although other Governments were guaranteeing a bare moiety—we decided to guarantee a full 8s. per bushel.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER interjected.

The TREASURER: That is fortuitous, but it does not interfere with our bona fides. We gave a definite guarantee of 8s. a bushel, just as we cashed the war gratuity bonds of the returned soldiers.

Mr. CORSER: Only for the elections you would not have cashed them.

The TREASURER: We are always going to have some motives imputed to us. A moment ago the hon. member for Burnett thanked the Government for this Bill and said he thought they had done a good action in this regard. If he has scruples on this occasion, let him be honest and give voice to them. The promise regarding the gratuity bonds was given long before the election.

Mr. MORGAN: Stick to wheat.

The TREASURER: I did stick to wheat until your colleague brought in the war

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bonds. We have an 8s. guarantee. We are now erecting the machinery—a board that will be able to market the wheat and finance the farmer. The Bill, naturally, also contains provision for the utilisation of the storage sheds, and indemnifies the Commissioner in respect to any agreements he may have regarding them. It is not likely that a Government who are looking after both producer and consumer are going to allow any farmer to be at a disadvantage because he has an agreement with the Railway Commissioner regarding storage. The Railway Commissioner will recompense him. There is nothing in that; but you must give the board plenary power to control the storage space we have. We must be in a position to store the wheat and put it on the market. With regard to our agreement with the Commonwealth wheat pool, we shall not have any interference from them. They control the shipping space, and if we had a surplus they would export it. They will allow us to market our own wheat. The board, nominated by the farmers themselves, have full power to deal with the whole harvest. We have there provision to arrange storage, even down to penalties, all conceived with the idea of helping the farmer and the producer. My own hope is that bread is not going up in price at all. With proper management, I do not think it need do so in Queensland. It may eventually go up a trifle, but we, at all events, are not concerned with the miller, but with the producer and the consumer. We do not want New South Wales to be flooding our State. We do not produce enough wheat for our own consumption, and we want to be in a position to export wheat that is not of fair average quality. I cannot understand the captious criticism that has fallen from hon. members. The board is there; they have full control, and it is being erected for no other purpose than to serve their interests.

Mr. STOPFORD (*Mount Morgan*): Hon. members opposite, representing the Country party, by their attitude to-night would lead us to believe that they were opposed to this legislation. If there is anyone who should be opposed to this particular measure, it is those members who are representing industrial constituencies—who are representing the men who are going to harvest this wheat and are getting no consideration at all in it. Hon. members asked for representation on this board for the producers. I want the Government, or representative of the Government here to-night, to realise this. Personally, I have no objection to the farmer getting a fair result for the value of the labour he puts into the production of his product, but I think I am equally right in asking that the labourer that the farmer employs should also receive a fair return for the labour he executes. When the sugar agreement was brought forward, provision was made for justice, so far as it went, to the producer, under the price fixed—I cannot pretend to say whether the price was a just or an unjust one—to the wage-earner and to the consumer by fixing the prices of wages and of sugar. In the particular industry we have under consideration to-night, we, as representatives of industrial centres, are in this position: We are fixing the price of the product. We have also a shadowy promise that it will not increase the price to the consumer. Now, if we fix the price to the consumer, and justice is done to the

producer, it is a reasonable argument that justice should also be done to the worker. But we stand to-day, faced with a record crop, and we have not the power to go to the workers' tribunal to obtain an award for the workers who will harvest that crop. We are shut out from the Arbitration Court and deprived of an opportunity to receive a fair and just rate of wage for the workers who harvest the product. I contend that while that measure remains as it is, it is an injustice to the workers who are going to work in that industry. Experience tells us that the man who has what we call the world's parity is often the man who will take advantage of the law of supply and demand when paying the price of the labour he requires to produce his commodity. I maintain that the industrial workers of this State have a right to ask that this Government will follow up this measure with one that will give access to the Arbitration Court to the men who work in the industry, or to secure from the wheat board some guarantee that the men will be paid according to the rate—the minimum rate, if necessary—ruling in other industries that have their rates of wages fixed by the Arbitration Court. I sincerely trust that even the members of the Country party will realise the justice of that request on behalf of the workers who—because of the number of men who are out of employment—are subject to the law of supply and demand, and may be compelled to work at a rate much lower than any judge of the Arbitration Court would fix, if the case could be placed before him as in another industry.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): I do not propose to take up the time of the House very long, as any defects in the measure can be remedied in Committee. It appears that members on both sides of the House are in favour of the Bill. I take it that the Government are guaranteeing 8s. a bushel, and the price fixed is to be 9s. at seaport. That price may not mean 8s. to the producer, as there is 4d. a bushel to come off for freight. Taking it on the average, the freight to Brisbane would amount to 4d. a bushel, or, perhaps, a little more. Then there is something for interest and storage, and it is just possible there may be abnormal conditions to deal with. There may be a bad season for storage, for instance. Some seasons are very bad for storage, as the wheat is more likely to become weevily, and waste will occur. Therefore, I think there ought to be some arrangement whereby the board could charge more than 9s. It is just possible, owing to the present financial position, that the Government may have to raise freights on the railways. That would make a difference.

The PREMIER: Are you suggesting that?

Mr. DEACON: No, but the Government may find it necessary.

The PREMIER: That is certainly a very important admission from the Country party—that we will have to raise the freights.

Mr. DEACON: If that is done the board will have to increase the price in order to secure a return of 8s. to the farmer. At present, I understand the board cannot charge more than 9s. at seaport, and the margin may not be sufficient. At present the margin is sufficient, but I do not know whether the board has power to ask an increased price if it becomes necessary. One

hon. member referred to the position of the consumer, and I would point out that under this agreement the consumer has got the cheapest bread in the world.

The PREMIER: I would suggest that when the Country party do suggest an increased schedule on the railways that we exempt wheat.

Mr. DEACON: As far as wages paid are concerned, I might say that the men directly paid by the farmers are not growling, so the wages cannot be very far wrong. The engine-drivers and others on the railway are under the control of the Arbitration Court. There is only one class of men directly employed by the farmers, and you do not hear them growling.

Mr. COSTELLO (*Carnarvon*): As the representative of a wheatgrowing district, I should like to say a few words on this Bill. First of all, I would like to compliment the Government on the way they rose to the occasion when the people interested in this industry came along with the deputation to them.

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

Mr. COSTELLO: The Government issued a "Gazette" to the effect that they would guarantee the growers 8s. a bushel, but the growers could not see how the Government were going to carry out that guarantee. In the first place, there was no provision made to finance the guarantee, and in the second place there was no control of the wheat, and the guarantee was only for prime milling wheat. The people engaged in the wheatgrowing industry are very much in need of funds. Those who know anything about the wheat industry know that there has been no wheat harvest for many years, and under the circumstances the growers would be compelled to take the best price offering at the time their wheat was ready for marketing, whether it was 6s. 7s., or 8s., and all disputes would probably have to be settled by the Government.

The PREMIER: It was perfectly obvious that we would have to pass legislation when we made that guarantee.

Mr. COSTELLO: There would be great difficulty under those circumstances. People in distress would have had to accept the first price offering. They would have had to take it and be satisfied, and the only way to overcome that difficulty is to pool all the wheat. I am very pleased, indeed, that the Government received the deputation and readily rose to the occasion in the way they did. I am out to advocate that all wheat be controlled by the wheat board whether it be first class, second class, third class, or chick wheat. That would be fair and just to the producer, and also to those people who buy the wheat, as they would know what they would have to pay for it and would know where to go for it. There would be no middlemen and no profiteering in the industry. I am very pleased that the board has full control in this matter. The success of this board depends on whether those who manage the business are competent, and I have every confidence that the right men will be selected by the farmers, and if the Government are prepared to give them full control the producer will have nothing to worry about at all. As far as the grain sheds are concerned, I think it necessary that the board should have the power to take over the railway sheds. The wheatgrowers should

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not be deprived of the sheds. No other industry will be needing the use of the sheds. For instance, the wool is all now marketed, and there will be no other crops in those districts for some two or three months. The grain sheds are absolutely empty and should be utilised by the wheatgrowers and the board should be given full control of those sheds. My hearty support is with this Bill, and as the details may be discussed later on, I do not intend to delay the House any longer. I congratulate the Minister for Agriculture on introducing the Bill, and on accepting almost everything recommended to him by the primary producers. As regards the wages paid in the harvest fields, I would say that I have just come from the district where they are harvesting, and the earnest and willing men are receiving better wages than hon. members on the other side thought would be given. They have an idea that the "cockies" are out to sweat the men at every point. That is a wrong idea altogether.

Mr. COLLINS: We have not got that idea in regard to the sugar industry.

Mr. COSTELLO: The "cockies" pay their men a fair wage, and give them good food. In fact, they have the same food and sit at the same table as the farmers themselves. So long as the agitators keep away from the farmers they are all right. (Hear, hear, and laughter.)

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*): I am glad that the Government have made provision in this Bill to see that the Queensland requirements of wheat are safeguarded before any wheat is allowed to be exported. I was under the impression that that was not so, but the Premier informed me that the Government made an agreement with the Commonwealth Government whereby no wheat will be permitted to be exported from Queensland without the sanction of the Queensland Government. I only want to say, in reply to the hon. member for Carnarvon, in regard to the payment of the wages of the men working in the industry, that it will be just as competent to provide for them in this Bill as it is to provide for the men I represent, who will have the privilege of paying for this wheat. We have no other interest locally in the securing of the increased price of wheat, except that we want to see the farmer get a fair deal. (Hear, hear!) At the same time, as the representative of men who will be coming down here from time to time to work, I hold exactly the same right to see that they receive a fair return for their labour as any farmers' representative does to see that the men he represents get a fair thing for the amount of stuff they produce. I say that no man has a right to rise on his hind legs in indignation because a member on this side of the House desires to have the interests of the men who work on the farms properly safeguarded. If agitation and agitators are responsible merely for seeing that the men who work on these places are getting a fair return for their labour, well, nobody can say anything hard about that. I only want to say that this party stands just as much for the rights of the men who work for the farmer as we stand for the rights of the farmer himself. (Hear, hear!) We are not going to place the rights of the men who work for the farmer second to the rights of the farmer. I am not going to stand for anything in the direction of giving these men anything but a perfectly fair deal, and if that is agitation I am content to

accept the name of agitator in that connection.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Before the Minister replies, I would like to make a few observations. Let me repeat what I have said previously in this House—that I recognise, so far as I can see, that everyone should do their best to make the Bill one that will be acceptable, because it has to do with one of the biggest industries in Queensland at the present time. (Hear, hear!) If there is one thing more than another that Queensland wants, it is to get men on the land. It has been shown again and again through the debate that the tendency has been for people to get away from the land, and the result has been that the production from the land has not been as great as formerly. If there is one thing more than another that this Parliament should guard against, it is that there should be nothing done to discourage still more men from going on the land. That is why it is necessary for us to make this Bill the very best Bill it is possible to make it. If we can make the Bill such that the growers will receive more money for their products, then it will be all the better for the individual, and all the better for Queensland. I think it was the Premier who referred to clauses 11 and 12 as having been taken from the Victorian Act, but I remarked, by interjection, that the cases in Queensland and Victoria were not quite analogous. It must be said, with a great deal of regret, that, so far as Queensland is concerned, for years past there has not been any over-production of wheat. The production has not equalled our requirements, and, that being so, there has been no need for such a clause as was referred to by the Premier. It is our business to-night to pass the second reading of the Bill, and when we get into Committee we will point out where the clause is not quite right, so far as the matter I am referring to is concerned. Hon. members know me well enough to assume that I am not going to agree to anything that will go in the direction of repudiation. (Hear, hear! and laughter.)

The PREMIER: You yourself were responsible for the introduction of the Rights in Water Act, and that was repudiation.

HON. W. H. BARNES: When we get into Committee we shall be able to deal with the clause which I refer to. I quite agree with the Premier that this is an urgent matter. Anyone who has been over the Downs will see that it represents the major portion of the wheatgrowing districts, and it is a matter of urgency that the crops shall be harvested as speedily as possible. I recognise that a great deal of machinery has to be set in motion in connection with this measure. We have been talking to-night about grain sheds, the disposal of offal, etc., but I speak under correction when I say that no provision has been made for someone to take control. It will mean that there is a lot of work to be entered into very quickly, because the wheat will be rolling in directly. Is it not a fact that the wheat is coming into Brisbane already? I do not want to cry "stinking fish," but it is a fact that some of the wheat that is coming into Brisbane is not too good. The weather conditions have been responsible for some of the wheat being in the condition that it is. Some of it is scenty, smutty, and mouldy.

The PREMIER: That is the reason for urgency in regard to this measure.

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HON. W. H. BARNES: I do not wish to thwart the desires of the Country party in getting this measure through the House.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Is your party agreeable to put the Bill through to-night?

Mr. CORSER (to the Premier): We are agreeable to the conditions you made with the leader of the Opposition.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CORSER (to the Premier): We will stick to what we agreed with you. We are agreeable to the conditions you made with the leader of the Opposition.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: We will stick to any agreement we have made.

Mr. CORSER: We stick to the agreement with you.

The SPEAKER: Order! If the hon. member for Burnett does not obey my call to order, I shall have to deal with him.

HON. W. H. BARNES: If the melodious member for Burnett, who has just interjected, will allow me, I will proceed. (Laughter.) The policies of the Nationalist party and the Country party are very much alike. As regards the policy of the National party,

[9 p.m.] my feelings are that I stand by whatever the Country party desire in this particular matter. It is imperative that the machinery in connection with the wheat harvest should be got to work immediately. I hope if the whole of the wheat is to be handled by the wheat pool, that very great care will be taken to see that any damaged wheat is not stored with good wheat, because there is nothing so sensitive as wheat, and if you get bad wheat and good wheat stacked together, you are going to bring about destruction of the whole of the stack. It is absolutely imperative that the public should know at this juncture exactly where they are. It is essential, now that the wheat pool has been decided upon and all the necessary machinery got together, that arrangements should be at once made for the accommodation of the wheat. I venture to say that the public of Queensland are concerned about getting in the crop, and anyone who has vacant sheds ought to be willing to provide those sheds to assist the Government to find room for the wheat, but they should know exactly where they are going. Further, it should be very clearly outlined that, in connection with the wheat crop—which looks as if it were going to be almost sufficient for the country's needs—that protection should be given to Queensland from the South. I know it has happened in the past that Queensland has been made the dumping ground very largely for Southern flour. If wheat is to be handled quickly and properly and turned into flour, then it will be well to have avenues of trade which will be open to all parts of Queensland. I think one speaker—it may have been the Minister—mentioned that—and I think the Bill makes provision for it—second-class wheat should be dealt with promptly in the interest of all concerned. It is very much better to export it as wheat than to enter into any arrangement by which second-class flour should be made from it, because—it does not matter what the article is—when anything of this nature is sold, it brings a bad

taste with it as far as those who have bought it are concerned. Our object in connection with this Bill—either at this stage or in Committee—will be to do our best to make it the very best measure possible, believing it is a national measure—

Mr. HARTLEY: How do you make out it is a national measure? It is only a farmers' measure.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Surely the hon. member is not so narrow as to think we are not closely allied one with the other when production is brought about as a result of the labours of the men in the country and has to do with the very life of the people! And I would remind you that twelve months ago, when it looked like a shortage of wheat in Australia, if we had not have had a bountiful rainfall and a good wheat crop the trouble would have been national to a very great degree. And yet the hon. gentleman is insane enough to make an interjection like that! I say it is national, and it is a pity that some men's souls are so small that they cannot rise to a national occasion.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): To my mind this measure is something in the nature of experimental legislation, but it contains some very interesting features, and I am glad to see that the party opposite have at last become converts to the principle of price-fixing, for that is what it means when they ask this Government to form a pool to practically guarantee the farmers a minimum price for the results of their enterprise. With regard to the gentleman who referred to the narrowness of my soul, I would like to contrast—with the narrowness of a Government of which he was previously Treasurer, when the country was in need of a Government with a big soul both for the farmer and also for the consumer and the people of the nation in Australia in time of stress and war—the Government's action in bringing in this measure, doubtful as to what the results may be—because there are some problems in it untried in this State so far and which certainly have not shown to the best advantage in some of the Southern States. The Government's action in this matter is a splendid contrast to the administration of the Denham-Barnes Government at the outbreak of war as regards this specific transaction. The 1914 wheat crop was above the general average. New South Wales fixed a price for their farmers at 5s. per bushel; the Victorian Government refused to safeguard the interests of their farmers and fixed no price. The Denham-Barnes Government were asked to fix a price in Queensland, but that Government—being middlemen and not farmers—could not then see the value of such a measure, and did not fix a price, with the result that wheat grown in Queensland at that time was bought at from 3s. 6d. to 4s. 6d. per bushel, exported from Queensland—as shown in the Royal Commission who inquired into the transactions—and sold in Victoria at anything from 8s. to 9s. 6d. per bushel. Subsequently this State went short of wheat for the bread supply, and when this Government came into power they could not buy enough wheat in Australia, and had to send to the Argentine for the wheat that our friend, the hon. member for Drayton, was gibing at a little while ago, which, he said, was so much inferior to Australian wheat. We recognise that it

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was. I want this House to contrast the narrowness of the soul of the hon. member for Bulimba on that occasion, with his action to-night, when he claims that it is a national measure simply because he is on the Opposition benches.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The following year your Government fixed it practically at 5s. 6d. per bushel.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HARTLEY: This Government never fixed the price of wheat in 1916. They fixed the price of flour, in order to prevent the middlemen speculators I have just referred to, and others of their ilk, from exploiting the workers and the people of Queensland in the direction of selling flour. By our fixation of prices, it worked out that the farmers that year got an average price of 5s. 11d. per bushel for their wheat.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: With flour at £9 per ton? You are dreaming.

Mr. HARTLEY: The Royal Commission showed that the price for wheat in that year worked out at 5s. 11d. per bushel. Now, there is an interesting thing, as far as I am concerned, in this. There are two old shibboleths of the Tory-Conservative-Liberal-National, etc., party which have been exploded; because at last they have sanctioned what this party always have contended for—first, the fixation of prices; and, secondly, the fixation of wages in order to ensure a return for services rendered. If it is a fair thing for the farmer to get a fair price for his wheat—and this party always have contended that he should get the full results of his industry—(Opposition dissent)—and it is because we subscribe to that principle that I, at any rate, am prepared to take the risk of this measure, because, I say, it will boomerang if mishandled—

Mr. COSTELLO: On whom?

Mr. HARTLEY: On the Government. A board will be formed; but if there is any bungling, any mishandling, any corruption, such as has occurred in the Southern States, this Government will suffer the odium. I trust the Minister for Agriculture will see that the soundest and keenest men are put on the board as Government representatives, and the board be debarred from appointing any wheat speculator or commission agents as agents.

Mr. COSTELLO: They are farmers on the board.

Mr. HARTLEY: That is all right; but the board has power to appoint agents to buy and receive delivery of the wheat.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: No, we will not have them; there is no power; there cannot be; absolutely no power.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HARTLEY: How are you going to get the wheat?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It goes straight into the pool.

Mr. HARTLEY: There is a fixed price under this Bill for the wheat. But the board has the power to appoint agents, and those agents have the power to appoint subagents for the delivery of the wheat.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Not to sell; there is no selling commission.

The PREMIER: They have no power to buy.

Mr. HARTLEY: They have no power to buy, because the price is fixed; but they

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have the right to arrange for delivery, and subagents will have the right.

Mr. COSTELLO: They will be employees of the board.

Mr. HARTLEY: They will; but you have to see that you have employees who will make their paramount aim the benefit of the farmer and the farmer alone, and that he is not handling secret commissions in any way for speculating purposes.

Mr. COSTELLO: We have not come to that in this country; it would be taking money falsely—bribery.

Mr. HARTLEY: I am not accusing anybody of bribery. But it is an easy thing to arrange a commission. One of the big troubles in the South in connection with the Wheat Board has been the improper commissions, and one of the avenues which will have to be most safeguarded is the appointment of agents to accept delivery of wheat.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The Minister already has promised that.

Mr. HARTLEY: The main point I want to remind hon. members opposite of is that, having subscribed to the principle of fixation of price for wheat—that it is a good thing to form a pool to get the best results they can for their industry—the next thing they want to subscribe to is that it is a right and proper thing to arrange for the working out of a rural workers' log.

Mr. STOPFORD: Hear, hear!

Mr. HARTLEY: It has always been opposed by the farmers up to the present time. Surely, now that they have asked the Government to step in and equip them with a board to fix the price of wheat, they will withdraw any opposition to bringing before the court a rural workers' log to fix the results to the labourer for his industry in all the industries, whether it is growing wheat, corn, or any other commodity on the land.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: And then fix all the prices in order to be able to pay those wages.

Mr. HARTLEY: I want to tell the hon. member for Carnarvon I speak from practical knowledge as a worker, a union agitator, and honorary union secretary. I have had the best education. (Interruption.)

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HARTLEY: It is good in this way, that any man with experience in any line of useful labour must demonstrate that value when he comes into contact with his mates in a union. It has been my misfortune to have had to work at several industries, not because I was incompetent in any one, but for various reasons, one of which was that a man who was a union agitator in those days got rather a rough spin; and I am glad to say the last company I worked for—one of the biggest companies in Queensland—gave me such a rough spin that eventually the workers sent me into Parliament, and I am standing here in their interests to-night.

Mr. COSTELLO: Is this a better job?

Mr. HARTLEY: In some ways it is, and in some ways it is not. I think the wear and tear on me in the last five years has been greater than in any five years during which I worked in an engineering foundry. I have worked the clock from 5 o'clock in the morning until 12 o'clock on the following day on more than one occasion.

Mr. SIZER: You worked twenty-seven hours continuously this week.

Mr. HARTLEY: And it took more out of me than any forty-eight hours shift I have worked. (Hear, hear! and laughter.)

Mr. STOPFORD: You can laugh, but you do not know what bores you are; we had to listen to you.

Mr. HARTLEY: That has been my experience on that point. The other point I want to emphasise is that, in subscribing to this Bill to-night and hailing it as a good measure, it is an assertion that the old time-honoured belief that all industries were to be controlled and operated on the law of supply and demand goes by the board. The acceptance of this Bill shatters every tenet of that old creed that the operations and transactions of industry are governed by the law of supply and demand; for this reason, that this season is the record in Queensland to the production of wheat—something between 3,500,000 and 4,000,000 bushels are estimated to be produced—the greatest harvest that ever has been produced; yet you are asking us to hold the price of wheat at 9s. a bushel. If the law of supply and demand were operating, and the supply is so great, why not let it operate now and let us see what would be the effect on the price of wheat?

Mr. WARREN: We could export it.

Mr. HARTLEY: You cannot export it. The hon. member knows the shipping factor would be a big preventive factor regarding export. Also, the production of wheat in other countries would operate to prevent your wheat, with its 12,000 or 13,000 miles of sea carriage, being able to compete on the other markets. We know very well that never yet has Australia been able to compete with Argentine and American wheat in the European markets, and cannot do so now. That must be admitted; but I am pleased for one reason that this Bill has been introduced. That reason is that hon. members opposite, by supporting such a measure, have at last subscribed to the doctrine that the law of supply and demand is only a sham and a shibboleth created by capitalists for the purpose of fleecing the workers.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): It comes to me rather as a surprise to hear the hon. member for Fitzroy say that Australian wheat has never been able to compete with wheat grown in the Argentine and other wheatgrowing countries of the world, because the fact is that during the last twenty or twenty-five years Australia has sent millions of bushels of wheat to Great Britain.

Mr. HARTLEY: That is nonsense.

Mr. TAYLOR: It is not nonsense.

Mr. HARTLEY: You back up your statement by quoting from a statistical return.

Mr. TAYLOR: I can secure statistical returns to show that millions of bushels of wheat have gone from Australia to Great Britain during the period I have mentioned.

Mr. HARTLEY: At what price? At 2s. 9d. a bushel.

Mr. TAYLOR: Whatever the price may have been, Australian wheat had to compete with the wheat from the countries mentioned by the hon. member. However, I should like to emphasise the remark of the hon. member for Bulimba as to expedition being necessary in bringing this wheat pool into operation. There is a fairly large quantity of this

season's wheat coming into the market at the present time. I have tried to get some definite information as to the quantity, but have not been able to do so, but I feel sure that the Minister can get absolutely correct figures showing the quantities of wheat which have come into the Roma Street yards during the last three weeks. Possibly, there have been 6,000 or 7,000 bags brought there during that period. I should like to point out that there is a difficulty in connection with wheat that is coming in at the present time, as it is uncertain whether this measure will apply to such wheat.

The PREMIER: It is generally known that we intend this Bill to apply to all the wheat which is harvested this season.

Mr. TAYLOR: That does not appear to be quite clear from the Bill. According to my reading of one clause, in the case of a contract that may have been entered into prior to the board being established, only that portion of the contract which may have been incompleated at the time of the establishment of the board will be null and void. The portion of the contract that has been completed will hold good.

The PREMIER: One clause of the Bill makes it retrospective. If it does not, we will make the Bill retrospective.

Mr. TAYLOR: The wheat which has been coming along has been selling at about 8s. 4d. a bushel, or from that up to 8s. 6d. and 8s. 9d. a bushel. Those are the prices which have been realised during the last three or four weeks. In any case, it seems to me desirable that the pool should come into operation as soon as possible in order that any uncertainty which exists on the matter may be removed. The Premier has told us that an arrangement has been come to by the Queensland Government with the Federal wheat pool that no wheat is to be exported from Queensland until the requirements of this State have been provided for. But I would point out that if second-class wheat or chick wheat is not brought into the pool considerable inconvenience and annoyance may occur. One clause of the Bill provides that only growers of wheat can dispose of inferior wheat. That clause will absolutely prohibit grocers and others from selling chick wheat.

The PREMIER: Do you say the board should have control of that wheat as well as milling wheat?

Mr. TAYLOR: If this pool is going to be effective, it should control the selling of second-class wheat as well as first-class wheat.

The PREMIER: You cannot force on the board wheat which they cannot market anywhere.

Mr. TAYLOR: I do not suppose that any of the wheat will not be marketable at all. I certainly hope that the Bill will be put into operation as soon as possible, as I believe it will work out to the best interests of the whole of the people of Queensland. With regard to the fixing of prices, I would remind hon. members that special reasons have existed in Australia during the last few years which have induced the Government to guarantee a certain price for wheat to the farmers. The cultivation of wheat in Australia was decreasing to such an extent that the Federal Government and other Governments recognised that they must take

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some action if they were to keep the farmers on the land growing wheat. They felt that they must guarantee a fair price for their wheat, and the price guaranteed at the present time is 8s. or 9s. per bushel, and in view of the experiences of the wheatgrower during the past five years, I do not think that is an unfair price to pay for his product. If ever compensation was to be paid to the farmers in connection with their losses through bad seasons, that compensation should be paid at the present time.

Mr. SIZER (*Yundah*): With regard to the remark of the hon. member for Fitzroy that Australia has never been able to export wheat and compete with other wheat-growing countries of the world, I should just like to mention that statistics show that in 1901 the value of wheat exported from Australia amounted to £2,755,000; in 1918-19, it amounted to £11,335,000; and in 1919-20, it amounted to £2,569,000. I think it would be just as well to record it in "Hansard," to show that it is clearly a misapprehension that we cannot compete with other countries in regard to wheat.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (in reply): After inviting constructive criticism on the Bill, and useful suggestions, while some very useful suggestions have been made, and one or two amendments have been forecast which I think are worthy of consideration, I want to say that a lot of the criticism has been very disappointing, because it has not been of a constructive nature.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: I do not think it is fair to say that.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The whole purpose of this measure is to appoint a board, the majority of the members of which will be farmers' representatives. Those representatives have been elected in the most democratic way by the growers in the wheat-growing districts, and they are satisfied that these men will make a success of the scheme. Yet, notwithstanding that, suggestions have been made that their hands shall be tied. First of all, they are going to be forced, according to one hon. member, to take all wheat. I say that the board, under the Bill, will have power to take all. They are compelled to take all milling wheat of a fair average quality, but they have power, in their judgment, to take all the wheat. I think it is unwise, if these men are the men we are told they are, to tie their hands to such an extent as to compel them to take all wheat, irrespective of its value.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I did not. I think if they take any wheat they should take the lot.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I disagree with you. The most surprising criticism is the suggestion of repudiation. I have heard the same thing time and again in this Chamber. I remember one instance, when it was suggested that the power should be taken away from the sugar-miller to fix the price of cane to their growers, which was done for all time by the Labour Government of this State. We had the spectacle of a barrister coming to the bar of the House and saying it would ruin the widows and orphans because it was proposed by the Government of the day, for the first time in the history of the State, to give the grower

[*Mr. Taylor.*

what he considered just. We propose to give the board power to annul contracts which may have been made under distressing circumstances by the farmers. We hear this cry of repudiation. When it is proposed to place the grain sheds at the disposal of the board, and no one can contend that the scheme can be a success without it—we again hear the cry of repudiation, and they talk about compensation. That kind of criticism is not helpful to the Government. It is surprising to hear the alleged farmers' friends talking about repudiation when these clauses are put in for the sole purpose of protecting the farmer.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Suppose you have a party of farmers who have paid the rent for a grain shed for four years during the drought, and those farmers want the shed to store their barley? The board will take that and leave them at the mercy of the elements.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am satisfied that the scheme cannot be made a success unless grain sheds are placed at the disposal of the board, and I am satisfied that the farmers on the board will exercise common sense. Surely, we can trust those farmers? It is not intended to take away those grain sheds without making some reasonable compensation. I would like to quote from the notes I had taken at the deputation which waited upon myself and the Premier on 21st October—

"Mr. Vowles asked, in the event of the financial institutions agreeing to finance the pool, what would be done about storage? The Railway Commissioner had storage, and there were private mills and grain sheds.

"Mr. Theodore took it that depôts would be provided. They could have receiving depôts at the most convenient places—Warwick, Clifton, etc.—and the pool could have agents there, and arrangements would be made between the Railway Department and the pool. He supposed they only wanted the wheat stacked and covered. They would hardly want sheds built for this.

"Mr. Barnes pointed out that it was no use covering the wheat with tarpaulins: galvanised iron would be required.

"Mr. Bebbington mentioned that the mills had a fair amount of storage."

Mr. BEBBINGTON: And Barnes and Co. had placed their storage at the disposal of the pool.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The deputation recognised that the question of storage was an important one, and that was why it was wanted in this case. I know of no great scheme of reform which can be brought about without some sacrifice. Surely, the members of the farmers' party, who are supposed to be the friends of the farmer, are prepared to impose this sacrifice on the people who lease the sheds, in order to make the scheme succeed. Objection is also taken to the provision—reasonable in my opinion, and not arbitrary—that if I think it is a reasonable thing to instruct the board to collect some of the £47,000 outstanding and due to the Government for a number of years, the board should be instructed to do so. The hon. member for Drayton wanted to know where the storekeeper and landlord came in? Both the storekeeper and landlord are out for gain. The storekeeper is

out for his profits, and should take a reasonable amount of risk. The landlord should be prepared to take some risk, too, and suffer loss. The position of the Government is somewhat different. They are trustees of the public money. The hon. member for Aubigny admitted that there are some people who got seed wheat from the Government in days gone by, who are quite able to pay for it, but who are not doing so. Those are the men I have provided for in this Bill, not the unfortunate farmer, against whom I would not exercise the power.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: They should be made to pay.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I agree with that interjection. I think that hon. members will agree that those who are able to pay should be made to pay. It was suggested by the hon. member for Drayton that no commission should be paid for selling or buying. As the hon. member knows, I have no time for the middleman or the speculator; my sympathies are with the producer. On consideration, I think that amendment might be accepted in Committee. Then there is an amendment circulated by the hon. member for Burnett. Those are the only two amendments I have had placed in my hands. I have no serious objection to that—that the scope of the Bill should be broadened so as to include maize and other products. Had I inserted that in the Bill myself, we should have been accused of putting a dragnet clause in, and the members of the Opposition would have sought to take it out. I am sorry that the Opposition are not prepared to allow this Bill to go through to-night, because it is an urgent measure.

Mr. SIZER: It could not go through the Upper House till Wednesday.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We could arrange for them to meet and it could go through on Monday. (Laughter.) This is a very simple measure; it does not require a lot of thinking over—members have evidently thought out their amendments—and there is no reason why it should not go through to-night so that we could get it on the statute-book early in the week. If the Opposition are not prepared to agree, the responsibility is theirs.

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

The consideration of the Bill in Committee was made an Order of the Day for the next sitting day of the House.

QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT LOANS SUBSCRIPTIONS BILL.

SECOND READING.

The TREASURER: I beg to move the second reading of this Bill. I had occasion yesterday and on the previous sitting day to explain the main features of the measure. It does not deal with the amount of any loan that may be asked for—the authority for which is contained entirely in previous measures. It merely provides that in the event of flotations by the Government, if the loan is not subscribed fully in Queensland, compulsion may be resorted to by the Government.

Mr. MORGAN: Why do you not mention the amount?

The TREASURER: While the House was sitting all through the night and day, I unfortunately had business all the time before the Chamber, and had no opportunity even for half an hour's sleep, but the hon. member must have been asleep for a great part of the time, because I mentioned half a dozen times that the loan would be £2,000,000.

Mr. WARREN: You do not say it in the Bill.

The TREASURER: Of course, not, for this reason—suppose—

Mr. MORGAN: That is the question I asked. Why do you not mention it in the Bill?

The TREASURER: There is nothing to conceal. I will give you an assurance that only £2,000,000 will be asked for. If more is subscribed we will accept it, and I think more will be subscribed.

Mr. MORGAN: That is in respect to this loan. When will you float another loan?

The TREASURER: This Bill is not required to bring forward a loan at all. Present legislation—I do not want to be hard on the hon. member—enables us to put any loan on the market at any time we like of any amount we like—

Mr. MORGAN: But not a compulsory loan—

The TREASURER: A child could recognise that fact. This is merely the compulsory part of it. We have full authority to float a loan at any time, and in any place, for pretty well any amount. We are now asking Parliament for authority to collect, under compulsion, subscriptions from those who can afford to pay them, if they will not subscribe voluntarily. This is merely the machinery for that purpose. That is the only principle in the Bill. We propose an exemption of £1,000—any person whose income is £1,000 or under need not contribute. That is generous. The Commonwealth have the same legislation and the same machinery, but they have an exemption of only £250. In New Zealand there is no exemption at all. Our legislation is drafted on the legislation of both. I do not think we have one original clause, except that we have an appeal board which will hear and determine appeals against assessments. It may exempt or confirm—it has full powers. If it finds that a business man required all his surplus capital for reinvestment in his business it can make an arrangement to allow him to retain the capital.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: I think you will find very few who will not claim that.

The TREASURER: If so, very few will get exemption. Let me put this fact to you. There is not a local authority—there are a few mayors and a few councillors here—there is scarcely a local authority in Queensland that is not sitting on the Treasurer's mat beseeching loans. There is not a member opposite—except the new members, who have not had time to find out where the Treasury is—(laughter)—but wants a loan for some authority in his electorate. No—I am wrong, because one new member has been down there already.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: And the Treasurer is so short of money that they cannot get any money.

The TREASURER: We must recognise that the conditions for loans are not favour-

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able, and if there is a shortage in the Government's coffers, it must be reflected in the coffers of the local authorities. They cannot get money that is not there. We have in the Treasury requests for about £4,000,000 or more on loans for local authorities. Half an hour ago two members opposite accosted me, and wanted—merely £5,000. Another hon. member merely wanted £1,000. Two other members want £15,000.

Mr. FRY: I have not been to you yet, but when I do I shall want £10,000.

The TREASURER: These things must be considered. For the purposes of this question we simply spend at the rate of £500,000 a month. The Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board is getting £40,000 a month. The Water and Sewerage Board get £40,000 and other municipalities and public bodies get very substantial amounts. We have to reconsider the whole of the loan position and probably at the Cabinet meeting on Sunday we will be able to arrange matters, and it may be found that tentative promises which have been given will have to be reviewed under the stress of circumstances. Does any hon. member here say that we are wrong in asking for a local loan of £2,000,000? Does any hon. member say we cannot get £2,000,000 and that we are not justified in using compulsion to collect £2,000,000?

Hon. W. H. BARNES: We say you should not.

The TREASURER: I say we are justified. The people who make fortunes out of this State should pay something towards the development of the State. Queensland taxation and Commonwealth taxation combined is not nearly as high as New Zealand taxation.

Mr. MORGAN: It is greater than the taxation in any other State in the Commonwealth.

The TREASURER: We have a very small population, and we have the biggest mileage in connection with the railways.

Mr. MORGAN: We had that in 1914, and our taxation was the lowest of any State of the Commonwealth.

The TREASURER: That is the position with regard to loans. The Government will have to curtail expenditure. Our loan expenditure will have to be curtailed from £300,000 per month to probably something in the neighbourhood of £150,000 per month.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: You told the electors that everything was all right.

The TREASURER: It is all right. There is no fountain of wealth; there are no gushing streams of wealth; we cannot bore down and bring up some moulten gold. We can only spend what we can get. We are asking for £2,000,000. We have allocated £2,000,000 and the Water and Sewerage Board will have to follow the example of the Government and reduce expenditure. We have a limited supply of loan money, and local authorities and those engaged in public undertakings can only get according to what we get.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: I thought the local authorities could go to the Commonwealth Bank?

The TREASURER: We are endeavouring to arrange that. The Commonwealth Bank

[*Hon. J. A. Fihelly.*]

are also lending some to the Mayor of Brisbane, and some to the Mayor of Townsville, and some to other municipalities. That is the position with regard to the loan situation. With regard to the penalties, we are much less severe than the Commonwealth or New Zealand. Any penalties for breaches of the Act will be devoted to fresh investments in the loan. It must be remembered in regard to Queensland on the matter of loans, dividends, and interest generally, that most of our big pastoral properties and most of our big enterprises are owned by absentees. We have not the same resources here that they have in New South Wales and Victoria, but they also will have to pay. I do not propose to keep the House any longer. There is only one point in the Bill, and that is the fact that if the loan is not subscribed voluntarily by the people the Government can compel those who have the wealth and those who are earning dividends to contribute something to the development of our country.

Mr. TAYLOR: I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I beg to move that the House, at its rising, do adjourn until Tuesday next.

Question put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I beg to move that this House do now adjourn. The first business on Tuesday will be the Committee stage of the Wheat Pool Bill, to be followed by the Savings Bank Bill; and we hope to make good progress.

Question put and passed.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. SIZER: I desire the permission of the House to make a personal explanation.

The SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the hon. member be allowed to make a personal explanation?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. SIZER: I notice in "Hansard," page 72, that during the course of the debate on the Savings Bank Bill I made use of these words—

"We have only the hon. gentleman's word for that. I remember on one occasion he said there would be no increase of fares and freights, but there was an increase."

And the Treasurer interjected—

"And you acted in a most despicable way in going to the Treasury and getting information."

I did not understand at the time that the hon. gentleman used those words. If he did make use of those words I want to deny that I ever went to the Treasury to get information; and, what is more, the hon. gentleman should know that we do not go to the Treasury to get information in connection with the Railway Department.

The TREASURER: I said one of your party.

The House adjourned at four minutes to 10 o'clock p.m.