

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**FRIDAY, 14 JULY 1922**

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FRIDAY, 14 JULY, 1922.

The SPEAKER (Hon. W. Bertram, *Maree*) took the chair at 3.30 p.m.

QUESTIONS.

INCOME TAX RECEIVED FROM CO-OPERATIVE COMPANIES, 1915-1921.

Mr. WALKER (*Cooroora*) asked the Treasurer—

“How much has been received in income tax from co-operative companies in Queensland during the years 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1921—(a) dairy companies; (b) cheese companies; (c) bacon companies?”

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

“I regret that the information is not available.”

RAILWAY MATERIAL ORDERED FROM OVER-SEAS.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

“Will he furnish a statement showing—

- (a) From what places outside Australia material has been obtained or ordered for his department during the past financial year?
- (b) The class of material so obtained or ordered, and the value, respectively?”

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

“(a) United Kingdom, Belgium, and the United States of America.

	£
“(b) Copper, iron, steel and brass	67,971
Wheels on axles	12,262
Tin plates	64
2-foot gauge locomotive	2,200
Fencing wire	4,110
Superheaters for locomotives	4,751
Electrical material	13,038
Canvas	20,250
Cotton waste	6,173
Sponge cloths	3,188
Linoleum	778
Paint brushes	366
Watches and clocks	828
Stationery	782
Hardware and iron	7,950
Machinery	11,016
Miscellaneous	3,701
<b>Total</b>	<b>£159,423</b>

Articles of Australian manufacture are, as far as possible, obtained, subject to a preference of 15 per cent. over British and American goods, and 20 per cent. over the products of other countries.”

LOSSES IN CONNECTION WITH STATE ENTERPRISES.

Mr. VOWLES asked the Minister in Charge of State Enterprises—

“In view of his evasive answer given on 11th instant to my question relative to losses on State enterprises, is he aware that the community is suffering the

following losses in connection with State enterprises over and above those disclosed in the Auditor-General's annual report:—

(a) The State and Commonwealth income tax which would have been paid each year had the State businesses been left in the hands of private enterprise?

(b) The land taxes which would have been paid?

(c) The difference between the interest actually charged each year and the interest actually paid by the Government on the money invested in these businesses?

(d) The difference between the rent charged to State stations and the rent which would have been paid by private enterprise?

(e) Additional loss on State stations owing to the over-valuation of the stock on 30th June, 1921?”

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*) replied—

“My reply to the hon. member's question of 11th instant was not evasive. Instead of suffering losses, as suggested by the hon. member, I am fully aware of the fact that the community has been saved millions of pounds by reason of the establishment of State enterprises; in the State butcheries alone a careful estimate shows that the saving to the public since 1915 is over £3,000,000. There would be no advantage to the community in the State receiving a little extra income tax if such were accompanied by the exploitation of the people by private enterprise, as desired by the hon. member. As a matter of fact, however, the surplus profits repaid to the Treasury are greater than the amounts that could have been levied for taxes. The interest actually charged by the Treasury is greater than the interest actually paid by the Government on the money invested in these businesses, and, as previously stated, the rent paid by the State stations is the full amount charged to date by the Lands Department. I cannot agree that the stock on State stations was overvalued as at 30th June, 1921. The question is based on false information furnished to the hon. member.”

Mr. VOWLES: I would like to know whether the hon. gentleman is entitled, in replying to a question, to cast a reflection on the hon. member asking the question.

The SPEAKER: I did not hear the Minister cast any reflection on the hon. member.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Speaking to the point of order, the question was based on false information furnished to the hon. member.

Mr. VOWLES: False information!

LENGTHSMEN'S COTTAGES IN SOUTH-WESTERN AREA ERECTED SINCE 1918.

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

“1. How many lengthsmen's cottages have been erected in the South-Western Railway area since 1916?

“2. What was the cost of same?

“3. What rental is charged for their occupation?”

"4. How many lengthsmen's cottages have been erected in the Central Railway district since 1916?"

"5. What was the cost of same?"

"6. What rental is charged for their occupation?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

"1 to 6. The information is being prepared."

#### LAND SOLD BY J. F. BRETT TO WAR SERVICE HOMES COMMISSIONER.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*) asked the hon. member for Rockhampton—

"1. Is he correctly reported in the "Daily Standard" of 12th July as having said at Deeford that land purchased by J. F. Brett in September, 1919, for £10,650 was sold to the War Service Homes Commissioner in June, 1920, for £25,350?"

"2. If so, did he get that information from the State Land and Income Tax Office, or from the Federal Land and Income Tax Office?"

"3. Is he aware that the information could only have been obtained from four sources—(a) the State Land and Income Tax Department; (b) the Federal Land and Income Tax Department; (c) J. F. Brett; and (d) one other?"

"4. If he did not get this information from either of the taxation departments, which of the other two persons supplied the information?"

Mr. FORDE (*Rockhampton*) replied—

"1. Yes. I quoted these and other facts, including the Canungra timber scandal, to show how the Hughes Government was wasting the taxpayers' money.

"2. From neither.

"3. Yes; but knowing that the hon. member is associated with the National party, I can quite understand his endeavouring to condone the gross extravagance of the Commonwealth Hughes Government.

"4. The hon. member should direct this question to the hon. member who told him to ask me these questions."

#### ALLEGED AGREEMENT BETWEEN QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT AND EMPIRE COTTON GROWERS' ASSOCIATION IN RE GUARANTEED PRICE OF COTTON.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*) asked the Chief Secretary—

"1. In view of his answer to my question on 28th September, 1921, contained in "Hansard," volume 137, page 966—that an arrangement had been made between the Agent-General and the British Cotton Growers' Association, whereby that association guaranteed a minimum price of 1s. 6d. per lb. (sea freights and insurance payable by the association) for cotton lint of good quality, for five years from 1st January, 1920, how can he reconcile this statement with—

(a) His answer to my question this week—that the agreement with the British Cotton Growers' Association was limited to a risk of £10,000, which limit had already been reached?

(b) His statement made in Perth on his return to Australia on 3rd September 1920—that an offer had been made by the Empire Cotton Growers' Association of a guaranteed minimum price for cotton lint, and negotiations were still in progress when he (Mr. Theodore) left England?

(c) His statement in Melbourne on 8th September, 1920 (published in the Brisbane Press of 9th September)—that since his arrival he (Mr. Theodore) had been met in Adelaide by the Hon. W. McCormack and had been advised that the association had now indicated its willingness to guarantee a minimum price of 1s. 6d. per lb. for good, clean lint, the guarantee to operate for five years?

"2. If this agreement existed, where is it now?"

"3. If it did not exist, were not his statements harmful to those farmers who undertook cotton-growing on the understanding that there was a guarantee of 1s. 6d. per lb. for cotton lint for five years from 1st January, 1920?"

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

"1 (a), (b), and (c), 2, and 3. The hon. member's imperfect acquaintance with the facts is responsible for the alleged irreconcilability, he evidently being not aware that there was a money limit of £10,000 as well as a time limit of five years."

#### CLOSURE OF REEF STREET, GYMPIE.

Mr. WALKER (*Coorooa*), without notice, asked the Secretary for Public Land—

"Will he defer his decision on the Reef street trouble, Gympie, pending the taking of a referendum by the electors of the city of Gympie?"

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

"I have no intention of putting the people to the expense of taking a referendum on this question.

"The hon. member for East Toowoomba yesterday asked me if I had any objection to laying on the table of the House certain papers in connection with the closure of the street. I said I had not. Since then I have ascertained that, if the original official papers are laid on the table of the House, they become the property of the House, and I shall not be able to obtain them again. If the hon. member wishes to peruse the papers he may do so. I have them here."

#### PRIMARY PRODUCERS' ORGANISATION BILL.

##### SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE

Mr. BULCOCK (*Barcoo*): To anyone listening to the debate on this Bill last night and on previous occasions when the subject was before the Chamber, it was apparent that members of the Opposition would like to oppose it if they had the courage to do so; but, knowing that it would mean such a tremendous assistance to primary producing organisations in the State, they have not the courage to say that the measure should not be placed on the statute-book. We have

heard many bitter attacks, many personal attacks, emanating from hon. members opposite, and if the Bill is to be considered on the merits or demerits of individuals who are associated more or less actively with the measure, if hon. members opposite can find only such arguments as grounds for condemning it, they must have a very weak case indeed. We had the cultured leader of the Opposition referring to a certain gentleman in Toowoomba as "a political Judas." Surely we have not come to that position where, for want of argument, we have to term gentlemen who have the welfare of agriculture at heart "political Judases." If those are the arguments hon. members intend to adopt, if that is the line along which they propose to debate this Bill, their case is weak indeed. One of the main things that struck me when hon. members opposite were discussing this Bill was the charge they repeatedly threw across the Chamber that the Labour Government were attempting to jettison the industrial workers and to woo the farmers. Hon. members opposite say we have lost the confidence of the industrial workers outside, and it is necessary that we should placate the farmers in order to get their votes and gain another lease of life. So far as I am concerned—and I know this is the view of hon. members generally on this side—that is another untrue argument, which is brought forward by Opposition members for the purpose of bolstering up their hopeless ineptitude. I am prepared to support a farmer's policy, and the Labour party are in the forefront in inaugurating that policy, because it means greater prosperity to the State and consequently to every individual in the State. We have in the forefront of our platform—and it is not a platitude or a pious aspiration, but a deliberate goal which we hope to reach some day—the proposal that to each shall be given the product of his labour. Have the farmers in the past, in spite of those much-vaunted organisations hon. members on the other side talk about, gained that to which they were entitled as the result of their labours? We know that the farmer does not get the full result. He does not get one-half, and frequently not one-quarter of the result of his labour. Hon. members who represent farming constituencies know that it frequently happens that consignments of fruit are sent away on which the overhead costs, including cases, are about 75 per cent. The grower gets 25 per cent. of the amount realised in return for his year's work and all the expenses incidental thereto. That has been repeated, not once, but many times in the course of the annual marketing of a farmer's crop. The organisations which hon. members opposite have created to do away with this exploitation have signally failed in that direction.

Mr. EDWARDS: That is not true.

Mr. BULCOCK: We claim we can superimpose an organisation which will give to the farmer, if not all that he is entitled to, at least a bigger proportion of that which he creates than he receives at the present time. That is the main object underlying this Bill. We do not stand totally and exclusively for one section of the community. We recognise that the farmer is a worker, just as much as is the navvy, the shearer, the shed hand, or the sugar worker. Recognising that, we are going to translate into law, for the benefit of the farmers, that plank of our platform which sets out that to each

shall be given the result of his labour; proving conclusively that we, and not hon. gentlemen opposite—who evidently are endeavouring to find flaws in this measure, which they cannot find fault with—are the friends of the farmers. It is significant that hon. members opposite are always saying that this Bill is being introduced on party lines; that it is designed for the purpose of catching votes. I do not think I am violating any confidence in saying that, when discussing this Bill, it was suggested that the Government should have greater representation, and that the Minister, in answer to that, said it would tend to take the power out of the hands of the agriculturists, and it was therefore undesirable. That sums up the attitude of the Minister and the attitude of the Cabinet on this very burning question.

Having stated quite definitely that this Bill is not of a political nature, we come to the consideration of the fact that agricultural evolution to-day has brought in its train in other countries in the world where agricultural projects are more highly and efficiently organised than they are in Queensland the speedy and successful formation of non-partisan leagues. These leagues do not attempt to dictate anything in the way of policy. Agriculture is on a much more satisfactory footing in those countries where non-partisan leagues are functioning on behalf of the primary producers. This scheme is an extension of the principle of those leagues, with the farmers controlling their own destinies, and attempting by other means in their power to gain more than they are getting at the present time for the work they are performing on their farms. To say that this scheme is a political move is therefore obviously false. If the scheme should be political, then it will have in it the elements of decay. I would strongly urge hon. members opposite, if they desire that this scheme shall be a success, to strive with hon. members on this side of the House to keep out politics, so that the farmers and their representatives will meet on the one common ground of economic interests. That is the principle underlying the Bill, and one which I want to see in the Bill, and one that I would appeal to hon. members opposite to uphold if they desire that it should be a success—the success that I confidently hope it will be.

In introducing the Bill, regard is had to the question of prices. As a Labour representative, I am supporting the Bill. It has been frequently stated that a system of frustification, or nationalisation, or government by one supreme council, tends to raise the price of the product that that body is handling, and therefore, as an association, it prevents the consumer getting the advantage that he should get out of a more efficient system of organisation and industry. If I thought that was so, I would not be so keen on this Bill; but I believe that, by eliminating the middleman, and by giving greater access to the markets, perhaps in time to come, in spite of the sneer by the hon. member for Drayton last night, there will be established a definite system of marketing right from the producer to the consumer without the middleman handling the goods at all. I believe that in urban and semi-town areas that system is possible, and I can see a rapid extension of it arising out of the definite system of organisation such as is proposed to be introduced

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under this Bill. By eliminating the middleman I think the farmer will get more for his product than if he was exploited for less. The consumer will not have to pay more for the product he receives, and the farmer will have more money to expend on improvements and machinery and the little social amenities of life, and his position and lot in life will be ever so much more satisfactory than it has been in the past. I believe this can be done to the advantage of the worker as well as to the advantage of the farmer, and that it will be a mutual advantage so far as the entire community is concerned. The only man who will suffer, or who can logically raise any protest against the Bill, is the middleman who is fattening and fattening on his exploitation of the farmer.

In connection with distribution, we have heard a great deal of talk about "Produce more." Hon. members opposite have been fairly consistent in saying that we should produce more. We on this side of the House recognise that, before we produce more, we must establish markets for the extra amount that we desire to produce.

Mr. EDWARDS: Didn't you do that through the State Produce Agency?

Mr. BULCOCK: To-day we are producing cattle, but we have very little, if any, sale for them, and one of the wisest provisions in this Bill—and it is a new provision so far as State departments or advisory boards are concerned—is the power that it gives to the advisory board, which represents the farmers' interests, to ascertain and exploit new markets to the advantage of the farmers. It will mean the establishment of a highly organised buying and selling department on behalf of the farmers, and we know that the more business that goes through any central organisation the greater the trade discounts they get and the better the facilities they will have for purchasing. This Bill will create those facilities by reducing the overhead charges on the bulk of the produce that has to be handled, and will also allow the central council to purchase commodities at a cheaper rate than they could be purchased when ten, fifteen, twenty, or a hundred co-operative societies are purchasing in the same market side by side, but without exercising the true principle of co-operation. I have often thought that, if the farmers had only one-half of the unity, solidarity, and insight that organised labour has, then the monopoly of distribution that the middlemen have to-day would be impossible. This system of organisation has been originated by gentlemen who have had some considerable experience in successful organisation—such experience in organisation as has led them to the occupancy of the Treasury benches for quite a number of years—and these gentlemen, because of their experience, will make the scheme the success that it deservedly should be. There is no other industry on which national prosperity depends that is in the same state of individualism that the farming industry is in. In order to give the farmer a better opportunity of getting the full amount that his labour entitles him to, it is necessary that he should abandon this system of individualism and come under the bigger and wider scheme of co-operation, because that is what this scheme amounts to. The organisations established in the past have not given the farmer that amount of co-operation, that amount of collective marketing and purchasing, that he

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was led to believe he would get as a result of his association with these organisations; and the organisation arising out of this Bill will provide the missing link that is necessary between the producer and the consumer from a domestic point of view, and between the producer and consumer on the other side of the world, as considered from an expert point of view. Under these circumstances, it is quite obvious that we must do away with the individualism of the farmer. It is rather significant that, while other national undertakings have blossomed forth into trusts and corporations as a result of the investment of capital, yet agriculture, as such, has never offered any inducement to the investor. Why is that? It is principally because agriculture has never been placed on a sound commercial basis, and it is necessary, for the benefit of the community at large, that agriculture should be placed in that position.

[4 p.m.]

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You know why it has never been placed on that basis.

Mr. BULCOCK: Because you are one of those who have been fooling with politics.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: No, because we were providing you with food too cheaply.

Mr. BULCOCK: When this is done, there will be prosperity for the community generally. Perhaps the hon. member for Drayton, having an economic interest with those opposed to this Bill, is against it, although he has not the courage to show the House that it is opposed to where his economic interests lie.

Let us look at the effect which the Bill will have from the employees' point of view—those employed in the agricultural, pastoral, dairying, or whatever industry it may be. I think the hon. member for Nanango assured the House the other day that the farming industry could not afford to pay the wages it was being called upon to pay at the present time. I do not know whether the farmers can or cannot pay the present rate of wages, but I am quite sure that, under this system of organisation, the farmer will be able to meet his obligations, so far as wages are concerned, and, as the Bill will place the industry on an organised footing, it is obvious that the employees must benefit under the scheme, in so far as it will provide more work, and, possibly, more remuneration for the work men are called upon to perform. This Bill is not a class-conscious Bill, as the members of the Country party would have it to be. It is a Bill which will benefit the entire community, and, in benefiting the entire community, it is in total accord with the doctrine of hon. members on this side. The cost of production has been such in the past that the farmer has not got that to which he was entitled. Organisation will not raise the cost of production. It will tend to lower it, and, consequently, the farmer will get more for his produce; but the consumer will probably have to pay less. That is my interpretation of the Bill, and as such it leaves very little to be desired from a community point of view, and that is the viewpoint that we must take. It has frequently been said that the Country party stands for the farmer. Going through a paper published in a country constituency in New South Wales in the heart of an agricultural district, I found this statement—

"Both the National party and the Country party have played the game in

respect to making our country self-contained, but the chaps who fooled the 'hayseeds' have never given a helping hand to build up Australian industry. The Country party should change its name—it does not represent bucolic sentiment. There is no smell of gum-leaves on its whiskers."

That seems to me to be a fairly accurate summing up of the position, so far as the self-claimed members of the Country party are concerned. In the first place, it is necessary to remember that, although hon. members opposite claim to represent the farmers, yet they are not all farmers. The leader of the Opposition was last night complaining that under the constitution laid down in the Bill it might be possible for a person who had no farming interests or activities to gain a seat on a district council, and raise himself to the top of the tree. Is the leader of the Opposition in any way different from the gentleman whom he seeks to condemn? I believe quite recently a member of the Country party—who, by the way, has caused a run in the bookshops at the present time by striving to gain a knowledge of agriculture—found that book-learning was not all that it might be. He had rather a painful experience, I understand, in that direction, in a recent campaign that took place in New South Wales. I understand that this gentleman visited that State. A meeting of farmers was called, and he was addressing them on matters pertaining to farming, and it was not very long before some of his auditors recognised that his knowledge of farming was very limited. After the meeting, one "wag" took him to one side and said, "Mr. So and So, I was very interested in the remarks you were making about improving the quality of our crops. Will you tell us how you would improve the quality of our crops of split peas?" "Well," said this gentleman, "as like produce like, if you want to produce a good crop of split peas, you want to sow good split peas." That would show the ineptitude of hon. members opposite, so far as the question is concerned. The questions which hon. members opposite have been raising are questions which would tend to arouse suspicions in the minds of the farmers about the bona fides of this programme we are going to place before them. We have at all times claimed that certain things are possible that would be undesirable for the farmers. Last night we had the interesting exhibition of the hon. member for Drayton, who has claimed that this thing should be non-political, saying, "Why not absorb the present organisations into one harmonious whole?" The hon. member knows that most of those organisations are political, and it is one of the fears of his life at the present time that the farmers are breaking away from the Country party, and will leave certain members of the Country party high and dry. The farmers, recognising that their interests do not lie with Turbot street or Roma street, are tending to swing in behind the Labour party, realising where their interests do lie. It is rather significant. Hon. members opposite say they stand for this Bill. One prominent member of the Country party has always told this House, in season and out of season, that he stands for payment by results.

Mr. MOORE: That is the way the farmer is paid.

Mr. BULCOCK: Recognising that, and that the farmer was suffering from economic

difficulties, the Government introduced the Bill to get over those difficulties. There was no more insistent or clamorous member for this Bill than the hon. member who interjects.

Mr. MOORE: Quite right.

Mr. BULCOCK: There was no more clamorous member for this Bill than the hon. member who occupies the seat next to the hon. member for Aubigny. There was no one more clamorous for a canary-seed pool than the hon. member for Pittsworth. The whole of the hon. members opposite were in favour of a wheat pool.

Mr. MOORE: Of course.

Mr. BULCOCK: How can the hon. member for Oxley, who is associated with the hon. member for Aubigny, claim to be a member of the Country party, when he says he believes in payment by results, and the Opposition want to nullify the doctrine of payment by results, by having legislation introduced interfering with the law of supply and demand? Therefore, the hon. member for Oxley is in his wrong place.

Mr. MOORE: It is not interfering with it at all.

Mr. BULCOCK: Of course, it is interfering with it. The hon. member wants to advocate the policy of payment by results, and desires legislation to be introduced to interfere with that principle.

Mr. MOORE: We do not interfere with it. You do not understand it at all.

Mr. BULCOCK: If I had as little knowledge as the hon. member has, I would be ashamed to speak in this House. Some time ago the members of the Country party were clamouring in favour of a boycott that had been instituted against this Government. At that time, when the Government were unable to obtain money, when the Government's credit, because of sinister influences, was cut off on the other side of the world, there were none more vitriolic in their condemnation of the Government than the members of the Country party sitting opposite. We can generally find parallels in these things, and we find it in the State of North Dakota. The farmers in that State, recognising that their interests did not lie with the middlemen, formed an association, and ultimately were successful in gaining the reins of power in the State legislature. When they got there they found that the means of distribution and transportation were closed against them by those self-same middlemen, who were taking 75 per cent. of the total value of the farmers' crops. It came as a matter of policy that they should gain control of the means of transportation, and that they should gain control of the mills and elevators; and, in order to do that, they put a six-million dollar bond on the market. In the United States the banks are the ordinary money-lenders, and the banks refused to handle this bond. They instituted a boycott against it, but the farmers' representatives in that district, recognising that they were fighting for the interests of the farmers, did not back down. They did not cry "Hold, enough!" when they found they were in the jaws of the profiteer. We can claim that it is a parallel with our action in Queensland. The legislature of North Dakota fought and won through just the same as we fought and won

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through. The time will come when it will be necessary to face this question of the elimination of the middlemen in view of the attitude in connection with that boycott; and, when we consider the attitude of the Country party when that boycott was in operation here, is it not feasible to suggest that the Labour party is the logical and natural party to support the farmers when they clash with the big vested capitalistic interests, with which they must clash as time goes on. I should like to speak on the very great necessity for encouraging agricultural knowledge and agricultural production in this State. I have before me a table showing the expenditure on agriculture in the various States of Australia and one or two other countries in the Old World. In each case the figures are based on the most recent departmental figures available. The figures for Western Australia are two years behind the rest, as the figures are taken from the 1919-20 Estimates. These are the latest figures that I could find in the library when I was collecting these data—

State.	Amount Spent.		Population (in round figures).	Cost per 1,000 of Population.	Area under Crop per 1,000 of Population.		Amount Spent Per Acre to Encourage Agriculture.
	£	s. d.			£	Acres.	
Queensland	133,823	3 7	750,000	179	777	4 7	
Victoria ...	235,113	3 9	1,250,000	187	2,674	1 4	
N. S. Wales	502,844	4 9	2,100,000	237	1,884	3 1	
S. Australia	194,204	3 10	491,000	191	6,333	0 7	
W. Australia	57,201	3 5	330,000	170	4,949	0 8	
Un't'd States (1919-20)	...	...	...	68	...	...	
Germany (1910)	...	...	...	63	...	...	
Un'ed Kingdom	...	...	...	60	...	...	

It will be seen from this table that Queensland spends more per acre under crop in the encouragement of agriculture than any other State in the Commonwealth. It is significant that New South Wales comes second. I took these figures from the Estimates presented by the Dooley Government when the Labour party were in power in New South Wales. The fact that Queensland comes first and the New South Wales Labour Government second in the amount of money spent on agriculture seems to be a complete refutation of the statements so frequently made that the Labour party has not had the courage to spend money to develop our primary industries. In the case of South Australia, I have deducted the sum of £96,000 from the estimate, as this amount is voted to finance their produce agency and marketing scheme, and does not legitimately fall within the ambit of expenditure on agriculture. Victoria has been held up to us as a State which spends a lot of money on agriculture, but it only spends 1s. 4d. per acre, while the great Barwell Government in South Australia only spend 7d. per acre per annum to encourage agriculture.

This Bill is at least a portion of the soviet system which is satisfactory to hon. members opposite. It provides for local councils, district councils, and a grand council. You have there all the organisation that the Soviet Government have. I hope the hon. member for Drayton and certain other hon. gentlemen

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who are so adverse to the soviet system will not find that a flaw in the Bill. When this Bill becomes law we hope that it will provide a fairer return to the producer. It will also create the power to eliminate the middleman. It also provides for the organisation of agriculture in Queensland. It means greater efficiency, and, finally, greater prosperity for the whole of the community. This will be accomplished by greater efficiency in the agricultural industry. It will give the producer and the manufacturer of butter and cheese access to markets that they have not access to at the present time. Last, but not least, I believe that a consolidated national organisation will have to make another move, and establish rural credits. As things stand at the present time, we all recognise that the farmers are frequently compelled to allow the local storekeepers to be their bankers from year to year; and I am given to understand that the interest which the storekeepers are charging for the ration bill for the year, to be liquidated out of the ensuing crop, is in many instances as high as 20 per cent. I hope the time is not very far distant when we shall be able to establish a system of rural credits. I believe that it would be impossible to establish a State system of rural credits so long as we have industry which is not organised under one head; but under one head I think there will be no difficulty in establishing a ring of rural credit banks. It would save the farmer from the exploitation to which he is undoubtedly subject because he is unable to finance himself satisfactorily from month to month.

Speaking generally, I suppose that some faults will be found in this Bill, and perhaps it will be necessary to introduce some amendments. When the Bill is passed and is put into operation, if there are any faults in it we must amend it so that it will do what we desire. The Bill must be considered as a Bill for the entire community, not as a Bill that can be or should be made the football of party politics. After all, it is necessary that the farming community should occupy a higher plane than that of party politics. I do not think the producing industries can ever gain those things which they hope to gain unless they have a non-partisan agricultural council which will inquire into the problems with which they are confronted, and, having inquired into those problems, legitimately and honestly strive for a solution.

Just before I conclude I want to congratulate the Minister, or those persons responsible for the drafting of the Bill, upon the very simple and efficient way in which it is drafted. I hope it is the forerunner of a number of Bills drafted in a similar simple fashion. To the layman having no knowledge of these matters, it is difficult to understand some of the Bills that come before the House; but I am quite satisfied that you can place this Bill in the hands of any farmer and allow him to study it for a while, and then he will be able to tell you as much about it as the expert and be able to point out its weaknesses, if there are any weaknesses, and call attention to its good points.

Mr. WARREN: Do you see any weaknesses in it?

Mr. BULCOCK: I am quite satisfied with the Bill as it stands before the House, but I recognise that two heads are better than one, and that a collection of heads is better than two, and I believe it is possible that hon.

members opposite will find weaknesses in it. If they can, I know that hon. members on this side of the House will do their best to remedy the defects; but, if the weaknesses which they are going to find are the weaknesses they pointed out last night, it is quite obvious that they are but shadow-sparring, and they will not be able to improve on the measure as it stands. This Bill marks a new era in the agricultural industry, and the beginning of better days for the farmer, and I wish him luck with it.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I was very pleased at the Laidley proposals of the Premier, and naturally we have been looking with patience for the Bill itself in order that we might ascertain just what this organisation is going to be. I am going to support the Bill. At the same time, I have not much time for the attacks by the Premier on the Country party when he visited country centres to launch the scheme. The Bill is not quite in conformity in detail with the scheme the Premier outlined. Nobody can cavil at the good things he claimed the measure would provide, and within its four walls we must look for the possibility of securing those good things to the primary producer. One great trouble is that the Bill limits the co-ordination of effort to the State, and that it does not give to the primary producers of Queensland the opportunity of becoming part of an organisation which is essential in their interests—an organisation which can extend itself throughout the Commonwealth and so bring the interests of the various industries together. Until that comes about we cannot get the best results in Australia in any of our rural industries. To-day we have in the different States people in the same industry working against each other's interests, fighting each other in various markets, whereas we should have an organisation combining industrially all the interests of the producer of a particular commodity right throughout Australia.

The Bill is not a purely co-operative measure. Throughout the Bill and in the Premier's statement the word "co-operation" is used very extensively; but this is far from being a co-operative measure. The Department of Agriculture is to be replaced to a certain extent by an advisory board. The truth is that the Department of Agriculture, under the administration of the present or past Governments, has not fulfilled those duties for which it was founded, and we find we are to have a system of experts in the various branches of the department, the charges of which will be payable partly by the primary producer himself. We find also that this Department of Agriculture is to be housed at the Trades Hall—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is wrong.

Mr. CORSER: A building which some little time ago was bought by the State for £15,700. If this is so, I hope that the building is well fumigated before they get in.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Let me tell you now that they are not going to be housed in the Trades Hall.

Mr. CORSER: I am glad the Minister has amended that suggestion.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: What is wrong with the Trades Hall? It is a splendid building.

Mr. CORSER: It is. Why did you get out of it?

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: You know all about that.

Mr. CORSER: I do know all about it, and so do the Government. They wanted a new building and a good site, and they got £15,700 to do it with. Although the Government are bringing forward this scheme and are telling the primary producers that it will improve the prices of their commodities, they at the same time keep the Commissioner of Prices in his position. While he is there to cut down the prices of commodities produced by the primary producer, where are we going to get full value from the Council of Agriculture which is to be elected under the Bill?

The character of the administration of the Bill depends upon the Government in power, and we must make some amendments which will take away from any Government the rights the Bill provides for them. Certain amendments, highly democratic and in the interests of the primary producer, are essential, and I hope the Bill will be improved in those particulars. I am personally happy to support the Bill, and, when it becomes law and the primary producers of Queensland want amendments of our Acts and in our administration—when, for instance, they want freehold instead of perpetual leasehold—and they ask for them through their Council of Agriculture, I trust that a sympathetic Government will give them.

Certain hon. members of the Opposition who have spoken on this measure have been criticised by Government members, and have been told that they are killing the Bill with faint praise. Do not hon. gentlemen who are sitting behind the Government appreciate the fairness of the Opposition in criticising the Bill and in supporting it also?

Mr. DUNSTAN: Some of them condemn it.

Mr. CORSER: I am going to deal with the Bill as I see it. We have heard from hon. members on the front Government bench and from the people in the cities the cry to the young men to go on the land. I trust we shall be able to introduce a Bill which, when it comes into operation, will result in our hearing from the people in the country the cry to come on the land. We shall then know that to some extent those people are satisfied with being on the land. I see in the clauses of the Bill great possibilities of good. I see also very great and grave dangers, and the dangers predominate when the administration of the measure would be in the hands of a hostile Government.

Mr. FERRICKS: Are you going to support the Bill?

Mr. CORSER: I certainly am. I hope to amend it so that it will not be dangerous in the hands of the Minister. It makes possible the objective of the Country party. It makes possible, also, the application of the Labour platform to the primary industries. Hidden within its clauses are some very dangerous principles—hidden very deeply, too. We must try and extract these fangs.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: A regular mantrap.

Mr. CORSER: We must make them innocent clauses, in the interests of the primary producer, who should get all our consideration and assistance. This Bill, hon. gentlemen opposite claim, is in accord with the Labour platform; the objective of which is obtaining for all workers the full reward of their industry.

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The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must keep to the principles of the Bill.

Mr. CORSER: I will not get away from the principles of the Bill. I was saying the objective of the Labour platform is the obtaining for all workers of the full reward of their industry.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must connect his remarks with the Bill.

Mr. CORSER: The Bill is in accord with the Labour party's platform. Hon. gentlemen will be pleased at my reading those few lines. They are—

"The full reward of their industry by collective ownership and democratic control of collectively used agencies of production, distribution, and exchange."

That means socialism. The policy of the Labour party is socialism, and I say there is the possibility of carrying this Bill through in accordance with the Labour platform.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: "The full reward of their industry."

Mr. CORSER: "By collectively owned agencies" is what I say is not in accordance with our platform.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Do not the farmers collectively control the butter factories?

Mr. CORSER: Yes—farmers' collective ownership—not collective ownership by State. Do the workers in the city own the industries of the primary producer in the country? Are they to be the people who are to control those industries?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is not suggested.

Mr. CORSER: It is. The hon. gentleman claims it is in accordance with his platform. I have read the Labour platform.

Mr. KIRWAN: You do not understand it.

Mr. CORSER: I will read the new objective—"The socialisation of industry, production, distribution, and exchange." Will the hon. gentleman say he does not stand for that?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You do not stand for the present method of distribution.

Mr. CORSER: I stand for co-operative distribution.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Is not that a step towards socialism?

Mr. CORSER: No, because it is controlled by those who are engaged in the industry; and socialism is controlled by those who wish to dominate all industry and are interested in no industry. I claim that this Bill should be absolutely and solely in the hands of those who are engaged in their industry. They can best control that industry by a method for which the Bill does not make provision—co-operative handling, marketing, and distribution. Do not say that it has not been advocated. When the State Produce Agency Bill was before this House in 1917 I am reported ("Hansard," page 906) to have made this statement—

"If the Government wanted to assist the farmers, the way to do it was to enable them to handle their produce by extending the co-operative system in such a way as would assist them to dispose of their produce. The farmers were the men who needed assistance to-day more than any group of people in Queensland."

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And again—

"Under this great co-operative system we will not only be comfortable farmers, but we will also be able to establish our agencies and handle our own stuff and tranship to other markets of the world, which we ourselves will be quite capable of finding for ourselves—the fruit and vegetables, tinned or otherwise; our meats, our hides, our tallow, our agricultural produce. We will see that, in time of plenty, the maize grower receives fair remuneration for his produce—and if anybody is going to store it, it will not be the Government, it will be the co-operative societies. So, when there is a glut, his produce may be held for the benefit of the grower."

That was advocated in 1917, and has been advocated by many members on this side times out of number. The Government have never taken any notice, they have never adopted any of our suggestions, and they will tell the people that we never made them.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Why didn't you advocate that when you and your father sat behind the Denham Government?

Mr. CORSER: I have advocated it ever since I came into this House.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: With no results.

Mr. CORSER: If we had had a fair roll at last election we would have had results by this. I am not going to say that this Bill is a "double-header"; but I say it is capable of being used for the advantage of either of the two great sections of the people of Queensland. It can be used for the advantage of the so-called capitalist—the man who owns his farm; the man who has gone out into the backblocks, and from the scrub and the forest made for himself a home after years of hard labour. The man who holds a lease or a freehold is to-day termed a capitalist. The confiscationists can also be assisted—the men who believe in State ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange. We must withdraw from the Bill those objectionable features.

The Government claim that under this Bill they are out to assist the primary producer. Hon. members on this side of the House only desire to have it amended in order to make that absolutely certain. The Secretary for Agriculture knows that he, with other hon. members opposite, has stated that they must keep their minds on the objective of the Labour party, and at the Trades Hall he said that objective is production for use and not for profit. How can we expect the primary producer to obtain all the advantages if we are going to allow the Bill to be administered by people claiming that the objective of the Labour party is "production for use and not for profit?" What is the man outside struggling for if it is not for profit? Why is he using up the best days of his life and those of his family, if it is not for profit? We hope the Bill is going to give him profit as well as a fair living. He must get a fair profit to enable others to go out and do the same. You cannot expect anybody to do anything except for profit. We claim that, by co-operative means, we can best bring together the various sections of our agricultural community. The Bill provides

for the bringing together into one big union of all the various agricultural interests.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What clause is that?

Mr. CORSER: Clause 4—the clause dealing with the Council of Agriculture. That is the dominating body. The Minister will recognise that the principle provides that the supreme council shall be constituted by representatives from district councils, who are not to be elected from one particular industry but from a conglomeration of agricultural interests.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Not necessarily.

Mr. CORSER: Unless the whole district is a banana or cane district, that is going to obtain. I am speaking from the point of view of my own district, where there are varied agricultural developments, and where practically every kind of agriculture is carried on. The Council of Agriculture will be composed of twenty to twenty-five members, including five members appointed by the Government and including the Minister himself. We object to the provision that six shall form a quorum, because many matters might be decided by those six gentlemen living in Brisbane, and there would be no recognition of the other representatives at all. We will endeavour to amend that. These twenty to twenty-five men are going to control the destinies of the butter, cheese, wheat, maize, fruit, cotton, pig-raising, and all other rural industries. The scheme which is advocated with no small degree of success by the Country party is the development of sectional interests, so that those in an industry shall control the industry in which they are interested. That is the best control. It is no good for a maize farmer to try to control the butter interests, and it is no good constituting a board of men and saying to them, "You are to control the butter industry," when they might be fruit, maize, cotton, or timber men, or pig-raisers. If the Minister will accept an amendment which will be of the greatest advantage, I would suggest that he should kindly consider sectional interests, and try and bring them together more for the management of their various sections of agriculture, so that the maize people throughout Queensland can meet as maize people, and they can have their district council or their supreme council to deal with maize interests, the same as the butter people now have under their co-operative management and their co-operative associations. We want control of industry by those engaged therein. We all agree that the person who produces an article and his associates in that industry are the people who will look after it best in the interests of the industry. Would the Labour party say that the wharf lumpers' business should be managed by railway employees, or that the bricklayers' interests should be managed by the painters? No. They have their sectional interests, and they meet and have conferences of their sectional bodies. Although they may be combined into one big union, they still preserve their identity. You could best help the primary producers by giving them the sectional organisations to enable them to look after their individual interests. I offer this suggestion, hoping to help the Minister. Whilst we advocate these things in the interests of the farmer, and whilst we advocate the creation of co-operative institutions, we find that the

Government are not so favourable. Mr. T. L. Jones, ex-member of the Legislative Council, stated, according to the "Hansard" of 13th July, 1915—

"Co-operation advocated by the Country party is class co-operation just the same as trades unionism is class co-operation; neither takes cognisance of the consumer. This is the vital point. Legislation directed to the nationalisation of industry and the establishment of State enterprises recognises that vital point. That is true co-operation."

Those are the sentiments of the Labour party. I notice that the hon. member for Gympie said, according to "Hansard" for 29th July, 1915—

"The strange thing about the farmer, I regret to say, is that while he is working in practice for all the State socialism he can get he is continually denouncing the principle of national enterprise."

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Hear, hear!

Mr. CORSER: I hope "Hansard" will record the hon. gentleman's "hear, hear."

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Of course they will. They always do.

Mr. CORSER: The report in "Hansard" further states—

"This Government wants to see the prosperity of the farmer, but I hold that if the farmer is going to get all the State socialism he wants—and I hope he does get it—it is only fair to this Government that the national Legislature and the national Administration shall have some power in controlling that industry in the interests of every other portion of the State. I trust that before the three years of this Parliament are over, the farmers, instead of having a separate party, just recently severed from its old Liberal associations, will be on this side of the House in full accord with the Labour programme and with their eyes opened to the virtues of national self-government and the principles that are contained in the Labour objective—the nationalisation of all means of production, distribution, and exchange."

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: A very good speech.

Mr. CORSER: If we are going to make this Bill what it should be, we should give the full control to the primary producer, and we should take from the Bill any political recognition at all and the idea of nationalising the industry. We should delete from the Bill the provision that the Secretary for Agriculture shall be the chairman of the council, and we should take from it, too, the large proportion of representatives to be appointed by the Government.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You will have to wait a long time before you get that.

Mr. CORSER: All the farmers throughout the State of Queensland are allowed only fourteen or nineteen representatives, while the Government are going to appoint six—a Minister of the Crown, and five other nominees.

Mr. COLLINS: Experts.

Mr. CORSER: You can call them what you like. The experts of the department, according to the Bill, are available to the

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Council of Agriculture, as they should be, but there is no reason why there should be six Government nominees on the council.

Mr. PEASE: When you get over here you can alter it.

Mr. CORSER: We are going to alter it. I am supporting the Bill because I believe we shall soon be over there. I have not attempted to bring the political business into this matter. I have tried to show the difference between the two sections. The Secretary for Agriculture, I am sorry to say, said, "I ever we get this council we will bring down other men to say what the farmers want, so that the Country party will not be speaking for the farmers." We have also the statement of the Secretary for Railways. I put a question to him with regard to a reduction in freights, and he said that such requests must come through the advisory board, so as to deprive Parliament of the representation that it should get through members who are elected from country districts; and we have further evidence of it, too. According to the "Farmers' Gazette" of 25th April, 1922—

"Mr. J. Purcell, a member of the advisory board of the Queensland Council of Agriculture, recently appointed, advised that the bacon industry should take the first opportunity of getting on to the council, for it was from that council that all the recommendations would have to go to the Government. It was the only body that the Government would recognise for suggestions of legislation."

Meaning to say, as was stated by the hon. member for Barcoo, that all the principles of the machinery of the Soviet were in this Bill.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Who said that?

Mr. CORSER: The hon. member for Barcoo.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You should be careful not to misquote him.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. member for Barcoo is quite correct.

Mr. BULCOCK: Are you going to vote for or against the Bill?

Mr. CORSER: I am supporting the Bill.

Mr. BULCOCK: Then you believe in the Soviet system?

Mr. CORSER: I am telling you that the principles in the Bill are, in some respects, in accordance with our scheme; and also that in the Bill we have the Labour platform. The hon. member is quite correct. This is what the "Railway Advocate" says—

"AUSTRALIAN WORKERS' UNION.

"(1) We hold that there is a class struggle in society, and that the struggle is caused by the capitalist class owning the means of production, to which the working class must have access in order to live. The working class produce all value. The greater the share which the capitalist class appropriates the less remains for the working class; therefore the interests of those two classes are in constant conflict.

"(2) There can be no peace as long as want and hunger are found among millions of working people, and the few who constitute the employing class have all the good things of life.

"(3) Between these two classes the struggle must continue until capitalism

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is abolished. Capitalism can only be abolished by the workers uniting in one class-conscious economic organisation to take and hold the means of production by revolutionary, industrial, and political action. 'Revolutionary action' means action to secure a complete change—namely, the abolition of capitalistic ownership of the means of production—whether privately or through the State—and the establishment in its place of social ownership by the whole community. Long experience has proved the hopeless futility of existing political and industrial methods."

The SPEAKER: Order! I have already called the hon. member to order, and I now warn him that, if he continues in that strain, I will ask him to resume his seat. The hon. member's remarks are not in any way relative to the Bill now before the Chamber.

Mr. CORSER: I am merely answering the hon. member for Barcoo.

Mr. BULCOCK: You are merely misrepresenting the hon. member for Barcoo.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CORSER: The statement I made is from the "Railway Advocate." The Minister says he is not using this scheme politically. Now I will read the "Northern Sensation," which is very appropriate, and which appears in the "Courier" to-day. I did not want to bring these things in, but the hon. member for Barcoo referred to the organisation they have under the Soviet system, and I was explaining it in connection with the One Big Union, as it appears in the "Railway Advocate." Now I will give something dealing with the Bill itself from to-day's "Courier," which I will read to give the Minister an opportunity to answer it—

"NORTHERN SENSATION."

"INTERESTING REVELATION.

"The Appointment of Organisers.

"Cairns, 13th July.

"A sensation has been created here by a revelation made by Mr. Thomas Walmsley, a prominent resident of the Tableland, and a director of the Atherton Butter Company, in regard to the Government appointments under the new Producers' Association scheme. In the course of an interview, he declared—'A great deal has been said for and against Mr. Theodore's scheme, and since its inception in March I have discussed the matter with many of our dairy farmers. The majority consider it only a hypnotical move to dope the farmer, and particularly the dairy farmer, so that Mr. Theodore may gain votes at the next election, thereby securing for himself and his party a further lease of political life. But as Mr. Theodore stressed the importance of the new movement being free from politics, and decided against linking up with the existing Farmers' Association, whereby the least suspicion of political influence might creep in, I myself was prepared to give him the benefit of a death-bed repentance, as I really believed he desired to retrace his steps and make good for all the sins of commission and omission he and his party have been responsible for in the past towards the farmer, particularly as regards commandeering and price-fixing stunts of dairy products. I am afraid I

am doomed to disappointment, for a little happening here recently leads me to view the whole proposed organising scheme as a sham, delusion, and a snare, and nothing but a political organising stunt. On 15th June, 1922, Mr. James Purcell, who is vice-president of Mr. Theodore's Agricultural Council, visited the Atherton Tableland in quest of a suitable man to be appointed later as a sectional organiser and commissioner, a Tableland gentleman, who is supposed to be free from political bias, to recommend a suitable man for the position, such a person to be above political bias. The recommendation was to be forwarded by Mr. Purcell not later than 25th June, but about two days after Mr. Purcell's departure, and before the Tableland gentleman had had time to give the matter serious consideration, Mr. Marvey C. Jurd, of Millaa Millaa, appeared on the scene. He produced a wire which he had received from Mr. Gillies to the effect that he (Mr. Jurd) had been appointed organiser, and he wished to know from the Tableland gentleman the nature of his duties. As he was unable to be enlightened, he was referred to Brisbane. A day or two later the gentleman in question also received a wire from Mr. Gillies confirming the appointment, the vice-president of the council evidently being only a stalking-horse in the game. Now, with all due respect to Mr. Jurd, who is a very excellent gentleman, I believe it impossible to find on the Tableland a stronger Labour supporter than Mr. Jurd. In fact, he is one of Mr. Gillies' warmest supporters at election time. Mr. Walmsley advised his brother farmers to be wary, for they were going to be asked to subscribe financially to an organisation that, in his (Mr. Walmsley's) opinion, was nothing more nor less than an organising campaign on behalf of Labour. If Messrs. Theodore and Gillies really believed it was good for the farmer to organise on non-political lines, why did they not recommend the industrial unions to do likewise?"

The Government have had their say ever since the Premier launched his scheme, but the Opposition have not had their say.

[5 p.m.] The Government have had the "Daily Mail" coming out every day with descriptions of their scheme, with big headings—a lot of them, no doubt, paid for by their publicity agents, and written and published by a man paid by the Government at the rate of £600 a year to boost the scheme, but not to boost the farmers' interests. Why did the Government not bring the Bill in last session to give an opportunity to the Opposition of amending it in the interests of the farmer? They leave it to the recess, and talk about it, and pay men to write it up in the papers, and the papers publish their statements day after day without ever seeing the Bill. When we come here to give our views they endeavour to stop us, and claim that we have some ulterior motive in our desire to improve the Bill in the interests of the primary producers. In this scheme there is much that is in accordance with our platform and our suggestions; but there is also hidden in the scheme the Labour platform and principles—the socialisation of industry, and the control of the means of production, distribution, and exchange. That is where

I offer objection to the scheme, and offer to help the Government to amend it, and I hope the Minister will give a satisfactory answer to the statement from the Tableland, because we do not even want one appointment to be questioned. I have been through my electorate, and have told the farmers there that although there were many farmers against the Bill, I still hoped that when the Bill came before the House we would be able to make it of value to them. I said, "If you can get some assistance out of it, you are entitled to all the assistance you can get; but I hope and trust that the Bill will not be used for political purposes." When the Government called the representatives together at the conference, the Premier and the Secretary for Agriculture—members of the Government—were there, but no member of the Opposition was invited. We were not allowed to go. We rang up from this building to find out whether we could be present, stating that we had one member here who represented a co-operative institution in his district, and that we wanted him to be at the conference, and we were informed—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Who informed you?

Mr. CORSER: We were informed by the private secretary that the Premier did not desire Opposition members to take any part in the proceedings, as it might give the conference a political significance.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is absolutely incorrect.

Mr. CORSER: I will give the hon. gentleman the proof.

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

Mr. WALKER (*Cooroora*): I recognise at the outset the desirability of bringing in a Bill like this. Listening to the speeches of hon. members, I am reminded of the many so-called experts who were employed by the Department of Agriculture many years ago. These so-called experts were sent all over the place. They were men with theoretical knowledge derived from books, but without practical experience.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What Government was it?

Mr. WALKER: They were appointed by past Governments, and have been kept on by the present Government.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: If we had put them off, you would have said we were victimising them.

Mr. WALKER: I venture to say that, if these men had been practical experts with a knowledge of the agricultural industry, there would have been no occasion for the introduction of this Bill, or, at any rate, it would not have been urgent. I have gone very carefully over the Bill. I have been connected with the co-operative movement for a long time, having been a director of a co-operative company for something like seventeen years, and naturally one must have a grasp of something which he is engaged in. It is deplorable to hear hon. members opposite saying that members on this side are not farmers, and are not true to the co-operative movement. It is a mistake to take up that attitude. There are men on this side who have devoted the greater part of their lives to trying to develop this particular line of work, and they have built up some of the most successful organisations in Queensland. If we

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compare the personnel of hon. members on this side with that of hon. members opposite, we shall find that there are men on this side who have put £100 or £200 each into co-operative movements, while I doubt whether any money has been put into these concerns by hon. members opposite. To show the class of people the Country party consists of in comparison with the party opposite—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Do you think a member of the Council of Agriculture ought to know all about dairying?

Mr. WALKER: I think that will have a good deal to do with the success of the council. A farmer has to have brains to make a success of his calling, and he should be able to use his knowledge and experience to good purpose as a member of the council. We hear that the farmer can do this and that, but that he cannot run his own commercial business. We can get farmers just as well able to manage commercial affairs as the present Government are.

Mr. McCORMACK: Are those men farmers?

Mr. WALKER: Of course, they are farmers. You have only to look at members of the Opposition to see that they are mostly farmers, and have made a success of agriculture. We have heard a good deal of talk about the Labour party's platform and the nationalisation of industry. I do not care what the Labour party have got in their platform. This is a good Bill, and I am going to support it, if it is amended in the way indicated by the Opposition the other night. The Bill needs to be amended, but there is no need for us to bring in side issues as to what the faults of the Labour party are. We know that they have not been friends of the farmer up to the present time, but they have now brought in a Bill to amend the Land Tax Act, which will reduce the taxation on farmers. If the Government pass this Bill through in the terms of the speech of the Premier, and as indicated by the Secretary for Agriculture last night, it is going to be all right. It has been stated that hon. members on this side were not invited to the conference. It is true that they were not invited as a political body, but I had an invitation to go as chairman of the Gympie Co-operative Company. Unfortunately, I was urgently needed in a certain part of the electorate, and I had to send a man down here to take my place. Had hon. members on this side been in responsible positions in co-operative concerns, there would have been nothing to stop their respective boards from electing them as delegates to the conference. I was particularly pleased when the Premier said that he would not allow politics to enter into this matter. Now, that spirit wants to be carried out in this House. We do not want this party business going on, and I would like to see the Premier get up to-night and say that this is going to be a non-party matter. If he does that, it will relieve the minds of many people. The Premier made a statement to the people at Laidley and Gatton, and he then said it was not a political matter. At that time it was wise for him to make that statement, because his audiences consisted of farmers. If he continues on those lines, then the scheme is going to be a success. If, however, the Premier or the Secretary for Agriculture brings in politics, or allows political questions

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to be discussed, then the scheme is going to fail.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: If you are going to bring in politics, there is no need to bring in party.

Mr. WALKER: Neither politics nor party should be brought in. We should treat all matters relating to the man on the land on non-political lines. We know that once a thing is decided in caucus, all the members opposite are bound by that decision and they have to support it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What is the rule in your party?

Mr. WALKER: I will vote for a thing every time if I think I am right, no matter what the party thinks. That is my position. I would knock politics completely out of this matter altogether. A lot of criticism has been levelled at the men put on the council. Personally I do not care who is chosen for the council—whether they belong to the Country party, the Nationalist party, or the Labour party. So long as they carry out the work of the council, that is all we want. I reckon you have good men on the council belonging to all shades of political opinion. You do not want to appoint anyone who has any political prejudice, and you do not want to have any discussions on the council as to the land tenure—whether it should be leasehold or freehold or anything like that. You should cut that right out.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You cannot ask a man what his politics are.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You usually know.

Mr. WALKER: I would like the Minister to remember that we have men connected with dairy companies who are shareholders but not suppliers, and their advice has not been altogether in the interests of the companies nor of the suppliers. They usually want a dividend declared on the capital invested. I think that you should tighten up the definition of "primary producer." If a man owns a farm and describes himself as a farmer, is he to be allowed to sit on the council?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Read the definition of "primary producer."

Mr. WALKER: It is very hard to know what will constitute a primary producer. I know there are men on the council to-day who are going all over Queensland in the interests of the scheme, and they have not been on a farm for the last ten years. They are agents and middlemen. I know that to be true, although I will not mention their names.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I think they were elected by the farmers.

Mr. WALKER: Must a man who is appointed to represent a particular district be a farmer at the time of his election? I consider that we have a particularly fine country in Queensland. There is not a finer country in the world. We have all kinds of natural resources, and we have hundreds of thousands of acres of land suitable for growing anything. We have all descriptions of agriculture, and we have every facility for growing cereals, cotton, and many other things. We have proved that we can grow all these things successfully. It is a good dairying country, in fact right along the North Coast the country is so good for dairying that it carries one beast to the acre. That gives you some idea of the worth of our land. We have a

lot of good sheep-raising country on our coastal lands, and I regret that the sheep industry is not represented on the council. In addition we have a climate which is second to none. We have sunshine almost every day, and we have a rainfall which will grow crops almost in every part of Queensland almost all the year round. Is not a country like Queensland well worth catering for? To make a success of the scheme, it must not be applied to Queensland alone. I hope the result of this scheme will be such that it will be extended to the other States. If we carry out the scheme successfully and we get the co-operation of the other States, then it is going to be a good thing for the man on the land. That is a point that we must not lose sight of in connection with this matter. It is no use trying to confine it to Queensland. We must get the other States to bear their share of the burden in providing markets all over the world. I recognise that a number of farmers look on this Bill with a certain amount of suspicion on account of the treatment meted out to them by the Government in the past. Hon. members opposite are continually talking about the fact that the Government released the farmer from the railway guarantee—but I might point out that it was the Kidston Government that introduced the railway guarantee principle, and at that time the Government were supported by the whole of the Labour party. The Philp party were in opposition and they voted against the introduction of the guarantee principle. The only member of the Labour party who voted against the introduction of the guarantee principle on that occasion was the present hon. member for Paddington. The farmers must find extra markets for their products. The farmers and their wives, and their families also, are sweated to a great degree in producing stuff which is not of a saleable value at all. We have not gone ahead in agriculture as we should have done. There are thousands of acres of land on the North Coast line, whether owned privately or otherwise, which should be under intense cultivation at the present time. But we have given the farmers no encouragement, because we have not found markets in the old country or in the East. I wonder why our Agents-General do not do more in making the farmers better acquainted with the markets in other parts of the world. The Government have not done as much as they might have done in the direction of finding markets in the East and elsewhere. Frequently the farmer produces a lot of stuff at a loss. I notice that at the present time our interest bill amounts to nearly £4,000,000 per annum. There are two ways of paying that bill. One is by going in for increased production, and the other is by increased taxation. To my mind we should go in for increased production, and I honestly believe that this Bill will be a step in that direction. I have heard it stated that all companies have not been represented on the council. I regret that the Minister left out the bacon industry. Perhaps that was a slip.

**THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE:** It was a dairy conference to deal with the dairying business, because the industry was in a bad way, and the farmers had to be called to the conference quickly.

**MR. WALKER:** It is not too late now to include the bacon industry. There are two co-operative bacon factories, one on the Downs and one at Murarrie, with a turnover

of approximately £300,000 a year. We have in the electorate of the Secretary for Agriculture areas growing hundreds of thousands of bushels of maize, and that commodity can be used to provide the necessary food to enable us to get extra supplies for the bacon factories. There is no industry in Queensland that can be extended so much as the bacon industry, and the market is particularly good, in spite of the fact that prices are low.

Dealing more particularly with the dairying industry, I would like to say that we are a very well organised body. Remarks to a contrary effect have been passed on the other side, but in Queensland we have all the co-operative companies organised to such an extent that we are unanimous in the belief that we should work together. We have formed a pool which, from its inauguration in September to March last, has been responsible for putting into the pockets of the primary producers in Queensland £94,706 over and above the Victorian prices. We have an enormous scope in Queensland for the dairying industry. We can go right out towards the West, practically another 150 miles, and still tap very excellent dairy land. Look at the future we have in that direction. What is more, Russia and Siberia will not produce for the next four or five years, and, on the whole, things have never looked brighter, so far as the butter market in England is concerned, than at the present time. You can come to only one conclusion—that Queensland has a particularly bright outlook. We only need a little help—I do not mean financial help, but help to get over the quarrelling amongst ourselves.

**THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE:** That is what we are trying to bring about.

**MR. WALKER:** We want to bring all the factories into line. We are all purely co-operative. We are not concerned of profit; our sole object is to distribute to those who supply our raw material the full market value of their products, less working expenses. The time may come when this Council of Agriculture may be represented in the old country by somebody to look after our products there, and I think the time has come already when the whole of our export butter should be put through one floor. That is a big departure from the sentiments of the ordinary advocate of the butter industry, but I say it sincerely. I have here a table, which I want to give to the House, of figures respecting production, export, and commission—

1. Total production, 1921-1922—  
Estimated at 1,057,650 boxes.  
Value, estimated at 160s. per cwt.,  
£4,228,200.
2. Quantity exported—  
739,450 boxes overseas.  
42,000 boxes interstate.  
Queensland consumption, 275,600  
boxes.
3. Value, averaged at 160s. f.o.b.,  
£2,957,800.
4. Average rate of commission—  
3 per cent. on estimated c.i.f. price.  
180s.
5. Total amount of commission—  
(a) 3 per cent. export ... £99,657  
(b) 3 per cent. local ... 33,072  
(c) 3 per cent. interstate ... 5,040

£137,769

I venture to say that, if the whole of the butter exported went through one floor, with

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due regard to economy of administration, the Queensland dairying industry would save £50,000 a year. Unfortunately, there are agents all over Queensland—the number running into dozens—with commercial influence over many of the directors, and I honestly believe that compulsion should be brought to bear, to make the latter sell in such a way that we can get away from the parochial practices which exist.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You mean that we should compel co-operative companies to sell through co-operative channels? That is very drastic.

Mr. WALKER: I honestly believe we should do that. There is nothing to prevent the factories from coming together, putting five members on a board of control, and forming a distributing company here of our own—we need not have anything to do with any company already in existence—and we could cut out all those men who are living on the dairymen at the present time. That would save at least £50,000 a year.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member for Bulimba would not like that.

Mr. WALKER: There are other things we ought to do. We ought to see that under our own organisation we have a uniform system of payment. There is an enormous amount of petty jealousy between the different factories and quite a lot of unnecessary competition, when there should be none except in respect of efficiency in the factory. We also need a uniform system of delivery of cream. Some companies subsidise coaches, others do not. Some pay freight, and the articles of association of others do not allow them to do so. Then we have factories so close together that one is prepared to try to crush the other out. On the North Coast line you can see two butter factories trying to crush another factory out, and one of them is making about 2 tons of butter per week. I really believe that the time has come when the Government should have the power to approve or otherwise of the erection of butter factories, and—what is more—they should have the power to approve or disapprove of the design and the machinery and everything else put into them in order to bring them right up to date. We can only get thoroughly up to date by having—I shall not say pressure—but advice brought to bear on the factories so that they are put up under best conditions.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is where the Council of Agriculture will come in—in giving that advice.

Mr. WALKER: That is why I believe these are duties the council could carry out. Then take the two gradings that are going on at the present time. There are sometimes two and three points of difference between the State and Federal graders. Do you not think something should be done to stop that? We pay a twopenny tax per box to the Federal Government to have our butter graded, in addition to the State grading, when one grading would be sufficient.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What you want to do is to get the Country party to tell the Federal Government. "Hands off!"

Mr. WALKER: There are big arguments on both sides, but there is nothing to prevent the Minister or the Council of Agriculture from getting to work immediately and coming to an agreement with the Commonwealth.

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We recognise that the Commonwealth must look after the export question, and that the State should be able to deal with the farmer for faults that may be detected. Personally, I like the State graders very much, because I follow them and they do very excellent work, but the two sets of graders are almost fighting among themselves. Sometimes one will not allow the other on the floor, and in any case the farmer has to pay double what he should pay. I hope one of the first things the council will do will be to stop this silly business. We also need to control the Government to a certain extent as to where they establish their cold stores. At the present time an elaborate building, costing £200,000 or £300,000, is being built at the Hamilton, and every man representing the dairying industry at our conference disapproved of that site. Had the [5.30 p.m.] council been formed at that particular time, they would have insisted on the Government placing those stores on a more suitable site.

Mr. MOORE: The Government will take no notice.

Mr. WALKER: We must give the Government a trial.

Mr. MOORE: They had all the companies coming down advising them beforehand.

Mr. WALKER: The constitution of the council will be such that it will keep the Government under control. I recognise that the Government will be over-represented on the council. There is no occasion for them to have five or six nominees; I think three would be quite sufficient, and then no harm could be done. If the Government are really sincere, they will immediately reduce the number of their representatives. I asked a question this afternoon regarding the income tax paid by co-operative bacon, cheese, and butter factories. I very much regret that the Premier was not game to give that information, for reasons best known to himself. I have known that for some considerable time those concerns have been paying an enormous amount of income tax. I am given to understand that, although they have tried repeatedly to stop it, the co-operative companies have been obliged to pay into the Treasury about £50,000 in the form of income tax. It is a big tax on us. At the present time, for many reasons, we want that money. Co-operative companies should never be taxed in the form of income tax, for the simple reason that they are not profit-making concerns, their object being to return to the farmer or the producer everything obtained from his product. The farmer is taxed on his income every year. That is only fair. We have tried repeatedly to obtain additional capital for particular works, but have failed to get it to the extent we would like. If you want new machinery you have to appeal to the same loyal old men every time to take up scrip—ordinary or preferential. We always put a maximum dividend of 6 per cent. on preferential scrip. In some cases, companies do not pay anything in the shape of interest on ordinary scrip, because it is a work of love for the farmer, who recognises what a terrible loss it would be if the companies were done away with. I suggest that this council should strongly recommend the wiping out of the income tax in regard to the truly co-operative concerns, for the reason that we cannot get additional capital to carry out improvements. We not

only want improvements, but we want to go in for additions. Take the bacon factory of which I have the honour to be chairman. We want about £15,000 to put up additional machinery so that we can treat the farmers' cattle. We have appealed, during the last month or two, for £3,000 to £4,000. We have obtained that money, but we have reached a deadlock. What a boon it would be to Queensland—what an enormous amount of money would come into the country—if we were allowed to go into the tinning industry, even if the price of cattle is low! We can make a success of it; we have already done so. The Bill, if amended, should be a particularly good Bill, and should meet the requirements of the farmers. It is no use the Government adopting the tactics the Premier adopted when he indicated that all amendments had to come from his side. That is not playing the game. I am prepared to go with the Government, or against them, as my conscience dictates. Other hon. members should be in the same position. Let this be a non-party affair. It will make for the smooth working of the Bill. Let us remember that agriculture is the greatest industry in any part of the world. If we can send out of the country material in the raw or finished state and get back for it the money which we have a right to get and which we would get, we shall reduce taxation and create an enormous amount of employment for those who are unemployed at the present time.

Mr. DUNSTAN (*Gympie*): I have very much pleasure in supporting the second reading of this Bill, which, I think, will give effect to what can be honestly described as the big idea in the history of production in this State. Nothing indicates with greater effect the importance of this Bill than the fact that the Opposition are seeking to decry it, and at the same time are trying to claim credit for having thought of it first. All we have obtained up to the present in this debate from the majority of members of the Opposition is, not a concerted policy, but merely a confused state of mind. The leader of the Opposition merely took up an attitude of suspicion and distrust.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Can you wonder at his suspicion?

Mr. DUNSTAN: But the leader of the Opposition, in his conceited claims with regard to the origin of this measure and his arrogant references to the Premier and the Government, had all the self-assurance of the fabled rooster that thought his crowing made the sun rise. I know there are country representatives on the other side who will heartily support this Bill—the “dinkum” country representatives, I think we might describe them; but the others, including the leader of the Opposition, find themselves at present on the pitchfork of a dilemma, trying to decide on which prong it is least unpleasant to be impaled. First one decries the Bill; then another condemns it; a third wants it altered; still another says that it is part of their platform, or part of the Labour platform; while another claims advantages both for and against it. Then, from a welter of words, the hon. member for Pittsworth emerges, like a molehill in eruption, with the statement that this should be a scheme of a Federal character, and that, anyway, it is a form of nationalisation. All that we have got from the Opposition

in this debate has been a misty mixture of political vapourings wrapped up in a cloud of smoke. Some of them, too, seem to think that they can move industrial mountains with an epithet or solve political problems with a sneer. A good deal has been said by some hon. members, including the leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Burnett, to the effect that the appointments of organisers who have been sent round the country districts to enlighten the farmers in regard to this scheme, which is for the benefit of the farmers themselves, have been of a partisan political character.

Mr. CORSER: I did not say anything of the kind. I read a statement from the “*Courier*,”

Mr. DUNSTAN: That has been the argument—that there was something of a political character in the appointment of these organisers. If there were any force in the argument, it would lead one to believe that they were all supporters of the Government who took on this important work of educating the farmers in connection with this scheme. As a matter of fact, we know that that is not so; we know that political partisanship did not enter into the contract at all. The hon. member for Burnett read from the “*Courier*” a charge against the Minister of partisanship in connection with the matter. This is the reply of the Secretary for Agriculture to that charge, which the hon. gentleman has handed to the Press to-day—

“Replying to the criticism appearing in yesterday's ‘*Courier*,’ alleged to have been made by Mr. Thomas Walmsley, of the Atherton district, against the appointment of Mr. Harvey Jurd as one of the organisers of the Queensland Primary Producers' Association, Mr. Gillies said that neither the administrative committee, who recommended, nor the Government, who appointed, the organisers need make any apology with regard to the personnel of those organisers.

“I do not know Mr. Walmsley,” continued Mr. Gillies, “but I do know, having been the provisional secretary of the Atherton Co-operative Butter and Bacon Company, Limited, and having sold the first share in that company, that Mr. Walmsley, who is apparently now a director of the company, did not assist to establish it, as Mr. Jurd did, nor is he a pioneer selector of the district.

“He appears on the Eacham roll for the first time in 1919, in which year he apparently leased some land in the district. Since then he appears to have acquired some further property.

“Mr. Jurd, on the other hand, may be numbered amongst the selectors who pioneered the Atherton Tableland. He is one of the most successful and popular men in the whole district, has been associated with practically every movement, whether co-operative or otherwise, for the advancement of the district, is a member of the Shire of Eacham, and at the last election was returned third highest on the list out of nine candidates.

“He is one of the provisional directors of the North Queensland Co-operative Bacon Company, Limited, and has acted as chairman of that company in the absence of the chairman of directors.

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"From this it is apparent that Mr. Jurd possesses the confidence of his fellow-settlers in the district, and, in my opinion, is well fitted for the position with which he has been entrusted.

"It ill becomes Mr. Walmsley, or anyone else, to raise the question of politics with regard to this matter, especially as quite a number of those who have been appointed organisers, and who are also, in my opinion, well fitted for the position, have been associated with party politics in the past—and not the politics of the present Administration.

"Mr. Walmsley is entirely wrong in what he says about Mr. Purcell, because Mr. Purcell is a member of and was present at the meeting of the administrative committee where Mr. Jurd and the other organisers were approved of and recommended to the Governor in Council for appointment.

"As showing how careless Mr. Walmsley is about facts, Mr. James Purcell informs me that the gentleman who was entrusted with the recommendation wired Mr. Purcell recommending Mr. Jurd, and further, it was Mr. Purcell himself who proposed Mr. Jurd for appointment at the meeting of the administrative committee."

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member for Burnett should now apologise.

Mr. CORSER: The Minister should write to Atherton and get the people there to apologise. I only read the statement in the "Courier."

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You ought to be ashamed of yourself.

Mr. DUNSTAN: That effectively disposes of the argument that there was any partisanship in connection with the appointment.

Mr. MOORE: It does not dispose of it at all.

Mr. DUNSTAN: Hon. members opposite are annoyed because they did not get all the men of their own political kidney chosen.

Now, it is significant that whilst the Nationalist party have always declared that they represent country districts and country interests as well as, if not better than, the Country party, they have remained conspicuously silent on this measure.

Mr. COSTELLO: They will talk later.

Mr. DUNSTAN: Is that silence due to the fact that they believe that the best solution of the producers' problem is the removal of the tickets from the railway trucks containing consignors' produce? Or is it that they believe that the very best policy for the primary producer, in his relation to the middleman, is to adopt as his motto the old adage that "ignorance is bliss"? Happily, the success of this scheme depends not upon hon. members opposite but upon the farmers themselves. I am certain, considering the remarkable interest that the scheme has aroused in all country districts and the wide-spread support it has received from farmers who are not political supporters of the Government, that the scheme is assured of success, and will bring about one of the greatest movements ever heard of in the development of the primary industries of this State. I particularly welcome this measure,

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because, when speaking on the Address in Reply last session, I said—

"Whether hon. members opposite like it or not, there is a movement throughout the State and throughout Australia in the direction of national organisation; either by State regulation and control or by association with co-operative bodies. . . . I believe the time has arrived for better relations between the consumer and the producer, the industrialists in the city and the man on the land. I hold that there is a very close identity of interest between the workers generally and the primary producers. The industrialists have to recognise that the farmer is entitled to a fair price for his product, and that an effort should be made to stabilise prices. But the farmer, also, has to recognise that he cannot justly ask for an abnormally high price for his product for home consumption because of world's parity, when he does not desire to recognise world's parity when overseas prices are low."

Lately the dairymen have been receiving only 7d. a lb. for butter-fat, while at the same time the retail price of butter to the consumer was 1s. 7d. per lb. As indicative of the readiness of the consumer to bear a reasonable and uniform price, we have the fact that in no case has there been any protest from the consumer against the retail price of 1s. 7d. per lb. We also have the fact that there has been no resentment and no protest by the consumers in this State against paying 6d. per lb. for sugar. The people of this State, or the consumers generally, recognise that that price was fixed in order to stabilise one of our most important industries, and to secure the success of a white labour industry.

I believe that every fair-minded and unprejudiced man within or without this Chamber will admit that this scheme is distinguished by broad vision and true and practical statesmanship as well as thoroughness of detail, and that it will open up a new era for the primary producing industries in this State. The good work already done in connection with our co-operative bodies in butter, cheese, and bacon factories, in the running of special fruit trains and other transit arrangements secured by the Fruitgrowers' Association, are all well known to hon. members, and the efficacy of that kind of organisation will be admitted by everyone. The speech delivered by the hon. member for Coorooora stands out in remarkable distinction as an indication of the severance of policies represented by hon. members opposite. In fact it even went further than a lot of the statements made on this side in favour of nationalisation of the means of production in this State. Some of the hon. member's arguments were particularly sound, especially as to the useless, foolish, and unnecessary competition that is going on at the present time amongst co-operative bodies.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: We have been fighting that for years.

Mr. DUNSTAN: I hope the advisory council, if it does nothing else, will go a long way in the elimination of that useless kind of competition, and will also do its best to remove the tendency that now prevails, especially in the dairying industry, to over-capitalise the industry by the duplication of butter factories. It must be remembered that this Bill not only organises the producers

from the producing side, but also provides machinery for effective co-operation at the selling end. That, after all, is one of the main factors that will provide for the success of the producing industries in Queensland. We have only to take as an instance the cotton-growing scheme that is now being fostered in this State with every promise of success. I do not think any hon. member opposite will gainsay the fact that there would be very little hope of effective development in the cotton industry, were it not for the fact that we have an organisation at the selling end, with the co-operation of British Cotton Growing Associations and the guaranteed price of cotton by the Queensland Government. That being so, it is all the more apparent that there is the greatest need for a Bill of this kind, which will bring into close association with the scheme the legislative machinery, the expert facilities, and the departmental activities of the Government, together with their financial assistance. The farmer has well been described as the backbone of the country, and a combination of the backbone and brains of the State will make for a new era of progress, and make the Queensland producers one of the greatest powers in the markets of the world. We all recognise that the interests of the man on the land are interwoven with those of the general community. We also recognise his hardships and disabilities, and I think, in a case of this kind, the Government and all the originators of the present idea and the co-operative bodies should push forward this scheme for the good of our State and of the producers, and for the benefit of all our industries, so that not only here, but right throughout the Commonwealth and in the markets of the world, our effective organisation will be felt. It is a matter for regret that there is any diversity of opinion in regard to a measure of this kind. I sincerely hope that there will be exhibited more of that spirit of co-operation on which hon. members opposite are so prone to dilate amongst themselves, and more agreement with the Government in building up the fabric of the structure which we seek to erect for the benefit of the man on the land. This big idea, framed in effective organisation, strengthened by State assistance, and imbued with a spirit of patriotic ambition and endeavour to help our primary industries, will, I am sure, open up a new era of production, development, and prosperity in Queensland, such as the State has never seen before.

Mr. FLETCHER (*Port Curtis*): It is with pleasure that I rise to support this Bill. I recognise that the main principles of the Bill may possibly be of great benefit to the farming community. I believe it to be a fine system of organisation, and, if the amendments foreshadowed by the leader of the Opposition are carried, it will, I believe, be a very sound measure indeed, and, provided it is properly controlled, the benefits accruing to the farming industries may be very helpful. But, of course, it depends entirely upon how it is controlled as to what those benefits will be. This is not a new system. In America it has been very largely utilised, with a fair amount of success, and in England, in the years 1919 and 1920, there was a measure of a similar type introduced, but with more far-reaching powers. After that scheme had been in operation twelve months it had to be withdrawn owing to economic pressure making it impossible for

the scheme to be carried out. That will not apply here, because the objects are somewhat different. But, if we follow the same course that was followed in England, and try to fix prices and arrange pools, and such like, to any large extent, then the economic effect may force a similar position. This organisation is much the same as the scheme to overcome the effects of drought instituted in New South Wales, which has not yet been properly put into operation. I referred to the matter in the House last year, and in the very first speech I made in my electorate before I was returned to this House I stated to a gathering of farmers that some such organisation as this was absolutely necessary in their own interests. This party support the measure because it is our own platform. We have discussed similar schemes at our meetings, and we have also proposed to introduce some of the other measures that have been foreshadowed in the Governor's Speech. Therefore, there is nothing new in what the Government propose to do; but they are in power and can do things, whereas we are in opposition, and can only approve or disapprove. If the amendments foreshadowed are all carried, I have no fear of this scheme being used for the nationalisation of industry, because the farmers will be able to control it themselves, and it is very necessary that they should control it, and it is also very necessary that these amendments should be carried. If these amendments are carried, the Bill will be a plain, straightforward one. Personally, I do not believe there are any ulterior motives behind it, though there is, of course, the political significance. I have advised the farmers in my electorate to support the measure and join up with the organisation, recognising that it will be to their benefit.

The hon. member for Rockhampton, when speaking last night, said that I had tried to influence the farmers in my electorate against the measure. I say that is absolutely incorrect and untrue. In last Saturday's Bundaberg "Daily News," the hon. member published a letter containing misleading and personal statements concerning me. That letter lays the hon. member open to an action at law, if I cared to take advantage of it. I do not think it is right that personalities should be indulged in. The people of my electorate know that I can be trusted to do the right thing, and to deal with them honestly, and they will know and will understand that the statements which the hon. member has made are absolutely untrue.

The PREMIER: You say you deal with them honestly?

Mr. FLETCHER: Yes, and they know it, too.

[7 p.m.]

Mr. FORDE: I was replying to a criticism of yours.

Mr. FLETCHER: Those statements of the hon. member are absolutely untrue. They show that the hon. member is unreliable.

Mr. FORDE: He knows how to deal with unreliable men.

Mr. FLETCHER: This superficiality is proverbial. Making such attacks on me, where my reputation is known, is not going to do any good to the hon. member when he stands for Capricornia. When the hon. member was speaking on the Bill last night, he indulged in a mass of platitudes which takes

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us nowhere. There were no deductions drawn and no valuable advice given by the hon. member. He made a lot of statements which would lead the farmers to believe that far greater benefit will accrue to them from this Bill than is at all possible. That is not a fair thing. We should have more genuine criticism from a member of Parliament.

Mr. FORDE: We never get it from you.

Mr. FLETCHER: I support this Bill. I believe that, when we come here, we should criticise honestly; if we believe in a thing, we should say so; and, if we disagree with it, we should also let our views be known. With a few modifications and amendments, I believe this will be a very good measure. I would like to mention the objections I have to the Bill. In the first place, I would like to see the Minister removed from the presidency or chairmanship of the Council of Agriculture, and have it made non-political. I think that the Minister who is in charge of the Department of Agriculture, which will have to sanction any proposal submitted by the council, should not act as chairman of the Council of Agriculture. Possibly as chairman he would be apt to influence the council, though perhaps unwittingly; therefore I think it would be much better for him not to be in the chair. My second objection is this: I would like to see the quorum raised to nine, or else, as the hon. member for Cooroora has said, the number of Government representatives reduced to three. As the Bill stands, the Government representatives can form a quorum and control the situation, although possibly only temporarily. I think that is a suggestion the Minister might accept. In the third place, I do not think that the Council of Agriculture should have such power over the local producers' associations. They should be able to conduct their own affairs without any drastic interference from the main council in Brisbane. Fourthly, I think that the definition of "primary producer" should be more clearly stated, so as to exclude altogether employees on farms. Fifthly, I think that the director and the staff should be paid by the Government out of the Consolidated Revenue, and not from the Producers' Association Fund. They are really an adjunct of the Department of Agriculture, and should be paid by the department. The producers should not be charged more than is absolutely necessary. There will be ample ways of spending money without paying Government officials. I think that is an amendment the Minister might very well accept. I would further like to see the date of determination of the existence of the provisional council specified, or a definite assurance given.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I cannot give you any assurance as to the date, but I can give you an assurance that the election of the Council of Agriculture will be brought about as soon as possible.

Mr. FLETCHER: If the hon. gentleman can give us some assurance as to how many months it will be, that will probably suffice. There are other amendments which will be necessary, but those are the amendments which most appeal to me. The Government say the council is to be non-political, but at the same time politics creep in. If the Minister is not the chairman, it means that the farmers themselves can control the situation, especially if the Government representatives are

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reduced. I think that the director should occupy the chair. If the director has to be responsible for the success of the scheme, then he should guide its destinies. The most able man procurable should be obtained as director, and a big salary paid to him. It would be preferable to have a man who knows something about primary production, and who has considerable organising ability. The success of the scheme depends upon the man whom we have at the head of affairs.

I spoke in favour of this scheme in my electorate. The hon. member for Rockhampton will find my remarks reported in the "Gladstone Observer." I recommended the farmers there to select from the producers' associations the very best men to represent them upon the district council. If you get an aggregation of men who are mere talkers, you will not go very far with this scheme; but, if you elect the best men from each association, and the best men are selected by the district councils to go on the Council of Agriculture, you will do some good. You want men with common sense, men who recognise their duty, and who know when a good proposition is put to them, for it is no use introducing unsound proposals. You want men who are unselfish. There will be a diversity of interests in each district council, and, unless you have men such as I have mentioned, you will probably find them paddling their own canoes, or the canoes of the industries in which they are engaged, instead of considering the interests of all sections. The whole thing will end in smoke unless we have the very best men available.

Mr. FORDE: The farmers will see to that.

Mr. FLETCHER: It is our duty to point out the dangers.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You have not got a very high opinion of the farmers.

Mr. FLETCHER: There are men who are mere talkers amongst the farmers, but you have very good men amongst them; you have the same thing everywhere, and you get it in Parliament. For this scheme to be successful, as we all hope to see it, you must have good men. There must, naturally, be difficulties at the initiation of the scheme, but as the scheme develops those difficulties will be removed. For instance, in my district there are already complaints about the district council being situated in Rockhampton. I have pointed out to the people there that as the scheme develops such a disability as that will be removed. It may be necessary to increase the number of district councils from fifteen. The farmers should not expect too much from the scheme, as its possibilities are limited. During the next few months, before the next ensuing election, they may get a lot of things granted to them which, in the ordinary course of events, they would not get, because the Government are naturally anxious for political purposes for the scheme to be a success and for the farmers to appreciate it. They want to get the support of the farmers at the next election; therefore, they would be prone to give them more than they would give them under ordinary circumstances. The farmers want to take that point into consideration. They want to look further, and see what the conditions are going to be under ordinary circumstances without an election in sight. The Minister, in speaking on the second reading and also at the introductory stage, referred to the Bill as "emancipating

the farmers." Now, that is extravagant language, because it will not do anything of the sort. It cannot possibly emancipate the farmers. It is misleading to say so, and it is wrong to lead the farmers to believe that they are going to get much more from this measure than is possible. They will still have to work hard; they will still have difficulties to contend with in the shape of bad seasons and fluctuating markets. So it is wrong to mislead them, and to let them imagine that they are going to be led into a sort of paradise.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I did not suggest that they should sit down and do nothing.

Mr. FLETCHER: But you said that the Bill would emancipate the farmer, and that it would give him tremendous benefits. It is not possible to give the farmer tremendous benefits. The law of supply and demand will apply, no matter what you do. The more you try to interfere with the law of supply and demand, the more will it become like a boomerang in its effect. The failure of the English Act was due to trying to overcome the law of supply and demand, and it had to be abandoned. That will not apply here, because my view is that the main provisions of this measure are to assist the farmers in local affairs. So far as marketing is concerned, the scope of the scheme is quite limited, though, of course, it will be helpful, especially in times of depression. It is not possible, in my opinion, to fix prices locally. You cannot give high prices or form pools, except as a temporary expedient. If we attempt to form pools and take no notice of the law of supply and demand, the effect may be very much worse in the long run. Therefore, it is wrong to lead farmers to believe that they are going to receive tremendous benefits from the scheme. We can help them, of course, in times of depression, but that is all. I believe the main duty of the council will be to deal with local affairs, such as the conservation of fodder, water conservation, and such like. I see that there is provision made for forming committees. Committees may be formed from the Council of Agriculture to look after different duties, and a fodder conservation committee should be one of those sectional committees. They will also have to provide storage facilities, and go in for co-operative effort for the purchase of implements and farm material generally, and for establishing co-operative factories. Transport facilities will also have to be improved, and committees can deal with improvements in herds and cream-testing, and give encouragement for new industries, such as subsidising pig-raising for export. The council can also make provision for experimental stations, deal with educational matters, assist in finding new markets, and act in many other directions for the benefit of the man on the land. These will be the main avenues in which the council will work. After having considered all the different schemes for the different districts, emanating in the first place from the local producers' associations, the main council will come to the Government, and it is the Government, really, that will sanction or otherwise any scheme brought forward. Therefore, there must be a sympathetic Administration behind the scheme. The farmers will naturally know where they stand, so far as the Country party is concerned, and they can be assured at all times

that they will get a fair deal from members of this party in regard to every sound and practicable scheme that will assist them, because we know that, when we are assisting the farmers, we are improving the welfare of the whole community at the same time. The biggest factors in the farming community's life and welfare are overseas markets and seasons. We are dependent almost entirely on the overseas markets for the disposal of our products, and the council can do very little in that respect. If there is a big price at home, we shall get the advantage of that big price; but, if prices are low, then the farmers will not do so well.

The Premier, when outlining this scheme at Laidley, made an unsound statement. He said that a similar scheme had been introduced in America with the most beneficial results, and that what they could achieve in America we could achieve here. But there is no analogy between America and Queensland in this matter, for the reason that in America practically all the primary products are consumed in America, and they can, therefore, control the business from the grower to the consumer. In this country it is quite different, because we have to depend on the overseas markets for the disposal of the greater proportion of our primary products. The only exception is sugar, and, as I said before, it is possible to stabilise the sugar industry, just as the other products are stabilised in America, because we consume it all in Australia. When we have to depend on overseas markets it is different. Therefore it is unwise, and not right, to tell the farmers that they can expect too much from this scheme, so far as markets are concerned.

As far as the seasons are concerned, we can help the man on the land by providing for water conservation and fodder conservation, but the big thing is to get good seasons. Nothing will materialise, and no great benefit will come from the scheme, unless we have a really good director with an efficient staff to deal with the whole scheme. Personally, I believe that it would be a good thing to have compulsory membership. We could have compulsory membership by every primary producer automatically becoming a member.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: On the principle of preference to unionists?

Mr. FLETCHER: Not at all. I am not dealing with unionists; I am dealing with farmers. If we had compulsory membership, it would eliminate the possibility of politics creeping in. As it is now, it is quite possible for cliques to be organised in certain districts, and that will make it more or less political. If all the farmers were members of the organisation, then that would be eliminated. It would then be very much simpler and more satisfactory all round. The membership fee need only be small, because I do not see where any great expense is going to be incurred. The director should be paid from the consolidated revenue. If the council are going to pay a publicity agent £600 a year, as they are doing at present, and if that is going to be paid from the producers' fund, then the farmer is going to pay heavily for it. I would be very much against that myself. Further, I think it would be a mistake for the sectional organisations connected with sugar, wheat, fruit, and butter to disband. It might be very beneficial for them to remain. The functions of the sectional organisations are quite different to the functions of this agricultural organisation.

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Now, as to the reasons for the introduction of the scheme. Is it because of the Government's love for the farmer, or of a most patriotic desire to see the country advance, irrespective of all other questions?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is just what it is.

Mr. FLETCHER: No doubt, it is partly responsible, but would it not be nearer the mark to say that the Government, seeing that their power is waning, and seeing that they have to get fresh support from somewhere, have introduced this scheme? We know that for the last seven years the Government have been in power, and during that time we had the "cheap food stunt." We know that terminated disastrously in every way, and no one received any benefit from it, and, in addition, the Government have accumulated a tremendous amount of debt. State enterprise was the next cry, and "Socialism at Work" was the book published in support of it. We know what a tremendous failure that was, and what a colossal waste of public money it involved, causing heavy taxation. We know how the farmers were robbed of their butter on two or three occasions, and were not permitted to get the full price for it. We remember the stock embargo, the commandeering of meat, repudiation and retrospectivity, and all the legislation for the city worker that has been proved to be absolutely unsound, because the city worker, in spite of all the legislation for his benefit, is discontented and dissatisfied. So bad have matters become that the Government have been forced to break the pledge they made before last election and ask the Arbitration Court for a reduction of wages. The exigencies of the financial position may demand that, but it is surely not right that the Government should break their pledges.

Mr. KIRWAN: You were elected as a Nationalist. (Government laughter.)

Mr. FLETCHER: But at election time I said, in response to questions, that, if elected, I would join the Country party. The whole electorate endorsed my action. No pledge was broken; it is a country electorate.

The PREMIER: If you had permission, why not sit on this side?

Mr. FLETCHER: Having seen that the game is played out in the city, and that they are going to lose seats there, the Government have turned to the country. They are able to do that simply because of the neglect of the farmers and primary producers during the seven years of their reign. The field is open for development and organisation, and the Government have seen fit to take advantage of it in the hope of climbing back to power by getting sufficient members returned from the country to outbalance their losses in the cities. It is the growing power of the Country party that has forced them into doing it. They see that, with the advent of the Country party, they have no chance of recovering their position, and so they take up the Country party's platform in the hope that they will be able thereby to delude the farmers into supporting them.

Mr. FORDE: Nonsense!

Mr. FLETCHER: That is absolutely so. The hon. member cannot refute it. It is a clever move, I have no doubt, and the scheme they have brought in is a very good one, as I have said. The Premier was not here when

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I said that it was the Country party's platform entirely. All these matters have been discussed by them, even down to the Director of Agriculture.

The PREMIER: Where is the Country party's platform?

Mr. FLETCHER: How can we do anything when we are in opposition? Give us a chance to get over there and see what we will do. Notwithstanding all that has gone by in the last seven years—and I do not suppose any Government in any country in the world have shown such iniquitous mismanagement as this Government during those seven years—the party opposite have the effrontery to ask the farmers to forget. I think it was when the Premier outlined his scheme to the assembled representatives that he said, "Let the dead past bury its dead." Fancy his saying that—"Forget all that has gone before; support the scheme; vote for the Labour party!"—for that is what he meant. The farmers should recognise what might happen in the future. They have seen what has been permitted by this Government in the past—nothing very beneficial to this country; and they want to watch the future. It is only the great natural resources of our State that have enabled the country to carry on, and the farmers need to be careful for fear that, if the Government are returned with the help of this scheme, they will resort to legislation very similar in nature to that from which we have suffered during the last seven years. We know that, if they get the support of the farmers sufficiently to put them back, they may have no hesitation in turning them down absolutely and resorting to their platform of socialism.

Mr. BRAND: Communism!

Mr. FLETCHER: The platform of the party opposite is socialism. At the October Labour Convention all these resolutions were carried, and the Council of Action was formed. That council is still in existence, and from your knowledge of the Labour party, Mr. Speaker, you know that, when you are not hearing very much of their activities, that is just the time when they are most active, so that the council may even now be formulating plans for the socialisation of industry. We have not had from the Premier any disavowal of that socialistic platform.

The PREMIER: It is not in the platform; it is the objective.

Mr. FLETCHER: As the hon. member for Drayton said, the Premier has two pups—one a communistic pup, and the other a country pup; and, when he goes to the country, he takes his country pup with him, and when he is in the city, he has his communistic pup. (Laughter.) The Premier is not his own master—he knows that—he is dominated by the Central Political Executive, although lately, I will admit, he has been asserting his authority. When the Premier outlined the scheme first, I said that either it presaged an early election or the Premier was preparing a soft bed to fall on; and I may not be far wrong. It would be a ridiculous thing—can you imagine anything more incongruous?—if the Government came back from the country with a majority and the Central Political Executive, who dominates the party opposite, had to administer the Act for the farmers. (Opposition laughter.)

The PREMIER: Are you against the scheme?

Mr. FLETCHER: I am not. I am absolutely in favour of it, but I am giving the motives for it.

The PREMIER: The Council of Agriculture will administer the scheme.

Mr. FLETCHER: Yes, but they can only make proposals. They have to get the Cabinet's sanction. You must have sympathetic administration, and I would not care to have the administration of the Central Political Executive. (Opposition laughter.) The whole thing savours very much of some of Phillips Oppenheim's novels—"The Great Delusion," "The Amazing Impersonation," or "The Mysterious Mr. Theodore." (Opposition laughter.) To think of the Central Political Executive controlling the farmers' interests is too stupid and silly for words. (Government interjections.) Then you have to consider what the Secretary for Mines said: "We have a majority of only one, but after the next election, we shall come back with four or five, and then we shall put our platform into effect." What platform do they mean? They are putting the Country party's platform into effect now; but the Secretary for Mines says that after the next election they will put into effect their platform—the socialistic platform. I have criticised the scheme from every point of view honestly and fairly.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You have been very hostile.

Mr. FLETCHER: I have not been hostile, but I am not going to laud the scheme to the skies, or support it without giving the Government's reasons for introducing it. It would not be fair—you have to take both sides of the question. I say it is a good scheme, and there is the possibility of great good coming from it, provided that the right men control it from one end to the other, and provided that there is no political control. Before the Premier came in, I said it was necessary to realise that we must have the very best man as director, even if we have to pay £2,500 a year, but that having got him, we must let him take the chair and control the whole thing from one end to the other. We must get the farmers, through the district councils, to recognise that the best men must be put at the head of this scheme, if it is to be a success. That is why I am so insistent on that point now. I am very glad to be able to support the Bill, because I recognise that it is high time that something of this kind was done, and I have no fear of the farmers turning their own representatives down when the election arrives.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): No one will deny that this Bill has vast possibilities of doing good. It also has vast possibilities of doing a great deal of damage. It will do good if it is administered apart from party politics.

I do not think, under the present [7.30 p.m.] Administration—judging by their past action—that that is possible. Anyone listening to hon. members on the Government side would think that, by a few words, the many obstacles standing in the way of the consummation of such a scheme could be overcome without any difficulty. In fact, one would think that all these difficulties are already overcome.

Mr. BRENNAN: Hear, hear!

Mr. KERR: The hon. gentleman says, "Hear, hear!" If he will peruse the Bill, he will see that, from the beginning to the end, it is merely the initiation of the scheme,

and is merely for organisation purposes. I intend to deal with the question of organisation. In the first place, we are to have fifteen district councils throughout Queensland. They send representatives to what is known as the Council of Agriculture; possibly, in another place, if the Council had to be called anything, it would be called the "Council of Action"—a council that is well known throughout Australia.

Mr. BRENNAN: Better than the "Council of Inaction," like you have been.

Mr. KERR: The interpretation clause sets out that "primary producer" includes every person engaged in the occupation of a dairy farmer, cane-grower, persons engaged in general farming, etc. It means that any fifteen men who are engaged in primary production—it may be that they are working on a farm for the owner of the farm and have not any capital involved—any fifteen of any particular locality, being employees who are not at present governed by Arbitration Court awards, may combine and be registered and join on to a district council, who, in turn, will send their representatives to the grand council. It will be seen that the organisation follows closely on the lines laid down in the Trades Union Act of 1915, the only difference being that under the Trades Union Act seven men may get together and form a union. The Trades Union Act also provides that two units may amalgamate. This Bill provides that various units may amalgamate. Naturally, when you look at that organisation and know what is happening in other parts of Australia, you begin to wonder if there is a sinister aspect to the whole matter. There may be a thread of honesty running through it, but after seven years of Labour government one is inclined to look adversely at such a Bill. Everyone must realise that to-day the farming community requires assistance. We find hon. members talking about giving the full result of his labour to the primary producer, and with the same breath urging that cheaper commodities be given to the consumer. The Labour party to-day are trying to have it both ways. They have, in their minds, excluded the middleman.

Mr. BRENNAN: What is wrong with that?

Mr. KERR: There is nothing wrong with it. One middleman who to-day is between the grower and the consumer is a Labour Minister drawing £1,000 a year. Every man, from the bank manager down to the bar tender, including every man in this House, is getting a slice of that product between the producer and the consumer. The quicker it is realised that you cannot form a whole community on the communistic principle the better it will be for this State. That is one of the obstacles that should be overcome at a very early date. It is applicable to every article of production.

When you look at clause 10, you find they are, apparently, making the Council of Agriculture a body corporate, capable of suing and being sued; and it is to have perpetual succession and an official seal. This, to me, is a very sinister clause. It states, further, that the Council of Agriculture has power to take, purchase, sell, exchange, lease, and hold land, goods, chattels, securities, and any other property. From that turn to the functions and objects outlined in the Bill. The first is "developing the rural industries." That has nothing to do with leasing

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land. Then there are investigation into problems relating to rural industries; instruction in scientific knowledge and training, farm management and farm economics, including cost of production and farm accountancy; research; controlling diseases in pests; marketing and distribution; storage, handling, and transport; testing, standardising and grading; promoting co-operative associations and enterprises; bettering the conditions of rural life and extending rural education; dealing with matters which may be referred to the Council by the Minister; advising, assisting, and co-operating with the department and the associations in matters pertaining to rural industries. I would like to know whether that clause relating to taking, purchasing, and leasing land, is put in for the specific purpose of establishing the scheme on a community basis. With organised bodies there is no necessity for that clause. If the clause has not a sinister meaning, I shall be very much mistaken. It is a condemnation of the Department of Agriculture to bring this in after seven years of this party's administration. It is an acknowledgment that they are incompetent to find a solution of the problems confronting the agricultural industry. If we turn to statistics, we find that of the total amount spent by the Department of Agriculture, 50 per cent. goes in the payment of salaries to officials in the head office in Brisbane. The Government spend only £130,000 per annum. Against that, New South Wales spends over £1,000,000. New South Wales has three times our population, but they spend nine times the amount of money on agriculture. Taking the purchasing power of the sovereign into consideration, an equal amount was spent years ago to what is being spent to-day by this Administration. One of the most important things in connection with primary production is world's parity. It is useless for us to talk unless we have a consuming population giving the primary producer better value for his product—giving him more than the cost of production. That was done with regard to sugar. We can produce all the sugar required for consumption here. It was the Nationalist party in the Federal House who handled the situation successfully.

Mr. BRENNAN: Nonsense.

Mr. KERR: It remained for the Commonwealth Government to negotiate an agreement which enabled the sugar-growers to obtain a living out of the industry. No industry can be successfully controlled unless we have co-ordination throughout Australia. The whole of the producers of Australia should be brought under the control of the Federal Government. The Federal Government paid to the producers for their products during the war the sum of £484,000,000. The difference between the Labour Government and the Federal Nationalist Government is that we have a good deal of talk and propaganda on the part of the Labour Government, but the Federal Nationalist Government have substituted actions for words.

Mr. BRENNAN: Can you prove your figures?

Mr. KERR: Yes.

Mr. BRENNAN: Prove them, and do not talk about it.

Mr. KERR: The Commonwealth Government came to the rescue of the farmers, and enabled a considerable amount of their pro-

ducts to be exported overseas. The Commonwealth Nationalist Government have come to the assistance of the banana, maize, timber, and many other industries.

Mr. KIRWAN: Canungra, for instance.

Mr. KERR: I know exactly the position at Canungra. I have spoken on that matter in other places. Surely the hon. member for Brisbane, representing a commercial community, will not classify Canungra as the timber area of Queensland or Australia?

Mr. KIRWAN: You were quoting what the Federal Government had done, and I gave you a case in point.

Mr. KERR: Everyone realises that half the people of Australia are kept in employment by the primary industries, thus enabling produce to be sent to Great Britain, and possibly exported from there. I think it is a mistake compulsorily to force members to join organisations and then to wipe out the existing organisations that have done so much for this State. I do not think that it is possible to take such sudden action with beneficial results. These existing organisations should be kept going for a considerable time before they are absorbed, if it is intended to absorb them. To hear hon. members opposite, one would think that this was the first occasion on which anything had been done to organise the primary producers. There are thousands of primary producers organised to-day.

Mr. FEBBINGTON: Ninety per cent. of them.

Mr. KERR: Just outside the metropolitan area we have possibly 1,800 farmers who, during the Government's seven years of office, have been bringing in their produce one day a week and placing it on the floors of the various auctioneering rooms. The Government have been watching this going on, and they know perfectly well that the stuff has been handled half a dozen times by useless dealers, and that the consumer has been paying an increased price as a consequence. The Government have taken no steps to remove those disabilities.

Mr. BRENNAN: The Bill is going to remove them.

Mr. KERR: The Bill is not going to remove them. This Bill is only for purposes of organisation. I am complaining because there is "nothing doing" in the Bill. It is mere talk. One thing that will get over the difficulty is co-operation, and I am in accord with it.

Mr. BRENNAN: How many farmers have you got in your electorate?

Mr. KERR: I have in my electorate perhaps double the number of farmers that the hon. member for Toowoomba has in his, and I have taken action time and again by placing matters in their interests before the Government; but the Government have, in turn, not seen fit to adopt my suggestions. The present scheme co-ordinates with some suggestions that I have already put before the Government, and which can be carried out with beneficial effect. The Government have previously turned them down time and again. The foreword of a pamphlet entitled "Co-operative Storekeeping," issued by the Westralian Farmers' Limited and the Farmers' Co-operative Company, reads—

"Waste has become so great and general that national, as well as individual necessity, demands its elimination.

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The Prime Minister and some other legislators have realised this, and they urge co-operation in every industry as the only remedy. Unfortunately for the producers and for the State, all the legislators are not so far-seeing or so free or courageous to voice their opinions on this matter as the Prime Minister. As usual, the people themselves must take the lead, and there is no doubt the mere politicians will follow."

The farmers' associations of Queensland have taken the lead, and the mere politicians of the Labour party after seven years of power have been forced to follow in their footsteps. The pamphlet further states—

"With them the motto is not 'My country first,' but their instinct of self-preservation is strong, and when public opinion becomes organised and expresses itself in co-operative action, co-operators may expect the general support of legislators.

"The condition of affairs it is so necessary—really vital—to remedy is the result of organisation among those interests that have fastened themselves on to the primary and secondary industries. The farming industry offered an open and most profitable field for exploitation, since farmers were without organisation, and their isolation and continual struggle for existence made them easy victims to keen, scheming, and frequently unscrupulous business men. That farming paid 'the interests' there can be no doubt, and the field for exploitation was so profitable that 'the interests' grew, flourished, and multiplied, until the burden on the farmers became unbearable, and extreme necessity compelled them to action for their own preservation. Like the farmers in other countries, they found but one solution offering, and that was 'co-operation.'

"This has proved its efficiency, and no better testimonial to its success need be looked for than the bitter opposition to which it has been subjected by the interests which formerly battered on the farmers. Co-operation has been tested in a small way, and it has been an undoubted success. It has been said that any failure in co-operation could be cured by more co-operation, and it is patent that the success which has so far been achieved can be made a greater success by still more co-operation.

"When the seventy co-operative companies were formed in this State a year or so ago, it was deemed advisable to limit their operations to agency business for a time, during which members would familiarise themselves with the movement and what it stands for. Membership in the local co-operative companies was made easy, for little or no capital was required for agency business, and the result has more than justified the method. These seventy companies, starting with capitals varying from £5 to little more than £20, have made profits for the year ranging from about £50 to £500 each.

"It is now felt that the time has come for the further extension of the movement, and it is well to remember what the system, the organisation, or the movement—call it what you will—is aiming at—the elimination of all waste, and to

secure to the producer the full reward of his labour. To secure this end action in two directions is necessary: the farmer must dispose of his products with the greatest possible economy, and he must buy his requirements at legitimate prices and not at prices inflated by the intervention of unnecessary middlemen. By these methods alone can he hope to continue his industry. He has to compete in the world's markets, and must sell at the world's prices, and it is compulsory that he adopts the methods of other countries before he can look for success."

Already, without the intervention of this Government, the farmers have adopted co-operation. It is a policy that every reasonable man in the community should adopt. Evolution has brought about many changes, and we have now to admit that we should give the man on the land a fair thing. If that is not done, the result will be that he will be driven off the land. During the last few years there has been a decrease in the acreage of land under cultivation in Queensland, and now the Labour party recognise that something must be done. We could also assist the manufacture of our produce by co-operation. To-day we are nothing less than a State producing raw products for other countries of the world to manufacture by slave labour, and then the manufactured article comes back to this country and is sold at a high price. That is due to the conditions existing in the industrial world to-day, and the only solution is immigration, so that we shall have a sufficient number of people to consume what we grow. At the present time our producers have to depend on world's parity. We would like to see the Argentine—without wishing her any harm—have a drought, as then the Queensland cattlemen would get a decent return for their cattle. We must have more people in this country, and the quicker we get them the better. I will now read out a proposition which I put before the Government in regard to a soldiers' settlement in my electorate. It is dated 1st September, 1921, and reads—

"To-day, representatives of 'The Gap' (Enoggera) Soldiers' Settlement Progress Association (Messrs. Sparkes, vice-president, and Smith, honorary secretary) waited upon me to place the following matter for the kind consideration of the wounded and maimed soldiers' committee in conjunction with the Land Settlement Committee, the latter of which you have the honour to be chairman.

"It is proposed by the association to form a company corporate, registering as a limited company in the usual way, the objects being—

1. To distribute eggs and fresh-dressed poultry

(a) Direct to city and suburbs;

(b) Through agencies established throughout Queensland.

2. Complete control of their own products.

"I think this explains the objects, and is a scheme with good prospects, although new to Queensland."

The SPEAKER: Order! I would ask the hon. member to connect his remarks with the Bill.

Mr. KERR: I am connecting my remarks, inasmuch as this proposal has a particular

*Mr. Kerr.]*



bearing on the proposed scheme, and it is in accord with various principles outlined in the Bill. It continues—

"It is intended by the settlers to 'move,' as far as possible, on their own initiative, and already arrangements are being made with the Commonwealth Bank to secure the negotiation of part of their gratuity bonds, thus paving a way for the purchase of shares by those directly concerned.

"However, the settlers, as you are aware, cannot do justice to the proposal and restrict the shares to the men themselves unless a little assistance is forthcoming.

"Approximately, 70 per cent. of these men on the settlement are drawing war pensions because of their injuries. They really are pioneers in an industry with vast possibilities to Queensland. The fund, as indicated by the designation thereof, is applicable to their case. It is for the purpose of assisting those concerned as herein. The benefit possible is very great in many ways."

The poultry industry in Queensland has reached an independent position. The value to the Commonwealth of that industry is about £8,000,000, and its value to Queensland is over £400,000, and it is something that should be mothered and nursed. Any Government could well expend a few pounds to nurse this industry. It means a good deal to the people of America. They have settlements there containing thousands of people who make their living from poultry alone. I suggested in my letter to the Government what I thought would meet the situation and provide for the pulping of eggs, of which we receive many casks from China and Japan to-day done up by yellow labour; and yet the Government made a suggestion that they would advance a certain amount of money equal to the amount advanced by the settlers. The settlers already had spent their gratuity bonds in trying to make the business a success. They did not have a penny piece to put up, and instead of the Government losing on this proposition, these men would have been able, with a good start such as that, to pay their rents and interest on the advances. I am not going into further details of the scheme. As I said in commencing, the Bill has vast possibilities of doing good, and I sincerely trust that such matter as has appeared in the "Agricultural Journal"—paid for by the Government, no doubt—will not be utilised in any shape or form to bring political taint into the matter. We are all entitled to our political opinions, but we have no right to do anything detrimental to one section of the community in connection with a scheme such as this, which has vast possibilities. I sincerely hope that the scheme will result in increased production, which will be for the benefit of the man on the land and everyone between, as that will lead to a contented community. I hope the Government will not use a scheme such as this to get into power, in order that they may remain at the head of this State for a few more years. I hope also that there will be a change of Government in the near future to carry this scheme to the consummation point, and that good will result all round.

Mr. BELL (*Fassifern*): I do not rise to give my unqualified approval to this Bill because, from this Government, we have experienced very many pitfalls and so many

kicks in their legislation in the past that we always look for those kicks when a Bill is brought in by them.

Mr. J. JONES: And you will always get them.

Mr. BELL: My experience is that we are never disappointed. However, I would like to say that the object of organising the primary producers of this State is a most laudable one, but whether the Government believe in it or not I do not quite know.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Give us credit for it.

Mr. BELL: After seven years of office they suddenly realise that it is necessary to do something for the producers. It seems to me an extraordinary thing that the Government should bring in a Bill like this and now pose as the friends of the farmer, because it is the first time we have ever heard of any sympathy for the man on the land from this Government. That naturally makes us suspicious about their sincerity. The Bill is entirely opposed to the aims and objects of the Labour party, whose policy is "socialisation of industry and the means of production, distribution, and exchange." One must admit that it is very necessary that something should be done to encourage people, not only to go on the land, but to stay on the land, to make life in the country attractive and profitable. For some years past there has been a drift to the cities. Some years ago only 50 per cent. of the population of Australia lived in the cities, but to-day we find the proportion has increased to 75 per cent. That is a bad thing for any country. What we want is more population, and in that connection the Government are not sincere. After the war, when the attention of the world was drawn to Australia, we had an opportunity of attracting desirable immigrants to Australia; but what has been done? Absolutely nothing, and it is not the intention of this Government to do anything, either.

[8 p.m.]

Mr. KIRWAN: The Nationalist party are in charge of immigration in the Federal Parliament.

Mr. BELL: If this Government make the land available, immigrants will come out here, and the Federal Government will be only too pleased to assist us. If anything can be done to improve the conditions of the people on the land it is most desirable to do so, in order to attract immigrants and to settle our own people on the land as well; but how this is to be obtained by organisation I do not know. It looks like an experiment on the part of the Government, and, if it turns out to be a failure, then the Government can turn round to the farmers and say, "You ungrateful dogs—we have given you a Primary Producers' Organisation Act." Whether it can be done by organising all the primary industries into a national unified body I do not know. It has been found in Queensland that the fruit-growers could not be organised into one organisation. It was necessary to divide them into separate sections and have them organised under separate heads. That, I think, will have to be done with the various producing interests in Queensland in order to be successful. The Government, by this Bill, are creating huge and expensive machinery. On their own admission, it is going to cost from £20,000 to £25,000 for the first year. What

[Mr. Kerr.

it is going to cost for the second year we do not know, but the Government are subsidising the scheme on a "fifty-fifty" basis; the producers have to put up 50 per cent, and the Government will subsidise it to the extent of 50 per cent. But what are the producers' organisations going to do? We know that in Australia the prices of our primary products are regulated by oversea markets. We have not got the people here. In forming local pools we may get a temporary advantage, but we have the experience of the maize-grower to-day. Once maize reaches a certain price, then black-grown maize from Africa will be imported. It is the same with the butter pool. We found that, when butter reached a certain price, Victoria, which got all her supplies from Queensland, sent over to New Zealand and obtained her supplies from that country. I might say that I have no opposition to offer to the Bill, provided that the Government give every industry the opportunity by vote to say whether they will come under the Bill. Why should the grazier and the cane-grower be forced to pay their levies and come under the Bill when, probably, they have their own organisations? Those engaged in an industry are the people who know most about it. I would like to refer to what the graziers propose to do to relieve the present situation. We all realise that the grazing industry is in a very bad position. We are up against great interests on the other side of the world, and to fight those interests we must have some power behind us. To do that, we have appealed to the Federal Government to give us power to form a meat board to enable us to make a levy on the stockowners of the whole of Australia, in order to create a fund with which to get into closer touch and organise our markets at the other end of the world. We did this because we realised that without this we would be entirely powerless as an industry. We asked the Federal Government to come in behind us, but, owing to the restrictions of the Federal Constitution, there is no power to enable us to levy rates or fees in the various States. We were going to ask the Government of Queensland to give us statutory power to make that necessary levy on the stockowners of Queensland. With that general fund we were going to seek new markets in the East, and to develop and re-establish Australia's name on the markets at home. We all know the reason of the collapse of the market at home, which was largely due to the reduced purchasing power of the nations in Europe, and also to a fight which is going on between the huge North American companies, known as the "Meat Trust," and the British companies operating in South America for the control of the world's markets. We realise that, if the North American trust should win in this fight, the British consumer will be entirely in their grasp—they can charge what prices they like. It will be remembered that a Commission—the Bridgeman Commission—was appointed by the Home Government to inquire into the extent to which American companies are securing a hold over the English trade. This Commission advised the home Government to license all importers of meat and produce into Great Britain. Under our scheme, we are asking that the Home Government should grant preference to Dominion-grown produce to the extent of 33½ per cent. It is not an unfair request for us to make, because, when

the war broke out, Great Britain wanted men to fight for her and beef and other produce to feed the men with, and Australia gave unstintingly. In times of trouble in the future Great Britain may require the assistance of the Dominions; and, if this fight goes on and the meat trust wins it, then Great Britain will be entirely within the grip of a foreign country. I am just elaborating the beef question, because it more or less affects every other primary industry in Australia. There is another very important matter—that is the standardisation of Australian produce. We have some of the finest fruit and other products in the world grown in Australia; but, unfortunately, they are badly turned out and are not up to standard, and we lose our position on the world's market and Australian produce gets a bad name. We shall also have to eliminate the distributing costs, which are altogether too high. Even to-day the British consumer is not getting the advantage of the cheap meat which is sold on the Smithfield market. We also suggest an improvement in our breeding methods. In the Argentine and the United States, which are the two biggest beef-producing countries, the system is buying by weight on a quality basis. It would tend to the improvement of our stock in Australia. I say that Queensland and Australian stock are as good as those in any other part of the world. The only thing is that in the Argentine and other countries they have a much bigger proportion of high-grade stock and first-class beef. That is not altogether the fault of the stock-breeder in Australia and Queensland, because we are unfavourably situated here, and we cannot do as they do in the Argentine—pay a high price for bulls and female stock—because they have the advantage of selling their beef products at a much higher rate than we can get. I just wanted to mention this matter of the beef, because I want to show that in organising these industries it will be impossible to organise the pastoral industry in common with the other primary products in Queensland, because those engaged in those industries know most about them, and should be the most capable of managing their own affairs. The same thing applies to the sugar-cane growers and to the dairy farmers. In the dairying industry there are many men who have given their lives to the organisation of the dairying industry. They have built it up by co-operation, and, if this Bill goes through as it is, all those organisations will be more or less wiped out. If the Government were sincere, they should have taken the existing grazing and dairy organisations and built up from them. Why have a huge expensive machine to do a lot of work that has already been done?

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: They want to create billets for a lot of people who are looking for them.

Mr. BELL: It looks like it. Turning to the Bill itself, as I said before, if these various industries were given an opportunity to say whether they would come under the scope of this Bill or not, I would be heartily in favour of it. The Minister said he would accept any reasonable amendment from this side, but unfortunately we have the experience of the last two sessions, when not one amendment was accepted from this side.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They were not reasonable.

*Mr. Bell.]*

Mr. BELL: We will assist the Government to amend this Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We want you to assist the country.

Mr. BELL: The definition of "primary producer," reads—

"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 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 for the purposes of this Act; and 'primary produce' and 'primary production' have correlative meanings."

We would like to know what that means, because one of the Ministers interjected last night that a miner was a primary producer. The employees on the farms may be considered to be primary producers, so there is a danger of some other class than the farmer getting control of the machinery under this Bill. They are not actually engaged in production so they cannot be termed primary producers.

Mr. FOLEY: The definition says "for the purposes of this Act." That is very plain.

Mr. BELL: We are not sure what the purposes of this Act are. There is another weakness in this Bill, and that is that it is more or less under Government control and Government influence. That is something which the world to-day is fighting against. We had experience of that during the war, and we find what a paralyzing influence it has been to the primary producers. Instead of giving the primary producers every encouragement to carry on their own affairs, it looks as if the Government are trying to dominate this machine. I notice that the Council of Agriculture is to have a quorum of six; but, as the Government appoint five members with the Minister, it is quite possible that the Government may be able to control it, and then they can give effect to any recommendation they desire.

There is another matter. It does not say how many shall constitute a local producers' association. It says that not less than fifteen may, by application, be recognised as a local producers' association, but it does not say how many shall be in the association. It looks as if the Act is going to be largely one of regulations, and that is always a very dangerous thing. I should like the organisation to be placed more in the hands of the producers and those engaged in the industry.

I have pointed out what I regard as weaknesses in the Bill. Probably we may be given an opportunity to move amendments in Committee, and, if the Minister in charge will accept some of them, it will be an advantage. So far as the general Bill is concerned, I am in favour of organising the primary producers, but not under this present scheme. If our amendments are accepted, this will be a better Bill.

[Mr. Bell.

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*): I desire to say at the outset of my address that I intend cordially to support the Government in the passage of this measure. I do so, not because I have absolute faith and sincerity in the actions of the Government in bringing forward the measure, but I regard it mainly as a palliative. Very often when a nation is afflicted, and even in our own households the same thing applies, when medical science has failed, then we have to resort to palliative measures. This Bill contains many clauses and provisions which can be regarded for the time being as palliatives. The Minister was very optimistic in connection with the whole Bill. He pointed out that he was prepared to accept reasonable amendments from this side. When those amendments are circulated in Committee, the Minister will recognise that they are reasonable amendments and not meant to destroy the main provisions of the Bill in any shape or form. Personally, I think it should be the duty of every hon. member of this chamber to help the Minister to render assistance to the primary producers. For a long time I have contended that the primary producer will never come into his own until he is organised on the same plan as the industrialists are organised. The Minister has gone further, because he is organising a huge concern that is to control the affairs of the primary producer. The Minister says it is to be non-political. The most remarkable thing about it is that the Minister is prepared to tell the primary producers that this should be non-political, while at the same time he is prepared to go to the Trades Hall and meet the trade unions and tell them to be true to the Labour party, and stick to their unions and stick to the objective. Why, if this Bill is to be non-political, does he not give the same medicine to the trade unions? Because of that we have to question the sincerity of the Minister, although his Bill is a good one. We have the right to ask what is the underlying factor that is compelling the Government to bring this Bill forward now?

Whilst I intend to support it, as I have already said, that should not deter me from trying to point out where we consider we cannot expect to achieve the millennium for the producers under it. I have said to the electors in the Central District that I would render every assistance to the passage of a measure of this sort, provided there were no decided pitfalls in it; but, at the same time, I realise that the producers cannot come into their own unless there is a Federal system controlling the whole of the State systems.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. PETERSON: Let me give a simple illustration. It is proposed to bring the sugar industry into this agricultural combine, if I may use that term. It seems to me that the sugar industry is on a very good wicket—I am assuming that the sugar agreement has been renewed.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Why do you assume that?

Mr. PETERSON: I think the hon. member will recognise that, on the information that is in the Press to-day and the notification made by Mr. Rodgers yesterday, we can assume there will be a satisfactory agreement.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is very good news to Queensland.

Mr. PETERSON: Anyhow, I assume that the agreement is renewed. I voted, and the Government voted, for the cane prices board principle, which was absolutely necessary at that time to give to the producer a fair return for his labour. Those boards were to fix the prices to be paid for sugar-cane, which at that time were on a very low scale. But something else came along. Whilst the cane prices board legislation was good, it was found ultimately that to secure the salvation of the sugar industry it was necessary to get a Federal agreement. I say the same thing is necessary here. Whilst the Minister may provide in this Bill admirable machinery to secure fair prices for the producers, he will find in the end—if we look forward three or four years—that he will have to go to the Federal authorities and seek co-operation federally in order to succeed. Suppose, for instance, the Council of Agriculture advised the Government that, owing to drought conditions and other causes, the cost of producing butter was 4s. per lb.—Mr. Ferry, in his report, showed that for 1916 and 1920 butter cost nearly 5s. per lb. to produce. Suppose that, at the behest of this Council, the Government recommended that the producers receive the cost of production of 4s., surely the Minister is not going to make us believe that the trade unionists will accept that? They will see that the screw is put on, and although the Council of Agriculture may advise the Government to put through such a provision, there is nothing in the Bill to compel the Government to do it. So, after all, it is well named an "advisory board." I would like to see the Minister outline some clause whereby the advice tendered by this Council, which is to be subsidised from the State funds, shall be mandatory on the Government. If that clause were inserted you would see this Bill through to-morrow. Take also the question of wheat and the question of butter. These things must be dealt with federally. Suppose that the Council commends an increase in the price of butter locally of 2d. per lb.; immediately the Brisbane merchants get butter from the South, and you cannot stop it. All the advisory boards in Queensland, all the advisory boards in the world, cannot stop it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Where should a start be made?

Mr. PETERSON: I agree with the Minister, and I agree with his sincerity. A start should be made in Queensland. We must do our own part first, but I am only pointing out that sooner or later he will find he will be up against a dead end, and that dead end will be the no-recognition of a Federal pool, or a Federal system operating here as well as in the other States. If his Bill aims at that, I think every hon. member may rest assured that it is truly in the interests of the primary producers; but how is the Minister going to get over that difficulty? What is the use of the advisory board in that case, if they cannot regulate the price of butter in Queensland—which the Minister by his silence admits?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I told you how last night. The Labour Government in Queensland have commenced the thing. After next election there will be a Federal Labour Government, who will extend the principle. (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. PETERSON: Perhaps so, and probably this is what may happen if that event

takes place. I notice in a report which I have here of a speech by the Secretary for Agriculture at the Trades Hall that, not so long ago, he made some definite statements with regard to production. I am glad he has made that interjection, because we can now see if he is sincere.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: My sincerity has never been questioned like yours.

Mr. PETERSON: Perhaps not, but perhaps the hon. member will give me the credit of admitting that I tried to do my best for the primary producers when I was on that side. This statement reminds me very much of the story of the lion who wanted to get a good meal and went along the track and found a very lean lamb. He did not eat him, because, he said, "I will take him home and feed him up well so that I can have a good feed off him." I want to know who was the Secretary for Agriculture who made this statement at the Trades Hall on 30th March, 1921?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Were you there?

Mr. PETERSON: No.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: How do you know?

Mr. PETERSON: I take the Press reports—the Brisbane "Courier." He cannot deny that the Brisbane "Courier" is a fair paper. At this meeting, at the May Day dinner, he said—

"But they could not get for the worker the absolute result of his industry until they got socialism, pure and simple."

What is socialism? According to the definition of the Labour platform, it is the socialisation of the whole of the means of production of wealth and distribution. If the hon. member wants a further definition, there is a dictionary in the library, but I am going to give him his own definition. He went on to say—

"They wanted the advice and suggestion of industrialists. He was satisfied that democracy in Australia would not be free till they had a Labour Government controlling the Commonwealth. And one of its first acts should be to control finance, currency, and banking. . . ."

"He hoped the supporters of the party would not pin their faith too much on price-fixing. The objective must be kept in view, and they must aim at producing for use and not for profit."

(Opposition laughter.) The hon. member said here last night that he was out to get the producers all he possibly could. How can he square that statement with the statement I have read that the objective of the Labour party stood for production for use and not for profit? And can he show me in this Bill anything that says that that is going to take place? The hon. member talks of the Commonwealth Labour party. The objective at the head of the Commonwealth Labour party's platform, to which every State member has to subscribe—for I know it—aims at the socialisation of all the means of production, wealth, and distribution, and the delegates at the Labour Conference distinctly stated that they would not be satisfied until the present system is overthrown.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You said it many a time.

Mr. Peterson.]

Mr. PETERSON: I challenge the hon. member to show where I ever advocated socialisation; and I never went into my electorate and talked co-operation and then went to the Trades Hall and talked communism.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: And the Minister signed that platform.

Mr. PETERSON: The hon. member cannot get away from the fact that he stated that the Labour objective was to produce for use and not for profit. I want him to go out to the different electorates [8.30 p.m.] and calmly tell the farmers what he means. I am convinced that, once the Minister honestly owns up that that is the objective he stands for, he will not have "Buckley's" chance of winning an election in Queensland.

Let us go a little further. I had the pleasure of being uninvitedly at the conference convened by the Premier and Secretary for Agriculture. It was a great pleasure to see the primary producers, the men who are interested in the great primary production of this State, turn up in such large numbers. One of the most pleasing things I ever saw in my life was when the Premier rose in his place and said, in effect, "We know that we have wronged you, but forgive and forget." (Government interruption.)

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He never said that.

Mr. PETERSON: I heard him say it. The hon. gentleman thinks we are all on his level and talk as he talks. Any number of people in that room heard the Premier make that statement. I am prepared to put my integrity against that of the Minister. The Premier said, "Let bygones be bygones." Can anyone deny that? The hon. gentleman who is Secretary for Public Lands has inflicted a cruel penalty of 10 per cent. on the drought-stricken settlers of the Dawson Valley. That hon. gentleman is supposed to be the friend of the man on the land, and is supposed to stand in the interests of the producers. When we appealed to him because of the condition of the settlers, what did he say? He said, "We will extend their time, but fine them 10 per cent." Then hon. gentlemen opposite come along and talk about "helping the farmers." The Minister hid behind the Land Act. He was not man enough to bring into this Parliament a Bill to amend it, although I appealed to him to do so.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What did you appeal for?

Mr. PETERSON: To bring in an amendment of the Land Act so that the drought-stricken settlers would have remitted to them the 10 per cent. fine.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You went and supported the party who put that provision on the statute-book.

Mr. PETERSON: Here is their platform, which stands for the alteration of that matter.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. PETERSON: Because of the hypocritical attitude of the hon. gentleman, who pretends to be the friend of the man on the land, yet who ground the lives out of hundreds of my settlers—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You do not understand.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He does understand. You do not like it.

Mr. PETERSON: The next matter which the Premier must have had in his mind when he said, "Let bygones be bygones," must have been this—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He never said it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Yes, he did.

Mr. PETERSON: You excised that, like you do "Hansard."

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. PETERSON: Let us go back to the Premier and his "Let bygones be bygones." I want to remind this House what one of those "bygones" was. Many of the settlers in the Dawson Valley in my electorate were mortgaged up to the hilt to the Department of Agriculture. They were fined 10 per cent. by the friend of the man on the land because they could not meet their rents on account of drought conditions.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What have I to do with it?

Mr. PETERSON: The hon. gentleman could have amended the Land Act. These same people were mortgaged up to the hilt with the Agricultural Bank. I pleaded for them from the back Government benches.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He did.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member for Drayton to restrain himself.

Mr. PETERSON: I am trying to draw the attention of the House to some of the matters which the Premier must have had in his mind when he said, "Let bygones be bygones." These settlers who had been mulcted in a 10 per cent. fine by the Secretary for Public Lands under cover of the Land Act, were fined 5 per cent. by the Agricultural Bank because they were not able to earn a living owing to drought conditions. Altogether those settlers were fined 15 per cent. because of these conditions. When I met those people and saw the trials and tribulations they were going through, when I appealed in vain on the back Government benches, and when this Country party said they would alter that if they were strong enough, I had no compunction whatever in joining them.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. PETERSON: Let us talk a little bit more about the "bygones." In 1915 there was a seizure of the primary producers' butter.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You never raised your voice in protest.

Mr. PETERSON: I will give the hon. gentleman the exact speech in a few moments. The next matter was that of the high taxation which was levied upon these producers by the present Government. Then there was the question of high freights. Will the hon. gentleman deny that for months and months a number of country members in the Labour party fought to prevent the freights being raised on the farmers? If he does, I challenge him to produce the caucus minute-book. (Loud Government laughter.) It is all very well for the hon. gentleman to come along with a smug look of statesmanship and treat me like this.

Let us go a little further. The hon. gentleman proposes to emancipate the farmers. Whenever you use the term "emancipation" you refer to slavery. The hon. gentleman therefore says he is going to emancipate slaves—the farmers. Who helped to make

them the biggest slaves in Queensland? It was the hon. gentleman, who took the farmers' produce at less than what it cost to produce. What did the hon. gentleman care about the country Labour members? When the stricken dairy farmers in my district and elsewhere, about ten days before the 1920 election, appealed to the Government to allow the Commissioner of Prices to increase the price of their cream, what did the hon. gentleman say? He said, "No, we cannot grant you that increase; but after the election we will grant you an inquiry." (Opposition laughter.) That is how the Government treated their country members. In order to give the people in the cities cheap butter, they were prepared to keep the farmer ground down until after the election.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That was the time for you to "rat."

Mr. PETERSON: That was the time for me to "rat." The only thing I am really ashamed of is that I did not "rat" three years ago.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. PETERSON: It was only in the hope of keeping the front-bench Government members up to the pledges of the Labour movement and the principles they stand for in regard to primary production that I remained as long as I did. All I can say, when I think of the Premier's appeal to "Let bygones be bygones," is that I can believe what a coward he felt when he stood in front of those people whom he had taken down.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. PETERSON: I do not mean that he was a coward personally; I mean politically. The hon. gentleman has twitted me with not having raised my voice. I will show what the hon. member for Rockhampton said about me "Hansard," volume CXXXVI., page 577)—

"The hon. member for Normanby took a very keen interest in the struggling farmers in the Wowan and Dawson Valley districts, and he had done more for them by visiting Ministers and calling at the different departments and using his influence in other ways than any member on the Opposition side had done."

I could have no better testimonial than that. When I tried to secure the removal of those penalties of 10 per cent. and 5 per cent.—when I pleaded with the Government that this policy of high taxation would not only ruin primary production but would bring the workers to the soup kitchen, I was laughed at, sneered at, jeered at. When I found that no notice was taken of a voice crying in the wilderness, I thought it was better to get where there were other voices which had a similar sound. The Secretary for Public Lands asked me why I did not raise my voice. That shows that he does not peruse "Hansard," or that he does not listen to members of his own party. The matter was taken up by the Press. On the question of price-fixing, as reported in "Hansard" in the session of 1919, I said—

"With regard to payment of the primary producers, I think the primary producers should get together and form themselves into a union and see that they get proper prices for their produce. (Hear, hear!) Too long have they been between both sections of the community; too long have they allowed themselves to be in

that position, and unless they take a wrinkle from the other industrial unions and organisations of such a nature, so long will they be crushed."

I could quote a number of extracts from my speeches where I wholeheartedly condemned price-fixing being applied to the producers in my electorate. After the 1920 election the inquiry was held by Mr. Ferry, a gentleman of undoubted integrity, and with whom I have no fault to find, to inquire into the cost of production of butter. The hon. member for Ipswich at that time stated during a debate, as reported in "Hansard" for 1920, at page 928—

"He had proved from their own statements that those engaged in the farming industry were four or five times better off now than they were in 1912 and 1914."

Mr. Ferry found that from 1916 almost up to 1920 those engaged in the butter industry were producing it at a loss. Either Mr. Ferry or the hon. member for Ipswich was wrong. My complaint is that, although Mr. Ferry, whose report was laid on the table of the House, found that the producers did not even get the cost of production for their butter, nothing was done. Not a single effort was made by the Government. The advisory board was not vested with any power to give the producers a reasonable price.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Are you going to oppose the Bill?

Mr. PETERSON: I am not going to oppose the Bill, because, before long, I am hoping that the hon. gentleman and his crew will not be there to administer it. I know the hon. gentleman is doing his best to get my scalp; but I am quite prepared for it. It matters not to me whether they get my scalp at the next election with a stuffed electorate with about 2,000 navvies—I will regain it the next time. It does not matter whether I am effaced from this Parliament, because I can go back to where I came from. I am not a professional politician, nor do I need to come forward at the eleventh hour with one foot in the political grave, and say, "I am going to rescue the farmers out of the ditch into which I pushed them." I hope the Minister will accept the amendments which have already been foreshadowed by the leader of the Opposition. The biggest factor with the producing element of Queensland is the need of finance. It takes £600 or £700 to get water in the drought-stricken areas. The Agricultural Bank will not advance a cent, unless the water is in the hole first. When the people cannot meet their land rent they are fined 10 per cent. until they do, and they are fined 5 per cent. because they cannot meet their Agricultural Bank advances. Where is the sincerity of hon. members opposite? Let them come up into the Normanby electorate and try and get water, where the struggling farmers have had the yoke round their necks for six or seven years. I remember speaking with regard to some measures dealing with water conservation, similar to those embodied in this Bill. I approached this great friend of the man on the land, the Secretary for Public Lands, on behalf of twenty settlers at Pheasant Creek, about 10 miles from Wowan, who had taken up land under the 1910 Act, and under which they had the right to convert their land into freehold. They had spent the whole of their savings, amounting to £200 to £300, in trying to get water. The Agricultural Bank would not advance

any money until the water was there. The result was that, having become financially ruined, they wrote to me as member for the district, and asked if I could get the Government to give them some assistance in this way. They asked if the Government would come to their assistance by putting down one bore for the community, and the Government could reassess the rents on the farms, and get the money in that way. I thought, as a member supporting a Government that was posing in the interests of the man on the land, that I would have no trouble with the Secretary for Public Lands. I came down to him, and he put all sorts of imaginable difficulties in the way. He said, "No, we cannot do anything like that. There is no machinery—nothing." No department had any machinery to help settlers who were prepared to help themselves, and who were prepared to pay the Government for what they got. I pointed out to the Minister the hordes of workers rushing in for free rations, and I said "I will bring those settlers down to Brisbane and make you feed them." He said, "If it is as bad as that, we will consider the matter." He considered the matter, and in a letter informed me that, if they were prepared to surrender their farms and allow the land to be converted into perpetual lease instead of freehold, to which they were entitled, he would see whether the Government would come to their assistance or not. I asked him if these stricken settlers, who were down and out, would get any priority, and the hon. gentleman said that he could not grant it under the Act.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member to connect his remarks in some way with the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: His statements are untrue.

Mr. PETERSON: It is true, and I will show the hon. gentleman the letters if he likes.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Show me the letters.

Mr. PETERSON: I will get them back from the association that I sent them to. If the farmers and small settlers have to rely upon the Secretary for Public Lands for assistance, they will be very much surprised. It is recorded in the journals of this House that—

"Mr. Corser, pursuant to notice, asked the Secretary for Public Lands: Will he relieve settlers who have been large losers during the late drought, and who are greatly hampered by the continued dry spell, by amending the law which permits the department to demand in such cases a penalty of 10 per cent. on late payments of Crown rents?"

"Answer: I do not anticipate that any alteration of the law in this connection will be made during the present session."

If a man has no money, 10 per cent. is a big price. The Government refused, and have refused all the time I was a member of the party, to assist the settlers in this direction. There is no excuse for them. It seems now, seeing that several hon. members have already had replies from the advisory board, that the functions of a member of Parliament are to be abrogated. We are sent down here by the producers of our electorates and asked to advocate certain things in their interest, and now we shall not be needed to do that. If a bag of cement or something else is wanted up in your electorate, and you have

to go to the advisory board for it, it is a pretty fair indication of the state of affairs we have got to. If Parliament is truly representative in all respects, we on this side of the House and on that side of the House, too, should have the right to explain to the Ministers in charge of different Bills what are the opinions of our electors, and the Minister should use his judgment as to what are the best suggestions; but to-day the Secretary for Agriculture has said, in effect, that members are not required to make suggestions. If the duty of pointing out to Parliament the requirements of our districts is to pass away from us, then the sooner the hon. gentleman and his party introduce a Bill to reduce the number of members in this Chamber the better the people of Queensland will like it. I sincerely trust that, whatever strictures are passed on this Bill, whatever mistakes the Government have made in the past—the Premier has admitted them—let us, one and all, say to the producers, "Accept what you can get from the Government before it is too late." I am going to advise them to do that, and I am going to advise them also, through their advisory boards, to do everything possible to bring about a similar scheme in the other States of the Commonwealth, so that ultimately, through a grand Federal council, we shall be able to secure better conditions for the primary producers of Queensland and other States.

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*): I listened with very close attention to the hon. member for Normanby, and I must say that I am rather surprised at that hon. member. He started out to give his blessing to the Bill, and in doing that he said that he had a right to question the motives of the Government. He said he was giving his blessing to the Bill, not because he has any faith in the Government, but because he realised that they were open to suspicion, and he had a right to question the Government's sincerity.

Mr. FLETCHER: Don't you think he is justified?

Mr. POLLOCK: In view of some of the hon. member's statements that I have lately been reading, I do not think he is justified. I intend calling, in the defence of the Government on this matter, particularly as regards the Government's motives, a witness in whom I have every reliance, and that witness is no other than the hon. member who has just resumed his seat. The hon. member must very recently have altered his mind as to the Government's policy with regard to the primary producers.

Mr. PETERSON: What date was that?

Mr. POLLOCK: I will give the hon. member the day and date for the whole lot, and I can assure him that I will not be in any way stingy with the quotations I have. In 1915, as reported on page 81 of "Hansard" for that year, the hon. member for Normanby said—

"If any hon. member will look up "Hansard" as I did and showed it to my electors—he will find that, with the exception of the hon. member for Murilla on one occasion, those hon. members always voted against allowing the settlers on the land to get more money from the Agricultural Bank."

Mr. PEASE: Who said that?

Mr. POLLOCK: The hon. member for Normanby. The hon. member who has just

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finished accusing the Government of all sorts of sins of omission and commission against the farmers. On the same day, as reported in "Hansard," the hon. member said—

"The members on the other side"—  
Those are the hon. members, amongst whom he is now sitting—

"say they are friends of the man on the land, but every time legislation has been brought forward for the purpose of wiping out the middleman or doing anything that would help the workers, those hon. members were never found supporting it."

(Government laughter.) Perhaps the hon. member is now in good company.

Mr. PETERSON: Read what I said on page 222.

Mr. POLLOCK: On page 84, the hon. member is reported to have said—

"No wonder that the farmers are beginning to see things from our standpoint."

Mr. PETERSON: I believed that at the time.

Mr. POLLOCK: On the very same page he said—

"The Country party will disappear altogether before the next election."

(Laughter.) And in speaking on the Industrial Arbitration Bill on 21st September, 1915, as reported on page 829 of "Hansard," he said—

"I am out to give preference to unionists every time, because the object of unionism is not to belittle the worker or to bring him down, but to make his conditions better. Members opposite are out to decry and belittle the worker. We had an exhibition to-day of an hon. gentleman who leads the steerage party—beg pardon, the Farmers' party—insulting the unionists of this State."

On page 830 the hon. member said—

"I say that if the primary producers and those whom they employ depended upon the members on the other side, then, God help them."

(Government laughter.) On page 1548 of "Hansard" for 1915, the hon. member is reported to have said—

"I am getting a good deal for the farmers in the Central district . . . and other members with me have been able to get concessions for the farmers that they never got from a Liberal Government. That is because we have had a sympathetic Government."

On page 2273 the same hon. member said—

"Yes, and he would never be done thanking the Government, nor would the settlers ever be done thanking the Government, for bringing about that assistance."

(Renewed laughter.) That was on the Rights in Water and Water Conservation Bill. In 1916, as reported on page 103 of "Hansard," the hon. member said—

"The longer I am in Parliament, the more I am convinced of the utter hypocrisy of members on that side of the House, who claim to be the friends of the men on the land. I have seen two members who pose as the representatives of the man on the land to-day make an exhibition of themselves in irrelevancy, in immature facts, and in statements which cannot be borne out by facts."

(Government laughter.) The hon. member

for Drayton is the hon. member who just patted the hon. member for Normanby on the back.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: And I will pat him again.

Mr. VOWLES: I rise to a point of order. I would like to know whether any of these quotations have anything to do with the principles of the Bill?

The SPEAKER: I allowed the hon. member for Normanby considerable latitude, and the hon. member is now replying.

Mr. PETERSON: I don't mind; I am enjoying it.

Mr. VOWLES: I ask whether it has anything to do with the principles of the Bill?

The SPEAKER: The hon. member for Normanby had very wide latitude allowed to him.

Mr. POLLOCK: It will be found right throughout the speech I am making that I have dealt with nothing else but farming matters, and all other hon. members have been allowed the same latitude as myself. The hon. member for Normanby further said—

"Does he (the hon. member for Drayton) think that the people of Queensland are deluded? I challenge him to come to my electorate and talk that 'tripe' there."

(Laughter.)

Mr. BEBBINGTON: And I did, too.

Mr. POLLOCK: I am making these comments with the object of showing that the newly launched offensive by the hon. member for Normanby against the Government, on farming matters, is not to be substantiated, and that his testimony is altogether unreliable.

Mr. PETERSON: Quote what I said at the same time.

Mr. POLLOCK: On page 105 the hon. member for Normanby said—

"I desire to thank the Government for the considerable amount of good which has been done in my electorate. (He mentioned carriage of starving stock at reduced rates, abolition of guarantee tax, supply of seed maize and wire netting.) Since the Labour party came into power fifteen schools have been established in the district; yet I am asked to join a party like that which refused them schools. I would sooner be shot. I would sooner remain with the party whose aim is the betterment of all and the protection of the farmer."

(Loud laughter.) But he did not remain.

[9 p.m.]

Mr. BEBBINGTON: But your objective has changed.

Mr. POLLOCK: On the next page, the hon. member for Normanby said—

"I also desire to thank the Government because they have at last seen the wisdom of assisting settlers in regard to water."

If the hon. member desires to cast doubt upon the bonâ fides of the Premier, who was in 1916 the Treasurer of this State, let me remind him that, when speaking on the Government Savings' Bank Bill, he stated that he was prepared to take the Treasurer's word. He said—

"He was prepared to take the Treasurer's word. Since he had been in

*Mr. Pollock.*]



the party, anything that the Treasurer promised to do he always attended to. The settlers in the Normanby electorate knew that the Treasurer would keep his word."

(Government laughter.) I am satisfied that, in connection with this Bill, the then Treasurer and the present Premier will keep his word.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. PETERSON: Let us hope so.

Mr. POLLOCK: On page 1686 the hon. member said—

"As a country member, I must say that I am absolutely satisfied with the way the Government have treated my electorate. . . . I feel sure that when we go before the electors in eighteen months' time the people will be satisfied with the work of this Government. . . . The party opposite is made up of Labour rats."

(Government laughter.) Speaking on Supply, vide page 2647, the hon. member said—

"In his electorate there were vast areas of prickly-pear. . . . Hon. members were sent there to try and solve the problem among others. . . . It seemed, however, they were going to continue in the same old way."

"Mr. Bebbington: Come over here.

Mr. PETERSON: If he went over there it would simply mean that, after he had been in the party for fifty years, there would be no country at all—it would be all pear. While he remained where he was there was some chance of salvation."

On 12th July, 1917, vide page 148, "Hansard," the hon. member for Normanby said—

"All I can say is that every Labour 'rat' is scraped out of the rubbish tin and made a Liberal leader."

(Government laughter.) In the debate on Ways and Means, on 5th June, 1918, the hon. member, referring to the last election, said—

"What did the people say? The people said—and the farmers particularly—'We have not been taxed as the result of Labour legislation. When the hon. member for Cunningham gets up here and says that the genuine farmer is being taxed, it is an absolutely unfair statement to make. As far as my own electorate is concerned. . . . I defy him to show me one agriculturist there who is compelled to pay a land tax who genuinely produces from the land. . . . Anybody who has studied agricultural matters and sees butter factories cropping up all over agricultural districts, does not wonder that the farmers have returned a larger majority of farmers' representatives on this side; because never in the history of Queensland has there been such a successful financial side to the producer as since we have been in power; and may it long go on.'"

On the proposed reduction or removal of the land tax, in 1918, the hon. member, in referring to settlers from Dorrigo, said—

"These people are eager to take up land under perpetual lease tenure, and if this policy is in force in normal times, and with reasonable seasons, I am sure that the hon. member (referring to Mr. Bebbington) if he does live to see that time, will be with us, and will say he

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made a mistake, and that the policy of this Government has done more in the same period to send Queensland ahead to a greater extent than ever before."

(Government laughter.) The hon. member for Normanby was nothing if not thorough when he was making these remarks. Speaking on the question of perpetual leasehold in the debate on the Land Acts Amendment Bill in 1917, vide page 1332 of "Hansard," he said—

"I represent a very large constituency, which includes a lot of farmers, and I have never found any consistent objection to the perpetual lease principle."

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He served your party as well as he is serving us. (Government laughter.)

Mr. POLLOCK: Well, all I can say is that I wish the hon. gentleman luck. In 1918, vide page 1465 of "Hansard," the hon. member said—

"Now, as a Country member I desire to say straight out—and I speak for a very large electorate indeed—that as far as this Government is concerned, I have nothing whatever to cavil at."

Mr. PETERSON: It is quite true.

Mr. POLLOCK: There is no doubt about its being true. On page 1,745 of "Hansard," the hon. member said—

"I believe when the war clouds lift and the people return to sanity. . . . they will see that there was one party in the Commonwealth which kept their balance, and that was the Labour party."

In 1919, the hon. member said, vide "Hansard," page 82—

"I am very glad to be able to say that the people of Queensland are behind the Labour Government even in this trying period. . . . I am very pleased to find that the official organ of the Queensland Farmers' Union, the Queensland Cheesemakers' Association, and the United Cane-growers' Association, has seen fit to endorse the policy which I have supported during at least the last four years."

(Government laughter.) And again the hon. member, in order to prove that the Labour party is bonâ fide in regard to co-operation, said—

"I am responsible to my electors, and that is why I have supported the Labour movement as I have for twenty-nine years—that co-operation has been a paramount plank in its platform."

Mr. PETERSON: Not communism! (Government laughter.)

Mr. POLLOCK: This Government is now putting into operation that plank of its platform—co-operation—and I am glad to see that the hon. member is supporting the Government. I want to remind him of a few things he said at one time and another, and of his confidence in the Government. The hon. member is reported to have said, on page 85—

"The policy of Governments in the past has been to assist men to get on the land—dump them down and leave them there—and a lot of men have got tired of it. . . . I think I can truthfully say, speaking of the whole of the Labour party in this House, that never have the farming members appealed to the party in vain."

(Government laughter.) Yet the hon. member had the effrontery to tell us a few

months ago that he appealed in vain from the back benches for assistance for the farmer. Which is right?

Mr. PETERSON: They are both right. (Government laughter.) You have quoted what I said in favour of the Government; read what I said against the Government!

Mr. POLLOCK: My function to-night is to show that the hon. member is quite satisfied as to the bona fides of the Government, and I am quoting himself as being the best testimony that can be given. On page 570 of the "Hansard" of 1920 the hon. member said—

"As the member for a farming electorate he had never found the Minister for Agriculture or the other members of the Government backward in assisting him."

(Government laughter.)

Mr. PETERSON: We passed the Co-operative Agricultural Act, and it took twelve months to put it into operation.

Mr. POLLOCK: I have not forgotten anything. It is the hon. gentleman who has forgotten things. I want to say the hon. member is not a true representative of the people when he says that the Advisory Board's decisions should be mandatory on the departments. I, for one, certainly would not agree to allow any advisory council to make its suggestions mandatory upon the Government, for the reason that that would be presupposing that the farmers were the only persons in the community entitled to any consideration. By the same rule, if the Government were to adopt such a suggestion as that—and it is an impossible suggestion—then all we would have to do would be to hand over in the same way the Arbitration Court, the Department of Labour, and everything else, to be controlled by the workers, who could give themselves what they liked. If the hon. member's suggestion were agreed to, what would be the use of representative government? Of course, the hon. gentleman, viewed by his utterances to-day, is an impossible person, and no man with any idea of what government for the people means would venture such a suggestion as that. If the Department of Agriculture were asked to accept every suggestion of the Advisory Council, then Queensland would be run for the farmers, and the farmers alone. While I believe in giving the farmers a fair deal, I am not prepared to go as far as that, nor is any other hon. member with any sort of balance in him. In my opinion, the Bill aims for the first time at organisation in a thorough and efficient way of every branch of the primary-producing industries. No person is left out. No individual is too small or too insignificant to come within the scope of the Bill. Any man who represents the farmers has nothing to be ashamed of in giving his support to this Bill. Hon. members opposite realise that the Government are taking from them the justification for them to be in the House at all. The Government have taken the wind entirely out of the sails of the farmers' representatives, and the reason that they are opposing the Bill is simply because they do not like it.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (Warwick): The hon. member for Gregory was more concerned in his speech about rating the hon. member for Normanby than anything else, although the Bill certainly received his blessing in the

end. At the same time the good name of the House might have been protected if the hon. member really had given one of the speeches that he sometimes delivers on many matters that concern the country. I suppose every hon. member in this House has felt deep concern regarding the proposals of the Government in this matter. I know that I said to myself something of this kind when I first saw the Bill. We are going to witness either one of the biggest political somersaults we have ever seen, or we are going to see an attempt of a gigantic nature made to hypnotise and deceive the people. I was inclined first to believe, before the presentation of the Bill, and before hon. members had spoken, that we were going to see some true reversal of the policy of the Government, or rather a reversal in deed and in truth, which was going for ever, in a sense, to belie the misdoings of the past seven years. I thought that the time was coming when real help was going to be given to the man on the land.

Mr. PEASE: It is like you did when you imported wheat from the other States.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: That is not relevant; but not one bushel was imported by us from the other States.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. G. P. BARNES: If it had been a somersault, we would have witnessed rather a lot of indignation from hon. members opposite, but I have waited very carefully to find out what their attitude was, and, knowing that the real objective of the Labour party was the nationalisation of all the means of production, distribution, and exchange, I naturally felt that the thing would be revealed, and it has been revealed. Those who have spoken have unhesitatingly given their support to the measure before the House, which indicates that they are satisfied that they are on the true and direct line for the nationalisation of the industry. And, indeed, there is latent in their breasts the feeling that they are simply moving step by step, as the Minister for Justice said some years ago. That Minister said, "We are going to do things, not in a revolutionary way. We are going to do things in an orderly way. We are going to do things step by step; but we will do them." There is no doubt that the members of the Government have been true to their objective, and they have been carefully presenting legislation this evening with the effect of carrying out the high purpose which they have in view. I am afraid that in the Bill which has been presented to us, although I would have liked to have it otherwise, the Government of the day are simply out to achieve their own objective. Their own people inside and outside, by their utterances, are giving a good reason why the farmers of this land should accept with the greatest caution what is now presented to them as being for their good and their well-being. So far as one's reading goes, and as the result of the attitude of Government members and supporters, every man should satisfy himself that what is being done accords with the real idea of the party itself, and of the leaders of the organisations behind them. They are endeavouring to satisfy their consciences by saying, "Whilst we are going to indicate to the men on the land that we are doing something for him, be quiet! We are carrying out our purpose step by step, and we shall achieve it, and in the end the ideal

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of common ownership will be realised." We have seen it going on, first in the acquisition of various commodities. That was one step—not a kind step towards the farmer, by any means. Then there was the introduction of various State enterprises and their management. That was a very big contribution to the result. Now we have the Bill before us, which goes a great deal too far for any Government of a free people in a British land. I defy anyone to prove that a Bill with like aims, having behind it a purpose so deep, has ever been introduced in the Parliament of any free people in any part of the world. There are many things that the Government might have done. It is not a matter of accepting a proposal like this with a grain of salt. So far as I am concerned, in view of the purpose of the Bill and the inclusion of the various industries in the State into one great big union, I shall urge every man on the land to pass it out, because it is an unwise procedure; it is going back on all the fundamentals of our life, and it is a staggering blow to any man who has at heart the very best interests of this country.

The PREMIER: What dangers do you foresee?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: If I were to put it in my own terms, I would say that, if the purpose is carried out, it is a kind of toned-down Sovietism. I know it is quite bloodless in its way, but still it is revolutionary to an extreme, and certainly it is moving in the direction of the objective of the party, or they would not be so quiet about it, and they would not have given it their blessing, because, whatever we may say or feel regarding the Labour party, I believe that, as a rule, they are a body of sincere men. They may delude and they may help to deceive the people, but they are carrying out a purpose within them and are actuated by a sincere desire. I know that sometimes they see the error of their ways, and to-night we have had a speech from the hon. member for Normanby indicating, although not in these words, that he regretted that the scales had not fallen from his eyes three years earlier.

The PREMIER: Do you say that the Country party are supporting a system of Sovietism?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: It is for them to say. I am speaking as I feel. They evidently see some good in this; but I think that every member of that party who has spoken has said, in effect, that, although he may accept it in a degree, yet it is only in a degree, and with the latent hope that the Government may see their way to accept amendments. Of course, there is good in everything if you can only trace it; but there is a mighty lot of evil in this thing—so much evil that it should never have been introduced into an Assembly of English people.

Can you wonder that the people and the Nationalists have great difficulty in accepting and believing what is presented to the Chamber? We have memories. We have gone through seven years in which we have witnessed no real development. The people have been discouraged. The lament of the Minister when introducing the Bill was that the people were going off the land and they must be brought back—that the country was not going ahead. All the farmers must be organised, he said, into a solid body, and their rights must be looked after. After seven years of their treacherous dealings with the

farmer it is too late in the day to tell him that you are going to give him more attention in order to secure his confidence. It is not fair. Hon. members of the House will remember that the Government ticket to-day is not the ticket of seven or eight years ago. What hoaxed the people and the worker on the land then? Cheap bread, cheap butter, cheap beef! And, my word, they got them! You know how butter was acquired! You know how the man on the land groaned! I had prepared in 1916 a table of figures as a result of information secured in this House as to the quantity of butter seized, and I was able to tell this House that from 7th July, 1915—the date of the inception of price-fixing—to 8th September, 1915, the loss to the dairymen of Queensland was £143,716 11s. That figure was arrived at by ascertaining the average ruling price of butter during the period named in Melbourne and Brisbane, and by finding out the quantities of butter produced in Queensland during the same term. I found that the difference in some instances was enormous; the average was £13 6s. 4d. per ton, and the quantity 10,868 tons, and the loss as I have indicated.

At 9.30 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. Kirwan, *Brisbane*) took the chair as Deputy Speaker.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: You cannot wonder at the statement I made just now that the Government were true to the promises they made and that they came down upon the people at extraordinary periods when they needed every fraction they could get out of their products. Their very life was squeezed out of them. You have only to turn to the Auditor-General's reports—I do not know whether it is in the 1921 report, but it is certainly in the 1920 report—to find that a sum of £36,000 or £37,000 stands to the credit of a fund comprised of a levy made to prevent people making the best use of the market over the border; altogether an illegal thing. It was not the big squatter who suffered on that occasion, but the dairyman who was in the habit of passing his surplus stock over the border into New South Wales. That is not showing very much sympathy. There has been a big change of front. To-day they say they are out to serve the farmers. The hon. member for Normanby might have gone a good deal further than he did in speaking on the amount of rent collected. Just imagine seizing a period when the values of stock were abnormal, and fixing the rents according to a figure based upon those conditions, as well as making them retrospective for a great number of years. You cannot imagine anyone having the interests of the people at heart doing a thing of that nature. Financial help is the principal help the farmer needs, and very little of that has been given. The administration of the Government has limited the opportunities of those men to get what they wanted. It would be interesting to know how many men who have made application for help since the Savings Bank was transferred to the Commonwealth have had their application turned down. I know a great many have been turned down—not in the interests of the farmer, but for other motives that are not discoverable to the ordinary mind. The bank—the very best thing we ever possessed, which could have been of the best service to the man on the land—was handed over. To-day, if I understand the matter rightly, the money that comes through the Savings Bank costs 1

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per cent. more than it would have done if we had continued in the old way. That is a very serious thing. I pointed out in this House in 1918 what the farmer wanted. It may be a coincidence that I brought before the notice of the House a Bill which contains many of the conditions included in this Bill. It was a financial Bill to which I referred. In "Hansard," volume cxxx., page 1799, I am reported as having said—

"I myself have a cutting here from 'Munsey's Magazine' of January, 1918, a scheme not altogether identical. But in America and everywhere else they are finding that the trend of things is for men to leave the land for higher wages and surer conditions. The conditions that are generally obtained by living in the city are acting as a wonderful inducement for the young life to leave the country and go to the city. Consequently, in America, they are having to go to their wits' ends to know what inducement to put forward in order that the men may be encouraged to go on the land and remain there. I commend to the attention of the Treasurer the fact that in America, in order to meet the contingency which exists, they have introduced what is known as the 'Farm Loan Act.' I know it may be said that we have our land here, and some help is being given, but it is not being given in a general way, but rather in a tardy way. As already stated, in America they have a Farm Loan Act, and under this Act, farmers, graziers, dairymen, and orchardists are enabled to borrow money from the Government at 5 per cent. The loans may be got for short or long periods up to forty years. Farm loan system has reduced the interest rate by quite 2 per cent. Experience in America proves that the most profitable farms are those that are best equipped, and those loans allow of the purchase of more implements and stock, the classing of land, fencing, and fertilising the land. The Act is administered by four men sitting as a board. These are appointed by the president, the Treasurer of the United States acting as chairman. American farm lands are valued at £800,000,000, and the value of the products in 1916 was nearly £300,000,000—equal to five times the mineral, natural gas, petroleum, and coal production of the United States. It is recognised in America that here are three vital elements in food production, viz., land, money, and labour. This system makes farming more attractive, and encourages young men, who would otherwise flock to the cities, to take up farming. The loans are made when the necessary evidence of ownership and security has been provided. Short credit is given for harvesting and marketing crops, as well as for seed, fertilisers, and for payment of labour. It is said that the system has increased, not only cultivation, but the yield per acre, and has brought under cultivation much unused land. In loan terms reduction by annual instalments of principal and interest is arranged. It is said that the system is essential to the successful prosecution of the business. To-day America has 4,000 associations for the purpose of making advances on the lines indicated. In four months they have advanced nearly £5,000,000. The Act was passed when it was found that the food-

producing population was diminishing, and it has had the effect of steadying things and of developing production. America considers that the Farm Loans Act marks a new era in her agricultural and national development. Surely, in these days when we have to deal with great lands such as ours, we ought to consider what is going to satisfy the man on the land and what is going to encourage him to stay where he is!"

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: But you failed to advocate a better method of distribution.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: No. When the Savings Bank Bill was going through, this side of the House took up the same stand, and said, "We are against the centralisation of financial matters." It was advocated from this side that a portion of the deposits made in various districts should be set aside for the development of those districts. The Government allowed the very best thing the country was in possession of to be given away, and they are not now able to render the assistance they would have been able to render. The then Treasurer (Hon. J. A. Fihelly) came over and told me the idea was a good one. He went further, and said that the matter was not going to be lost sight of; it was going to receive consideration even when the transfer was completed.

The Government has come down with a proposal which is going to include the whole of the industries of the State. It will embrace—

"Dairy farmer; wheat, maize, or cereal grower; canegrower; fruitgrower; grazier; farmer—whether engaged in general or mixed farming, cotton, potato or vegetable growing, or poultry or pig raising—and any class of persons, on the recommendation of the Council, declared by the Governor in Council, by Order in Council, to be primary producers for the purposes of this Act."

In connection with the wheat pool, I have had men who have been grievously troubled accost me on the matter. Under this Bill a man will have neither a fowl nor a pig to call his own. He will have neither body nor soul to call his own. The whole of the producing interests of this State are to be handed over to twenty-five men. No greater absurdity was ever conceived of. This vast and mighty producing interest is going to be governed by men who are only adventurers. We have only to look to the management of affairs in this State during the last seven years. The railways have gone to the bad, and in earning-power we have lost £8,000,000 upon them. We also have enterprises like State stations and State fisheries. With the exception of the State Insurance, none of the State enterprises has been a success.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: You are quite wrong.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Might I suggest to the hon. gentleman that he is hardly in order in dealing with the merits or demerits of State enterprises on this Bill. He may refer to them in passing, but he cannot discuss them at length.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I intended to show that, where we have such failures in the management of those enterprises, we can scarcely expect the Government to succeed when they get down to the hard, dry level of the management of the affairs of

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the people on the land. I am out-and-out opposed to the Bill under the present Administration, and I do not care who knows it. A more daring, audacious, and cruel Bill was never presented for the consideration of a deliberative Assembly in a British land.

The PREMIER: What do you think of the Country party for supporting such an audacious proposal?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: That is a matter for the Country party. I do not care what my electors do with me. I have no hesitation in telling them that they are touching a very dangerous thing, which comes within the domain of common ownership, and which I have termed "toned-down Sovietism." When the Bill is passed, and the people are mesmerised into a belief that it is for their good, if they are going to be so mesmerised, the time has arrived when the Government can go a step further and nationalise industry, in deed and in truth, and every man will become a mere chattel.

The PREMIER: Do you call co-operation Sovietism?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: On one occasion Mr. Alan Cameron, chairman of the Darling Downs Divisional Council and Central Downs District Council, and chairman of the Burton branch, seconded a resolution to the effect—

"That the Burton branch fall in behind the Government's scheme."

This man is a canny Scotchman, and he has been thinking since, and this morning's "Daily Mail" contains the following:—

"Toowoomba, Thursday.—Mr. A. E. Cameron, chairman of the Burton branch of the Queensland Farmers' Union, and chairman of the Darling Downs Divisional Council and Central Downs District Council, speaking to a representative of 'The Daily Mail' to-day, stated that he was not as satisfied with the Government's agricultural scheme now as he was in the early stages of that scheme.

"Asked his reasons for this, Mr. Cameron replied that it was owing to the alteration of the personnel of the board giving the Government the greater proportion of representation on it. Mr. Cameron remarked that there seemed to be too many Government men connected with the scheme, and these members could outvote at any time any suggestion for the relief of the farmer that was brought forward by a farmers' representative.

"If the Government wished to help the man on the land, it must give him assistance without interference."

In bringing in a coercive measure like this we are following a trend which, I am glad to say, is being broken up elsewhere. The principle at stake is the same. I notice that the strikes in America have caused the people of Washington to think, and this is what President Harding said—

"The Government will force no man to employ men against the free exercise of an employer's rights. The Government is concerned with a coal production sufficient to meet the requirements of industries and transportation, and to prevent a fuel famine."

This is a coercive measure, intended to dictate to everyone what he shall do and what he shall not do. Then, I notice also in

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connection with the seamen's strike in the South, that this statement is made by Mr. Kneen—

"That the Seamen's Union has agreed that ships' officers shall select and engage those men whom the officers desire."

And he concludes with a definite assurance that the whole of the Commonwealth fleet will be laid up in the event of any further job-control tactics being employed. That proves that a change has come over the scene, and the Government are too late in the day in bringing in a restrictive and coercive measure regarding the producers. Instead of foisting on them hard conditions, and instead of pinning the country down to Sovietism, they should be opening their arms and breaking away from conditions of that kind. We are as dependent as ever we were on the enterprise and industry of the people, and this land will never become great, or continue to be great—it is great now, considering all things—unless the people have more freedom than they have at present. This State is wonderfully prosperous considering all things, and prosperous because men have had their own way in life. They have fallen back on their own resources, their own initiative, their own enterprise, and I sincerely hope that this fair land of ours is not going to be cursed by the passing of legislation which will be destructive of our freedom, and which will prevent all development in the future.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): I wonder at the Government bringing in this Bill, and I wonder, if the Premier intends to pass it, how he managed to convince his party that he is sincere.

The PREMIER: It was adopted unanimously and enthusiastically.

Mr. DEACON: Then, I wonder how he managed to convince those gentlemen outside who, it is generally understood, are in favour of socialism. I wonder at hon. members on the other side commenting so freely on the actions of the hon. member for Normanby. I would not, if I were in their shoes, be quite so easy in my mind. They are coming here now with ashes on their heads, and who knows how soon they will be on this side of the House?

The PREMIER: Do you think this Bill will be a good thing for the Cunningham electors?

Mr. DEACON: I wonder at so many members of the Country party entirely approving of the measure. I am not so sure that it is a good thing. I am not going to condemn it altogether, but will wait until the Bill has left this House. I am not quite sure of the Government's intentions being entirely and solely in the interests of the farmers. I do not wish to cast any doubt on the Premier's sincerity, as I believe he sees for himself the mistakes of his party.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What do you think of the Secretary for Agriculture? Do you think he is sincere?

Mr. DEACON: I have never heard the Secretary for Agriculture declare himself yet, but I have heard the Premier declare from a platform that his party have made mistakes in the past.

The PREMIER: All parties make mistakes; we are not supermen.

Mr. DEACON: Speaking at Warwick, the Premier said they had no body of organised

farmers that could speak for them and correct him; but I would remind him now that there is a political party representing the farmers who know what the farmers want, and they have told him in this House that they are quite prepared to give him their assistance. I hope he will remember that. I do not wish to resurrect any unpleasant memories, but one cannot forget what the Government have done. Charges have been thrown across this Chamber, but I do not wish to repeat them. I hope the Premier will believe hon. members on this side when they state that they desire to make this a workable measure. I am proud to say I am a farmer, and I am proud to be a member of a farmers' political party. It is not so long ago that there was no political party organised solely in the interests of the farmers. Now we have the Labour party throwing over their own party and turning into an agricultural party. I feel proud of the progress the farmers have made politically, seeing that they have two big parties in this House claiming to be desirous of assisting to pass measures in their interests.

The PREMIER: Will you give me your moral support at the next election?

Mr. DEACON: I will give the Premier my moral support when I recognise his sincerity. I am not saying that of the whole of the party. I want to know [10 p.m.] how the Government will treat the amendments which are required in the Bill. If they will accept reasonable amendments, I will give them my moral support. The Bill requires many amendments.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Mention one or two.

Mr. DEACON: One thing I object to is political control. I do not see why the Minister of the day should have control, because he has five Government votes under his control.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Five out of how many?

Mr. DEACON: It might be five out of ten. It is too many. After all, this is the farmer's own business. It is admitted that the farmer can manage his own concerns, and why not leave the management of this business entirely to him? It may be considered right, because there is a Government subsidy, that the Government should have some say in the matter; but if we look back we shall find that the Government owe us some money. They have admitted, by the introduction of a Land Tax Acts Amendment Bill, that they took some money from us which they were not entitled to take by imposing high railway freight. Rather than have Government management by a Government nominee, I would prefer to see the measure go through without a subsidy. We should let the farmers have the control in their own hands; they are jealous of their independence, and desire freedom of action in managing their own affairs. The Bill will not be so bad if that one defect is removed and the management left solely in farmers' hands. I am not sure that the scheme is going to be thoroughly successful; it all depends upon the interest which the farmers will take in it. I would ask the Premier and the Secretary for Agriculture to remember that the farmers are naturally suspicious of too many organisers. It causes them to think that they are being pushed into the scheme and are not being

asked to take it up voluntarily, and that has stopped them from taking the interest they would otherwise take in the Bill. It is absolutely impossible for a small Council of twenty or twenty-five men to manage all the producing industries of this great country when you think of the great distances involved and the financial assistance which will be required. We know the difficulties we have had with the wheat pool. The Wheat Board, in taking delivery of wheat, made small advances. The farmers had to finance themselves on those advances, and it was impossible for them to carry on with them. The fact that they carried on was due to other resources they had. At the present time the last year's crop is not yet paid for. For the present crop we have received only 4s. As the cost of handling wheat is something like 10s., how are you going to carry on for twelve months on one small advance like that?

I have to do the financing of my farm, and I know what it is. If the board are unable to do the financing, where is the farmer to get the money from? At present he gets it from the storekeeper and the middleman, but under this scheme we propose to cut them out. We are taking it out of their hands. All the purchase of machinery and everything that a farmer requires will be done by the Council. When we consider what it takes to finance a farm, I consider it will cost £5,000,000 or £6,000,000 to finance this scheme. I am not going to give the Government credit for bringing this scheme forward, because I have my doubts about the measure, and I think it has been overrated. As it stands at present, it is unworkable, and I hope it will be amended. I think we should watch the definition of "primary producer." There are possibilities there. I understand that this Bill has been introduced for the benefit of the primary producer, the grazier, and farmer particularly. A man who works on a farm is really a primary producer, and at present it is possible to bring him under the Bill. Any organiser can safely say, if he is engaged in primary production, that he is a primary producer. The cane-cutters can say it, and they can be represented on the Council if they are included as primary producers. I say they should not be on the Council, because they will not have the responsibility of finding the money. They will get as much as they can cut of it. That has been the attitude of the working man for a good many years. They have been pushing the Government to get as much as they can out of people, quite regardless of whether the interests they are pushing can pay them or not. If they are included in a scheme of this kind, they might pursue the same tactics.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You ought to read the definition.

Mr. DEACON: Amendments will be offered in the hope that they will receive consideration. Hon. members opposite talk about the middleman, but the middleman does not trouble the farmer. The farmer knows what he is doing, and I have seen a few middlemen who did not come off best in their deals with the farmers. (Laughter.) It is not in the interests of the consumer to do without the middleman. We hope to get the middleman's profit and deal directly with the consumer ourselves. It is the consumer who puts the middleman there. If the consumers chose to come to the farmers direct, they could buy all the stuff they wanted; but they want it in dribbles, and they want it brought to their doors by

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the middlemen. The farmers do not quarrel with the middlemen. We make good use of them. We say that at some time or other we will do the middleman's business when we are ready for the job. As an agricultural policy, this Bill is not what I hoped for. I know the farmers are taking a great deal more interest in it at the present time. I would sooner give the farmers immediate relief and not have such a big scheme as this, which is not likely to give them immediate benefit. We could help the farmer more in other ways by giving him what he is asking for than by this Bill. I would give him more railway communication, more sidings, more sheds, and lower freights.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is the present policy. Are you not getting lower freights and more sheds?

Mr. DEACON: The freights were put up on boom prices in boom times, and they have not come down to the present level of prices. That is one direction in which more direct and immediate relief could be given. More railways are required. I was travelling a short time ago in North Queensland in the sugar districts, and I saw a lot of narrow-gauge tramways, and I am quite sure that that system could be extended in other farming districts and do a lot of good.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: We have been asking for light railways for the last ten years.

Mr. DEACON: Assistance could also be given in road-making. I do not mean assistance by the Main Roads Board, because, so far as I know, that is not a system which the farmers consider a good one. Certain localities get no benefit at all from it. There is nothing so dear in the way of haulage as drawing stuff long distances by farm teams. If you look at an agricultural map of the State, you will find that farming is confined practically to within ten or eleven miles from railway lines. Outside of that, on the average, it is hardly possible to carry heavy goods, although there may be exceptions. Then I would totally abolish the land tax on the farmer's land. If there is one thing I feel pretty keenly about, it is that tax on farm land.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I hope the hon. member will not discuss the land tax; there will be another opportunity to do that.

Mr. DEACON: I am pointing out that there are other ways of getting relief than by this Bill. I understand that the main object of the Council of Agriculture is to make suggestions to relieve the farmer. I can suggest one relief measure now, without waiting for the election of the Council. I do not know whether the Council can make an effective recommendation on it, because it can be dealt with only by this Chamber. I refer to the income tax. Farmers suffer from a great many things. It is quite possible for them to have to pay what are really two income taxes on one year's income. Supposing a man has a bad year?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I have already pointed out to the hon. member that later in the session he will have an opportunity of expressing his views on that particular question.

Mr. DEACON: I am not going to speak on the Income Tax Acts Amendment Bill: I am only speaking on the possibilities of this Council of Agriculture. I understand

it will be their duty to suggest these things, and I am pointing out that it is impossible for them to make suggestions with any effect. Supposing a man has a losing year, he gets nothing; the second year his crop is harvested at the end of the year; he is not, perhaps, able to sell until the beginning of the next year. That is a matter in respect of which the Council will not be able to do anything. At the end of the year, if the market is at all favourable, he might sell another crop. That would mean that he would have sold two crops in one year. No consideration is given in the direction of taking an average over a long period of years. A recommendation from the Council to that effect would not be listened to by any Government.

I referred a little while back to political control. Here is a matter where political control would come in. Supposing the Minister was against the farming industry, and did not wish his legislation to be disapproved of by this Council. He would do his best to get an expression of opinion favourable to that legislation. It would be quite easy to do it. He would have five nominees absolutely dependent on the Government of the day for their billets.

The PREMIER: Those men are not absolutely dependent upon the Government of the day for their billets. The Commissioner for Railways is appointed under the Railways Act.

Mr. FRY: As the Government have a majority in the House, he is dependent on the Government for his billet.

Mr. DEACON: Those men must see eye to eye with the Government. They are not dependent on the farmers; they are not responsible to the farmers; that is the trouble.

Mr. COLLINS: There are more farmers in my electorate than there are in yours. They are not growling at all; they welcome this Bill.

Mr. DEACON: If the hon. member for Bowen will listen to me, he will find that the farmers' attitude on this is mine. They are waiting to see what will become of the scheme. When they see it in actual operation, they will tell the Government whether they approve of it or not. The Wheat Board is not perfect. The Minister suggested that it was possible under this Bill to have a general pooling system; and here there is need for caution. I am not going to condemn the Wheat Board, because there have been difficulties that they have not been able to get over. Maize is a commodity that could be pooled with profit. We have found every year that, when the price of maize rose to a certain level, it came in from other States. If the farmers controlled the election to this Council of Agriculture they would do what is right. I am opposed to the election of Government nominees. Only recently the Commissioner for Railways expressed his approval of the Wheat Board; but he only knows the improvement it makes in his department, and is not aware of any of the defects. The inconveniences—and there are many—have to be borne by the farmer, and that is why I would not like to see the Commissioner for Railways on a Council of this kind. He will consider the conveniences of his department, which would be able to save money. Under the present Wheat Board, delivery is slow, and the farmer has to travel long distances, and has to wait sometimes

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day and night to get his wheat unloaded. I have seen teams waiting two days to be unloaded. That is all extra cost to the farmer. I know the Wheat Board have attempted to obviate this difficulty, but they are dealing with such a large quantity that they cannot consider the individual. They have certain arrangements with the Commissioner for Railways. The Home Secretary said that this is "a cockies' stunt." This Bill should be solely in the interests of the "cockies." I am a "cocky" myself, and always have been. I hope the Secretary for Agriculture will consider the opinions of hon. members on this side when the Bill is in Committee.

At 10.25 p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. DEACON: There are many other things in the Bill just as important as those I have mentioned, and I would like to deal with them, but the time will not permit me to do so. When amendments are proposed in Committee by members on this side that will make it a workable measure, I appeal to the Government to give them earnest consideration.

Mr. NOTT (*Stanley*): 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 Tuesday next.

The House adjourned at 10.26 p.m.