

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**THURSDAY, 13 JULY 1922**

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THURSDAY, 13 JULY, 1922.

The SPEAKER (Hon. W. Bertram, *Marque*) took the chair at 5.30 p.m.

PRESENTATION OF ADDRESS IN  
REPLY.

The SPEAKER: I have to report to the House that this morning I presented to His Excellency the Governor the Address in Reply to His Excellency's Opening Speech, agreed to by the House on the 12th instant, and that His Excellency was pleased to make the following reply thereto:—

“ Government House,  
“ Brisbane.

“ Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen,

“ On behalf of our Most Gracious Sovereign I thank the representatives of the people for the expression of their continued loyalty and affection to His Majesty's Throne and Person.

“ I am fully assured that the various measures referred to in my Speech opening the present session and all other matters that may be brought before you will receive your most careful consideration, and that it will be your earnest endeavour so to deal with them that your labours may tend to the advancement and prosperity of the State.

“ MATTHEW NATHAN.”

QUESTIONS.

DEPOSITS OF LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANIES  
WITH TREASURY.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*) asked the Premier and Treasurer—

“ 1. What amount was on deposit with the Treasury under the Life Assurance Companies Act as at 30th June in each of the following years:—1902, 1908, 1914, 1920, 1922—(a) In cash; (b) Government securities?

“ 2. What was the amount of such 1920, 1922—(a) in cash; (b) Government being compulsory under the Act?

"3. What rate of interest (and the amount of such interest) was allowed to the companies concerned on the deposits in each of the years mentioned?"

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

Date.	DEPOSITS.				Amount of Deposits by Act.
	Cash	Government Securities	Other Securities	Total.	
30th June—		£	£	£	£
1902 ... Nil	211,720	89,000	300,720	120,000	
1908 ... Nil	222,120	89,000	311,120	130,000	
1914 ... Nil	222,120	81,000	311,120	120,000	
1920 ... Nil	242,120	64,000	306,120	140,000	
1922 ... Nil	262,670	64,000	326,670	160,000	

"3. The companies draw the interest half-yearly which their respective securities attract; the rates are various."

AMOUNT RECEIVED FROM RENT OF MINERAL AND TIMBER LANDS AND FROM SALE OF LANDS, 1920-1922.

Mr. KERR asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"1. What amount, as rent, was received from mineral and timber lands and for the sale of lands during the financial years 1920-21, 1921-22?"

"2. To what account were the proceeds credited?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. J. H. Coyne, *Warrego*) replied—

"1. and 2. The questions in their present form are not understood. There are 'timber lands' held under different tenures outside the boundaries of National parks, State forest, and timber reserves. Rents received from mineral lands are collected by the Mines Department. If the hon. member will state definitely and clearly what information he requires, it will be obtained."

CLOSURE OF A STREET IN GYMPIE.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*), without notice, asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"Will he, before giving a decision in the matter of the closure of Reef street, Gympie, lay on the table of this House all papers in connection therewith?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. J. H. Coyne, *Warrego*) replied—

"I have no objection to do so."

IMPROPER FORM OF QUESTION.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*) gave notice of a question, and while reading it,

The SPEAKER: Order! The idea of asking questions is to obtain information, and not to give it to the House.

Mr. CORSER, continuing to read the question, quoted statements said to have been made by the Premier,

The SPEAKER: Order! The Speaker has the right to edit all questions, and I shall certainly not allow that question to appear on the business-paper without considerable alteration.

Mr. CORSER: It would be fairly harmful to the Government if you did.

The SPEAKER: Order!

HEALTH ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*): I beg to move—

"That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Health Acts, 1900 to 1917, in certain particulars."

Question put and passed.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT OF COMMONWEALTH CONSTITUTION.

NEW STATES MOVEMENT—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

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

"That, in the opinion of this Parliament, the time has arrived for the remodelling of the Commonwealth Constitution providing for the subdivision of Australia into a greater number of self-governing States, making for more economical and effective government, and also providing an easy method for the people living in any district, such as Central Queensland or Northern New South Wales, to obtain self-government, and that the Prime Minister of Australia be urged to take the necessary steps to bring about these reforms"—

On which Mr. Peterson had moved—

"That the question be amended by the omission of all words after the word 'That,' on line 1, with a view to the insertion in their place of the words 'this Parliament hereby consents to the creation of a new State comprising the territory known as North Queensland, and a new State comprising the territory known as Central Queensland.'"

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I desire to say a few words on this proposal.

The PREMIER: Do you want it?

Mr. MOORE: No, I am opposed to it, because I think it is only going to lead to expense.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Are you opposing the amendment?

Mr. MOORE: I am opposing both motion and amendment, because I do not think there has been any mandate from the people outside, or any agitation, to speak of, amongst them. The Government did not move either the motion or the amendment. It has been left to a private member to do it for a little private electioneering purpose. We know that the hon. member is standing for a Federal seat. Nobody pretends that the Government are behind it. Everybody knows that if they were it would not be left to the hon. member for Rockhampton to move it. The Premier would do that. During the last debate in 1913 the then Premier pointed out that it was quite within the province of the Queensland Parliament to take the first step towards the division of Queensland into three States; but he also pointed out that there had been no demand from the people for it, and there had been no deputation to him on the subject. I want to point out that we have had no deputations asking for it. There may be a little private agitation in one or two small centres in Central and Northern Queensland, but there has been no

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agitation which has shaken Queensland as a whole. We know that the conditions to-day are totally different from what they were many years ago when separation was a live question. We have the railway to Rockhampton, and it is almost completed right up to the North. The distances are cut down to a tremendous extent compared with what they were.

Mr. HARTLEY: Thanks to the Labour Government.

Mr. MOORE: Thanks to no Labour Government, but thanks to the general progress of the State. Communication has been made easy right along the coastline.

Mr. HARTLEY: A former Commissioner would not build the North Coast line because it would compete with the steamers.

Mr. MOORE: I do not know whether he would do it at the time or not; but we know that the railway connection up the coast and the general railway policy was laid down years and years ago. Unfortunately, that policy, which was laid down by Sir Thomas Mellraith, has been departed from for political purposes.

There is no doubt that the proposal would not lead to economy. The Lands Department has a branch in Rockhampton; the Railway Department is practically decentralised, and Rockhampton has its own chief of staff, who is only responsible to the Commissioner. He has the running of the railways generally in that area, and the same remark applies to the North. I do not think the reason exists to-day that existed twenty years ago, when this was a live question.

Mr. FORDE interjected.

Mr. MOORE: I have not seen very wonderful things come from the Government. I have seen a great deal of distress and unemployment, as well as all sorts of conditions that we never had before, and which, in my opinion, are due to bad administration and extravagance. I do not think Central or Northern Queensland is going to benefit by our having three Parliaments instead of one for Queensland. It must lead to greater expense. It certainly would decrease the expense of this Parliament if we reduced the number of members, but I do not think it would decrease the expense in Queensland as a whole if we had three Parliaments. When the Commonwealth was inaugurated we were told of the enormous saving that would result from the Commonwealth taking over the Post Office and many other services which the States at that time were administering. It was said the result would be a reduction in the number of public servants and in the cost of all those services. What has been the result? We know perfectly well the expenses have been doubled. We have not fewer public servants. The work in connection with income tax, land tax, and electoral matters has been duplicated. Does anybody say there would be a different result if we divided Queensland into three States?

Mr. FORDE: Do you advocate one Government for Australia?

Mr. MOORE: I am advocating common sense in administration—that we should have one set of officials to collect taxation and one set of officials to carry out the electoral work.

Mr. FORDE: You are arguing for unification.

[*Mr. Moore.*

Mr. MOORE: I am not; I am arguing against having Queensland further split up, because the necessity does not exist for doing so.

Mr. HARTLEY: According to your argument, there ought to be one Parliament and one insane asylum.

Mr. MOORE: That is not so. I want to eliminate unnecessary expense. Nobody can say we have done that. Everybody knows that, in many departments, we have doubled the expense when money could have been saved. I think hon. members opposite recognise that as well as we do. Because they have failed to carry out certain duties, they say we are arguing for unification. I do not think the hon. member for Rockhampton put up any case when he was arguing for separation. He was getting in a certain amount of political propaganda, but nothing else. It certainly did not come off to a great extent; his cartridge was a blank one. If it is desired to have separation, the wishes of the people should be consulted by referendum, instead of having this Parliament bring forward a motion saying Queensland should be divided up, owing to the influence of a small section who, perhaps, are directly interested for certain political purposes. If the disadvantages of the present system were likely to be compensated for by the advantage of economy, greater population, or anything of that sort, the position would be quite different. I cannot, for the life of me, see how separation is going to increase population.

The hon. member for Rockhampton said that the administration of the Lands Department and other Government departments was faulty, and would be improved by giving local administration in the different districts, but he put forward no argument why there would be a greater population in Central or Northern Queensland because of an alteration in the administration. Various hon. members opposite have said what this Government have done—the excellent strides made by them in the Centre and North. Now we have an hon. member on the other side saying that all that administration is faulty, and that the Centre and the North would get on for better if the State was cut up and each district had its own local administration.

Mr. FORDE: Good government in the South is not to be compared with good self-government.

Mr. MOORE: If we have good government in the South, the Centre and the North will be amply compensated for any disadvantages they may suffer through distance from Brisbane; but, unfortunately, we have not got a good Government in the South, and both the North and the Centre are now endeavouring to get away from the unfortunate position they have got into.

Mr. BRENNAN: Who says that?

Mr. MOORE: I say it.

Mr. BRENNAN: Take a division, and see if the House says so.

Mr. MOORE: I am not here to take a division. I am here to give my views. I am here to show why separation is not for the benefit of Queensland. As to taking a division, the other night the Government deliberately prevented a division because

they did not want to take a vote on the motion.

Mr. KIRWAN: That is an awful suggestion to make.

Mr. MOORE: The motion was talked out by hon. members opposite so that a division would not be taken. So little interest was taken in the matter that the hon. member for Rockhampton at first could not get a seconder for his motion, even though he called out for someone to second it. He then wanted someone to move that he should be given an extension of time, but he could not get anyone to do it for him. Nobody in the House was keen enough on the question to do that. They all recognised that it was purely political propaganda for the coming Federal elections, and they were disgusted as much as we were that this House should be made the means for such a purpose as that. Hon. members opposite also thought that, if the hon. member for Rockhampton wanted to indulge in propaganda, the proper place was in the electorate.

Mr. COLLINS: Do you back up the Country party in the Federal Parliament?

Mr. MOORE: I back them up in anything I agree with.

Mr. COLLINS: You are now denouncing your leader.

Mr. MOORE: I am not. I have a right to give my views. If Dr. Earle Page likes to advocate separation throughout Australia, and he can show me it is going to be an advantage, I am quite prepared to accept it. The hon. member for Rockhampton advanced no argument to show that there was going to be any benefit to Queensland. He did not show how expenses were going to be reduced. He made the statement that immigration to Central and Northern Queensland would probably be greater, and that more people would settle on the land, but he advanced no proof in support of his statement.

Mr. FORDE: I named other countries that had gone in for subdivision.

Mr. MOORE: A mere statement is not proof.

Mr. FORDE: I have the right to put the case for Central Queensland.

Mr. MOORE: And I claim the right, also, to say that I object to separation. I also claim the right to show that the conditions under which the agitation for separation was first started were totally different from what they are to-day. The Secretary for Railways some years ago was very keen on the question.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I am keen on it to-day.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. gentleman is not nearly so keen as he was.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, I am. I do not get an opportunity of speaking because hon. members opposite utilise the whole time.

Mr. MOORE: I will give the hon. gentleman an opportunity of discussing the matter if he has his heart in it. It lies within the power of this Parliament to take the first step to get what some hon. members ardently desire. The Secretary for Railways was ardently in favour of separation when he was in opposition. After the Government

have been in office for seven years, during which time the hon. gentleman has been a Minister of the Crown for four or five years, he has allowed this matter which was so close to his heart to die out absolutely, and the motion has to be moved by a private member in order to wake the Minister up to say whether he wants separation or not. If hon. members opposite who have spoken on this question had the matter at heart, as they pretend to have, they could have got the Government to take steps to grant them the desire of their heart. All sorts of "tiddlywinking" legislation have been brought forward. All sorts of extravagances have been permitted to go on, and we find hon. members opposite are absolutely silent until a Federal election is coming on. It stands to reason that no Cabinet that really thought separation in Queensland was going to be for the benefit of the State would have kept silent so long. I do not think separation will be for the benefit of the State, and I intend to oppose both the amendment and the motion.

Mr. FLETCHER (*Port Curtis*): I am rather surprised at this motion coming forward to-day, as I understood the motion, notice of which was given by the hon. member for Townsville, would have come forward for discussion. Unfortunately, the Government, who have the regulating of the business paper, have brought forward this motion again.

The PREMIER: The Standing Orders regulate that—not the Government.

Mr. FLETCHER: It was so regulated last session.

The PREMIER: No. The Standing Orders provide that on days set apart for private business notices of motion and Orders of the Day, not being Government business, shall take precedence on alternate sitting days.

Mr. FLETCHER: I propose to support the amendment, as I recognise that it is sound in principle. The hon. member for Rockhampton does not know the position. He is behind the times. Under the Constitution to-day it is quite within the power of this House to move that new States be created in Queensland, and that was shown as far back as 1913, when Mr. Adamson, the late member for Rockhampton, moved a motion similar to the amendment moved by the hon. member for Normanby. At that time, as reported in "Hansard," No. cxiv., page 33, Mr. Adamson moved—

"That, in the opinion of this House, the time has arrived when Queensland should be divided into three States, and that Central and Northern Queensland shall each be granted a separate Constitution, subject to the Constitution Act of the Commonwealth of Australia, and that this resolution be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence by message in the usual form."

It is not likely that Mr. Adamson would have moved a motion of that kind if he was not in order, under the Constitution, in doing so.

Mr. FORDE: Was there business in it?

Mr. FLETCHER: Now the hon. member for Rockhampton comes along and asks that the Constitution be amended, although there is power to-day for new States to be

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created. He is only seeking notoriety and publicity because a Federal election is coming on; but the electors of Capricornia will know how to treat him.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: They will put him in.

Mr. FLETCHER: They will not put him in. They do not treat him seriously. They know he is unreliable and superficial, and this motion proves that he is unreliable.

Mr. FORDE: I have been waking you up.

Mr. FLETCHER: I propose to support the amendment, because it is very necessary that we should have new States in Queensland. I do not agree with the hon. member for Aubigny, who said that the creation of new States would be a mistake. Queensland is altogether too large a State for it to progress as we would like to see it progress. Take the States of America. Why, twenty of them could be put into Queensland. From the very day new States were formed in America we saw remarkable progress, and I believe we would see the same progress here if Queensland were divided into three States. Physically, Queensland lends itself to a subdivision into three States. Our watercourses, railways, and harbours all indicate that a subdivision would be of great advantage. In Central Queensland we have seen the development of Rockhampton to the disadvantage of Gladstone, and, if we had a new State in Central Queensland—as we undoubtedly should have—we would see the right thing done, and we would see Gladstone develop as it should be developed. We have a remarkable harbour there—the second best harbour in Australia. No money has been spent on it. It is a natural harbour. Hundreds of ships can lie at anchor in the harbour, and vessels drawing up to 23 feet can come up to the wharves without any dredging. At a very little expenditure on the building of wharves we could accommodate any number of vessels there to-day. By reclamation we could provide some very fine land for building warehouses. The assets that would be created by this reclamation would pay for the construction of wharves and for developing the harbour generally.

Mr. HARTLEY: They had to bring a boat from Gladstone to Port Alma the other day to finish loading.

Mr. FLETCHER: The present Government, as well as other Governments, have neglected Gladstone and developed Rockhampton harbours by spending over a million of money on them. Notwithstanding that, the harbour dues and wharfage rates are most expensive at Rockhampton. They charge 6s. 8d. per ton on inward cargo and 5s. on outward cargo, whereas in Gladstone we could charge 1s. per ton and make the board pay.

Mr. HARTLEY: That is not correct.

Mr. FLETCHER: Owing to the expensive cost of running the Rockhampton harbours, they have to charge these exorbitant rates to try and pay their way; but they still run into debt. They owe something like £400,000 to the Government to date. During the last three years they have not even paid interest and redemption. Something like £23,000 was consolidated two years ago, and the Premier has now gone further and lent them £10,000, provided they pay interest; but, if interest is not paid, there is no penalty. That is tantamount to saying, "You need not pay

up unless you like," and under existing circumstances there is no chance of its ever being repaid. It is unpractical and unsound, and the Premier knows it; but he has got the Rockhampton members to assist him, and he wants to protect them in their electorates. If we had a separate Government in Central Queensland, these things would not obtain. We would endeavour to do the right thing, and look after our finances, and see that they are controlled in a proper manner; but, under control from Brisbane, the Government do not care what happens in Central or Northern Queensland. With three States, you would see immense development, because the people there would take more interest in matters. They would probably get better men to stand for Parliament.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear! and laughter.

Mr. FLETCHER: Central Queensland could be made into an immensely rich State. I have no doubt that separation will come in the near future. It is quite impossible to think that we are going to carry on as we are doing to-day with an immense State, the legislation for which is passed down in one corner of the State. Some hon. members know nothing about the State, for they have never travelled throughout it.

The PREMIER: They are on that side.

Mr. FLETCHER: They are on the hon. gentleman's side, too. Hon. members representing the Darling Downs have spent a lot of time in travelling over the whole of the State. I have had an opportunity of travelling over the State, and I know its potentialities.

The PREMIER: The deputy leader of your party has never been north of Gympie.

Mr. FLETCHER: That is an argument in favour of new States. The resources in Northern Queensland are just as great as in Southern Queensland, but the people do not get the same opportunity of developing them. It stands to reason that the greatest development will take place where the seat of Government is situated. When a former member for Rockhampton, the late Mr. Adamson, moved his motion in favour of separation, there was a division taken, and the following hon. members voted in support of it:—Messrs. Adamson, Barber, Fihelly, Foley, Gillies, Grant, Hardacre, Huxham, May, Lennon, Ryan, and Theodore. There are several of those hon. members here to-day, including the Premier, and it would be most interesting to see how they stand now. They say they have not changed their views; but how is it that they allowed a private member to introduce this motion? Why did the Government not introduce it?

The PREMIER: I will tell you why the Premier did not move it—because it was a private member's motion on private members' day.

Mr. FLETCHER: But why did the hon. gentleman not bring it in as Government business? He voted for it before. When the hon. member for Rockhampton brought it forward last week, the Government evaded a division, as they did not want one. But it leads us nowhere at present. Private members' day generally, so far as I can see, is a farce. Hon. members do not take it seriously, and that is why I did not speak upon the motion

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last week. I had no intention of speaking to-day, but as it has been brought forward, I wish to state my views. I am in full accord with the separation movement.

The PREMIER: You are a well-known separationist—you separated yourself from the Nationalists.

Mr. FLETCHER: I am glad the Premier has mentioned that, as it will enable me to correct a wrong impression straight away. At the last election I announced on the platform on several occasions, in answer to questions, that, if I was elected, I would join the Country party. That was announced in the Press, and I would not be honouring my pledge if I did not join the Country party.

Mr. FOLEY: What is the difference between them?

Mr. FLETCHER: The difference is that the Country party represent the country seats, and the National party the city seats. (Government laughter.)

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*): If I were to reply to the hon. member who has just resumed his seat, the Speaker would probably pull me up, and say that the discussion was irrelevant. The point that has impressed me in connection with this matter is that up to a certain stage we have scarcely treated it with sufficient seriousness. I do not know whether it is due to the fact that many members of the House—probably on both sides—have an impression that there has been nothing very serious in the motion, but rather a desire on the part of an hon. member who may some day, if he lives long enough, be the Commonwealth Prime Minister, and he has probably certain ambitions. I was in Rockhampton recently, and I found that in connection with this matter the hon. member has a number of workers. We all know that the hon. member for Rockhampton is a ladies' man. (Laughter.) They say that there is no one who is hanging up his hat to so many ladies as the hon. member for Rockhampton, and I want to say from my personal observation that, somehow, not only has he succeeded in captivating what you might call the young women of Brisbane at the expense of Rockhampton, but he has succeeded in captivating the old ladies. I found, when speaking in Rockhampton, that he had as one of his "barrackers" there an ancient lady. I do not know how he managed to woo her successfully: but, apparently, he has been successful in that direction, for on this particular matter, she got up and put certain questions to me. The hon. member for Rockhampton made a misstatement the other day when he told this House that, when the lady put the question to me in Rockhampton, I was snuffed out and sat down. That is not correct. This satellite—this young, young lady of about sixty—

Mr. FORDE: Don't cast any reflections.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am sorry if she is the hon. gentleman's chief lady, and I apologise on that score. This young lady of sixty told me that in 1913 I voted against separation on the motion introduced by Mr. Adamson. I told her that probably was correct. She then asked why, if I loved Rockhampton so much, and loved the Central district so much, I voted against separation.

The PREMIER: That was a very pertinent question.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I answered it just as pertinently. I said, "The lady has

furnished the answer herself. It is because I love this district so much."

The PREMIER: I am sure that was not received with applause.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Let us get down to bedrock in this matter. What is really behind this resolution? A certain hon. member goes into other constituencies and discovers that there is a lock wanted on the door of a school. He writes down to the department, and the department write back and say that the lock will be put on the door of the school. Then the hon. gentleman gets a paragraph put in the columns of the local newspaper saying that the lock is going to be put on the door of the school, and everything is all right.

Mr. FORDE: That is not true. I am not going to turn people down because they are represented by a Tory.

HON. W. H. BARNES: If anyone likes to look through the files of the Rockhampton "Bulletin," they will see that what I say is correct. The hon. gentleman has an idea that when these things are published the people will say that there is at least one man who is going to be the saviour of Queensland, and that man is the hon. member for Rockhampton. I am not misstating the case when I say that the hon. member for Rockhampton has announced that he is going to be a candidate for the Capricornia electorate in connection with the Federal House.

Mr. COLLINS: He will win by a majority of 3,000.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member for Rockhampton thinks this is splendid material for him to get in, and he thinks he will succeed in winning Capricornia.

Mr. COLLINS: Of course, he will.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member for Bowen is sometimes very serious, but he knows that the hon. member will not succeed, because, if it were in order, I would say that there is a better man running against him.

Mr. FORDE: He left the Labour party and went to your party, and that is why you say he is a better man.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The question this House has to consider is: Is separation going to be of advantage to Queensland or otherwise? I might point out that on previous occasions this question was not made a party one. I notice that on the occasion when I voted against the motion I was in very good company. I find, Mr. Speaker, that I was in your company voting against the motion. I was also in the company of the late Mr. Bowman and the late Mr. Hamilton, and Mr. Gilday, the hon. member for Ithaca, also voted against the motion, and Mr. Winstanley. Judging from the standard of the other side and this side, I was in very good company on that occasion. No one will say that you are in bad company when you are in the company of the present Speaker. (Laughter.) Members will realise that this is a big question. The deputy leader of the Opposition touched the very kernel of the business when he asked what was going to be best for Queensland. During the advocacy of federation we were told that the cost of government was going to be very materially reduced; but we know that the cost of government has not been reduced. We know that it has been increased very largely. I am prepared to admit that in

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some directions federation was absolutely necessary; but we find ourselves to-day as a State whipped in a way that few States have been whipped by federation. We find ourselves so closely linked with the other States in the development of this country that, in my judgment, it would be a huge mistake to cut up Queensland into small States. I think it would be an unwise thing for this House to agree to a motion of this kind. The Home Secretary, by interjection this afternoon, said that there was nothing in the motion. The motion is mere fireworks. The Home Secretary did not say it was fireworks, but I say so. It is introduced for the purpose of gaining influence for a certain hon. gentleman in a certain district. Like the deputy leader of the Opposition, I am going to vote against the amendment and also against the motion, because I do not think it would be in the interests of Queensland to support either.

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

AYES, 38.

Mr. Barber	Mr. Jones, A. J.
.. Brennan	.. Kirwan
.. Bulcock	.. Land
.. Collins	.. Larcombe
.. Conroy	.. McCormack
.. Cooper, F. A.	.. Moore
.. Cooper, W.	.. Mullan
.. Coyne	.. Payne
.. Dash	.. Pease
.. Deacon	.. Pollock
.. Dunstan	.. Riordan
.. Ferricks	.. Ryan
.. Foley	.. Smith
.. Forde	.. Stopford
.. Gilday	.. Theodore
.. Gillies	.. Weir
.. Gledson	.. Wellington
.. Hartley	.. Wilson
.. Huxham	.. Winstanley

Tellers: Mr. Moore and Mr. Pease.

NOES, 27.

Mr. Appel	Mr. Kerr
.. Barnes, G. P.	.. King
.. Barnes, W. H.	.. Maxwell
.. Bebbington	.. Morgan
.. Bell	.. Nott
.. Brand	.. Peterson
.. Cattermull	.. Petrie
.. Clayton	.. Roberts, J. H. C.
.. Corser	.. Roberts, T. R.
.. Costello	.. Sizer
.. Edwards	.. Vowles
.. Elphinstone	.. Walker
.. Green	.. Warren
.. J. Jones	

Tellers: Mr. Kerr and Mr. Sizer.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Original question—(*Mr. Forde's motion*)—put and passed.

#### PROPOSED REDUCTION OF MINISTERIAL AND MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES AND PUBLIC SERVICE SALARIES.

Mr. GREEN (*Townsville*), in moving—

"That, in view of the Arbitration Court having decided that, owing to the reduced cost of living, the basic wage should be reduced by approximately 10 per cent., this House approves of the reduction of Ministerial and members' allowances to a similar extent. Further, that the salaries of all officials outside the scope of the Arbitration Court should be likewise considered"—

said: At the present time I am not, nor

[*Hon. W. H. Barnes.*

have I even been, an advocate of low wages or of a reduction in the standard of living in any sphere of labour; and, I feel sure, that all the members sitting on this side can make the same claim successfully. We contend that, with more efficient management and strict economy, we can improve the condition of affairs so that it will reflect itself, not only upon those carrying on the industrial work of the community, but also upon those employed by the Government. The reason for introducing this motion is that we know that the Arbitration Court for some time past has been dealing with wages throughout the State in various spheres of labour, and, owing to the fact that the basic cost of living has been reduced, the court has lowered accordingly the basic wage. In some cases a reduction has been made to the extent of 10 per cent. My contention is that in this matter we must be honourable and honest and just, not only to ourselves but also to the people we represent; and if we claim that the cost of living has been reduced, as the Arbitration Court holds it has, then I say, unequivocally, that it is only right and just that men occupying high positions such as members of Parliament, and drawing high salaries, should be prepared to suffer a reduction in common with those who do not draw such high pay. On 2nd October, 1919, the present Secretary for Railways, Mr. Larcombe, initiated the Constitution Act Amendment Bill (No. 2) to increase the payment of members from £300 to £500 a year. I would like to make clear my attitude in regard to that increase. Without hesitation, I say that I would have opposed the increase being made in the manner in which it was. I claim that the Premier of the State should either have enunciated such a proposal in his policy speech, or should have been prepared to submit it to the people by referendum, or he should have been prepared to submit it to the Arbitration Court.

Mr. DASH: You draw £300 as Mayor of Townsville, and £100 in addition.

Mr. GREEN: And I have spent in six months £100 over the £300 I draw in twelve months.

Mr. POLLOCK: Would you take a referendum of the people as to what you should charge for your drugs? (Laughter.)

Mr. GREEN: I hold that the increase was quite justifiable—that the members of this House, if they are worth their positions, were worth the salary or allowance, whichever you like to call it, of £500 a year, especially with the increased cost of living at that time. But I absolutely disagree with the manner in which it was carried. I say that every man, whether a politician or otherwise, is worthy of his hire. On page 1227 of "Hansard" of 1919, the present Secretary for Railways gave the reasons for asking for the increased salaries for members. The first was the increased cost of living; and as bearing out that fact, he submitted to the House a comparison of wages and the increases which had been granted between 1895 and 1917 to artisans in various spheres of labour.

Further than that, he argued that, on account of the increased cost of living, the purchasing power of a sovereign [4.30 p.m.] had decreased. The hon. member for Oxley interjected, "Do you propose to reduce the salaries when the cost of living comes down?" That



was a very pungent interjection. The Minister, in reply, said—

“I do not like this anticipatory style of argument. I think we should deal with every point as it arises.”

In support of his contention, the Minister quoted Adam Smith's “Wealth of Nations” regarding nominal wages as they were affected by the purchasing power of a sovereign. In justice and fairness to those people outside who have had their wages reduced, if we contend that such a reduction is necessary, we should be prepared to set an example and reduce our own salaries. The judges who preside over the Arbitration Court have declared that the cost of living has gone down. If that is so, the purchasing power of a sovereign has increased. A day or two previous to the meeting of this Parliament the Premier intimated that the finances were in rather a bad way, and that they would have to be carefully watched. He forecast the necessity for a reduction, and it was stated in the Press that he had offered a reduction of 5 per cent. to the public servants in order to enable the Government to balance the ledger. If the figures published in the Southern and local papers are correct, the number of Government employees in Queensland is 35,349, and the salaries received by them amount to £6,959,704: 5 per cent. on which would amount to £347,985. The present attitude of the Government is contradictory to the propaganda issued by the Labour party in days gone by, when they were attempting to obtain possession of the Government benches. In one of their pamphlets, which was signed by Lewis McDonald and Cuthbert Butler, they said that “Retrenchment is desperate finance.” By proposing this reduction of 5 per cent. they are adopting the very methods which they condemned in connection with previous Administrations. Why is this reduction necessary? The Premier stated that it was necessary in order to balance the ledger.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do you think it is necessary?

Mr. GREEN: I am not administering the State at the present time. With greater efficiency and less wastefulness, the State could have carried on without reaching the financial position it is in at the present time. Let me point out some of the wastefulness which has caused this reduction to be necessary. There are Ministerial allowances. Hon. members on this side have in the past moved for a return showing the amount spent on those allowances, but we have not been able to obtain the information. However, in the Auditor-General's report for 1920 we find a reference to the Premier's expenditure on his trip to the old country. After the payment of travelling and hotel expenses, and everything else, there was a sum of £1,007 for the Premier personally as a travelling allowance. These ministerial allowances should be cut off before anything else is touched. If travelling and out-of-pocket expenses are paid, Ministers can very well do without the two guineas a day which they draw when away from their offices in Queensland and the three guineas a day which they draw when travelling outside the State.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is not correct.

Mr. GREEN: Last session Electoral Commissioners were appointed to go into the question of the redistribution of seats throughout Queensland. They were relieved

of their ordinary work; but there was ample money to pay those men, not only their ordinary salaries, but an additional 200 guineas—evidently because they had carried out their work to the satisfaction of the Administration. We have a Public Works Commission which has been going for five years. I do not know what work they have carried out, but we find from the Auditor-General's report that in five years that Commission has cost the State £11,407. So far as I can see, that money has been wasted. The Auditor-General's report also shows that the printing and distribution of the Lieutenant-Governor's political speech of 1920 cost £2,372. Then we come to State enterprises. The employees of the State are asked to suffer a reduction in order to make up a debit on State enterprises amounting to £15,753, which has tended considerably to bring about the deficiency which exists. My contention is that, if we had efficiency, economy, and careful management—if extravagances were done away with—there would be no necessity to touch the salaries of the public servants.

Mr. DASH: Why did you reduce the wages of the council employees in Townsville?

Mr. GREEN: The council did not ask for any reduction in wages.

Mr. DASH: The council went to the Arbitration Court for a reduction.

Mr. GREEN: The council did not. The council absolutely refused to sign a consent to go to the Arbitration Court.

Mr. DASH: You reduced the wages.

Mr. GREEN: I am quite prepared to face the workers of Townsville and allow them to judge of my actions towards them. The hon. member for Mundingburra knows how the workers of the Townsville City Council have been treated under my jurisdiction.

The HOME SECRETARY: You, as mayor of Townsville, reduced their wages in accordance with the award.

Mr. GREEN: Full consideration should be given to the case of every individual public servant before the Government make any reduction. Many of the employees in this State have had their wages reduced by having their hours increased. It was practically laid down in the Department of Public Instruction that eighteen to twenty scholars were sufficient for one teacher, but the number has now been increased to practically forty scholars. Is that not a reduction and an increased burden which has been placed upon the teachers to the detriment of the scholars? Many of the employees in the railway workshops have been reduced by a certain number of days' work in each week or each fortnight. This has probably been responsible for a reduction of the wages earned to an amount below the basic wage. Again, there are many employees in the public service who are not receiving sufficient in comparison with the responsibilities with the position they are occupying. Whilst there were many who went to the Arbitration Court who received increases, there were many who were prepared to go to the Arbitration Court but who were prevented from going to the court, and therefore did not enjoy an equal advantage with those who received the increases. Under these circumstances I justly claim that consideration should be given to individual cases rather than that wholesale reduction should take place throughout the public service. I have worded the second portion of my motion very carefully

Mr. Green.]

for that reason. If the employees are given consideration in every respect, then I feel sure that there will be no dissatisfaction as a result of the Government's action. The Government are responsible for the administration of the affairs of the State. The only opportunity we have of discussing these matters is on private members' day. Whatever we do, we should look at the matter from a broad, fair-minded, just, and honourable standpoint; and whatever is decided upon under such circumstances I feel sure it will cause the workers of the State to feel that hon. members are standing loyally behind them and standing to them.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I desire to second the motion submitted by the hon. member for Townsville. The position that is upon us to-day affords evidence of the broken pledges of the Government. The Government sneaked into power last time through advocating that there should be no retrenchment. Time after time hon. members on the other side had gone to their electorates, and pamphlets had been published saying that there would be no retrenchment, and that the Labour Government was a Government standing between the workers and retrenchment. Now we find that they have come along with a modified form of retrenchment, and that deflation has been going on for the last two years. Since the private employers have made applications to the Arbitration Court, every hon. member opposite has stated that there is a capitalistic conspiracy to "down" the workers and reduce wages. We find that the Government have now joined in that conspiracy. The position has been forced upon them by the present state of finances. The Government recognised that when they went to the Arbitration Court the first time. They were then doing a fair thing. But, notwithstanding all their election promises and talk, they have to recognise the position as it exists to-day. After all, the Government are the trustees of the public funds, and it is their duty—and I suppose they recognise it, too—to get as much as they can for the money. It is their duty to get efficient service for the people. They have now taken the bull by the horns and have started at the top of the tree—which is the right place—and have reduced hon. members' salaries by 5 per cent. When there was an increase in the cost of living, it was only right that hon. members should enjoy an increase in their allowances, the same as any other person, but we know that the cost of living has come down, and it is only right that hon. members' salaries should be reduced accordingly. There will not be one single objector to that on this side of the House.

Mr. PEASE: Would you make it retrospective? (Government laughter.)

Mr. MOORE: I do not believe in retrospective legislation of any sort, although we have had, unfortunately, to submit to it in this Chamber. On every occasion when retrospective legislation has been introduced I have spoken and voted against it.

The second portion of the motion reads—

" . . . This House approves of the reduction of Ministerial and members' allowances to a similar extent. Further, that the salaries of all officials outside the scope of the Arbitration Court should be likewise considered."

The hon. member for Townsville had a very distinct object in view in wording the motion

[*Mr. Green.*

in that way. He recognised that there were a number of public servants outside the Arbitration Court who did not receive increases in accordance with the increase in the cost of living. The hon. member thinks, just as I think, that every circumstance should be taken into consideration when wages and salaries are being reduced. Many public servants may have been receiving during the last few years a lesser amount than they should have received, and they should not be subjected to the same reduction as others who have received increases. A large number of public servants have very onerous work to carry out, and they are put into positions carrying a great deal of responsibility, and many of those men have not received the increases that others have had; and, when a reduction in salaries is to take place, all these matters should be taken into account before a decision is arrived at.

Mr. DASH: The motion says that it should apply to all.

Mr. MOORE: The motion was drawn up very carefully with a definite purpose so that all circumstances should be taken into account. Why should the Government adopt a flat rate and say that every public servant should be reduced by 5 per cent., or whatever it may be? The Government have not done the right thing, because they have broken their pledges. If they want to do what they said they were not going to do, then it is up to them to have an election and tell the electors what they are going to do. Members of the Government made the definite statement before the last election that they were going to stand between the workers and retrenchment.

Mr. DASH: Will you support a straight-out fixation of a basic wage by this Parliament?

Mr. MOORE: I am not talking about any basic wage at all. We are not talking about the Arbitration Court at all; we are talking about a reduction in the salaries of public servants who are outside the Arbitration Court, and members sitting on the Government side gave a distinct pledge before they came into this House that they would stand between the workers and any reduction in wages. If they had not given that pledge, they would not have got back, and would not have had the opportunity to do anything. They came here because they gave a distinct pledge that there would be no retrenchment and no deflation, and now, when they find they have got into an awkward situation, they crawl down and break their pledges. Quite recently we had the hon. member for Mount Morgan speaking in the Market Square, when he said—

"He regretted that the working classes of Brisbane, at such a critical period, were so apathetic that they did not think fit to make a large and effective demonstration that night. Had there been a large gathering of workers, he would have taken the risk and told them that they should call upon their Labour representatives in Parliament to say that they were going to have an inquiry into the basic wage in Queensland—that the court that had given a decision such as that pronounced in the Mount Morgan case was not a proper tribunal to deal with such cases, and to ask for a free and independent tribunal. In his opinion, there was a great world-wide conspiracy to reduce wages. In New South Wales, the Board

of Trade had reduced the basic wage from £4 5s. to £4 2s., but the Labour Government had held up the decision. He hoped that the Queensland Government would not take second place to any other Labour Government on a question of that kind."

We have heard all sorts of statements of the same kind, and does it not seem an extraordinary thing that hon. members should go back on a distinct pledge such as that without facing their constituents? It seems to me that it is not playing the game. I recognise that the finances of the country are in a bad way; but, when the Treasurer last year anticipated a deficit of £450,000 odd, it was not business-like of him to make no provision to meet it. He should have done the same as a private individual would have done. If a business man found that he could not square the ledger, he would look round to see whether he could not economise in some way, and ascertain whether there were not some leaks which could be stopped. He would find out probably that many of his expenses had been brought about by prosperity, and were not really necessary. When the Home Secretary was speaking on the Police Superannuation Bill last year he said that men, after enjoying a certain amount of prosperity acquired tastes which were really not necessary, and that they would have to alter those tastes if the necessity arose. We have had all sorts of experiences like that, and no doubt, if the Government looked round, they would ascertain that there are many acquired tastes in connection with which they could save an enormous amount of money. Look at the amount of money lost on State enterprises. The public have to carry that loss. Look at the amount lost on account of their day-labour policy. I have given examples time after time where money could have been saved if work had been let by contract. I can give two examples which occurred in my own electorate. In one instance the Department for Public Works estimated the cost of pulling down and shifting a school at £157, and I got a tender for the work for £35. After a good deal of trouble the tender was accepted, and the school was pulled down, shifted, and re-erected for the £35. I received another tender for another piece of work amounting to £39, and the estimate of the Works Department was £154. I brought that tender down, but the department is not game to accept it on account of the Government policy. When you find cases like that being brought under your notice, it shows that there are leaks, and that money is being extravagantly expended.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order in dealing with that matter.

Mr. MOORE: There would be no occasion whatever for retrenchment if the Government expended the funds that came into the Treasury in a wise and proper manner. The Government have received an enormous revenue, but there are leaks that should not exist. Seldom has the advice given by an Opposition been proved so sound. We pointed out, when many of these matters were introduced, that there would be a loss to the country. When State enterprises were first established—

The SPEAKER: Order! The motion deals with a reduction in the salaries of members, and I cannot allow the hon. member to proceed on those lines.

Mr. MOORE: The necessity for the reduction has been brought about by the extravagances of the Government. There would have been no need for a reduction if the Government had expended the funds coming into the Treasury wisely.

Mr. COLLINS: Your contention is that we are paying the workers too much.

Mr. MOORE: There is no contention of the sort. The hon. member for Bowen should read the speech that was delivered by the Secretary for Mines when he was visiting the Nundah electorate. The hon. member then said that there must be greater reduction in the cost of production; but that did not necessarily mean a reduction in wages. It meant greater efficiency; and exactly the same thing applies in connection with the Government.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Greater efficiency means speeding up.

Mr. MOORE: The colleague of the hon. gentleman delivered that speech. Greater efficiency does not mean speeding up.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Greater efficiency means greater efficiency on the part of the employer as well as on the part of the employee.

Mr. MOORE: Of course it does, and the reduction is necessary because of the extravagant expenditure of the Government.

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not propose to allow the hon. member to criticise the finances on a motion of this kind.

Mr. MOORE: I want to make the position quite clear. I think the Government to-day have done the right thing in starting with the salaries of hon. members, but they have not done the right thing in fixing a flat rate and then applying it right through the departments. Proper inquiry should be

[5 p.m.] made into the circumstances of all those public servants who have not been before the Arbitration Court. They should have had the opportunity to put their side of the question—to say whether, in their opinion, they had been treated fairly or not. I think the workers should have an opportunity to put their case before the court, and, if they cannot go to the court, they should have just as good an opportunity to put their case before the Government before they come to a decision. I think they are entitled to it, considering the work they do. It is only a fair thing that they should have had an opportunity to put their case in a proper manner before the Government before the Government came to a hasty decision—which was carried by one vote in caucus.

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*): Now that the principle of payment of members has been established, I think that the only question this House should be asked to consider is whether or not the payment made to hon. members is adequate. I am not going to deal generally with the question of members' salaries or with the salaries of the public servants beyond £300. When hon. members raised their salaries from £300 to £500 a year, the rise was not, in my opinion, the fixation of members' salaries upon a proper basis.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Do you think they are worth more?

Mr. POLLOCK: Of course, I do.

Mr. MORGAN: Country seats should carry more payment than metropolitan seats.

*Mr. Pollock.*]

Mr. POLLOCK: If we were to fix our salaries on the basis of the cost of living, and were to pay to members of Parliament and Ministers likewise a living wage, there is no reason why any other branch of the public service should not be similarly treated. But I maintain that members of Parliament, being the makers of the laws, have, or should have, special qualifications. We recognise that principle in other branches of the Public Service. We pay Under Secretaries from £800 to £1,000 a year, because they are supposed to possess special qualifications. We pay judges salaries of £2,000 a year because they are supposed to possess special qualifications. We pay similar amounts to other men—Commissioners and others—in the public service, and to men in private enterprise. We ourselves as individuals pay men such as lawyers, doctors, and commercial men, bigger salaries than are necessary to keep body and soul together, because we believe—or profess to believe—that these people have special qualifications for their positions. I agree that a member of Parliament has, or should have, special qualifications.

Mr. J. JONES: We have not got them. (Laughter.)

Mr. POLLOCK: The hon. member can apply that to himself if he has not got them; and there is nothing to prevent him resigning and allowing someone else to take his place who has them. I am satisfied that I have the necessary qualifications, and consequently I am always prepared to demand a salary commensurate with those qualifications. If I have not got them, it is the duty of the public to get someone else who has them in a more marked form than I have. That should be the basis of this discussion. When we raised our salaries to £500 a year, we did not, in my opinion, lay sufficient stress upon the qualifications that hon. members ought to possess in order to be hon. members of Parliament, and consequently I believe that, if we had gone to the Arbitration Court—I am always willing to go to the court—hon. members would have received more than £500 a year. This is private members' day, and it is a day on which hon. members ought to be permitted to state their own case. I believe that I have a better case than any other hon. member of this Chamber—not for £500 a year, but for more—not because of special considerations, but for geographical considerations. Perhaps it is right that a flat rate should be paid to hon. members of Parliament, and I am not objecting to any reduction in salary of 5 per cent. or 10 per cent., but I have a special claim, and other country members have a claim to a lesser extent, for consideration from the people because of the size of the electorates we represent, and their distance from the seat of government.

Mr. PETERSON: Hear, hear!

Mr. POLLOCK: I am glad the hon. member said "Hear, hear" to that, because I recognise that, when he was in this party, he was one of those who assisted me in my agitation for an increase of salaries. I think something ought to be done by this House to consider hon. members who have to travel big country electorates. I have an electorate with an area of 120,000 square miles. I have always had by far the biggest electorate in Queensland, and since the redistribution some 20,000 or 30,000 square miles have been added to it. I am not going to say that an hon. member should be expected to visit every

station, and every bore, drain, dam, and tank in his electorate; but at least once a year every member ought to be given facilities by the Government, and by the people who are paying him, to visit every township and settlement in his electorate. That is fair enough. There is no reason why any hon. member should have to visit every part of his electorate at his own expense. Now that we have recognised the principle of payment of hon. members, the question of adequate payment is the only thing that concerns us. If the House decides to reduce the salaries of hon. members and Ministers, I would ask hon. members not to forget the case of those who have a just claim for special consideration. I believe that the House would do well to carry a resolution to the effect that every hon. member representing a country constituency should be allowed actual coach or car fares to every centre in his electorate at least once a year.

Mr. MORGAN: It would be better to divide the electorates into three groups.

Mr. POLLOCK: The hon. member may give his views presently, if he chooses. Whenever public servants—and particularly those in receipt of from £600 to £1,000 a year and upwards—travel on public business in any part of the State, they are not only allowed their motor-car, coach, steamboat, and railway fares, but at least £1 ls. a day for travelling expenses. It is the belief of the persons I represent that members of Parliament also receive a travelling allowance, or that they receive their fares to and from different places. All that a member of Parliament receives is a boat fare once a year to the nearest port to his electorate, or else a car fare from the nearest railway line to his place of nomination, which is generally the biggest town in his electorate. Take the position in which I find myself as a result of our present one-sided system of payment. I have a constituency for which Winton is the place of nomination. From Winton to Boulia is 240 miles, and Urundangie is 140 miles from the nearest railway line.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: From Winton?

Mr. POLLOCK: No, from the Duchess away up on the farthest northern point on the Queensland railways. From Winton to Kynuna is 110 miles, to Middleton 120 miles, to Bedourie 320 miles, and Birdsville is 470 miles from Longreach, the nearest railway station. It is also 210 miles to Windorah from the railway, 140 miles to Jundah, 100 miles to Stonehenge, and 160 miles to Mayneside. These are only some of the towns I represent, and I consider it is not a fair thing to ask hon. members who receive £500 a year to pay coach fares to and from those places.

Mr. PETERSON: They have to do so at present.

Mr. POLLOCK: A member must pay his fare himself, or stay away from those places altogether.

Mr. MORGAN: Or "cadge" a ride.

Mr. POLLOCK: Or "cadge" a ride. Why should a member for Parliament, acting in the public interests, have to "cadge" a ride from anyone? The only persons from whom I could "cadge" a ride, if I chose to adopt such a course, would be persons opposed to me politically, and I would not put myself in that position. I am sure that Parliament does not expect me to put myself in that position. A public servant travelling in the country districts gets all his expenses

[Mr. Pollock.]

allowed him. I am not going to be over-modest by refusing to say that I believe members of Parliament exercise the most important function in this State. If they do not, then what is the use of representative government? If members of Parliament are here to represent the people, then they are surely worthy of their hire; and, if any reduction comes the way of members of Parliament, I hope that the case that I have outlined for special consideration will at least be given careful consideration by this House, and that something will come of it. On every occasion that I have gone to the country since I entered Parliament, I have had a special little plank of my own. I had that plank printed and distributed to every corner of my electorate. I pointed out that I intended to secure for myself, if possible, a sufficient salary or allowance to enable me to visit each centre of the constituency at least once a year. On every occasion I have placed that before the public, and on every occasion I have been returned with a very large majority. Consequently, I have no fear as to what the House intends to do in this regard. My position has always been quite plain. I stand for an increase of wages where the public are satisfied with their representatives. If it is the desire of this House to reduce wages, I think that the House should not lose sight of those who are in an infinitely worse position financially than those who represent city and suburban electorates. I think that the distances I have quoted, and the difficulties under which country members are suffering, should be at least sufficient reason for any tribunal to grant some consideration. I am not afraid to submit my case to the Arbitration Court, or to any independent tribunal. The members of Parliament in New South Wales submitted their case for increased salaries to an independent tribunal, and they were awarded £875 a year. Later on, when their salaries were reduced they were not reduced below £600 a year, although not one of those members has to spend anything like the amount that I have to spend in travelling expenses in going through my electorate.

In conclusion, I do not care what attitude the Government or this House takes up—whether it is arbitration before the present Arbitration Court judges, whether it is conciliation, or any other method—I am prepared to submit a statement of my case. I think I have a better case to make out for this allowance than any other member of this House. Even if there are members who are in such a position that they do not require this allowance, they should have some consideration for others, because there are members on both sides of the House in the same position as I am, and who are entitled to some extra allowance, although they are not situated so badly as I am.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): As a country member, I have some sympathy with the attitude the hon. member for Gregory has taken up in this matter, and, although we are not discussing a Bill dealing with parliamentary salaries, I must say that, as one who has to spend two days every week of his life in going to and from Parliament, I always feel that I am placed in a different position to those members who represent city constituencies. When the question of the parliamentary allowance came before this House some little time back, a claim for an increase was made owing to the fact that there had been a very large increase in the cost of

living since the time when the salary was first fixed.

Mr. POLLOCK: Unfortunately it was based on those grounds, but it should not have been.

Mr. VOWLES: It was based on those grounds. It was a reasonable thing under the circumstances. There were many factors which brought about an increase in the cost of living, but they have disappeared, and now that things are becoming more normal than they were, I think it is only a fair thing, if economy is to be practised, that parliamentarians who are supposed to lead the way should see that economy begins with themselves. It is all right to suggest that we should cut down the salaries of the other fellow and enjoy our own allowances without reduction, but we should bring this matter before the House for consideration. I find by the afternoon papers that the Premier has already made an announcement about a reduction in member's salaries, and he has anticipated our motion. But he has dealt with that matter in a way which, to my mind, is altogether wrong. If he is going to make a reduction of 5 per cent. in the salaries of all the public servants, then he is not treating them fairly.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. VOWLES: There were a large number of public servants who claimed the right to go into the Arbitration Court, but they were refused that right by this Government. Those were the men receiving over £300 a year. I believe that some increments were allowed to public servants whose salaries ranged from £200 to £400 a year, but the men getting over £400 a year—and £400 is only equivalent to about £200 of a few years ago—got nothing at all. As these men have big families to keep, they are only on the bread line; while, so far as responsibility is concerned, there is no comparison between them and the juniors in the service, although the juniors, when they reach the age of twenty-one years, receive an increase.

Mr. COLLINS: This is a bit of special pleading for the man over £300.

Mr. MORGAN: You are getting £500 a year.

Mr. COLLINS: And I earn it, too.

Mr. VOWLES: Those men who were denied the right to go to the Arbitration Court should be considered. What I urge upon the Government is that all cases should be dealt with on their merits, whether they are getting under or over £300 a year.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: The Arbitration Court do not do that.

Mr. VOWLES: The Arbitration Court fixes the basic wage, but the persons I refer to did not get the benefit that other public servants got. They did not get the increases which were granted to those under £300, and, consequently, it is inequitable that they should be asked to suffer a reduction now. That is the attitude I take up, and for that reason I think every case should be dealt with on its merits. We know that the finances of the State are not in too good a position. We know that retrenchment is going on in various forms, either by deflation, by splitting time, or by pooling the work, and now by direct reduction of salaries. The Government went to the country on various occasions, and made rash promises to the people. They got in by false pretences. They told the industrialists that they

*Mr. Vowles.]*

were going to establish the Arbitration Court, which would put them in a better position, but there is now a great deal of unemployment, and on top of that we are going to have a reduction of wages by the very court which was created not only for the protection of workers, but to give them high salaries. Cheap food was also promised to the people, and even at the recent Paddington by-election, the Government candidate, the Secretary for Mines, stated that on no account would the Government stand for a reduction of wages.

I do not want to discuss whether it is right or wrong; the point I want to make is that the hon. gentleman misled them. I say that is an unfair thing for a man in the position of a responsible Minister to do. What are the causes which have brought about this state of financial chaos? Can it be attributed to Government extravagance, mismanagement of Government funds, incapacity, or ineptitude? It must be one of those four. In every direction we find that money is being lost, and, when additional revenue has to be found to pay increased interest upon loan moneys which have been expended and have gone for all time, we are really asking the public servants to come to our aid by suffering a 5 per cent. reduction in their salaries, which on certain figures that have been published, means that something over £300,000 a year is to be taken from them. They are asked to bear the burden of squaring up the finances of a Government who are incapable of carrying on their business in a business-like way.

Mr. COLLINS: You would make the lower-paid workers pay.

Mr. VOWLES: I would not make any of them pay. I say that if we had proper management, if the affairs of the State had been looked after in a businesslike way, we would not have got into the state of chaos in which we now find ourselves, and there would have been no occasion to go in for these drastic reforms. I remember, in 1902, reading the remarks of hon. gentleman opposite when the Government of the day reduced public servant's salaries and took from them their automatic allowances. Here they find themselves, under better conditions, doing what is a great deal worse, because they proclaimed from the housetops that they would never be a party to it. They stand condemned by the very men who put them into power on the evidence of their own promises.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: What about the Arbitration Court?

Mr. VOWLES: I am not talking about the judges or the Arbitration Court. That matter is sub judice, and it would be wrong for us to express any opinion, because we might be told that we were seeking to influence the court. I am talking about that class of public servants who have been underpaid and have not had the opportunity to get to the court in common with other sections, and I say that those people should receive justice and that their cases should be dealt with individually and on their merits.

Mr. COLLINS: You are speaking for the aristocracy of labour.

Mr. VOWLES: The man on £5 or £6 a week is not half so well off as some of the wharf lumpers. They are the aristocrats of labour—the wharf labourers and that class

of man. The man of intelligence, the man who, in many cases, has paid fees for private tuition to fit himself for his position, the man whom the hon. member calls the aristocrat of labour because he wants to better his position, is receiving, in many instances, the aristocratic salary of between £300 and £350 a year, and is doing responsible work for which he would be getting twice that sum if he were employed by an outside firm.

Mr. COLLINS: That is going too far.

Mr. VOWLES: It is not. I say that public servants are not getting too much, more particularly those who are right up. Take a man in the Education Department who has passed all his examinations and has got his first-class certificate. He has the equivalent of a bachelor of arts degree. I have a brother in that position who does not get as much money as the clerk in my office.

Mr. COLLINS: Let him go out into the cold, cruel world and he will get less.

Mr. VOWLES: That is not the point. We say that economy should be practised, and when the matter of a reduction of members' salaries comes before the House, as it must, you will find that the Opposition will be honest and will support the Bill and let the public servants see that, if sacrifices are to be made, we are going to make them, too.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*): I do not intend to give a silent vote on this question. I agree that the hon. member for Gregory has made a most interesting statement of the case for country members of Parliament, and I admit that I did a good deal when I was on the other side to obtain decent living conditions for members of Parliament. Nobody worked harder while a member of the Labour party than I, and nobody stopped us from getting a decent living wage more than members on the front bench.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: You know that is not true.

Mr. PETERSON: The hon. member was not there then. The hon. member for Gregory has, perfectly correctly, pointed out that hon. members are not receiving salaries. What they get is actually an allowance, and if they were enabled to control the whole of the £500, it would be right for us to support the motion to the fullest extent. With the hon. member for Gregory, the hon. member for Bowen, and other hon. members, I can truthfully say that practically half of my salary goes in the shape of travelling expenses, and, as the hon. member points out, we have every reason to expect that the State should place us on the same level as any public servant going into the country. Do we go into our electorates during the recess for fun? We are often asked to go there to open schools, or to attend to some public function. That means that the country member has to put his hand into his pocket to the tune of £30, or £40, or £50.

Mr. KIRWAN: Some of them more.

Mr. PETERSON: And some a great deal less. He has to do that out of his salary; but when a public officer, such as the Minister's private secretary, travels he receives a travelling allowance on top of his big salary; and the point is whether we should not consider the question of payment of

[*Mr. Vowles.*]

members from a distance point of view. The hon. member for Bowen interjected that he earns his salary. I am one of those who say, "Hear, hear!" to that, and I say that he, in common with other hon. members, is entitled to a great deal more than he is getting in consideration of the financial work members are getting done for their electors. Many of them, if paid on a commercial traveller's basis, would earn £3,000 or £4,000 a year.

But the trouble is that the finances of the State have come to such a condition that the Government, unfortunately, have been compelled to face the situation and to realise that they cannot carry on unless some reduction in expenditure is made. Although these gentlemen told the electors—and I, as candidate for Normanby, told the railway men, in view of the reports of the Premier, that there would be no reductions by this Government—and on the strength of that many of them voted for me. Unfortunately, the financial position is such that the Premier has been compelled to ask the Arbitration Court for a reduction in the salaries of workers and public servants. I do not know how some of these workers are going to live, especially some of those on the lower salaries, if their wages are reduced. It is a problem which will require some greater thinker than I to solve; but my sympathy goes out to them. When the Government propose a reduction we ourselves should be the first to face it. I say that we are worth the £500 we get, and I agree with the hon. member for Gregory that some members should get a great deal more than £500, such as he and others whose constituencies are away up in the North. But we are faced with the position that the finances have drifted, and the Premier is compelled to ask one union after another to accept a reduction and so try to save the position. There is no electioneering in this. I have already stated that the justice of the case has been well advocated by the hon. member for Gregory; but it is our duty as legislators to share the burden, and it is up to Parliament to do its part. If we take a dose of this bitter medicine ourselves, then the workers will take it, too, and if we do that, then I for one have no fear of the result with the electors.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murrill*): I remember last year asking a question in respect of a general reduction of salaries. It must be admitted that, owing to the unfortunate financial position in which we find the State, it is necessary that there should [5.30 p.m.] be an all-round reduction. I think, in respect of the actual wage of a member of Parliament or any individual, that we must take into consideration the purchasing value of a sovereign. Ten years ago the purchasing value of a sovereign was a sovereign's worth of goods. To-day that is not so. If a basic wage of £4 5s. will not give you any higher standard of living than one of £3 17s. 6d., a person would be equally as well off on £3 17s. 6d. a week. If the payment of a lower wage will enable many industries to carry on which are now held up because of their inability to pay the high rates of pay, and the same comfort in living could be obtained by the receipt now of a wage of £3 10s. per week as could previously be obtained on £4 5s. per week, would it not be better for Australia if men were kept in employment at the lower rate, instead of having to

draw the dole which the Government give week after week?

The HOME SECRETARY: How can that be accomplished?

Mr. MORGAN: In my opinion, by a general all-round reduction. I do not think my salary should remain as it is when the salaries of others are reduced. That is not just. The unfortunate part is that the Government have deceived the people, and what is happening to-day has been brought about by their extravagance and careless management. Even the Secretary for Mines a few months ago deceived the electors in order to win the Paddington seat. He told them that, if they returned him, the Government would not reduce wages in any shape or form.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I stood for the Arbitration Court.

Mr. MORGAN: It is only a case of the chickens coming home to roost so far as the Government are concerned. Something has to be done in order to right the finances, and the only way the Government can see is to reduce wages. I am very pleased that this discussion has taken place. My electorate is a very large one, and I know what it costs to travel round it. Had I not some other means of making money, I would not be able to live. Notwithstanding that fact, I believe that under the existing conditions it is right for me to agree to a reduction when a reduction is brought about in other directions.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): I and the party to which I belong are going to support this motion. When the Government realise the position so far as their employees are concerned and are proposing to submit the question to the Arbitration Court, it is time for us to recognise the position so far as this House is concerned. I agree with the remarks that have been made on this side in connection with the proposal forecast by the Premier in the Press this afternoon in connection with the public servants receiving above £300 per annum. A large number of those men were refused the right to put their case before the court, and did not receive any increase of salary. In addition, they were called upon to work additional hours equally with the men who obtained rises under the Arbitration Court awards. There was also a considerable amount of saving to the country in the withdrawal of railway passes. All those things have some bearing on the positions of those men, and under these circumstances they should receive some consideration. The Government, before the general election and during the Paddington election campaign which took place only a few weeks ago, stated that they stood for full wages to the men in their employment, and said that they would not go in for any reduction. To approach the Arbitration Court under those circumstances was not honourable or just. I contend that the action now being taken by the Government, as is set out in the Press, has been brought about by the motion we are discussing. (Government dissent.)

Mr. DASH (*Mundingbura*): I desire to show the inconsistency of the hon. member for Townsville in moving this motion. The hon. member has moved—

"That, in view of the Arbitration Court having decided that, owing to the

*Mr. Dash.* }

reduced cost of living, the basic wage should be reduced by approximately 10 per cent."

The Arbitration Court has done nothing of the kind; it has not decided to reduce the basic wage by 10 per cent. The hon. member seeks to influence the court to reduce the wage by 10 per cent. because the plaint has been filed by this Government. Further, he tries to secure some limelight by moving for a reduction in the salaries of Ministers and members. The hon. member is very cunning in the latter portion of his motion. He says that all those outside the scope of the Arbitration Court—those officials who are receiving over £300—should receive consideration. That is a plea for the man on a high salary.

I have just received from Townsville a wire sending a copy of a wire sent to the railway workers in Townsville by the hon. member in an endeavour to incite them against this Government. It has not been successful so far, because I am in touch with those workers. I have received this from an employee in the Townsville workshops. It says—

"Green wired carriage workers Telegram received. You can rely upon placing your position before House. Personally consider reduction unnecessary recognising that economy can be obtained by greater efficiency in management."

"H. W. HART, Loco Shops."

Mr. GREEN: That is what I have said here.

Mr. DASH: That is what the hon. member says to the Townsville workshop employees. Immediately the court reduced the basic wage by 5.8 per cent. in regard to employees of local authorities, the hon. member, as mayor of Townsville and the chief officer in the city council, sanctioned the reduction of wages of those employees, who do not get full time in the employ of the city council.

Mr. GREEN: That is absolutely untrue.

Mr. DASH: That is the position. The hon. member sanctioned the reduction of the wages of those employees, and then he endeavoured to incite the men in the Townsville railway workshops against the Government. The hon. member can refute the wire if he likes. He has reduced the wages of the council employees, who have only been working part time. He knows that the employees of the Townsville council have not received full time for a considerable time.

Mr. VOWLES: What has that to do with members' salaries?

Mr. DASH: The hon. member for Townsville said that, if there had been proper management of the Government's affairs, there would now be no necessity to reduce the wages. How does he stand now, when his own local authority has reduced the man on the basic wage? Most of the employees of local authorities are on the basic wage, because that wage applies principally to unskilled workers. If the hon. member for Townsville had the interests of the workers of Townsville at heart, he would have come along with me to the Arbitration Court and offered no objection to the application I filed for an increase in wages for those employees. That hon. gentleman, or his representative, like every other employer, opposed the application. On several occasions I have had to get the judge of the Arbitration Court to

interpret the awards, because the council were trying to do their employees out of a few shillings that they were entitled to.

The HOME SECRETARY: The Ipswich City Council have not taken advantage of the reduction, but the hon. member for Townsville has reduced his council employees.

Mr. GREEN: I am not afraid to face the workers of Townsville.

Mr. DASH: The hon. member sent a two-faced telegram. He has reduced the council employees, and yet he now wires to another section of workers saying that there is no necessity for a reduction of wages. At the same time he is trying to influence the Arbitration Court to reduce the wages by 10 per cent. That is what his motion means. He tries to safeguard the interests of those receiving over £300 per annum, for whom he is the chief pleader, and in whose interests other hon. members opposite who have spoken have pleaded. I believe, on the most reliable authority, that the hon. member, when indenturing his own apprentices, inserts a clause to the effect that they are not to commence business in certain towns specified in the indenture.

Mr. GREEN: That is untrue.

Mr. DASH: Will the hon. member allow me to see the indentures?

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member to address the chair.

Mr. DASH: There is no justification for a 10 per cent. reduction in employees' wages or in the salaries of hon. members. The motion has been moved in order to obtain limelight. Any hon. member who knows about the procedure in this House is agreed on that. The hon. member thought that he would "get in" on this Government, but he has failed. We have disclosed the motive of the motion.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. W. McCormack, Cairns): Mr. Speaker,—  
(Opposition laughter.)

Mr. MOORE: Stonewalling.

The HOME SECRETARY: I want to call the attention of the House to the attitude of the hon. member for Townsville. As has been stated by the hon. member for Mundingburra, if I can read English at all, the motion suggesting a 10 per cent. reduction is submitted for the purpose of influencing the Arbitration Court in a few days' time to apply the actual reduction in the cost of living to the basic wage.

Mr. GREEN: Dealing with hon. members' salaries.

The HOME SECRETARY: Dealing with the salaries of the public servants. That is what the motion means.

Mr. VOWLES: That is evidently what you read into it.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member for Townsville intended that, if he intended anything at all. The only reason for a reduction in wages is because of a reduction in the cost of living. Everybody throughout the world is advocating that we must get somewhere nearer the cost of production in our industries, and the only way of bringing the cost of production somewhat closer to the price that is received for products is by reducing the cost of living and

[Mr. Dash.]



reducing wages. If we could obtain an effective wage—not an actual wage—to purchase commodities to the value of £4 that previously cost £5, we would be in a much better position if our wages were fixed at £4. That is an obvious truth, as was pointed out by the hon. member for Murilla. The hon. member for Townsville intends, by his motion, that the workers shall be reduced to the full extent of the reduction in the cost of living. The hon. member, not thinking that he would be found out, in order to save his face with the workers of Townsville, says that a reduction is not necessary, and he actually argues that it does not matter how much the cost of living comes down, his voters at least shall not be affected by a reduction in wages. That is the sense of his motion.

Mr. GREEN: That is not my original wire.

The HOME SECRETARY: I know the wire, and I know exactly what the hon. member is trying to do. He wants his electors to receive the benefits of a fall in the cost of living by not having their own wages reduced. But everybody else in the Government service should be reduced. That only shows there is no business in the motion.

Mr. VOWLES: Do you suggest that the Arbitration Court will be influenced in the direction of discrimination by a wire like that?

The HOME SECRETARY: If the motion means anything, it means what I have stated. The hon. member for Townsville had no idea that his wire would be read to the House. I am not complaining about the action taken by the hon. member as the chief executive officer of the municipality of Townsville in reducing the wages of his employees. His responsibilities necessitated that. But he says that the Government's responsibilities do not necessitate them reducing the wages of the carriage workers in Townsville.

Mr. GREEN: I did not say that in the wire.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member did say that in his wire.

Mr. GREEN: These men are losing one day a fortnight, and they claim that they have been reduced in wages.

The HOME SECRETARY: The employees of the Townsville City Council are not working full time, and the hon. member knows that better than anyone in this House. He need not have agreed to the reduction. The mayor of the Ipswich City Council has continued to pay the full wage. The hon. member, as a member of Parliament, argues that the ruling of the Arbitration Court in respect of a reduction in wages should not apply to his own constituents. He takes up the attitude that, while he agrees that there should be a 10 per cent. reduction because of a reduction in the cost of living, it should not be applied to his constituents in Townsville. The hon. member wired to the railway employees at Townsville that he did not agree with the reduction.

Mr. GREEN: Under the circumstances.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is the hon. member's wire—that he did not agree with the reductions.

Mr. GREEN: No; I said that they had been reduced already.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member allowed a reduction in the case of

his own employees, and he thought it fair and reasonable. When he was the governing authority he allowed the reduction. He is hypocritical. There is no business behind the hon. member.

Mr. MORGAN: Didn't you tell the workers that you would not reduce wages, and now you are reducing wages.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Stick to the point.

The HOME SECRETARY: We said that the effective wage would not be reduced, and the effective wage will not be reduced. There is no need for us to defend our action in that matter. The Government have taken a certain action, and they are responsible to the people of Queensland for that action; but in this instance, we are at least not as hypocritical as the hon. member. The hon. member proposes a 10 per cent. reduction because of the reduced cost of living. Take his own argument, that it was not to apply to the public servants receiving more than the basic wage, but to members of Parliament. Was the salary of any person receiving above £300 ever fixed on the basic wage? He knows that is not so. He knows the basic wage is not applied to salaries of £300 or £400 a year. It is no factor in dealing with the question of salaries; it is a question of the value of the officer's service. It is ridiculous to say that a 10 per cent. reduction, because of the reduced cost of living, should apply to a man in receipt of £1,000 a year. If that were so, why was the hon. member for Bulimba paid £1,000 a year as a Minister, and although the cost of living has gone up 100 per cent., the salary still remains at £1,000 a year? I am using this argument to show that the hon. member for Townsville meant the motion to apply to the basic wage men, and he cannot deny it.

Mr. GREEN: I do deny it.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member cannot deny it, and yet he wired to his own constituents "under the cushion" and said that he did not believe the Government were acting wisely. I am going to stress that, again and again, and I will stress it to the hon. member's constituents in Townsville. This gentleman, acting in his position as mayor of Townsville, took up the same position that we did in relation to the servants of the State—he took the very first opportunity of reducing the basic wage.

Mr. VOWLES: He went to the Arbitration Court.

The HOME SECRETARY: Where did we go? To the court. We are doing exactly what he did in his position as mayor of Townsville. But what is he doing to his constituents in his position as a member of Parliament? He is wiring "under the cushion"—

Mr. GREEN: In reply to a wire.

The HOME SECRETARY: He wired "under the cushion" that he thinks we are doing wrong; that there is no reduction in the cost of living at all, or at least, that it should not apply to his constituents. That is the hon. member's argument. I think I have proved conclusively that the hon. member for Townsville is hypocritical in his attitude on this occasion, or else he was hypocritical when he was acting as mayor. I am rather inclined to believe that he acted

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as a responsible man as mayor and as an irresponsible man as a member of Parliament.

Question—(Mr. Green's motion)—put, and the House divided:

AYES, 32.

Mr. Appel	Mr. Jones, J.
„ Barnes, G. P.	„ Kerr
„ Barnes, W. H.	„ King
„ Bebbington	„ Macgregor
„ Bell	„ Maxwell
„ Brand	„ Moore
„ Cattermull	„ Morgan
„ Clayton	„ Nott
„ Corsier	„ Peterson
„ Costello	„ Petrie
„ Deacon	„ Roberts, J. H. C.
„ Edwards	„ Roberts, T. R.
„ Elphinstone	„ Swayne
„ Fletcher	„ Vowles
„ Fry	„ Walker
„ Green	„ Warren
Tellers: Mr. Brand and	Mr. Fletcher.

NOES, 36.

Mr. Barber	Mr. Jones, A. J.
„ Brennan	„ Kirwan
„ Bulcock	„ Land
„ Collins	„ Larcombe
„ Conroy	„ McCormack
„ Cooper, F. A.	„ Mullin
„ Cooper, W.	„ Payne
„ Coyne	„ Pease
„ Dash	„ Pollock
„ Dunstan	„ Riordan
„ Ferricks	„ Ryan
„ Foley	„ Smith
„ Forde	„ Stopford
„ Gilday	„ Theodore
„ Gillies	„ Weir
„ Gledson	„ Wellington
„ Hartley	„ Wilson
„ Huxham	„ Winstanley
Tellers: Mr. Dunstan and	Mr. Foley.

Resolved in the negative.

At 7 p.m., the House, in accordance with Sessional Order, proceeded with Government business.

## PRIMARY PRODUCERS' ORGANISATION BILL.

### SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): In rising to move the second reading of this important Bill, I do so with a good deal of pleasure. Since I have been Secretary for Agriculture I have been associated with one or two measures that I am very proud of, having been entrusted with the piloting of the measures through this House; but I venture to say that this Bill which is now before the Chamber is more far-reaching in its effects, and will probably do more for Queensland, than any measure I have had anything to do with. I may mention the Co-operative Agricultural Production Act Amendment Act, Main Roads Act, Wheat Pool Act, Railway Guarantee Act, and Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act, and other legislation of that kind—which were passed purely in the interests of the primary producer, and which have done much to assist primary production. Still there is something lacking, and it has been found necessary to introduce a Bill of this character to take the first step to place agriculture on a sound footing. It has been said by some people that this is a belated measure. I am inclined to agree that it is a belated measure, but “Better late than never.” I would like to remind those who

say that it is a belated measure, and who say that the Government have done nothing for the primary producer—I have just mentioned a few measures that came to my mind which have been passed purely in the interests of the primary producer—that we have had no experience of “peace-time” Government. The Labour Government of Queensland came into existence after the outbreak of war. We had to contend with all the difficulties of the war, and the aftermath of the war, but the aftermath of the war makes it necessary to do something—even if it is a belated measure at this hour—to place agriculture on a sound footing.

Mr. MORGAN: I am very glad you admit that it is not on a sound footing now.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not think any intelligent man thinks that it is on a sound footing. We have in Queensland the best land in the Commonwealth. I am not one of those who ride along the railway line from Coolangatta to Rockhampton and talk about all the idle rich lands, because a large area of the land served by our railways, and which has been opened up, is not rich land. But we know that in a State like Queensland, where we have so much good land, a good rainfall, and good climatic conditions, with so much idle land and so many idle people there must be some reason, and the responsibility must be placed, not on the department, but on the people who claim to make the laws of the country. After all, law-making does not do a great deal. If you analyse the Acts of Parliament of this State, they are, generally speaking, passed to force one section of the community to do something they do not like to do, in the interests of another section. But I say that the measure now before the Chamber is a constructive measure, and one which I believe will certainly make it possible—I do not say it will do it—to place the farming community on a better footing. We should ask ourselves the question why the area under agriculture is not increasing. I have the figures, which show that it is not going back, but it is not increasing at the rate it should, and there is some reason for it, especially when we know that people are leaving the land in some cases, and that people who claimed that they desired to go on the land are not going on the land. After all, what do people go on the land for?

Mr. MORGAN: To make a living.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Of course they do—to make a living, and to make an independence. Men who work all the hours that God made should have a good and reasonable opportunity to make themselves independent before they reach old age. A late President of the United States of America, James A. Garfield, speaking on agriculture, said—

“At the head of science and arts, at the head of civilisation and progress, stands, not militarism (the science that kills), not commerce (the art that accumulates wealth), but agriculture, the mother of all industry, the maintenance of human life.”

I think we can all agree with that declaration. Another American statesman, according to the United States Department of Agriculture “Year Book,” says, and I agree with him—

“Life on the farm and in the rural community gives rise to problems, the

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solution of which is of vital importance to American agriculture and American civilisation. . . . When agriculture begins to lose ground the political stability of the nation is endangered."

Mr. Gladstone also said—

"Successful agriculture demanded the exercise of a broader intelligence than any other calling."

I am inclined to agree with Mr. Gladstone there. I know that it used to be thought a few years ago that the best brains should join the public service, and that the dull boy in the family was good enough to put on the land. I think that age of reasoning is past, and it is recognised now that agriculture, the mother of all wealth, is one of the most important industries, requiring not only a greater amount of energy, but a greater intelligence than any other calling.

Mr. MORGAN: The application of science has brought about improved methods.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, the latest scientific knowledge and machinery must be applied to agriculture. One hon. member said that efficiency must be the watchword, and I agree with that. I agree that there is no such thing as unskilled labour. Any man following his calling, whether using a shovel or an axe, can make himself efficient, and the farmer, of all men, has to be efficient, and the Government have to assist in bringing about that efficiency. Coming closer home, another great statesman said quite recently—

"1. Agriculture as an industry must be made a remunerative industry to those engaged in it. 2. The industry must be greatly extended, for only in that can an additional population be absorbed; and it is only by increasing the population that we can reduce our per capita financial burdens. 3. The conditions of life of all country dwellers must be made more attractive than at the present time.

"Organisation of agriculturists on the farm bureau system is essential. The local organisation will be linked up with district councils of agriculture, and these in turn will be represented on the Central Council of Agriculture. Provisions will be made for advisory boards for the dairying industry, fruit industry, and for other branches of agriculture."

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Was that "Billy" Hughes?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It was not "Billy" Hughes I referred to as "another great statesman" in Australia, but Mr. Theodore.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I only quote Garfield, Gladstone, and Mr. Theodore as agreeing on this important point. I want to point out that, following on that declaration by the Premier of Queensland, the Premier did not sit down on that, but called a conference, which brought into existence the Dairy Advisory Board and was the start of the Provisional Council of Agriculture; and the work these boards have done so far shows what the permanent council will do when it is established. As a justification for the Bill, the Provisional Council of Agriculture, as I have explained, was brought into existence by a conference, following that declaration of the Premier at Laidley on 21st February last. The whole of the members of the provisional Council

were not elected by the producers, as we propose they shall be under this Bill.

The urgency and importance of the problem necessitated taking some arbitrary action to institute the members of the council. A Provisional Council was appointed, and so far they have justified their existence, and I consider that the selection of those gentlemen has been particularly successful.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: What have they done?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am going to tell the hon. member, if he will have a little bit of patience. It cannot be expected that even the permanent council is going to solve all the problems of agriculture in one, two, or three years, nor can it be expected that the Provisional Council could solve them in the short time it has been in existence. It has only held two meetings altogether, but many things have been done, and I will tell the House briefly what they are.

First of all, it has formulated rules and standing orders, and appointed a number of standing committees. It has appointed an administrative committee, a dairying committee, a wheat committee, a sugar committee, a transport committee, and a fruit committee. Steps have also been taken to appoint a director of the Producers' Association. The position was advertised for all over Australia and New Zealand, and seventy-two applications have been received for the position. I had the opportunity of looking through those applications a few days ago, and there is no doubt there are some very fine men offering themselves for the position of director. There are applications from New Zealand, and from all the other States, and about thirteen or fourteen Queenslanders have also applied. The Council of Agriculture will make a selection at their next meeting. Delegates were appointed by the Provisional Council to visit different parts of the State and explain the objects of the scheme. These delegates are able to give an outline of the policy adopted to the primary producers in connection with the new scheme. The council also considered the question of legislation, which has resulted in the Bill that I am now speaking on. About fifteen provisional district organisers have been appointed for the different districts. I had the pleasure of addressing those organisers to-day, and I am satisfied from their general appearance and from the care taken by the committee in their selection, although I do not know many of them by name, that they will be able to explain the scheme thoroughly and to justify their existence. They believe in the scheme, and they will be able to explain it in the way in which it was intended. With regard to legislation, the fruit section suggested that the Fruit Cases Act should be amended in certain directions to provide for grade classification and the setting up of a standard. It shows that the work of this body has borne good results, because the Crown Solicitor was immediately consulted, and the Government agreed to the introduction of the amending legislation proposed. I had the pleasure of perusing a draft of the Bill this afternoon.

Still the hon. member for Drayton wants to know what is being done, and I will tell him a little more. I might say here that the Government, realising the position of the dairying industry, appointed a Dairy Advisory Board, and that board have already justified their existence. They have

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done good work, and they have now been merged in the council. I am sure that great benefits will accrue to the dairying industry from the appointment of that board. It was suggested by the fruit section that something should be done in connection with the banana industry. It was pointed out that the banana-growing industry was likely to be in a bad way on account of the large area put under bananas in Queensland, and the suggestion was made that a banana pool should be created. I pointed out that the Government would not bring in any compulsory pool legislation without applying to the banana-growers the same conditions that they applied to the cheese-producers in regard to the establishment of a cheese pool. We pointed out that a pool must be asked for by 75 per cent. of those engaged in the industry before a pool can be granted. The same condition exists in connection with the cheese industry.

Mr. MORGAN: The Cheese Board has done no good, because the price is coming down.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is a reflection on the cheese-producing community to say that the Cheese Board have done no good, because they were elected by the cheese producers themselves in the most democratic way possible. I do not agree with the hon. gentleman that the Cheese Pool Board is a failure. It is impossible to keep up prices artificially, although they can certainly do something that way by organising the cheese producers, and, if they have not done that already, they will do it as time goes on.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The cheese producers have been organising for ten years.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: In order to meet the wishes of the fruit section who asked for a pool, I have already had a rough draft made of a general pooling Act. This has not been considered by the Cabinet yet, but it has been drafted, and I have no doubt that the Cabinet will agree to a general pooling Act being placed on the statute-book to meet the wishes of the Council of Agriculture. A safeguard will have to be introduced to provide that 75 per cent. of the farmers concerned must demand a pool and vote for it before the Government give effect to it. I think it is a good thing to have a general pooling Act on the statute-book so that, when an industry is disorganised by virtue of the lack of stabilisation and marketing facilities, effect can be given to the wishes of the producers to bring into existence a pooling scheme for the benefit of those concerned. I have already pointed out in this House that the Department of Agriculture is deficient in efficient instructors and experts. That is not new information for this Chamber, because ever since we have had an Agricultural Department in Queensland the Department of Agriculture has been starved in regard to instructors and experts. In order to meet the wishes of the fruit section, who asked for further instructors, provision will be made on the Estimates for the appointment of further instructors. There is no window-dressing or "leg-pulling" in this matter, so far as the Government are concerned, because we have already given effect to the recommendations and resolutions passed by the Council of Agriculture. We are also meeting their wishes in regard to the utilisation of surplus, waste, and inferior fruit. We have communicated with the Commonwealth Bureau of Science and Industry, in order to take some steps to utilise the

surplus, waste, and inferior fruit, and we have drafted a Bill to meet their requests. The fruit-fly is another matter that the fruit section has had under consideration. It is a very important problem, and one which appears to be very difficult of solution. It has been pointed out that on the border of New South Wales there is a number of neglected orchards, and the fruitgrowers passed a resolution and forwarded it to me with a request that I should get into touch with the New South Wales authorities and arrange a conference between the New South Wales officers and those employed by the Queensland Government. I communicated with the New South Wales Government, and they are now going to give instructions for the destruction of those orchards which appear to be breeding the fruit-fly. The hon. member for Drayton insinuated that the Provisional Council had been sitting down on their jobs and doing nothing.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I did not say so. I only asked what they did.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I will tell the hon. gentleman some more. I now come to the most important branch of agriculture in this State. I refer to the sugar-growing industry. It is the most important from the point of view of its monetary value, and because it settles a white population in the Northern portion of our State. The council passed a resolution and decided that steps should be taken by the local Producers' Association to do everything they possibly could to continue the present sugar agreement. The Government did not sit down on this question. The Government appointed Mr. Stephen Walker to go to Melbourne as publicity agent, and the hon. member for Musgrave admitted to-day that he was a very capable man for the position. Mr. Walker went to Melbourne to endeavour to convince the Southern people who are out to influence the Prime Minister against renewing the sugar agreement. Mr. Walker is the very man for the position, and he will be employed in trying to convince the narrow-minded people in the South who are hostile to the sugar industry of the necessity for continuing the agreement.

In regard to wheatgrowing, a very important development has taken place in connection with that industry. Since the council came into existence Mr. Quodling has submitted a scheme to the Wheat Board for the improvement of wheat. This is the resolution passed by the Provisional Council in connection with that scheme—

"The Council, in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture and the State Wheat Board, has succeeded in effecting a considerable improvement in the cultural methods of wheat-growing in Queensland. The scheme prepared by the council has been adopted by the Wheat Board. It provides for the purchase by the Wheat Board from the Department of Agriculture of a quantity of specially selected seed, which will be grown under special conditions. The wheat so harvested will, in turn, be reserved for seed purposes. A new list of recommended varieties has been drawn up, and these have been allotted to certain districts, where each will be planted on a specified class of soil."

(Opposition interjections.) I am surprised at the hostility directed at me in delivering

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such an important speech as this. I hope the hon. member for Nanango is listening, because I want to refer now to an industry in which he is vitally interested as well as I, because I know the Nanango electorate is a large maize-growing district. Last year he was very anxious about a maize pool. I pointed out the difference in the way of a maize pool as distinguished from a wheat pool. The wheat area is confined to one part of the State, and there is only a limited number of wheat buyers, but there are thousands of maize buyers, and the maize-growers are scattered all over the State. However, we have not decided that the maize-grower must be left to the tender mercies of the speculator. We have endeavoured to do something to find out the correct position, and, at the suggestion of the provisional Council, we are collecting certain information from the growers which may enable us to solve the problem. I do not say that it is simple of solution, but we can do something. Further than that, I may tell the House that during the last few days the Government have approached the Commonwealth Government with a view to imposing an increased duty on imported maize which may compete with Queensland-grown maize.

Mr. EDWARDS: Don't you think it was unfair that a representative of the maize-growers was not appointed to that council?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There is nothing unfair in it, but we do not want to overburden the provisional Council. I represent the chief maize-growing district in the State, and there are other maize-growers on the council, so that the interests of the maize-growers will not be overlooked. Serious consideration was given to the hon. member's suggestion, but for the reason I have just mentioned—that we did not want to overload the council or set up precedents which the permanent council will not be able to follow, we want to be as economical as we can—it was not adopted; but I am satisfied that the interests of the maize-growers will be conserved and their wishes respected by the provisional Council, and I feel sure that when the permanent council is elected, they will have their representative upon it.

To-day we issued a bulletin setting out what has been done to date by the provisional Council, standing committee, and delegates regarding the suggestion that more liberal legislation should be passed with regard to financing farmers. The most important thing after the farmers are organised is the provision of adequate finance—the establishment of rural banks, for instance.

Mr. KING: Can you give us any information about arrowroot?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I can give hon. members a good deal of information about a lot of other things. Arrowroot is important, but it is not important enough to justify a representative on the provisional Council. The permanent Council is appointed by the farmers, who, by their votes, will say whom they will elect. The dairying committee sat to-day, and dealt with one or two important questions—herd-testing, for instance.

The question of better finance for the farmers is under consideration, and the question of fodder and water conservation has been referred to the finance committee. There is no more important question than

fodder and water conservation. In a good season water is allowed to run to the sea, and thousands of tons of fodder are wasted. When the permanent Council has been appointed, with the co-operation of the Department of Agriculture it is hoped that these problems will be solved; but I think I have said enough to show that the provisional Council have not been asleep on their job; and, after all, it is the permanent Council to whom we look to make things move, because they will represent and be responsible to the farmers, and will certainly carry out the policy the farmers wish.

Mr. MORGAN: Will they be elected only by the farmers?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There will be Government nominees on the board, as I pointed out when the Bill was introduced. The Government experts will have seats on the council, but only five out of twenty will be Government nominees, so that the farmers themselves will dominate the council and formulate its policy right through.

Mr. FLETCHER: Your nominees will only be the experts?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes.

Mr. SZER: Will farm hands have a vote?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I have already said that the Commissioner for Railways is a member of the Council. Transport is one of the most important questions. I have always said that one of the great drawbacks to the farmer is bad roads. Probably we have too many miles of railways, and if we had better roads feeding the railways, the latter might possibly pay. That is one reason why I am proud of the fact that I was associated with the introduction of the Main Roads Act. (Opposition interjections.) I repeat that I am surprised at the opposition that the Bill is meeting so far. (Opposition dissent.) I am surprised, because it was said by intelligent farmers throughout the State before the House met that the so-called Farmers' party would have either to get behind the scheme and support it or declare themselves once and for all to be the enemies of the farmers. It is very difficult to tell from the speech of the leader of the Opposition whether he is against the Bill or in favour of it, but I am going to make reference to some of his remarks before I sit down. At this juncture I would like to give credit to the Press for the support they have given the scheme.

Mr. VOWLES: Have they not been paid to do that advertising?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No. For instance, I have here a leader in the "Daily Mail" of the 27th March last, from which I shall quote briefly. Though the "Daily Mail" is a party paper, it realises that the time has arrived when party should be sunk in order to save Queensland and develop it and place the rural community on a sound footing. This is what it says—

"The conference of dairying interests convened by the Premier was one of the most notable gatherings in the history of the State, and its decisions, provided that they are carried out in the spirit which signalled their birth, are likely to have a far-reaching effect upon the future development of the State. Great

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credit is due to the Premier for this bold piece of practical statesmanship."

I just want to quote a few associations who have given this movement their support. I feel sure this scheme is going to succeed and the farmers are going to embrace it, and even, if afterwards they vote against the Labour party, that does not matter to me or to the Premier. We are going to put the Bill on the statute-book and start it on sound lines, and we are going to do all we can to place the agricultural community on a firm footing.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The following associations have written supporting this scheme:—

South Queensland Fruitgrowers' Society.  
Farmers' Alliance, Mutdapilly.

Queensland Sailor and Soldier Producers' Distributing Agency.

Bowen Farmers' Association.

Applethorpe Branch, Stanthorpe District Council of Fruitgrowers.

Summit Branch, Stanthorpe District Council of Fruitgrowers.

Mount Tully Branch, Stanthorpe District Council of Fruitgrowers.

Cottonvale Branch, Stanthorpe District Council of Fruitgrowers.

Glen Aplin Branch, Stanthorpe District Council of Fruitgrowers.

Thulimbah Branch, Stanthorpe District Council of Fruitgrowers.

Marmor Progress Association.

Bracewell Farmers and Dairymen's Association.

Beverley Fruitgrowers' Association.

Ambrose Producers' Association.

Queensland Farmers' Union branches at Oakey, Maclagan, Moola, Jimbour, and Cecil Plains.

Australian Dairy Farmers' Association, Bundaberg.

Australian Dairy Farmers' Association, Byrnestown.

Farmers' associations at Goorolba, Mundubbera, Machine Creek, and Woodford.

Dairymen's Association, Bucca.

Sunnyvale Dairymen's Association.

Dairy Farmers' Association, Cooroy.

Gin Gin Dairy Farmers' Association.

Atherton Settlers' Association.

Central Queensland Farmers' Co-operative Company.

Charcoal Scrub Returned Soldiers' Settlement Progress Association.

Beerburum United Fruitgrowers' Association.

Amongst individuals who have written to the Press in its support are—

W. Parr, Ernest street, Manly ("Daily Standard").

W. H. Doherty, U.C.G.A. ("Courier").

H. Glowrey, Bendigo, Victoria ("Mail").

Country party in Central Queensland ("Telegraph").

H. Keefer, Pittsworth ("Daily Mail").

Murgon farmers (E. L. Delroy) ("Daily Mail").

Wyreema Milk Suppliers' Association ("Daily Mail").

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J. Gordon (near Toowoomba) ("Daily Mail").

In the face of that, the speech delivered by the leader of the Opposition is a most illuminating one. I am going to give this House an instance of the unfortunate position in which the hon. gentleman finds himself. If I were in the law courts trying to defend a prisoner, I would find [7.30 p.m.] myself, probably, in the same position. It is unfortunate that the leader of the Opposition has such a poor knowledge of the farming requirements of this State that he was uncertain where he stood. I have here some of the things which the hon. gentleman said at different times during his speech. Some have been taken from "Hansard" and some I took down while the hon. gentleman was saying them. I am not giving them in the order in which they were said. I have put them in my own order, to show the inconsistency of the speech. One thing the hon. gentleman said was—

"It is a funny thing, after seven years, that the Government have not introduced a measure of this kind before."

In another portion of his speech, he said the Government were holding up a bunch of carrots to the farmers. Then he said he was in favour of the scheme. Well, he was in favour of holding up the bunch of carrots. Again, he said there was a tremendous lot of make-believe about this matter. In another part he said that the hon. member for Drayton urged the principle of the scheme. Then again—

"If the Government were sincere, they would have come to the assistance of the farmer months, and even years, before."

Then he complains that the Premier treated this House unfairly because he announced the policy some months before the House met. Then he says he believes in the scheme. Further on, he said—

"It was unnecessary, and a commentary on the Agricultural Department."

Mr. VOWLES: I did not say it was unnecessary.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member said—

"It is unnecessary, and a commentary on the Agricultural Department."

Then he said—

"It is in our platform."

(Government laughter.) The hon. member also said he would criticise the Bill.

Mr. VOWLES: So I will.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member further said that the hon. member for Pittsworth drew up the scheme, and in another portion he advised us to "Provide markets; that is more important." One of the most important powers given to the council in the Bill is the power to provide markets. Then the hon. gentleman goes on to say that the organisers are quite unnecessary. Here is the beauty of the lot: After giving the hon. member for Drayton and the hon. member for Pittsworth credit for the scheme, he said—

"Mark Harrison is responsible for suggesting the scheme."

Mr. VOWLES: Giving it away, I said.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: In another the hon. gentleman said—

“The Premier lifted the scheme *holus bolus* from an American magazine.”

(Government laughter.) What are we to expect, with all those inconsistent statements?

I remember Mr. J. H. C. Roberts, the present member for Pittsworth, on one occasion making a declaration, which appeared in one of the papers, when the Farmers' party was first formed. It was a very clear, honest declaration on his part. He said—

“We are against the Nationalist party because of their association with trusts and combines; and we are against the Labour party because of the land tax and high wages.”

If the Standing Orders permitted, I would expose the bogey of high wages. The farmers have to sell their products to the people who live by their wages, and only by having good wages can the farmer receive a fair return for his labour. Also, if the Standing Orders permitted, I could go into the question of land taxation, and point out that the Labour party abolished the railway guarantee. I am satisfied, from what my colleague, the Secretary for Railways, has told me, that had that guarantee been in operation to-day, it would have been an annual tax of a quarter of a million on the backs of the farmers; whereas the land tax paid by the bona fide farmers is less than £20,000. Having explained that, I think I can claim that the hon. member for Pittsworth should come over to this side, because the Nationalist party are still associated with trusts and combines.

I am aware, Mr. Speaker, that under the Standing Orders you have no knowledge of what took place in Committee—it is a farce that that should be so. We all have knowledge of what takes place in Committee. I have already explained in Committee the provisions of the Bill, but I am going to explain them briefly again.

Before proceeding to do so, I want to say that the great agricultural industry of Queensland can be properly handled and developed only by the organisation into one solid body of every primary producer in the State. We do not need to question that, I think. We know that the wage-earners could not be emancipated until they were properly organised. We know full well that, if the middlemen can prevent the farmers from being organised, they can do what they like with them. Once they are organised into a solid body they will insist on having something more tangible than the so-called Farmers' party can do for them. They will insist on having their rights looked after, and will be able to put forward what they require. At the present time, when agricultural legislation is being framed, after the legislation reaches this Chamber the so-called Farmers' party come along and criticise it. I want the bona fide farmers to give their views regarding the legislation before it reaches this Chamber. When that legislation is endorsed by them, it must be in their interests, and they will take the responsibility of saying it is what they require.

Briefly, the Bill sets out—as the title indicates—to promote the agricultural and rural industries by the organisation of the primary producers of Queensland in a completely unified national organisation. The justifica-

tion for the Bill has been emphasised briefly in my short speech this evening. The genesis of the Bill is to be found in the speech which the Premier made at Laidley. Since that speech was made, we have been doing everything possible to enable the provisional Council to carry out these schemes which were advocated on that occasion. The Bill seeks to legalise what has been done, and what will be done in future.

The constitution of the Primary Producers' Organisation will be really in three tiers. There will be the local organisations. Where any fifteen or twenty primary producers are to be found in any small centre, they can form a local producers' organisation. They, in turn, will have a vote in electing the district councils. The State has been cut up, provisionally, into fifteen agricultural districts. It may be necessary to create more; it may be necessary to widen some of the districts, or to alter the boundaries—that is a matter for the permanent council when it comes into existence.

Mr. MORGAN: Can every branch elect a member on the district council?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Every local producers' association cannot do that; because, where any fifteen or twenty producers exist, they will bring into existence a local producers' association, and in some districts there may be 100 or 200 of those associations, and they could not possibly elect one member from each association. Provision will be made, by regulation, to enable every producer to have a vote in the election of the district council; and the district councils, in turn, will elect the Council of Agriculture, which will be the executive of the producers' associations, and will voice the views of the district councils and the local producers' organisations. I specially requested that the Bill should be drafted in as simple and plain a way as possible, because we want the farmers and those controlling the scheme to understand it. I submit that the Parliamentary Draftsman and the Crown Law Department have made it a very clear measure. The Bill sets out the definition of “primary producer” thus—

“Every person engaged in the occupation of—

- (a) Dairy farmer; or
- (b) Wheat, maize, or cereal grower; or
- (c) Canegrower; or
- (d) Fruitgrower; or
- (e) Grazier; or
- (f) Farmer, whether engaged in general or mixed farming, cotton, potato, or vegetable growing, or poultry or pig-raising; and

Any class of persons declared by the Governor in Council, on the recommendation of the council, by Order in Council to be primary producers. . . .”

Mr. FLETCHER: Does that include miners? The hon. member for Queenton said last night that the miner was a primary producer.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It will not apply to miners. If the Council of Agriculture recommends to the Governor in Council that a miner should be classed as

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a primary producer, I have no doubt that the Government will give the recommendation favourable consideration.

Mr. SIZER: Will the farm hand come under that definition?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No; a dairy farmer, a share farmer, and so on; but not farm labourers.

Mr. SIZER: Will any farm hands come under the Bill?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: For the benefit of the hon. member I will read again the definition of "primary producer"—

"Every person engaged in the occupation of—

- (a) Dairy farmer; or
- (b) Wheat, maize, or cereal grower; or
- (c) Canegrower; or
- (d) Fruitgrower; or
- (e) Grazier; or
- (f) Farmer, whether engaged in general or mixed farming, cotton, potato, or vegetable growing, or

Any class of persons declared by the Governor in Council, on the recommendation of the council, by Order in Council to be primary producers."

Mr. SIZER: The last portion of that gives very wide scope. Will a farm hand not come under that heading?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

Mr. SIZER: Only employers.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: A primary producer may be a tenant farmer or a share farmer.

Mr. SIZER: Would a tenant farmer come under it?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. As I have already stated, any body of farmers to the number of fifteen or more can form a local producers' association. As set out by the constitution of the Council of Agriculture, the number of members of the council shall not exceed twenty-five, and not less than five members nor more than one-fourth of the total number of members shall be appointed by the Governor in Council as the representatives of the Government. The Minister shall, by virtue of his office, be a member and president of the council.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: I thought it was to be free from political control.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am open to conviction, and, if hon. members can satisfy me that this scheme should be separated from the Department of Agriculture, and that I should not be connected with it, I am agreeable to hear their arguments. But I shall want to hear very sound arguments in favour of the Secretary for Agriculture not being president of this Council. He should be present at the meetings, to know what is being done, so that he can really be the connecting link between the Council and the department over which he exercises control.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The only claim you have is because the Government are finding half the money.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Government are finding all the money

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for the first twelve months and half the money for the first five years, and, if at the end of that time it is the council's wishes that the Secretary for Agriculture should not be there, it will be a very simple matter to remove him. The Cabinet have considered this matter very carefully, and I have also considered it very carefully, and it has been decided that the Secretary for Agriculture for the time being should be the president and chairman of this important body. Clause 6 set out that—

"The functions and objects of the Council shall be to co-operate with the department, district councils, local associations, and other bodies and persons in—

(i.) Developing the rural industries; (ii.) Investigating and dealing with problems relating to the rural industries including animal husbandry;

(iii.) Advising and instructing primary producers with regard to matters which require scientific knowledge and training, farm management and farm economics, including cost of production and farm accountancy;

(iv.) Making research on subjects pertaining to the rural industries;

(v.) Securing effective action for the controlling of diseases and pests generally;

(vi.) Securing additional markets for the disposal of produce and improved means of distribution;

(vii.) Studying markets; accumulating data regarding marketing processes and costs; disseminating accurate market information; and eliminating waste and unnecessary marketing expenses;

(viii.) Securing improved means of storage, handling, and transport;

(ix.) Promoting a general policy of testing, standardising, and grading;

(x.) Extending the usefulness of the professional staff of the department by the utilisation of experts, the dissemination of literature and pamphlets dealing with matters of interest to primary producers, and by any other method which the council thinks fit, including the establishment of a bureau of information for primary producers;

(xi.) Encouraging and assisting in the promotion of farmers' co-operative associations and enterprises;

(xii.) Bettering the conditions of rural life and the extending rural education by co-operation with the educational authorities of the State and generally;

(xiii.) Dealing with matters in relation to agriculture and production of primary produce which may be referred to the council by the Minister;

(xiv.) Generally advising, assisting, and co-operating with the department and the association in all matters pertaining to the rural industries; where deemed necessary, convening conferences."

The functions and objects clearly set out the wisdom of the Secretary for Agriculture being chairman and president of the Council. The Bill sets out that districts shall be constituted and that local organisations shall be brought into existence. It also sets out rules for the conduct of the Council, district



councils, and local associations, for the creation of Advisory Boards, and the establishment of a fund.

There has been some criticism with regard to the power of this Bill in connection with the right to levy on the industry. This matter has been unfairly criticised, and an effort has been made to stampede the farmers by suggesting that they will be unduly taxed under this scheme. There is no such intention. In fact, no such condition of things can be brought about without the wishes of the primary producers themselves, because they will control the Council of Agriculture.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The only safety they have is in the election of their representatives.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What greater safety could a farmer have than that? They may make mistakes, as they made in electing the hon. member for Drayton. The farmers will elect the very best men to the Council of Agriculture.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Are you sure they did not make a mistake in your case?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I think I have justified my existence by the legislation I have introduced into this Chamber. I venture to say, without fear of contradiction, that I possess the confidence of the big majority of farmers in this State. Clause 12 provides—

"(1.) There shall be established a fund to be called 'The Queensland Producers' Association Fund,' which shall be charged with the payment of all expenses incurred by the council in the execution of this Act and any such expenses of a district council approved by the council.

"(2.) The fund shall be administered by the council and shall be audited from time to time by officers of the department of the Auditor-General.

"(3.) All levies made by the council as prescribed and all fines for non-payment thereof shall be paid into the fund.

"(4.) The Governor in Council shall, during a period of five years from the date of the passing of this Act, make grants in aid of the fund out of moneys appropriated by Parliament for that purpose, and every such grant shall be at a rate of not less than one pound for every one pound paid into the fund during the twelve months preceding such grant in respect of all levies and fines imposed under this Act."

That puts an obligation on the Government. First of all, the Government have undertaken voluntarily to finance the scheme for the first year of its existence. The farmers will then be called upon to pay a levy. The levies will not be very heavy. I have already mentioned that, possibly, a levy of 1d. on every 100 lb. of butter and, probably, a ½d. or ¼d. on every ton of sugar-cane, and so on, will be sufficient to finance the scheme.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: What do you anticipate the first year's expenditure will be?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The expenditure the first year will be pretty heavy. There will be a lot of organising and pioneering work to be done before the permanent council comes into existence. It is estimated that not more than £20,000 or £25,000 will be required to carry out the scheme the first year.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The Federal Cheese Pool in 1921 cost the factories interested 1s. per case.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not think there is any occasion for any bona-fide farmer to be alarmed at the provisions in this Bill, because it clearly sets out that the power will be vested in the farmers' representatives who are elected by themselves. I admit that the power to make regulations is very large. This is absolutely necessary, but regulations will not be framed by the Governor in Council except on the recommendation of the Council of Agriculture. The hon. member for Drayton will admit that that is a sufficient safeguard to ensure that any regulation framed will be in the interests of the primary producers. Clause 14 certainly does give power to make regulations, but I think that power is necessary, and I do not think any hon. member who honestly believes in the scheme will question the power given in regard to the making of regulations.

That is about all I need say just now. The Bill is an important one, and I think it will mark an era of prosperity that will date from the passing of this Bill. When this Bill becomes law, the farmers of Queensland—a most important section of the community, having been properly organised—will be able, as I have already said, to assist in framing legislation for the purpose of promoting co-operation and for the purpose of enabling them to establish rural credits the same as they have done in America, with the assistance of the Government if necessary, and when that condition of things comes about, the farmers will be able to say that the start of their salvation, the start of their prosperity, and placing them on a sound footing, had its origin in this Bill. I have much pleasure in moving—

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

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The farmers' organisations have done very good work.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I think, Mr. Speaker, we have had one of the most remarkable second reading speeches that has ever been delivered in this Chamber, in this respect—that the hon. gentleman spent twenty-seven minutes on platitudes and apologies, about ten minutes on his Bill, and then concluded with some more platitudes. I understood that a Minister, when moving the second reading of a Bill, was supposed to give us the principles of the Bill and the principles only, and not go in for self-advertising or boosting the scheme.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Why do the Standing Orders allow me an hour and a half?

Mr. VOWLES: The Standing Orders give the hon. gentleman an hour and a half, which is supposed to be devoted to explaining the principles of the Bill. That is one of the things that has made us suspicious right through the piece. There has been too much of this boosting. I gave an instance before, and I quoted from the daily papers, where we find two absolutely contradictory reports in regard to the one transaction. In one instance they tell you that this organisation was responsible for the increase in the price of butter, and you find, over the page, the secretary of a butter company telling us that it is due to a shortage of supplies and

to the dry spell. When you get that sort of thing, you begin to wonder. People throughout the country are wondering why all this publicity should be necessary in regard to a scheme which is, on the face of it, compulsory; because, if a man does not join up with one of the local organisations, under the scheme of payment, his commodity is going to be attacked.

The PREMIER: Only if the farmers so desire.

Mr. VOWLES: The money has to come from somewhere after this year. The consolidated revenue is to find the money for the first year, and after that the farmers will have to find it.

The PREMIER: Do you object to the farmers paying for it?

Mr. VOWLES: I do not object, and they do not object to pay; but, if the scheme is going to be compulsory, why is there necessity for all these canvassers and all the publicity that has taken place? We had a scheme initiated by the Premier himself during the recess, but the Bill which we have to-day is not altogether in keeping with that scheme. It would have been far better if these publicity agents had been kept in Brisbane. They have never seen the Bill until to-day, because we have never seen it until to-day, and, if the Premier had held these publicity agents back, so that when they were sent into the country districts they would have been in possession of a Bill and able to discuss it clause by clause, the Government would have established greater confidence.

The PREMIER: The basis of this organisation was suggested by the council itself.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. gentleman initiated a scheme, and we say that scheme was taken from the Farmers' Union. It is all very well for him to say that what he advocated originally is the same as this Bill. I say it is not.

The PREMIER: If it is not, it has been modified on the representation of the farmers themselves, and we have accepted their scheme.

Mr. VOWLES: I thought you originated it?

The PREMIER: We consulted the farmers on the matter.

Mr. VOWLES: I know whom you consulted; you consulted Mr. Harrison.

The PREMIER: Yes, and he is competent to speak on matters of this kind.

Mr. VOWLES: He gave you the scheme *holus-bolus* from the platform of the Country party, and you took it, and now you are going one step further and intend to assist the farmers in the matter of rural credits—another plank of the Country party.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: You originated a bunch of carrots. (Laughter.)

Mr. VOWLES: The Minister said this was a belated measure.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I admit the charge.

Mr. VOWLES: That is one of the things that look suspicious—that on the eve of an election, after being seven years in office, the Government should suddenly wake up to their responsibilities so far as the primary producers are concerned, and, by way of an apology for all their delay, the hon. gentle-

man told us of certain other measures put on the statute-book by him. He mentioned the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act, and he mentioned the abolition of the railways guarantee and various other measures.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Wheat Pool Act.

Mr. VOWLES: You only put that on the statute-book because it was forced on you. The hon. gentleman, when speaking about the legislation that he has put on the statute-book, forgot to tell us about the price-fixing legislation. Price-fixing would not suit. He omitted to tell us that, when the price-fixing measure was before this Chamber in Committee, exactly the same principle which is embodied in this scheme was suggested from this side of the Chamber, and was thrown out with scorn. That is, that advisory boards should be created to advise the gentleman in charge of price-fixing. He did not tell us anything about the increased taxes that were put on during dry times.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is not true.

Mr. VOWLES: He did not tell us that the Government commandeered or fixed the price of produce below the cost of production. He did not tell us anything about the taxation imposed upon them in respect of the land tax, the income tax, and the super taxes. He only told us one side of the story, as he and his Government usually do. The hon. gentleman had an opportunity in previ-

[8 p.m.] ous sessions of adopting many of the principles which they now say are so good, but which on every occasion they rejected. Having been found out by the industrial section of Queensland, they are looking around to other sections, and pandering to them, and they consider it will be a good electioneering step for them to come forward at this juncture and introduce something for the farmer. They will go so far as to put it on the statute-book; but, when the next election is over—if they should be fortunate enough to succeed in regaining the Treasury benches—it will be put into the same pigeonholes as the amendments to our State Advances Act, advances under which were refused to farmers by the Government, although agreed to by the House. It is very interesting to know, by interjection this evening, that no room can be found on the provisional Council for a representative of a maize-producing district. The Minister considers himself a "maize king," and, as the official head of the department, decided that a maize producer should not be on the committee. I have told hon. gentlemen opposite the attitude we are adopting. We sincerely trust that this is not a political measure.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I give you my word right away.

Mr. VOWLES: It does not look like it, so far as it has gone. We are prepared to support it. We consider there is business in it, and, if reference is made to the speech which I made on behalf of the Country party at the last election, it will be found that nearly all the principles contained in this measure are contained in that speech. (Government laughter.)

Mr. PEASE: But you say it is a bunch of carrots.

The PREMIER: I have your speech here, and I cannot find one constructive idea in it.

[Mr. Vowles.]

Mr. VOWLES: I am very sorry for the hon. gentleman.

Mr. KIRWAN: That is the speech where you referred to the Nationalists as the "Roma Street Party."

Mr. VOWLES: We were told by the Minister that the provisional Council which is in evidence to-day have been busying themselves in various directions.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They have been doing good work.

Mr. VOWLES: The Minister speaks about things which are necessary in connection with cheese and sugar. It will be remembered that, when the Wheat Pool Bill was going through this Chamber, we asked for an amendment to include not only wheat but other commodities. If the hon. gentleman had been in sympathy with us, he could have had a general pool then, and it would have been ready to his hand whenever he wanted it. He turned it down, consistent once more in his inconsistency. Then he turns round, and, after this matter was brought forward in the Chamber and the opportunity was there, he tells us that his council have been applying themselves to this one thing, which they could have done eighteen months ago.

Mr. BRENNAN: Better late than never.

Mr. VOWLES: We shall see a change at the next election. Another matter is wheat culture. I was up in Roma seven years ago, and I saw Mr. Soutter demonstrating the culture of wheat, and, if anybody is entitled to the credit for the results which have been obtained, it is not Mr. Quodling, but Mr. Soutter. The Secretary for Agriculture has suddenly wakened up to the fact that there is such a thing as an experimental farm in Roma, and that one of their very efficient public servants has been applying himself to this particular branch of the industry, and now the hon. gentleman is going to get the council to consider what Mr. Soutter has been doing. I do not want to say anything which will reflect on the Council of Agriculture. I certainly trust that the persons to be appointed in future, or those who are on it now, will be representative of the various industries they profess to represent. I have heard certain remarks made about the appointees, but I do not want to refer to them either individually or collectively. I hope their appointment will result in good work.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Tell us what you think of them.

Mr. VOWLES: I will tell you later on. So far as the provisional Council is concerned, there is no power in the Bill to bring about a termination of that provisional Council, and establish a genuine or real council.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You can sack them any time.

Mr. VOWLES: You cannot sack them at any time. Evidently the hon. gentleman does not know his own Bill. Clause 13 states—

"The provisional Council of Agriculture and the provisional district councils appointed by the Governor in Council in existence at the passing of this Act shall be deemed to have been constituted respectively as the Council of Agriculture and district councils under this Act, and the members thereof shall

hold office until the appointment or election of a Council of Agriculture and the respective district councils in the manner prescribed."

The hon. gentleman says every safeguard is there. We will make it a little more safe by limiting the time in which that election has to take place.

The PREMIER: The time is limited, because they were appointed only for twelve months.

Mr. VOWLES: That is not in the Bill. They will continue in office, notwithstanding that appointment for twelve months, until another body is elected.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Can you tell me how we should disband them?

Mr. VOWLES: You should do it within six months of the passing of the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: How can we do that if we have not got the organisation?

Mr. VOWLES: We were told that it was going to be ready. The hon. gentleman stated that people are coming from far and wide to join the organisation. They will have to be registered, and they will have the right to appoint men to a district council, and that district council has power to refer matters to the supreme Council.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You may depend on it that we shall lose no time.

Mr. VOWLES: You should do it within six months. Have the farmers to have no right to say by vote who their representatives are to be?

The PREMIER: They would have no election or anything else if it was left to you.

Mr. VOWLES: The fabric of the whole thing rests upon the definition of "primary producer." I want to tell the hon. gentleman that I am very suspicious about his definition.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You are suspicious about the whole thing.

Mr. VOWLES: I am not. I want to see this absolutely straight. Unfortunately, I have had experience in the past of dragnet clauses, and finding out that terms which appeared on the face to be very honest turned out to be something else.

Mr. BRENNAN: As a legal man, you should have been able to see it.

Mr. VOWLES: Did the hon. member think that under the Sugar Acquisition Act the Government were going to commandeer other commodities? Did the hon. member think that, under innocent little clauses giving power to the Governor in Council, the Government would have the power to do things which were absolutely subversive of the intention of the Legislature? It turned out to be so, because the power was given, and it was abused. I say that the whole of this thing is wrapped up in the definition of "primary producer," and as to whether the Bill is an honest one or not. The definition reads—

"Primary producer"—Every person engaged in the occupation of—

(f) Farmer, whether engaged in general or mixed farming, cotton, potato, or vegetable growing, or poultry or pig raising."

Mr. Vowles.]

I hope the hon. gentleman will be prepared to accept an amendment at a later stage to put in the words "other than an employee."

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We will accept that.

Mr. VOWLES: If the hon. gentleman will accept that I will be satisfied. If I see that this thing is loaded and that the idea is to get control of the industry by bringing in the industrial workers as primary producers just because they are working on the farms, then I will object to it.

The PREMIER: I have already told you that it rests upon the consent of the council.

Mr. VOWLES: We have been told these things before in this House, and we have found out afterwards, to our cost, that what was said from the front bench was not accurate.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What are you referring to now?

Mr. VOWLES: I am not referring to you.

The PREMIER: You said something like that last night.

Mr. VOWLES: I did, and the hon. gentleman knows that I was right. Here is the point. This Bill provides that any class of person can be declared by the Governor in Council to be a primary producer; and from time to time persons who are not primary producers within our general acceptance of the term may be admitted as such.

The PREMIER: With the consent of the council.

Mr. VOWLES: I admit there is a safeguard there. I am prepared to say that, if the definition of "primary producer" means the primary producers as we know them, then there is very little harm in the construction of the Bill. It is only the powers that may be given from time to time that are open to criticism. I see that provision is made that fifteen primary producers can band themselves together and form a local producers' association, and that gives them the right to appoint a member to the district council. The district councils will have very great powers. It is an important matter to get representation on those councils, and it is left to the local producers' associations to appoint their representatives.

The PREMIER: The regulations will be framed by the Council of Agriculture.

Mr. VOWLES: Do you not think that this House should have some say in the matter?

The PREMIER: You want Parliamentary control.

Mr. VOWLES: It is our duty to pick holes in these things and see where the weaknesses are. If we leave it as it is, then when they are appointed they will be compelled to do like us, that is, to take a lot of things for granted.

The PREMIER: You want parliamentary control.

Mr. VOWLES: You should trust the farmer and let him know exactly what he is doing. If you do not tell the farmer straight-out what you are doing, you are only going to arouse his suspicions, perhaps unnecessarily.

Mr. BRENNAN: You are developing that.

Mr. VOWLES: You must be frank with the farmer, and you must trust him. Let

[Mr. Fowles.

him know exactly what he has got to do in order to send men to the supreme council. The local associations are to send men to the district council, where they are given powers that are almost synonymous with those of our courts, because they have the right to fine people and to levy against their produce and their property.

Mr. BRENNAN: So have the building societies.

Mr. VOWLES: The whole thing should be definite and straight so far as the appointments to the district council are concerned.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Don't you trust the farmers?

Mr. VOWLES: Yes, because they send me to Parliament to look after their interests. The duties of the local associations are very small, because when it is all said and done, the duties of all these various bodies, with the exception of the supreme council, are more in the nature of inferior duties. Provision is made for the Governor in Council, on the recommendation of the Council of Agriculture, to constitute fifteen areas, each with a district council, the members of which shall be elected by members of the local producers' associations registered under the Act. Provision is made for fifteen members to constitute a local producers' association, and the council are given power of discrimination, if there are fifteen persons or over in a local producers' association, to refuse them the right to send a representative to the district council. Why should the council be given discretionary power and be able to refuse to register a body consisting of fifteen primary producers?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You must have a limit somewhere.

Mr. VOWLES: They are all classified as primary producers, and yet, if they do not have a certain number, they have no right to representation on the board which has the right to tax them in future.

The PREMIER: Do you think that a council consisting of farmers' representatives would act unfairly?

Mr. VOWLES: There may be other influences at work. Do not forget that there will be Government representation on the council. There will be five Government representatives, including the Minister, on the council. It is provided that six is to be a quorum. Well, I object to that number. It is quite possible for the five Government representatives and only one other to be present. That means that the Government will have the thing in their own hands, and can do what they like.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: There is nothing wrong with that.

Mr. VOWLES: I do not like the Government representation, because, whether wittingly or unwittingly, the Government representatives are bound to be coerced and influenced by the Minister. The Minister is to be the chairman, and that gives him a good deal of power. The Government want to have a political pull over the whole thing, and I object to it. No politician should be chairman of that board. He can be a member of the board, but, if he is a wise man, he will not accept a position on the board at all. Let the council look after their own business and elect their own chairman. Let them get away from the political part of the business, which is there all the

time. The Minister might try to put into operation a policy which might be altogether different to what the primary producers want.

The PREMIER: Many members of your party who attended the conference were in favour of this scheme.

Mr. VOWLES: I was not given the courtesy of an invitation to that conference. The Farmers' Union had a meeting, and the Country party had a meeting a fortnight previously, and we went and asked the Premier to give some immediate relief to the people who were in distress.

The PREMIER: You tried to forestall the Government.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: And fell in badly.

Mr. VOWLES: No; the sufferers were the farmers. We asked that they be given immediate relief. The hon. gentleman said, "Certainly, we will do it," but this immediate relief never came. We wanted the Premier to deal with each individual case on its merits, but the hon. gentleman did nothing. The State conference was held and certain persons were invited to it. The Farmers' Union and the Country party, although they had meetings just before, were not invited to that conference. We were not shown that courtesy. Even if we were not allowed to speak, we should have been invited to listen and hear what was going on, but we were invited to stay away, and we stayed away.

The PREMIER: No member of the Country party, no member of the Labour party, and no member of the Nationalist party was invited to that conference.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: All who attended, attended as farmers.

Mr. CORSER: Why did you object to our members being there?

Mr. VOWLES: The Government had the whole thing rigged up.

The PREMIER: You tried to destroy the conference.

Mr. VOWLES: The Government had the whole thing rigged up.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. VOWLES: I was pointing out defects in the constitution of the Council, and saying that one of the principles to which I objected was that the Council has the right to say "no" when bona fide men come forward. I say that principle should be got rid of.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: How can they say "no"?

Mr. VOWLES: It says that the council "may"—the word should be "shall." Then again, the Council of Agriculture and every district council is to be a corporate body, and will have very extensive powers, and I would like the hon. gentleman to tell us whether there is anything sinister in the word "take" in the provision in clause 10, which says—

"The council and each district council shall be capable in law of suing and being sued, and shall have power to 'take,' purchase, sell, exchange, lease, and hold land, goods, chattels, securities, and any other property whatsoever."

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is a word of the lawyers. There is nothing sinister in it.

Mr. VOWLES: In that case I suppose we might just as well take it out.

The PREMIER: If anybody is to take it out, we will take it out.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. member wants to take all the credit. He wants to go round and say, "Look at what we did. Alone we did it." (Laughter.) There is a very fine provision in clause 11—

"The Governor in Council, upon the recommendation of the Council, may appoint advisory boards, to advise the Council in respect to the general business of the Council, or in respect to any particular matters of investigation or research."

And there is power to charge up the expenses to the fund. I think that is a very necessary and desirable provision, and I sincerely trust that the Council will avail themselves of the opportunities they have under it, and get the very best class of expert advice in every direction, more particularly from a marketing point of view, and from a business point of view.

The PREMIER interjected.

Mr. VOWLES: I have been drumming this into the Premier long enough. In fact I believe that by the time we have finished he will know what his own scheme is. He goes up into a farming district and reads out pages of it, and it necessarily takes time for it to sink in, and we are trying to get him to appreciate what the scheme is and learn some of the fine points about it. In regard to the regulations, I do not know whether the people in the country, who in many cases have accepted the scheme, really realise what power they are giving to the Council. The only safeguard is that the majority of the Council will be representatives of the various districts, although it is easy to see that the position may be dangerous, when you come to consider that there are fifteen districts distributed over the whole of Queensland, with such diversified interests that fifteen different industries might be separately represented, and so each industry might have very little representation so far as the individual members of the Council are concerned. If it is going to be divided up into sections—a sugar district here, a cotton district there, wool in another place, meat, butter or cheese in another—if we are to have all these represented in the fifteen men who constitute the Council, it may possibly happen that it will be a case of the "cobbler sticking to his last," and, when vital matters are under consideration affecting a particular industry, the other members may not be conversant with them, and they may not be—I shall not say "sympathetic"—interested at any rate, and that is where I fear the political pull of the five Government nominees will come in.

Mr. BRENNAN: They are all experts.

Mr. VOWLES: Not necessarily, because there is a flaw in the Bill so far as I can see. I do not know what the intention is, but in the very beginning in the case of the local association, it is necessary to have the qualification of a producer to join the association.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Is that right?

Mr. VOWLES: Is it necessary to be a producer to be on the District Council?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Do you want to restrict the farmers' choice?

Mr. Vowles.]

Mr. VOWLES: I want to know. The representatives on the district councils and the Council of Agriculture apparently need not be farmers or producers at all. They might be union secretaries.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: One might be a lawyer.

Mr. VOWLES: He might be; you never can tell. That is one of the matters which I say require a good deal of consideration. The only place where the primary producer is recognised at all is at the bottom of the tree. A man has to be a producer to get in there, but once they have got him, the member of the district council, by the packing of a meeting, may be an objectionable person. I have an idea of how these things are done in trades union circles. Can hon. members opposite tell me how objectionable men get to the head of the trade unions in Queensland? They push themselves, and they talk themselves to the top of the tree. We do not want that sort of thing to happen here. There is a loophole; a member of the district council need not be a primary producer, and the same thing applies to the central council.

Mr. KIRWAN: The primary producers are the foundations.

Mr. CORNER: They hold the whole thing up.

Mr. VOWLES: The Minister says I am right, and the hon. member for Brisbane says I am wrong.

Mr. KIRWAN: I did not say you were wrong.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Must not the men the farmers select be the best men?

Mr. VOWLES: It does not follow.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You are going to restrict their choice.

Mr. VOWLES: I understand nobody can vote by proxy, and you may have a little happy family turning up every year, and they can do what they like. I know of a case in point. If you want to get a thing carried you have only to get twenty or thirty people interested in a certain direction, and they can come along and carry what they like.

The Minister spent most of his time in reading out the duties and functions of the council, which reminded us of Woodrow Wilson's fourteen points.

Mr. DUNSTAN: Very excellent points, too!

Mr. VOWLES: There was more business in them than there is in these fourteen points. Let us look at what powers they will have by regulation. Look at No. (v.), under which the Governor in Council, on the recommendation of the council, has power to make regulations as to—

“The control and management of the fund; empowering the council or any district council to make levies on primary producers generally or in particular industries or sections of industries or in particular districts or localities, and fixing the amounts of such levies, whether on the same or on different bases, in respect of the different industries, operations, districts, or localities.”

Those are very wide powers—

“Providing, if deemed necessary, for the expenditure of the sums raised by any particular levies only in the interests of the particular industry or section of industry or district or locality upon the primary producers in which such

levies were made; providing methods of recovery or collection of any such levies, including the recovery or collection of such levies from persons holding moneys to the credit of the primary producers liable to pay such levies.”

In other words, garnisheeing their cheques from the cheese factories and compelling the factories to apportion the cheques between the fund and the producers; and this refers not only to individuals who join up with the scheme, but to every producer throughout Queensland, whether he is sympathetic or whether he is not. It goes on further to say that they have the power to make regulations—

“Imposing fines not exceeding fifty pounds for non-payment of such levies or moneys by primary producers or persons holding moneys to the credit of primary producers; providing, if deemed desirable, for a poll of primary producers either generally or in any particular industry or section of industry or in any particular district or locality before any levy is made.”

Mr. VOWLES: It looks all right. Who is to say whether it is “deemed desirable?”

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Council of Agriculture.

Mr. VOWLES: You are not going to give them a poll as a matter of right. It is only when a levy has been made that [8.30 p.m.] they have the right to a poll. I guarantee that not 1 per cent. of the people realise what you are committing them to, and they will have to put very big faith and trust in your council.

The PREMIER: It will be a farmers' council. Why not put faith and trust in them?

Mr. VOWLES: With too big a Government nomination? If you had one man as your representative to look after the interests of the fund, and to look after the policy of the department—just as you have a Government nominee on a country hospital committee with a dozen other committeemen—it would be sufficient, and there would be no suspicion of the control falling into the hands of politicians.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is the same principle of Government nomination as exists in the dingo boards.

Mr. VOWLES: What powers have dingo boards got? They can levy a certain amount, and pay through a clerk for every scalp captured. Look at the powers you are giving here! You are creating a subdepartment with bigger powers than are possessed by any other department in Queensland.

The PREMIER: Do you object to that?

Mr. VOWLES: They are practically a parliament of their own. If it is necessary, I say give them the power.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Is it necessary, in your opinion?

Mr. VOWLES: That is one of the things you can tell only as time goes on. There are certain industries in Queensland which are completely organised. Take the sugar industry.

The PREMIER: Both the Australian Sugar Producers' Association and the United Cane Growers' Association come in voluntarily.

[Mr. Vowles.

Mr. VOWLES: They are not going to disband their organisations, as the hon. gentleman suggested they should.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

Mr. VOWLES: The Government's organisations in the country suggested that all organisations be disbanded and come under this scheme. They would be nothing less than fools to entertain such an idea. I would like to know what this new department can do for the sugar industry?

The PREMIER: A great deal—which they themselves admit.

Mr. VOWLES: I would like to know what it can do. You have your agreement fixed with the Federal Government.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No, we have not. I wish we had.

Mr. VOWLES: The sugar is purchased by this Government and controlled by the Federal Government. The amount is apportioned over the various interests concerned. I would like to know what the Advisory Council is going to do; unless it is going to interfere and create industrial trouble in some direction? There are other industries here that are highly organised. It would be better if the Government were to take them over *holus-bolus*, with their consent; you would have the foundation for an organisation. When this matter was dealt with by the Farmers' Union, they came to the conclusion that the matter was one, not for State, but for Federal control. The more one analyses the scheme the more he must realise that we must have all the States acting in concert in this matter, and have federal control; because it affects only our surplus produce.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You must start with the States.

Mr. VOWLES: A conference took place on 14th June last with a view to dealing, from a Federal standpoint, with many of the matters contained in this measure.

The PREMIER: One of the members of the Council of Agriculture was at that conference.

Mr. VOWLES: I am very glad to know he was there. Do you not think we are rather premature in handling this, from a State point of view, when it could be better handled from a Federal point of view?

The PREMIER: You wish to postpone this scheme?

Mr. VOWLES: No. I want you to co-operate with the other States and the Federal Government, and bring about a general scheme which will cover the whole of Australia. The hon. gentleman forgets there are such things as interstate rights—that the produce from New South Wales can be marketed in Queensland, and all his legislation cannot interfere with those rights.

The PREMIER: You wish to postpone the scheme on that account?

Mr. VOWLES: I do not. I say that all the time you have been in the country advertising yourself and your party and trying to paint pretty pictures, when, if you had been co-operating with the other States, you would have been doing more to benefit the farmer.

The PREMIER: You seem very annoyed.

Mr. VOWLES: I do not seem annoyed. You suggest we want to postpone it, when

we do not. We know that it is essential, so far as many primary industries are concerned, that something should be done in the way of marketing their surplus products across the seas. We say that, instead of spending their money in what we consider to be semi-political work, in sending highly paid men into the various districts by expensive means of transportation, if that money were utilised in establishing markets in the East and in trying to recover our markets in the old country, you would be doing some good for the producer. Instead of that, you have what we consider are unpractical business men going round the country, and, so far as we can see, they are only trying to "boost" the Government.

The PREMIER: Why don't you state where you are on this scheme?

Mr. VOWLES: When our opportunity comes in Committee we are going to try to make it better. We will support the principle of the scheme. We will not allow it to become a dead letter. (Government laughter.) We will do everything in our power at the next election to have returned to Parliament men who will support it from a Country party point of view. Then the farmers need have no fear that the thing will be shelved.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I am very pleased that the Government, at the eleventh hour, have seen fit to bring in a measure which is likely to be beneficial to the farmer. I represent a large producing electorate, and I produce myself. I recognise the fact that for many years the producer has been under a great disadvantage, owing to the fact that we, as a disorganised rabble, have been fighting men who have been combined in large numbers for the purpose, naturally, of looking after their own interests. The disorganised farmers, naturally, have suffered in consequence.

The PREMIER: Why did you not form an organisation such as the Government have formed?

Mr. MORGAN: We have it on our platform, and advocated it during the last election. The Premier has been shrewd enough, recognising that the Country party have a good platform, to seize our policy and our platform; and he is endeavouring to place upon the statute-book an Act of Parliament that, had the Country party been in power seven or eight years ago, would have been in operation at the present moment.

The PREMIER: You were a supporter of a Government who were in power seven or eight years ago. Why did you not do it then?

Mr. MORGAN: Unfortunately, the farmer is a difficult man to organise. The Secretary for Agriculture, being a practical man, will recognise that farmers are most difficult people to get to work in unison. That is owing to the fact that they are scattered about, and have not at their disposal the time necessary to attend meetings nightly or daily. They are kept with their noses to the grindstone in order to earn a living. It is necessary for the farmers to organise to get the best results for their produce and to get a decent living. The Secretary for Agriculture hit the nail on the head when he said that men go on to the land to produce, in order to accumulate sufficient wealth to educate their children, and, eventually, to be able to retire without having to go to

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Dunwich or to draw the old-age pension. He has also admitted that the farmer does not go on the land for the good of his health. He goes on the land to produce from the soil, and, naturally, expects a fair price for his produce. If that was not the object, the farmer would not go on the land. A great number of the farmers are leaving the land because they find they can make more money in other walks of life than by producing from the soil. I remember on one occasion a gentleman saying that we were over-producing. If we have no markets and there is a glut, that is an indication that we are over-producing that particular article. We know that in different parts of the world to-day people are starving. We also know that during certain periods of a season produce is rotting on the land because the price offered for it will not compensate the farmer for harvesting it. A farmer may have a bountiful season, yet he may lose on his produce, because the market price is so low that it does not pay him to send his stuff to market. We should endeavour to get over that difficulty, and it can only be done by the farmers linking together and forming organisations for the purpose of establishing markets, and being able to keep in touch with their produce right from the gates of their farms until it reaches the mouths of the consumers.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Hear, hear!

Mr. MORGAN: The farmer should be in a position to do that, whether the produce be wheat, butter, cheese, meat, or anything else produced from the land. That should be done to prevent huge profits being made by middlemen or profiteers, and it can only be done by organisation. The sugar industry to-day is in a prosperous condition, but there are other industries which are "down and out." The farmers should be organised in such a way that industries that are in a prosperous condition will be able to assist those that are "down and out" for the time being. It is only by such a scheme as is introduced here that this can be done. I have so much interest in the farmers that I do not care from what particular source the scheme emanates.

The PREMIER: That is a very generous spirit.

Mr. MORGAN: I have always done my best to assist the producer. The farmers in my electorate have come to me in connection with this scheme, asking me what I would advise them to do, and whether it would be advisable to form local producers' associations; and I have told them to do so by all means, so that they can attend the meetings in order, first of all, to get information so that they will be able to guide and direct the different councils as they desire.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Very good advice.

Mr. MORGAN: I have gone over the Bill very carefully, and, provided it is not loaded and that it will not injure the farmer in any way, I think it should be adopted with certain amendments that we will propose. The leader of the Opposition has called the attention of the Secretary for Agriculture to the fact that certain amendments will be proposed which will only be fair and reasonable, and I am sorry that the Premier

interjected that the amendments would not be accepted by the Government.

The PREMIER: The Secretary for Agriculture said during his speech that he would accept any reasonable amendment. The leader of the Opposition said that he was going to attempt to amend the Bill, and I pointed out that the amendments must be accepted by the Minister.

Mr. MORGAN: On several occasions I have suggested certain amendments, and they have been taken up and moved by hon. members opposite. I have been only too pleased that that has been done, because it gave me what I desired, and I hope that spirit will operate in this case. I hope the Minister will be reasonable and accept our amendments. The producers should have control of this scheme. There is no provision in the Bill to show how many members are required in an association before a representative can be elected to a district council, and there is nothing to show how long a district council may remain in operation.

The PREMIER: Regulations will provide for that.

Mr. MORGAN: I am a bit suspicious of regulations.

The PREMIER: These regulations will be made on the advice of the Council of Agriculture.

Mr. MORGAN: The Bill provides that the Council of Agriculture will remain in operation for three years, when members must be re-elected, but there is no provision of that sort with respect to district councils. It will be possible by regulations to say that district councils will remain in operation for five, ten, or any number of years. The Bill should contain a provision to the effect that members should be elected to a district council for three years. That is a matter we should discuss in order that the Bill may not be carried only on the votes of hon. members representing the Government, but by all hon. members. The Secretary for Agriculture will be justified in bringing an amendment of that description forward, which will have the effect of improving the Bill. I recognise that the success of this measure depends to a large extent upon the explanation that is given to the farmers. During the recess the Premier went round the different districts and delivered certain speeches, and we saw an outline of the scheme published in the Press, but there were a great many matters that we did not fully understand. I admit that it is almost impossible to give in one speech a clear idea of an important measure such as this, or in the small amount of space that the Press are able to give even to such an important question. We have had organisers going round the country for some time, but they do not really understand the matter. Now that we have got the Bill, I would like an opportunity of going through my electorate and explaining its provisions to the electors, and I would suggest to the Premier that, after the second reading is passed—I do not want to delay the Bill—he should adjourn the House for a fortnight. This would enable every hon. member who so desires to go into his electorate with a copy of the Bill, explain its provisions to the farmers, and ascertain whether they are in favour of it or not. If it is not the intention of the Government to try to force the Bill on the

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producer, a suggestion such as I have made, if adopted, would enable the farmers to become thoroughly acquainted with the scheme, and they would then be able to personally instruct their representatives in this House. It seems to me that I am taking a great responsibility on myself if I come here and say, "I accept this Bill on behalf of the producers of my electorate" when I have not consulted my electors on the matter. I have not been able to tell my electors what the Bill contains, because I only received a copy to-day.

**THE PREMIER:** This Bill is not like the law of the Medes and the Persians; it will be subject to amendment.

**MR. MORGAN:** Yes; but a great deal of the success of the scheme depends on how it is carried out during the first six months. In other countries where something of this kind has been attempted, it has not been a success, owing to bad administration. I hope that will not be the fate of this scheme.

**THE PREMIER:** The Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Bill was first passed in 1915, and it has had to be amended four times since then.

**MR. MORGAN:** I admit that it may be necessary to amend this Bill every session, and I hope, whatever Government is in power, that the very moment they find it necessary they will amend the Bill. The policy of the Labour party, who represent the industrialists politically, is generally "cheap food for the workers." I remember the Government got into power on the cheap food cry; but the Secretary for Agriculture has always admitted that he is not in favour of cheap food. He has always stated that cheap food means the sweating of the producer. While it may be very nice for the workers to be in a position to obtain cheap bread, cheap butter, and cheap beef so that they may have a little more to spend on the races or on picture shows, those representing industrial centres must recognise that, if it were not for the producer, the industrialists could not exist. To-day, owing to the depression that exists amongst the producers throughout Queensland, the cities are languishing, although a casual observer would not notice it so much in the large cities as in the towns in the country. The business people also are feeling the depression amongst the primary producers because the same amount of goods is not going to the country districts. The producer is not a man who hoards his gold up by putting it in a stocking and burying it in his back yard. If he is lucky enough to get gold for his produce, he uses that gold in making his property more productive, or for the purpose of building a better home and in providing comforts for himself and family.

**THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION:** In buying city property, also.

**MR. MORGAN:** There may be a few big graziers capable of doing that, but very few farmers. If a producer does put his money into city property, why does he do so? Because he finds it a better investment than buying country land. That is one of our difficulties. It would be far better for Australia if we found the people investing their money in country lands instead of investing it in city property. If the Minister had a few hundred pounds to invest, I venture to say that he would sooner invest it in city

land than in country land, because the return from the city property would be greater. That is a deplorable position; but it only goes to show that at no period in the history of Queensland was it more necessary that a measure of this description should be passed for the purpose of organising the farmers, so that they will not continue to be exploited by those who are always out to exploit them. I do not blame the middlemen for making profits. If the Premier was engaged in business, he would not be satisfied to make just sufficient to live on, and then have to go to Dunwich in his old age.

**THE PREMIER:** My time is too fully taken up with my present position to enable me to make money.

**MR. MORGAN:** If the Premier were engaged in business as a middleman, he would like to buy his produce as cheaply as possible and sell it at the very highest price he could get. That would be good business. No one would blame him for that. If I could buy a mob of cattle at £2 a head and then sell them to someone else at £10 a head, I would do it willingly. I do not blame the people, but I blame the system. We want to try and do away with that system. I admit the farmer cannot produce his butter on his farm and deliver it to the producer. There must be some organisation in between. The idea should be—and

[9 p.m.] I feel sure that it will be when everything is in thorough working order—that the producer should be able to get a fair living wage out of what he produces, and the consumer should be able to buy the produce at a reasonable price. If that is so, there cannot be any harm done to any section of the community. In Australia to-day we have the Arbitration Court, which is protecting the industrial workers. The moment food-stuffs go up, up go the wages.

**THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. Kirwan, Brisbane):** relieved the Speaker in the chair.

**MR. BULCOCK:** Not at the very moment.

**MR. MORGAN:** Not at the very moment, but the wages do not come down when prices come down. We have that acknowledgment from the President of the Arbitration Court, Chief Justice McCawley, who decreased the basic wage by 5 per cent. only, although prices had come down 11 per cent. We have the admission of the judge that he has not reduced the basic wage to the same extent as the reduction in the cost of living. I am not advocating, and never have advocated, the worker getting a wage which will not give him a comfortable standard of living. I think it is necessary for the worker to get a fair remuneration, so that he will be able to buy the produce grown by the farmers. But that is not done altogether by high wages. I remember, from my experience as a young man, that high wages are not everything. I went to West Australia when the Kalgoorlie gold mining rush occurred, and after getting to Kalgoorlie, I got a job at £1 a day. I was working in Victoria before than for 5s. a day, or 30s. a week and keep myself. When I got £1 a day I thought I was in Paradise, and would have an opportunity to save money, but I had to pay 2s. 6d. a gallon for water.

**THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE:** You got extravagant with big wages.

**MR. MORGAN:** And at the end of the week I found that, owing to the high cost

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of necessaries, the £1 a day was no better than 5s. a day in Victoria. If a basic wage of £3 10s. will give the worker the same standard of comfort as £4 10s. a week would, he is just as well off with £3 10s. a week.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Yes, if he does; but that is used as an argument to reduce wages.

Mr. MORGAN: It is no good our having a great quantity of butter in store if the consumer is so poor that he cannot afford to buy it. We have an illustration of that in Russia to-day. We have thousands of tons of meat in Great Britain which we would like to get rid of. People are starving in Russia, but, owing to the fact that they are so poor, they cannot buy our meat. We also recognise that the owners of that meat cannot afford to give it to the Russians for nothing, as they had to pay for the meat. It is no use saying that that meat ought to be sent to Russia, if the people there cannot afford to pay for it, or cannot get credit, and you cannot blame the owners of the meat for not sending it there. Just the same, you could not blame the producers, if we had a lot of butter in Queensland, and the people there were out of work and practically starving, for not saying to the unemployed, "We have produced a lot of stuff but cannot sell it, and you had better have it for nothing." I am very pleased that this measure has been introduced, although it may be at the eleventh hour. There is no desperate hurry for a week or so, and now that the Bill has been placed before us, we should have an opportunity of explaining its provisions to the people in our districts. So far as the provisional council is concerned, I have no objection to the men on it at present, but I have an objection to the method by which they were appointed.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There was no other way of doing it.

Mr. MORGAN: I think that the Premier, instead of inviting certain men to come along should have given a general invitation. I admit there might be a large gathering then, but anything that is attended by invitation only creates the impression that there is some hole-and-corner business about it. I do not want to mention any names, but I could mention two or three men who, if it came to a vote of the producers, would almost lose their deposits at an election, the vote for them would be so small. I know there are some men on the council who have not the confidence of the producers, but I am not going to condemn the council because of that. I want to give them an opportunity, as the Government are doing, to carry on for a certain period, but I say that that provisional council should not last one hour longer than is necessary. The very moment it is possible we should have an election, so as to have members of the council elected by the producers in a democratic manner. If there is going to be anything done to prolong the life of the present provisional council, you are going to damage the Bill, because the producer is more or less a suspicious man, as the Minister knows. He wants to have matters explained to him very clearly.

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

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Mr. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): I am very pleased that hon. members opposite have referred to me as a farmer, and agree that I have been a successful farmer.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: For how long?

Mr. BRENNAN: It does not matter for how long. I heard the leader of the Opposition speaking about an experimental farm at Roma. I had an experimental farm at Gowrie Junction, and the wheat grown on the farm was so good that the Wheat Board would not allow it to be sold for gristing purposes. It was reserved for seed wheat, and fetched a record price. The hon. member for Drayton grew wheat, and a lot of it was second-rate.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I never sold a bushel of wheat in my life.

Mr. BRENNAN: Why does the hon. member talk wheat growing. When science is applied to the agricultural industry it will be a great success, and this Bill goes in the direction of applying science to the farmers. Hon. members opposite say that this Bill is loaded. I also say it is loaded. It is loaded with wonderful ideas. It is the greatest scheme ever evolved by any Government in the history of Australia for the benefit of the farmer. Our opponents object to us putting certain clauses in this Bill to give representation to the Secretary for Agriculture and certain experts. The leader of the Opposition says that they are not farmers and that they should not be included in the council at all. The Council of Agriculture is to consist of twenty-five members and five of them are to be the Minister and Government experts. If we take the Farmers' party on the opposite side of the House, we find that they are twenty-three in number. We have the leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Albert, both lawyers; the hon. member for Oxley is a mechanic, the hon. member for Townsville a chemist, the hon. member for Curtis a company manager, and the hon. member for Normanby a painter. There are six members who belong to the Farmers' party. They come along and tell us in this House that they are doubtful of the bona fides of this Bill. They say that undesirable people might be appointed to the Council of Agriculture. That is a reflection on the farmers who appoint that council. We shall find the hon. member for "No man's land"—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BRENNAN: The hon. member for Pittsworth will go round the country and try to belittle the Bill. The hon. member belongs to the Q.F.U., and, in addition to that body, we have the P.P.U., the A.S.P.A., the U.C.G.A., the U.F.A., the B.G.A.—Banana Growers' Association—the P.U.—the Pastoralists' Union—

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: What about the O.B.U.?

Mr. BRENNAN: This will be the One Big Union for the farming industry. I am very proud to see the One Big Union amongst the farmers of Queensland. I hope that we shall get a system which will be for the benefit of all. We have the United Employers' Association and the One Big Union of the farmers, and when we get the industrialists organised into one big union industry will be successful in Queensland. There is no doubt about that.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: Put you at the head of affairs, and it will be all right.

Mr. BRENNAN: I heard an hon. gentleman talking about not being able to supply meat to Russia because the people there are too poor to eat it. He said the people in Russia were starving, but they were too poor—not to buy the meat, but to eat it. At the present time the graziers are destroying their calves to avoid paying income tax. Why cannot they send this meat away to Russia and sell it on credit?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Give us Queensland—never mind about Russia.

Mr. BRENNAN: In Queensland we have people on the bread line; in fact, we have them on the crumb line, although we have fat cattle walking about really too fat to walk; but the owners will not kill them for fear the people should get cheap food. There is something wrong with the system which makes the graziers destroy their calves when there are so many people in need of cheap food.

Mr. WARREN: How is your scheme going to benefit the primary producer, when you talk like that?

Mr. BRENNAN: I was pointing out that the people are hard pressed for want of food, and the present system must be altered. That can only be done by organisation. The best brains must be used to evolve the best scheme. It is no use having all these different farmers' unions, with one interest working against another interest. We want to bring them all into one scheme, and, as that has been done by the present Government, I say that it is the finest scheme ever evolved in the history of Australia for the benefit of the farmer.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): This is a producers' Bill, and, as the producer has to pay for it, he should have the right to say whether he wants it or not. He should be allowed to examine the Bill, and see if he is going to get his money's worth. It is not for us to say whether the farmer shall have it, whether he likes or not. However, the Government have brought in the Bill, and we must improve it wherever we can. Evidently, something wants doing for the benefit of the man on the land. The cheese that is being sold in Brisbane at 8d. per lb. will not pay the cost of milking the cows. Expenses amounting to 3d. per lb. have to be paid for the manufacture of the cheese in the factory. The last returns I got were a little over 3d. per lb. for manufacture. The storekeeper pays 6d. per lb. for the cheese, which leaves the producer 3d. for about five quarts of milk. Just fancy what the producer is going to get out of it! At the present time I know cattle, which are certainly small, but they are offering for 1s. each. Just fancy, 12s. per dozen for cattle! The farmer will have to sell 200 head of cattle before he can get enough to buy a suit of clothes. When you realise how little the farmer gets for his work, it is certainly time something was done in his interests. I think the Minister has overstated the case when he says that the industry is not organised. What have the men we have had in our industry for so many years been doing all the time? The Cheese Manufacturers' Association is organised 100 per cent. to-day; the butter industry is organised considerably; and the two sugar-growing associations are also well organised. We have had our representatives going down South. They

have been staying at the finest hotels in Melbourne—not that anyone grumbles at that. I believe we should send the best men we can, and we should allow them to be respectable, and be ready to pay their expenses. I disagree with the Minister when he says that the industry is not organised. Our industry has grown to be worth £7,000,000, although it started from nothing. What brought it to that stage?

Mr. PEASE: The Labour Government.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The Government, like Rip Van Winkle, are just waking up, but we have been working all the time. Where has the editor of "The Producers' Review" been all the time? They have all been asleep while we have been building up the industry. It is quite true that there are any number of people looking after the farmers, and some of them like to get their share out of it. We find that one man collected about £2,000 of a levy on wheat, but he charged something like £600 in expenses. I think that is certainly a matter that wants inquiring into.

It is time that the Government, in their own interests, woke up to the importance of production. During their term the interest on the public debt has been increased from about £1,600,000.

Mr. W. COOPER (*Roswood*): I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member in order in discussing the Financial Statement? (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The hon. member simply wants to take up my time. By the end of this year the Government will have increased the interest on the national debt to not very much less than £4,000,000, which they will have to meet in London and New York. If they do not have exports, which will save exchange, are they going to borrow money to pay it? If we are not going to have exports to pay for our imports the State is going to be bankrupt altogether, so that in that respect the Government should certainly think of the farmers and help them to come to the rescue to make exports balance imports.

The Minister has complained that we have been rather suspicious of this Bill. I have turned up a "Government Gazette," and I find that the following prices were fixed for flour:—

"Flour, gristed from imported wheat, £20 7s. 6d. a ton (on the Downs). Flour, made from locally grown wheat, £9 a ton (on the Downs)."

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You know what the object of that was.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Never mind the object. The Minister will admit that is a fact. I can give him the page of the "Gazette" where they fixed two prices, one of £9 for flour from locally grown wheat and the other of £20 7s. 6d. from flour made from black-grown wheat. Can the Minister wonder that we are suspicious? Does he forget the time when the then Secretary for Agriculture seized the whole of the butter available at 140s., when it was worth 200s.? Does he forget the telegrams that were sent all over Queensland offering that butter at 140s.? Does he forget the Secretary for Agriculture coming into this Chamber, throwing his arms about and saying, "I am the only man who has got

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any butter to sell in Queensland to-day. I am selling at 140s., but it is worth 200s.? Does he wonder that we are suspicious? What else could we be? We suffer and learn from the past; I could keep on for an hour quoting similar instances.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: What date was that?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The dates of the "Gazettes" are 14th September, 1915, page 857, and 30th October, 1915, page 1,479.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That was Denham's wheat.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Both Governments imported wheat, and neither Government was to blame, because there was a great drought here. Very little was grown at Warwick, and Australia had a shortage, but the drought-stricken farmers expected to get the full market price. Instead of that, the Government fixed a price which gave them only 3s. 6d. a bushel, whereas the imported price was 8s. 2d.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Who passed the Act? The Denham Government.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Who administered it? The Government opposite fixed the price. Let me remind him also that the proprietary millers in Brisbane would not buy our wheat, would not run the risk of stocking up with it, but the co-operative mill in Warwick did risk its capital, and, when the proprietary mill ran out, the Minister ordered it to socialise or divide its stock with the proprietary mills in Brisbane, and compelled it to send down 6,000 bags for that purpose.

I would like to see this Bill go very much further and be very much improved. I would like to see the Council take on something of the character of the old meat and dairy board, which in the early days of dairying made a levy on stock, the fund from which was advanced at a low rate of interest for the specific purpose of building meatworks and dairy factories. That is really what started our dairying and meat industries, and, when they got on their feet, they repaid the loans to the people who advanced the money. Something of that kind may yet be done to improve this Bill. The Minister knows perfectly well that the milk food factories are paying from 3d. to 7d. per gallon more than we can get for the milk used for butter and cheese. The Minister is conversant also with the fact that we import from America and other places a large quantity of partially adulterated milk food products. At any rate, if they are not what we may call adulterated, they certainly contain a very small fraction of genuine milk. A large number of the factories down South are paying these increased prices of from 4d. to 7d. more than our suppliers are getting and sending a very large proportion of milk foods to Queensland. Here we have Queensland, with all her dairy-farms and enormous quantity of land which could be put under dairying, and yet these milk foods, made from milk for which they pay from 4d. to 7d. a gallon more than our suppliers are getting, are pouring into Queensland in large quantities.

At 9.30 p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I contend that that should be remedied. I went down South

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and spent a considerable amount of my own money. The hon. member for Stanley went to New Zealand and the Southern States, and spent a large amount of his money. The Secretary for Agriculture, his secretary, and an expert, went to the Southern States at the expense of the country. They came back, but not a single report did they make to the dairymen of this State of what they had seen.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I will tell you what I will do now. If the farmers approach me, I will make them an advance of two-thirds, at 5 per cent., under the provisions of the Co-operative Agricultural Production Act.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I admit you can do that much. I would like our farmers to accept that offer. I would like the levies to be made under this Bill, to get the balance.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You cannot do it under this Bill; there is no occasion for it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Yes, there is. I contend that in some suitable place, where we have branch railways, we should build a milk food factory.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Bring forward a concrete scheme.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: We could put one up costing, probably, £70,000. You could build one for £29,000 or £40,000. They told us the Wyreema factory cost, altogether, about £100,000. If it did, there is included in that cost the price of a lot of useless machinery. That has been the case with many factories. I believe we could build it for £70,000. If we did so, it would prevent all these milk foods coming from the South, and our money would remain in Queensland. Those milk foods are absolutely the finest and purest you can possibly get. The hon. member for Stanley saw, in the districts where they were being made, the farmers refusing to use their own milk, but using instead these powders which were manufactured in the factories. The factories in the South were receiving 40,000 gallons of milk per day. If we could put up a factory which would receive 20,000 gallons for the purpose of manufacturing it into the purest of milk foods, it would be a big advantage not only to Brisbane, but also to the farmers, in using up such a big percentage of their milk. I commend that proposition to the Minister and to our dairymen. The Minister has made a fair offer. I maintain that the Bill could be enlarged to bring within its scope some of the clauses of the old meat and dairy boards, allowing levies to be made for this industrial purpose.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Co-operative Agricultural Production Act is an improvement on the old Meat and Dairy Board system.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: No, it is not. It is an improvement in connection with the amount of advance you can get; but the people have to find 50 per cent. of the money.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is not so.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It is true. I would like to see those levies made. I would like

to see the Minister adopt another method of organisation. I do not consider that this is the correct method of organisation, neither do I consider that it is going to be successful; for this reason, that any organisation, to be a success, must deal with the farmers' produce. Had I been Minister, I would have adopted a different method of organisation. I would have built up this organisation on existing organisations, and allowed them to send their members to the central council. I would have built it up on the two sugar growers' associations—who are organised to the extent of 93 per cent. of their producers—the Queensland Cheese Manufacturers' Association—which is organised to the extent of 100 per cent.—the Queensland Butter Manufacturers' Association—which is in communication with all the factories, and the Southern Queensland Fruit Growers' Association. I would have taken those five organisations, and given each of their members a vote. There need be no compulsion in ascertaining the list of their members. They would have produced a register of every member, and that could have been a register of the members of the combined organisation. I am going to show the Minister where a difficulty will come in. No matter what you do, a big percentage of farmers will not join this organisation—a good many through carelessness. At the present time, when the cheese men meet, every man understands his business, and his attention is concentrated on it. When the sugar members meet, every man understands the business and his attention is concentrated on that. When the dairymen's association meets, every man understands the business. If you go to any district and get a few men representing sugar, a few men representing dairying, and a few men representing other interests, you will not get the men to attend.

The PREMIER: We will get them to attend where general matters are concerned.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Not in country districts. It is a most difficult matter. Under my scheme, your organisation would be complete from the start, because in those five industries, you would have had 95 per cent. of the producers already organised.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is really what we did to create the provisional council.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: There will always be thousands of men who will not join up and attend meetings; but you are going to levy on those men.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They will come in after a while.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: They will not. We know them too well. You are going to levy on them. They will not be members of your organisation, and they will object to having a levy placed upon them by an organisation to which they do not belong. I do not say the levy should not be made upon them. Under my scheme, you would have greater efficiency, and your central council would represent the whole of the industries. You must have a representative of every industry on your council. It is possible, with a mixed council such as you are getting now, that one or two interests may not be represented at all. By building up the associations you would have a central council representative of the whole district, and there

would be no trouble about levies, because every man would be compelled to pay his levy to the organisation. That would have saved an enormous amount of trouble. It is most difficult for the Cheese Manufacturers' Association and the suppliers to meet with representatives from other industries. They will say straight out, "We have got our Cheese Manufacturers' Association; we have got our cheese pool; and nothing outside that can help us, and we are not going to attend the meetings."

Mr. BULLOCK: Do you think that attitude is a right one?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am not concerned about that. We have to deal with things as they are. If this scheme had been based on the foundations of the existing associations, thousands of members would have been secured to start with, and that is what I would like to have seen. It would have saved an enormous amount of organisation and trouble afterwards. We all recognise that we are not going to do too much until we have got a Federal scheme.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We want to start with a State scheme first.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am not blaming the hon. gentleman for that; but we should not expect too much, and we should not have great ideas about what this council is to accomplish.

Mr. KIRWAN: You are trying to kill it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: No, I am not. I have already told the Minister what I am prepared to do. I have suggested improvements to the scheme. The question of controlling the markets in countries outside Queensland has not been dealt with sufficiently. The method adopted in New Zealand could certainly be adopted here. The hon. member for Stanley stated that their representatives sold somewhere about £6,000,000 worth of produce in England. When the markets were flooded they did not allow their shipments to go forward, but placed all the produce in cold stores, and fed the markets instead of flooding them. I believe that should be done as far as possible through co-operative channels. I believe I am correct in saying that there is not a member on the provisional council at the present time who represents a farmer selling fruit through co-operative channels in London. The farmers have elected some men and the Minister has nominated others.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Did not the Minister nominate Mr. McAnally?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He was elected at the conference.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: A nomination by a Minister is practically an election. The Minister nominated Mr. McAnally to the Wheat Advisory Board.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The members of the Wheat Board desired to nominate someone else, and the Minister immediately got up and nominated Mr. McAnally.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: If the hon. gentleman denies it, I will accept his word, but that was my information. The Minister

*Mr. Bebbington.]*

stated that this was one of the greatest councils of agriculture ever summoned, and said that about 150 representatives attended, and a lot of discussion took place about establishing a floor in London to dispose of our produce. Notwithstanding the fact that we already have a co-operative floor there, and are represented by companies in South Africa, New Zealand, and Australia, whose nominal shares amount to over £50,000,000, neither the Minister nor the officers of the Agricultural Department, or anyone else collected together on the day that these representatives were summoned, knew anything about it. Already some £3,000,000 or £4,000,000 worth of stuff has been sold. There is also some talk about sending a representative to London at the expense of the Government or the council, and this gentleman was a member of a firm of selling agents.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is not true.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am very glad to hear that, because there has been considerable talk about it. I have some very slight amendments to propose to this Bill. There is no use talking about altering the basis of organisation, I suppose; but, if the scheme had been based on the present organisations, it would have given every satisfaction to the fruitgrowers, sugar-growers, cheese manufacturers, and butter factories associations, and 90 per cent. of the producers of Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We want to get 100 per cent.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The hon. gentleman is not going to get 100 per cent. If he gets 80 per cent., he is doing very well.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We will get them all.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The hon. gentleman can get the names from the register, or somebody can give them to him, so long as there is nothing to pay. But what is the use of having a man's name without having his interest? He might as well take every name from the electoral roll and say that the industry is 100 per cent. organised. That is not organisation. You have not got the interest of those persons. If the Minister had accepted the Sugar Growers' Association, the Cheese, Butter, and Fruit Growers' Associations he would not only have had the members' names, but he would have had their interest, which would have made a wonderful difference. I ask the Minister seriously to consider that. I may be wrong, but I think the cheese suppliers' organisation is 100 per cent. organised. The principles adopted by the Arbitration Court in fixing wages based on the cost of living are wrong, for the reason that every manufacturer and employer of labour is desirous of getting the farmers' produce as low in price as possible, so that he may use that as an argument for cutting down wages.

Mr. KIRWAN: You want to be careful what you say.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You cannot get away from that fact; and if the producer is going to be compelled to produce cheap food in order to provide cheap labour, then the farmer is going to be a slave, and you will want to go further than this Bill before you will give the farmer what he is entitled to.

[Mr. Bebbington.

Mr. FORDE (*Rockhampton*): No doubt the farmers throughout Queensland, after reading the speeches made by the hon. members opposite, will know who their friends are. They will know that the Labour party is the true country party. The Country party and the Opposition failed to do anything for the man on the land, and now they want to kill this scheme because it emanated from Labour. They think the farmers may show their gratitude to this party for initiating the scheme.

Mr. FLETCHER: We are supporting it absolutely.

Mr. FORDE: You are trying to kill it, and you are going about the Port Curtis electorate whispering to the farmers to have nothing to do with it.

Mr. FLETCHER: I have done nothing of the sort.

Mr. POLLOCK: Damning it with faint praise.

Mr. FORDE: Hon. members opposite do not like it, but they are going to be told the truth. It is no wonder that this morning's "Daily Mail" had this to say regarding this new scheme—

"The fear expressed by Mr. Vowles, that the people will be fooled by the Government's agricultural scheme, is unsubstantial.

"It is a redeeming feature that the Council of Agriculture outlined in the Bill is to be primarily a farmers' body."

Of course, hon. members opposite tell the people that it is going to be a party political council, but it is to be absolutely free from party politics. It will embrace all shades of opinion. The hon. member for Drayton said that butter and cheese production had fallen off as a result of Labour rule. Now let us see the figures. In 1915 the weight of cheese produced was 4,380,000 lb. Four years after the Labour Government came into office, the weight produced was 2,637,000 lb. In 1920-21, the weight produced was 10,500,000 lb. Now take butter. In 1915, 25,000,000 lb. of butter were produced. After four years of Labour Government, 32,000,000 lb. were produced, and in 1920-21, 50,000,000 lb. were produced. The value of butter produced in 1915 was £1,674,000, and in 1920-21, the value was £6,000,000. These figures are more effective than some of the bosh talked by hon. members opposite. The butter and cheese industry in 1915 were worth approximately £3,000,000, and last year they were worth approximately £8,000,000. Mark the difference. Yet the hon. member for Drayton says that production has fallen off because of Labour legislation. Because of the encouragement we have given to the general producer, production has increased considerably, and I am very pleased that the Government has introduced this measure. It will tend to uplift the farmer. The leader of the Opposition said that all we did was to increase freights and fares. Let me quote the facts. Since 1914 fares and freights on general merchandise have been increased in various States as under—

	Fares.		Freights.	
	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.
Queensland ...	17	...	19	...
New South Wales ...	66	...	52	...
Victoria ...	48	...	43	...
Western Australia ...	30	...	29	...
South Australia ...	various	...	44	...

The Tory Government in Victoria have increased their freights by 43 per cent., and the South Australian Government have increased their freights 44 per cent., as against an increase of 19 per cent. in Queensland. That shows that hon. members opposite do not know what they are talking about. We want facts.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: When you say the Queensland freights have only been increased by 19 per cent. it shows you do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. FORDE: "Empty vessels make the most sound." The hon. member does not know what he is talking about when he says we increased fares and freights to a greater extent than the other States. Hon. members opposite say this should be a Federal scheme. I say it can be developed into a Federal scheme, and I believe it will be; but we have to make a beginning, and the Labour Government of Queensland is now making a beginning. I believe this scheme will be such an effective one that every State in Australia will take it up, and there will be a federation of these schemes. They will encourage co-operation, and the farmers will be able through their combined efforts to save the profits for themselves which now go to such middlemen as the hon. member for Bulimba and the hon. member for Windsor, who to-day vote side by side with the so-called members of the Country party in all important divisions in this House. The farmers will know who their friends are. They will, by this scheme of organisation, be banded together, their status will be improved, and they will be able to formulate co-operative schemes, and get a greater return for their labour than they get to-day. Samuel Gompers, the president of the American Federation of Labour, recently said—

"One farmer has but little power when determining issues vital to his welfare. But a hundred thousand farmers will count when they speak with one voice to one purpose. Organisation is essential. America will be richer in every way when the full voice of agriculture is heard in her councils. There is no reason why Labour should do otherwise than help the farmer in his battle to reconstruct agriculture on a basis which is equitable to all."

That is what Labour in Australia says. Labour in Australia believes that the man on the land must be looked after, because he is a worker in the true sense of the term, and that is why the Government introduced beneficial measures for the men on the land in the past, and will to a greater extent do in the future. The Government introduced the Sugar Cane Prices Act Amendment Bill, providing cane prices boards for the farmers, thus ensuring them a fuller return for their labour, as a result of which over £2,000,000 have been distributed amongst the sugar farmers. That is why the Government introduced the Agricultural Co-operation Production Act, enabling the farmers to get loans to buy cows, sheep, and to build silos. That is why the Government repealed the Railway Guarantee Act that was passed by a Tory Government. This Government repealed that Act, and relieved the farmers of an obligation of £250,000.

Mr. FLETCHER: Is that why you robbed the farmers of their labour?

Mr. FORDE: The hon. member has always been a middleman. He knows what it is to rob the farmer. He has invested all his money in Brisbane, although he represents the Port Curtis electorate. The farmers up there know him, and he will never be in this Chamber again. What do we find from the Country party supporters outside in regard to the scheme? Everyone outside who is fair and impartial and is not living on the farmers, and is not exploiting them as hon. members opposite do, supports this scheme. This is what Mr. S. J. Howe said when addressing a public meeting at Buderim—

"I have examined the scheme from all points, particularly as an active member of the Country party, and I am satisfied that it represents the best offered to Queensland producers."

That is the opinion of an honest, disinterested member of the Country party—one of those earnest men outside who now realise that this Government have done more for the producer than any other [10 p.m.] Government ever attempted to do. It is no wonder that the "Daily Mail" stated this morning—

"Any man who believes in the scheme and yet encourages the farmer to listen to political prejudice in estimating its advantages is a very doubtful servant of true country interests."

Hon. members opposite are doubtful representatives of country interests; in fact, at times here to-night there were only five or six of them in the Chamber. They are crestfallen. They have failed. The so-called Country party have never formulated a true country policy. It was the Labour Government—the Government truly representative of the workers—who formulated this policy for the workers on the land. What do we find the official organ of the Queensland Farmers' Union and the United Cane Growers' Association has to say—

"The Producers' Review" of 10th May, 1922, shows that one of the oldest branches of the Queensland Farmers' Union, the Burton branch, on 15th April, passed the following resolution:—

"That the Burton Branch of the Queensland Farmers' Union deem it advisable that the Farmers' Union support the formation of the new Producers' Union, and see no reason why we should continue with the Farmers' Union."

That was a resolution passed by the Burton Branch of the Queensland Farmers' Union. Hon. members opposite can see that the little associations which they have formed out in the country amongst the farmers for political purposes are now dying, and that the farmers are no longer to be deceived, and that these local producers' associations will band together the so-called Country party farmers, Nationalist farmers, and Labour farmers. They will all be banded together as one organisation in the local producers' association. They will be able to send their delegates to the district council and also to the central Council of Agriculture. They will all be banded together, irrespective of party. Too long have the farmers of Queensland been disunited. The hon. member for Pittsworth is an exponent of one phase of the Country party's policy, and he tells the farmers not to support a particular section

*Mr. Forde.]*

of the Country party. Then other members go out and tell them not to take any notice of the hon. member for Pittsworth. They have the farmers doubting as to what to do. This scheme is all-embracing. All we want to know is that a man is a producer, and he will then be welcome to join the local producers' association. Politics must be kept out of it. (Opposition laughter.) Hon. members opposite are telling the farmers not to have anything to do with it, because they fear that the Labour party might get some credit for the scheme, which is bound to be a great success. It is no wonder that the "Daily Mail" in commenting on the Premier's agricultural policy, said—

"If Mr. Theodore translates his words into actions, he can rely on the whole-hearted support of the Queensland Farmers' Union. Whether he calls himself Labour, Nationalist, or Country party will be immaterial, so long as he will assist to bring into actual being the reforms for which we have been so long battling."

We find Mr. Doherty, the general secretary of the United Cane Growers' Association—a man who, with Mr. S. Walker, of Bundaberg, said in Melbourne the other day that Mr. Higgs, the member for Capricornia, had done more to injure the sugar-growers than any other man he could mention—saying this—

"It appears to me that the assistance the Government is giving in such a scheme is the missing link that producers have been looking for a long time. Can we not throw politics to the dogs and bend our energies in the direction of doing something that will uplift the producers and, incidentally, the whole community."

Mr. Doherty does not want any parliamentary position. He is out to uplift the producers. He sees in this scheme something which will help the producers to a better state of things. He supported it, and hon. members opposite do not like it. They would like Mr. Doherty to be an instrument in their hands—someone who could be used to bolster up their political organisations, and keep them in Parliament to batten on the farmers. "The Producers' Review," on 10th May, dealing with this matter, showed that one of the new branches of the Queensland Farmers' Union, Cecil Plains, on 8th April, passed the following resolution:—

"That we as a branch strongly support the new organisation as outlined at the Premier's Conference, and urge that the Farmers' Union be strongly reorganised as the new organisation."

The attitude of the farmers in the Murgon district is expressed in the following resolution:—

"We, the farmers of Tableland and Crownthorpe districts of Murgon, after hearing the Premier's scheme, as outlined by Mr. A. S. Douglas, of the Grand Council of Agriculture, hereby express our confidence in such, and agree to further its objects as far as lies in our power."

Of course they will. The hon. member for Nanango knows that branch. Are they not intelligent people?

Mr. EDWARDS: Yes, they are. (Laughter.)

[Mr. Forde.

Mr. FORDE: Hon. members opposite should follow their lead instead of trying to defeat the scheme. We have heard something said regarding pools to-night. Hon. members opposite try to make us believe that they are in favour of pools. We find that men who support them in politics are opposed to the pooling system. What did Sir Henry Barwell, the black labour advocate, say in a speech he made in the South Australian Legislative Assembly? He said—

"The Government is opposed to a continuance of the pooling system."

Why? Because in the pooling system the middlemen, who help Premier Barwell to fight the Labour party at the elections, are stopped from exploiting the producer. That is why Dalgety and Company, Bell and Company, and Darling and Sons—who received from the Hughes Government over £4,000,000 for handling Australian wheat up to 1918—are against the pooling system. With regard to the wheat pool, I quote the following extract from the report of the Premier's Conference, at which the question of wheat pools was discussed in this way:—

"PRICE OF WHEAT.

"Mr. Theodore: With the object of protesting and encouraging the wheat-growing industry during the coming year, I would like to know if the conference will consider the desirability of fixing a home-consumption price for wheat of about 6s. per bushel?

"Mr. Barwell (Premier, South Australia): Certainly not, as far as South Australia is concerned. I say that definitely.

"Sir Walter Lee (Premier, Tasmania): Do not mention wheat to me any more.

"Mr. Oman (Minister for Agriculture, Victoria): You cannot fix it.

"Mr. Theodore: Not unless we all agree.

"Mr. Lawson (Premier, Victoria): When you mention that subject it reminds me of dissolution.

"Mr. Theodore: I thought I would bring the matter to the conference. I am quite willing to agree to a price being fixed.

"Mr. Maley (Minister for Agriculture, Western Australia): You have mentioned it already by telegrams to the States.

"Mr. Theodore: Yes, I have wired to one or two.

"Sir Walter Lee: Our reply is, 'Nothing doing.'

"Mr. Theodore: Well, I am very sorry we cannot come to any agreement on the matter on behalf of the farmers."

The Tory delegates at that conference would not stand behind the Premier of Queensland, because they believed in looking after the interests of the middlemen and exploiters, who get the greater part of the returns from the produce grown by the farmer, and who, they think, should be looked after in preference, to the farmers. Mr. Theodore put up a fight for the wheatgrowers of Australia, but he was not successful in getting the support of the delegates at the conference.

Mr. KIRWAN: And they are all supporters of the Country party.



Mr. FORDE: Yes; as the hon. member says, they are all supporters of the Country party. The Country party members, like the hon. member for Port Curtis, who got up at Gladstone and said there is no difference between the Country party and the Nationalist party. There is only a sheet of paper between them.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Why did he leave the Nationalist party?

Mr. FORDE: Because he could not get the leadership of the party.

The SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. member for Rockhampton will deal with the question before the House and not take any notice of interjections.

Mr. FLETCHER: His statement is untrue.

Mr. FORDE: It is true, and the hon. member knows it. The Labour party stands for the encouragement of co-operation and agriculture, and the elimination of the middleman. We are told that we want to eliminate the small shopkeeper and the man behind the counter. Nothing of the sort. We mean the elimination of all the agents, produce merchants, speculators, and market riggers who to-day are growing rich on the profits made out of the man on the land. This is what the Labour party provides for in its platform in regard to agriculture—

“Further encouragement of the co-operative principle.

“Experimental farms with a view to carrying out tests and experiments regarding crops, and so save the man on the land that expense.”

That is the policy of the Labour party. Dealing with dairy products in Queensland, I might point out that last year their value amounted to nearly £8,000,000. Still, many of the operations dealing with dairy produce are left in the hands of speculators, traders, and exploiters—men who ride about in motor-cars, and who live in the beauty spots of Queensland. These men, who carry on business with a capital of anything from £1,000 to £10,000, are dealing with millions of pounds' worth of produce. I might quote the opinion of Mr. C. E. D. Mears, manager of the Coastal Farmers' Co-operative Society, dealing with the British butter market and its effect on the Australian industry—

“Co-operative men returning from London emphatically endorse the opinion current over Australia in December-January last, that strong co-ordinated pressure from speculative agents was deliberately exercised to force values down. Their tactics, used simultaneously with the inexperienced misguided handling of the huge Imperial stocks, caused the breakdown of the London market during the period quoted.”

That is the opinion of the leaders in co-operative enterprise in Australia, and it is of great interest to the producer. Yet we have farmers' representatives opposite clearly allied with the old conservative interests and the middlemen and speculators, who are using the farmers for their own ends. In Canada we find that the farmers have an improved status because they are better organised, and because of that they get a better return for their crops. Now, it would be futile to build up co-operative companies in the different towns of Queensland and Australia if we did not have a federation of the

different co-operative concerns, and if we did not have co-operative distributing agencies on the other side of the world. We must encourage this co-operation, and the proposed scheme of organisation will give the farmers some understanding of the power they can wield when they are properly organised. During the great war we found the great companies engaged in the commercial, manufacturing, and transport world, merging together because they realised that by doing that they would have greater strength. The farmers must do the same. If hon. members opposite had the interests of the farmers at heart they would not get up and stonewall this measure, but would support it. They would not introduce party politics, and tell the farmers to have nothing to do with the scheme, or make out that there was something sinister in it. This Government is out to help the workers of this State, whether they be in the town or on the farm, and by so doing build up Queensland so that it will become the gem of all of the States of Australia.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS (*Pittsworth*): On looking through this Bill I cannot help coming to the conclusion that it is the first step towards the nationalisation of the whole of the primary producing industries. To bring about the nationalisation of the producing interests is one of the planks of the Labour party. I congratulate the Secretary for Agriculture and the Premier on at last getting a look in in regard to the nationalisation of an industry in which the farmers themselves have taken a very big interest, and which they have succeeded in building up by co-operative effort. We have repeatedly asked this Administration and other Administrations to realise that the first steps towards building up co-operative companies is to build up reserves. I listened with very keen interest to the hon. member for Rockhampton, and I never heard him make any reference whatever to the question of building up reserves in our co-operative companies. Any man interested in the co-operative movement will realise that a very essential factor in the building up of cheese manufacturing companies, and butter manufacturing companies, and other distributing companies is the power to build up reserve funds without heavy taxation. This Administration have never shown the slightest desire to relieve the bona-fide co-operative companies of any part of the taxation they have to pay under the income tax laws at the present time. Recently I had brought under my notice the case of a co-operative company which had made a profit of £358, and a big part of that profit was made owing to the fact that they received a little over £200 as their share of the profits distributed under the cheese pool. That company was called upon in the end to pay to the Income Tax Commissioner in Queensland the sum of £69, which is equal to a tax of 3s. in the £1 and 9d. super tax. When we asked why we had to pay that income taxation we were told that it was because the profit which the company made in that year was better than 19 per cent. of the paid-up capital. Anyone who knows anything about the co-operative movement knows very well that in several of our co-operative companies on the Downs our articles of association deal with the question of payments of capital in this way. Say that the shareholders take the shares at £1, we say that they shall pay up 2s. 6d. on application and 2s. 6d. on allotment, and they shall

be liable for the payment of one call of 5s. That is all that they are called upon to pay until a general meeting of shareholders decides to empower the directors to call up a further call of 5s., or two calls of 5s. each at certain periods. The result is that we find that to-day the co-operative movement is absolutely suffering for the want of capital, and it is entirely due to the fact of the unjust taxation placed upon our co-operative factories and reserves. I submit to the Secretary for Agriculture that he should bring under the notice of the Government the desirability in this connection of introducing a co-operative companies Bill and giving us certain rights under it. I believe they will be just in giving us relief in regard to certain taxation which we are paying to-day. After all, it can never be argued that a small co-operative company, consisting of only twenty-five or thirty struggling farmers, because they make a small profit, should distribute the whole of it by paying it away in dividends or bonus. It is, surely, a sound policy for the co-operative movement to build up a reserve fund, and I respectfully urge upon the Secretary for Agriculture the necessity for introducing this season a co-operative companies Act. He will get plenty of assistance, but he will get it aboveboard instead of underhand.

I was really quite surprised to hear the Minister say that the provisional council which is being discussed here to-night was elected at a conference called together by the Premier.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The dairy section was elected by the Dairy Conference.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: It is at this juncture that I would like to ask the Minister why it was that two large co-operative bacon factories did not even have an invitation to be present, when invitations were issued to small co-operative factories 100 miles out back, some of which had not been working even for two or three months? The two large companies I refer to are the Downs Co-operative Bacon Factory and the Murarrie Co-operative Bacon Factory, and I venture the opinion that they are the two strongest co-operative factories in Queensland to-day. Is it a fair thing, under these circumstances, for the Minister to tell us that the council was absolutely representative of the producers of the State? I say that they were not—that they were representative of a certain section only. I find that the names of the gentlemen on the Provisional Council are very interesting, more particularly when I read that the objects of the Bill include the encouragement and the better manufacture and more economical manufacture of our products. It makes me smile when I think that one of them, Mr. James Purcell, who has been on the Downs Co-operative Dairy Company for many years, has never done much to lead me to believe that he has any sympathy with the promulgation of the necessity for herd-testing. I myself, at a meeting of the company's suppliers some nine or ten years ago, moved a motion empowering the directors to spend as much money as they thought advisable on the encouragement of herd-testing, but nothing whatever was done in that direction. Yet to-day we find that man on the provisional council.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He is a good co-operator.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: I say he is not a true co-operator. Not one pound of that

[Mr. J. H. C. Roberts.

company's butter is sold through co-operative channels to-day. I would just like to point out that Mr. Purcell was appointed on the 24th March of this year. On 21st February of the same year the same man, speaking at a meeting of suppliers at Jondowae, said—

“Mr. Martin probably misunderstood what was meant by an advisory board. He took it that by the resolution it was meant that a committee should be formed, whose duties it would be to look after the marketing side of the product.”

I say that to-day Mr. Purcell is prepared to throw over that particular body. What for?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You must have a personal grudge against him.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: There is no personal grudge against him so far as I am concerned; but when we see the personnel of the council, it would lead me, at any rate—I do not know what effect it may have on the other section of the party—to believe that men of that stamp are not likely to promulgate the ideas so glibly laid down by the Secretary for Agriculture. He goes on further to say—

“So far as such a board was concerned, what better advisory board did they want than the executive of the present Co-operative Dairy Companies' Association?”

What can we assume from that? We are told that on this provisional council we have men who were elected by that Dairy Conference. I say that they were not elected by the dairymen at that conference. They were elected by the Premier.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I said the dairy section were elected by the Dairy Conference.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: Then I want to know where some of the dairy section have disappeared to. (Laughter.) Evidently, they have got out of the bag and gone, for two of the men elected at that conference, as the Minister has repeatedly told us, are not there to-day. I want to know why they are not there. The Premier put them out and elected his own particular council.

I was very interested when listening to the hon. member for Rockhampton speaking about the Burton branch. Everybody knows why my friend Mr. McAnally was sent out to that branch. He had a meeting of somewhere in the vicinity of ten representatives, and two or three men—one at least—strongly urged Federal control, but the Press at the meeting was invited to keep that part of the business out of the papers. (Opposition laughter.) I venture to hazard the opinion that the Burton branch has done better work for the farmers than this particular council will ever do under Government control. In 1915, when the Government were selling chaff through their State Produce Agency at £9 and £10 and £11 per ton, that branch was selling exactly the same sort of chaff at £6 5s. and £6 7s. 6d. per ton. All this organisation that has been perfected is to be thrown to the winds in order that there may be a chance of the nationalisation of producing industries in this State. The further we look into it the more we become satisfied that it is nothing more nor less than the nationalisation of our industries.

The PREMIER: Do you know what the hon. member for Murilla said?

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: I do not care what the hon. member for Murilla said.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: This attack on this Bill will be the end of you.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: Thank God, I am not here to consider my own interests in any shape or form. I am not like the Secretary for Agriculture, afraid to lift my hands or my feet because I might lose a vote, or because I might bring down on my head the displeasure of my leader. (Opposition laughter.) He cannot move hand or foot unless he goes to the Premier, [10.30 p.m.] and learns what he has to do and how he is to do it. Last session I listened with very keen interest to the Secretary for Agriculture, when he refused to give to the cheese-pool people the right to vote upon that particular measure before it became the law of the land. I suggest that the Premier adjourn this House for a fortnight, place the Bill before the people, and explain clause by clause what it means. In the Cheese Pool Bill, the Secretary for Agriculture was very careful to make provision that the cheese suppliers should have the right to say whether that pool should become law or not. He insisted at that time that there should be a vote in favour of the Bill of 75 per cent. of the cheese suppliers.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Is there anything wrong with that?

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: I am asking the Minister to realise exactly what he did at that time. When we asked that the affirmative vote should be 66½ per cent., the Minister would not accept it; because, he said, such a vote as that would not be a true reflex of the feelings of the suppliers, and he must stand on the 75 per cent. basis. Why should not the Minister be consistent? Let him send this Bill to the people, get a vote upon it, and then—if they carry it by a majority of 75 per cent.—let it become law. I sympathise with the hon. gentleman, because I feel that the Bill would go down with a wallop under those conditions.

We have heard a good deal said about what the Government have done in regard to wheat pools, which they claim to have brought into being. As far as I remember, in the year 1916-1917, the then Premier—the late Mr. Ryan—in company with Mr. J. M. Hunter—the man you are bringing out from England—insisted absolutely that the farmers on the Downs should not have a wheat pool unless they had a unanimous vote upon it. That was an impossible proposition. The Secretary for Agriculture became a little more liberal in his ideas, because he insisted upon a majority of only 75 per cent. in favour of the cheese pool. In 1920 we asked for a wheat pool. I claim that it was the Farmers' Union and its organisation that brought under the notice of the Secretary for Agriculture the fact that it was desirable to have a wheat pool. We were all in it. When one remembers the unjust propaganda carried out in regard to the wheat pool it makes one say that the same thing will apply to this Bill. Recently, as the Premier knows, the Government gave a guarantee of an extra 1s. a bushel on wheat on the Downs. The chairman of the wheat pool went back to Toowoomba, and it appeared in the Press that it was owing to the sympathetic treatment of the acting-Minister for Agriculture that that amount of £150,000 was made available. At that particular period the Queensland wheat pool had

exported just on 1,000,000 bushels of wheat, which, on an average, was worth 5s. 4d. to 5s. 5d. f.o.b., Brisbane. They had all those papers which they could have offered as security for this advance. It was not the Government, it was the farmers, through their management of the wheat pool, who did it. When we see that propaganda being carried out, and no credit being given to the management of the wheat pool, but all the credit being given to the Government, it is time the truth was told and the farmers realised that they have sufficient security to have double the £150,000 required to pay the extra 1s. per bushel.

Then we hear something about the stabilisation of prices. I do not know whether the Minister means the stabilisation of prices in Queensland, or whether he proposes it shall be so in regard to a Federal organisation. Quite recently, at a Federal conference in Adelaide, a far better and finer scheme of Federal organisation was outlined than the scheme which is offered to the farmers of Queensland to-night. It is only through Federal organisation and control that we can ever hope to stabilise the prices of our butter, cheese, bacon, and wheat.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Were you at that conference in Adelaide?

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: I was.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Were you the "Roberts" who sold Queensland over the North-South railway?

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: Once again the Minister shows his desire for repudiation, because the North-South railway was absolutely provided for in the agreement with South Australia when it came into Federation. I know repudiation is nothing to the Minister. I am not ashamed of having said what I did.

In the building up of a Federal organisation the farmers of Queensland would have far more to gain than any other farmers throughout the length and breadth of Australia. Where we propose to spend £50,000 in Queensland on a purely local organisation, I hazard the opinion that £20,000, under a Federal organisation would get better results for the farmers of Queensland. It must be realised that to-day Queensland is growing something in the vicinity of 4,000,000 bushels of wheat, as against 35,000,000 to 40,000,000 bushels in New South Wales, and large quantities in Victoria and South Australia. We have to appreciate the fact that, in spite of our having a Wheat Board in Queensland, we have been unable to prevent wheat coming in from New South Wales. We were told repeatedly last year that there was wheat coming in from South Australia and Victoria. How does the Minister propose to prevent that sort of thing with a purely local organisation? He never will be able to stop it. The cost, so far as Queensland is concerned, with a Federal scheme for selling our wheat, would probably be anything from £2,000 to £3,000, as against the enormous sum which is going to be put on to us when you come to distribute our wheat under this Bill. We all know that butter has been coming from New South Wales to Queensland and under-selling the Queensland butter. How is a State scheme going to prevent that?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I will tell you. There is a Labour Government in

*Mr. J. H. C. Roberts.]*

Queensland, and after the next Federal elections there will be a Labour Government in the Federal Parliament. (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: The hon. gentleman is as optimistic about the next Federal elections as he is about this Bill. Queensland last year produced over 50,000,000 lb. of butter, New South Wales produced 87,000,000 lb., and Victoria produced 82,000,000 lb. We are told that we have nothing to fear with a State organisation. Are we going to continue to allow these three States to indulge in open competition? Many of us know what effect the little competition that takes place on our local market has on the price of butter now. I again ask the Minister to consider the advisableness of allowing this Bill to be placed before the people most vitally concerned. We all know that a Federal organisation will be able to give us better advice, and tell us what we ought to know and do; whether there is a bad season in one part of New South Wales or a good season in another, so that we shall be able to prevent the glut that takes place day after day and month after month in big centres of population. Can that be done under this Bill? Will a purely local organisation like the one suggested be able to give us that knowledge that will enable us to send our butter, cheese, and other products to places where we shall be able to get the best price? I sincerely hope that there will be some alteration in the Bill before it becomes the law of the land.

So far as wheat pooling is concerned, Queensland should recognise that there is about to come into being a Federal organisation. While I was down in Melbourne, Adelaide, and other centres I found a very strong disposition not to have anything to do with any organisation that is subject to a great amount of Government control. Mr. Basil Murray, of Western Australia, and other gentlemen down there have built up a large co-operative federation, and have brought into being an organisation in Western Australia, Victoria, and New South Wales which will enable them to handle their produce far more effectively under the voluntary pool system than under Government control. To-day there is a big prospect of a Federal Wheat Pool coming into existence.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Where did you get that information?

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: I got it, and I will show it to the hon. gentleman at any time. We have in England at the present time three of the leading members of the co-operative movement in Australia. They are Mr. A. J. Trethowan, Mr. Ibbott, and Mr. Mears. These men are known from one end of Australia to the other. They are in England at the present time finalising arrangements for the selling of the Pool wheat from Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria, and New South Wales per medium of a co-operative company. We should be doing things in the same way. I believe a Federal Dairy Pool will be created within a few months. I do not know what will be the position when this Bill becomes law and we have to be compulsorily organised and become members of an organisation that is only State-wide. I ask the Secretary for Agriculture whether—in the

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event of members desiring to join the Federal organisation, and we are asked at that period to free our organisation of political control and that the Secretary for Agriculture should not have anything at all to do with the organisation—the hon. gentleman will stand in our way and say, "Go on as best you can. We will fight this particular organisation." There are many reasons why a Federal organisation is preferable to a State organisation.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Where would you make a start?

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: We have already made a start. I venture to say that there is no man in Queensland to-day who possesses the same capabilities as Mr. Basil Murray of Western Australia. There is not a man in Queensland to-day possessing the capabilities of Mr. Ibbott of Melbourne. The farmers of Western Australia have built up an organisation which is a power in the land.

Mr. FERRICKS: You want a dash of Queensland on your brains.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: I do not want a dash of the hon. member on my brains. I believe that the farmers in Queensland could build up the same organisation that they have in Western Australia, if they only desired.

Mr. FERRICKS: That is the first thing you have said in favour of Queensland.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: What has been done in Western Australia can be done in Queensland if an opportunity is given, and the farmers are allowed to do it themselves.

Mr. FERRICKS: They would not do it if they had many like you.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: The Premier at the Dairy Conference said that they were going to absorb all the existing organisations. If he is, he is going to leave the primary producers of the State like a ship without a rudder in a heavy sea. He will leave them to the mercy of anybody who likes to come along. So far as I am personally concerned, if I can help it, the Farmers' Union on the Downs is not going to be absorbed by anybody. It is going to continue to carry on its work. We will come into the scheme when we know we will get a fair deal out of it.

The PREMIER: How are you on this Bill? Are you for it or against it?

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: I want to be satisfied that the Bill has got the scope that we expect and look for. When the amendments we want are put in, possibly the Bill may be very different to the Bill we have before us to-night, and I look forward to the amendments being made in such a way as to make the measure of some use, and a Bill under which we may all come together and organise for our good. At the present time my opinion is that the Bill is a direct attempt to nationalise the producing interests of this State, and I do not stand for the nationalisation of the producing interests.

Mr. BULLCOCK (*Barcoo*): I beg to move—  
"That the debate be now adjourned."

Question put and passed.

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

The House adjourned at 10.52 p.m.