

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 19 JULY 1922

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The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones, *Paddington*) replied—

"Field.	Prospecting.	Deep Sinking.	Mining Machinery Advances Act.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Cloncurry ...	1,930 0 0	...	...
Mount Morgan ...	1,615 17 3	...	...
Nanango ...	7 11 5	...	...
Palmer ...	1,832 11 5	...	...
Clermont ...	397 9 8	...	50 0 0
Townsville ...	10 0 0	...	...
Brisbane ...	168 5 7	...	...
Maryborough... ..	17 0 0	...	...
Hughenden ...	72 0 0	...	...
Rockhampton ...	349 13 1	...	29 14 6
Herberton ...	1,707 8 4	582 10 9	...
Charters Towers ...	1,481 15 5	...	439 10 0
Bundaberg ...	117 0 0	...	...
Georgetown ...	160 0 1	...	...
Cooktown ...	154 6 6	...	...
Gympie ...	1,281 10 5	3,961 13 6	...
Chillagoe ...	810 14 8	509 9 9	303 10 4
Bowen ...	14 13 0	...	...
Ingham ...	12 0 0	...	...
Mackay ...	44 0 0	...	...
Warwick ...	12 0 0	...	...
Ipswich ...	420 16 8	...	...
Croydon ...	93 0 0	...	...
Ravenswood ...	...	467 12 4	100 0 0
Cairns ...	...	...	500 0 0
General Expenses, Freights, &c.	229 9 1	...	...
Total for twelve months	£ 12,989 2 4	5,521 6 4	1,422 14 10"

WEDNESDAY, 19 JULY, 1922.

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

QUESTIONS.

VALUE OF FARMS HELD BY SOLDIER LESSEES IN GROUP SETTLEMENTS.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"1. What is the average capital value of farms or blocks held by soldier lessees on repurchased lands under the group system?"

"2. Assuming that no payments of interest or rent were made, or such dues not capitalised, what was the total amount of interest or rent payable as at 30th June, 1922 (accrued due not considered, and this question not applying to advances)?"

"3. Will he give the following details in connection with the previous question:—(a) Amount received; (b) amount capitalised; (c) amount outstanding?"

"4. Will he supply the same information as asked for in Questions 2 and 3 relating to advances?"

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

"1. £3 14s. per acre.

"2. The total amount of annual rent for 1922 demanded for payment on 31st March, 1922, but payment of which could be made at any time up to 30th June, 1922, with interest for late payment, was £2,970 8s. 6d.

"3. (a) £490 19s. 1d.; (b) £109 8s.; (c) £2,370 1s. 5d.

"4. This information cannot be given, as the calculation of interest to 30th June, 1922, has not yet been completed."

EXPENDITURE FROM PROSPECTING, DEEP-SINKING, AND MINING MACHINERY ADVANCES VOTES.

Mr. LOGAN (*Lockyer*), in the absence of Mr. Walker (*Cooroora*), asked the Secretary for Mines—

"What is the total amount of assistance expended from Prospecting, Deep-sinking, and Machinery Votes for twelve months ended 30th June, 1922, showing amounts granted on each field?"

STABILISATION OF PRICES FOR PRIMARY PRODUCTS.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*) asked the Premier—

"In reference to the following statement contained in his speech at the Conference of Dairymen, held in the Executive Building on 24th March, 1922, viz.:—'The industry itself must be stabilised. Prices must be stabilised. I agree heartily with what His Excellency said about the necessity of assuring to the producers a fair remuneration for their toil':—

"1. Does he consider that the present Primary Producers' Organisation Bill will enable the primary producers to effectively deal with the question of the stabilisation of prices?"

"2. Is he aware that any action taken for the purpose of stabilisation of prices may be nullified by the operation of the Profiteering Prevention Act?"

"3. Will he taken such action as may be necessary to prevent interference by the Commissioner of Prices, or, if not, will he consider the desirability of amending the Profiteering Prevention Act on the lines indicated in the amendments to the Bill proposed by Mr. Bebbington, a member of the Country party (contained in 'Hansard' of 29th October, 1919, vol. 133, page 1706), so as to restrain the Commissioner from fixing a price for primary products less than the cost of production?"

"4. Will he introduce legislation to modify the provisions of Part III. of the Profiteering Prevention Act, so as to safeguard primary producers against the penalties of £1,000 and twelve months' imprisonment prescribed therein?"

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

"1. Yes; and the question can still more effectively be dealt with if similar organisations are established in each of the other States.

"2. There is no danger of action taken by the Council of Agriculture being nullified by the Profiteering Prevention Act.

"3 and 4. See No. 2."

AGREEMENT BETWEEN QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT AND BRITISH COTTON GROWERS' ASSOCIATION IN RE GUARANTEED PRICE OF COTTON.

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

"In view of the uncertainty which exists in regard to cotton, due to the following conflicting official statements which have been made in reference thereto, viz. :—

(a) The Premier's statement in Melbourne on 8th September, 1920 (published in the Brisbane Press of 9th September, 1920)—'That the British Cotton Growers' Association had indicated its willingness to guarantee a minimum price of 1s. 6d. per lb. for good clean lint, the guarantee to operate for five years';

(b) The Premier's 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';

(c) The statement contained in the speech delivered by His Excellency the Governor at the opening of this session of Parliament on 4th July, 1922—'That the bulk of the ginned product will be shipped to England at a minimum price of 1s. 6d. per lb., offered for a limited period by the British Cotton Growers' Association';

(d) The Premier's statement on 12th July, 1922 (in answer to my question)—'That the agreement with the Cotton Growers' Association was limited to a risk of £10,000, which limit had already been reached';—

"1. Will he give an explanation of the apparent inconsistencies exhibited in these statements?

"2. Will he give a full and clear statement (without any omissions) in regard to the terms of the agreement (or agreements) which he now claims have been entered into by the Government in respect of a guaranteed price for cotton lint?"

The PREMIER replied—

"See my answer to similar question by the honourable gentleman on 14th instant."

Mr. CORSER: That was no answer.

PURCHASE FROM SOUTHERN FIRM OF MOTOR BODY FOR TRUCK FOR STATE BUTCHER SHOP.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*) asked the Minister in Charge of State Enterprises—

"1. Is it a fact that a motor body was required for one of the trucks operating at the State butcher shop, and the order was placed with a Southern firm?

"2. If so, why was the order placed with a Southern firm when local firms were prepared to execute the work?"

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

"1. No.

"2. See answer to No. 1."

CORRESPONDENCE IN RE VALUATION OF ASSETS OF BRISBANE TRAMWAYS COMPANY, LIMITED.

Mr. MAXWELL asked the Home Secretary—

"Will he lay on the table of this House copies of all correspondence between the Crown Law Department, Railway and other departments, general manager of the tramways, and the gentlemen appointed to inquire on matters appertaining to the tramways on the following matters:—

"1. The amount of compensation to be paid?

"2. The state and condition of rolling stock and tram tracks?

"3. The sum required to bring rolling stock and tracks to a state of efficiency?"

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

"As the information asked for will form the basis of the case that will be submitted to the tribunal, it is not desirable that it should be published."

PURCHASE OF MUNGANA MINES.

Mr. MAXWELL asked the Secretary for Mines—

"On what grounds can he justify the Government's action in purchasing from the Reid syndicate the Mungana mines when the mines had been previously forfeited by previous holders?"

The SECRETARY FOR MINES replied—

"On the grounds—(1) That the mines are required to provide ore supplies for the State smelters. (2) That, according to reports by experts, the value of machinery and ore-bodies warrant the purchase. The leases were held by Mr. Reid prior to and at the time of the purchase by the Government of the Chillagoe smelters and mines. The leases referred to were not part of the Chillagoe Company's assets."

POWER OF QUEENSLAND PRODUCERS' ASSOCIATION TO IMPOSE LEVY ON FACTORY SUPPLIERS.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

"Is it proposed to give the free enrolled members of the Producers' Association power to levy on the moneys due to factory suppliers?"

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*) replied—

"No."

INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AS A FACTOR IN CONTROLLING BIRTH RATE.

The SPEAKER, having called upon Mr. Kerr (*Enoggera*) to ask the Premier the following question standing in his name—

“Does he agree with the contention that certain principles enacted by the legislation of his Government are tantamount to assisting in the control of the birth rate? The following clause, being an extract from the Industrial Arbitration Act, is quoted as an example:— ‘The minimum wage of an adult male employee shall be not less than is sufficient to maintain a well-conducted employee of average health, strength, and competence, and his wife and a family of three children, in a fair and average standard of comfort?’”

Mr. KERR: Owing to the fact that, without my concurrence, this question has been mutilated, I do not intend to ask it.

The SPEAKER: Order! For the information of the hon. member, I curtailed the question for the reason that it was excessive in length, and contained statements of fact which were not necessary to explain the question, and thereby contravened Standing Order No. 67. I suggest that the hon. member should make himself conversant with the Standing Orders.

Mr. KERR: I have studied the Standing Orders, and I desire to withdraw the question.

The SPEAKER: Order!

EXPENDITURE ON STATE IRON AND STEEL WORKS—PRESENT DUTIES AND SALARY OF MR. BROPHY.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Orley*) asked the Secretary for Mines—

“1. Is any expense now being incurred in regard to the State Iron and Steel Works proposal; if so, in what direction?”

“2. What duties are being performed by Mr. Brophy at the present moment?”

“3. What salary is he being paid?”

The SECRETARY FOR MINES replied—

“1, 2, and 3. Mr. Brophy is now engaged as Superintendent of State coal mines and boring operations at same salary, which is in accordance with his engagement agreement.”

PURPORTED OIL DISCOVERY AT BEAUDESERT.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE asked the Secretary for Mines—

“What is the present position in regard to the purported oil discovery at Beaudesert?”

The SECRETARY FOR MINES replied—

“I would refer the hon. gentleman to the report by Dr. Jensen, Government Geologist, in the 15th July issue of the ‘Mining Journal.’”

ADVANCES UNDER WORKERS’ DWELLINGS ACT AND WORKERS’ HOMES ACT.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE asked the Treasurer—

“What amount was advanced under the Workers’ Dwellings Act and the Workers’ Homes Act, respectively, for the twelve months ended 30th June, 1922?”

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore) replied—

“Workers’ Dwellings Act, £136,890; Workers’ Homes Act, nil.”

FRUIT PULP USED BY STATE CANNERY IMPORTED FROM SOUTHERN STATES.

Mr. SIZER (*Nundah*) asked the Minister in Charge of State Enterprises—

“Is it not a fact that at least 75 per cent. of the total amount of fruit pulp used by the State cannery during the period of 1st July, 1921, to 30th June, 1922, was imported from Southern States?”

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH replied—

“No.”

PAPER.

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

Report of the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board, Brisbane.

EXPENDITURE AND VALUE OF UNSOLD MINERALS IN CONNECTION WITH CERTAIN STATE ENTERPRISES.

Mr. LOGAN (*Lockyer*), in the absence of Mr. Walker (*Cooroora*), moved—

“That there be laid upon the table of the House a return showing the total expenditure to the 30th June, 1922, in connection with the following enterprises:—Roma oil bore, Warra coalmine, Baralaba coalmine, Styx River coalmine, Bowen coalmine, Arsenic mine (Jibbenbar), Venus State battery, Bamford State battery, Kidston battery, Chillagoe smelters, State works (Irvinebank), State store (Irvinebank), and dewatering Palmer mines, together with a return showing the amount received from products, &c., from the above enterprises, and the value of all unsold mineral obtained from such enterprises.”

Question put and passed.

FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. M. J. Kirwan, Brisbane, in the chair.*)

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*), in moving—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Factories and Shops Acts, 1900 to 1920, in a certain particular,”

said: The amendment proposed is a short one dealing with the bread-baking industry, and is introduced at the request of the Bakers’ Union and the Master Bakers’ Association. The object of the Bill is to prevent what is known as unfair trading. At the present time, under certain conditions the award can be evaded by the formation of a kind of partnership, and the partners may not carry on business in strict accordance with the award. The purpose of the Bill is to provide that the conditions appertaining in any bakehouse shall be the

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conditions laid down in the award governing that industry.

MR. BRAND: It is in the interests of the master bakers?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Yes, and of the employees.

MR. VOWLES (*Dalby*): On the face of it, this Bill seems simple enough. It seems as if the master bakers and employees have put their heads together to combine against some other people who are interested in the baking business.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: It is merely intended to prevent unfair trading.

MR. VOWLES: Unfair trading depends upon the way you look at it. It might be fair to the master bakers, but unfair to the other people concerned. I would like to know whether it will affect the price of bread.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: It will not affect the price of bread.

MR. VOWLES: Will it have the effect of keeping the prices up?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: It will not have any effect on the price.

MR. VOWLES: I do not want to waste time now in debating the matter; we can wait till we see the Bill itself; but it seems to me that all these regulations which are going to interfere with these people certainly will not tend to cheapen the commodity.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to a resolution.

The resolution was agreed to.

FIRST READING.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH presented the Bill, and moved—

“That the Bill be now read a first time.”

Question put and passed.

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

CAIRNS HYDRO-ELECTRIC POWER INVESTIGATION BOARD BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Kirwan, Brisbane, in the chair.*)

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH, in moving—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to constitute the Cairns Hydro-Electric Power Investigation Board and to define its powers and duties, and for other incidental purposes.”

said: The object of the Bill is to appoint a board to investigate the possibilities of the Barron Falls being utilised for a hydro-electric power scheme. The board will be elected by the various local authorities in the district, from their own members, and two members approved by the Governor in Council. The Government will subsidise the fund pound for pound, up to a maximum of £1,000. It will be the duty of the board to inquire into the whole scheme and to make a report to the Government on the advisability or otherwise of harnessing those waters.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to a resolution.

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[*Hon. W. Forgan Smith.*]

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PRIMARY PRODUCERS' ORGANISATION BILL.

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

MR. COSTELLO (*Carnarvon*): I rise to voice my opinions on this Bill. First of all, I would like to say that the introduction of the Bill shows a change of front on the part of the Government. In fact, they have almost robbed themselves afresh. They have removed their stained clothes and put on garments of spotless white. (Hear, hear! and laughter.) However, whether they have removed their stained garments, or whether they are spotless white, I am quite prepared to give the Government a reasonable opportunity of showing their genuineness in regard to this Bill. The Bill interests me as a primary producer. I may say that I am a primary producer of the first water. I was born on the land and served all my time on the land, and, except for a period when I was engaged on a more important duty, I have been on the land all my life. I have no other object in life but to till the soil, even if we have a Government in power that is not sympathetic to the people on the land. I had the opportunity of hearing the Premier outline his scheme on the third occasion. I was not present when he delivered that famous address at Laidley which we have heard so much about, but I was present when he delivered his address at Stanthorpe in February of this year. At Stanthorpe we had a full representation of fruitgrowers and farmers belonging to that district, and, although they were not all supporters of the Labour Government, they were prepared whole-heartedly to hear what the Premier had to say, and they were prepared whole-heartedly to accept his scheme, and, if it were a genuine scheme, to help the Premier to put it into force. They were prepared to forgive and forget the past actions of this Government.

MR. COLLINS: What past actions of the Government were they prepared to forgive and forget?

MR. COSTELLO: They are too numerous for me to attempt to enumerate to-day. The people in the country know all about them, and have expressed their opinion on them to such an extent that we have full benches over here while there are many empty seats on the other side of the House.

MR. COLLINS: You only represent South Queensland.

MR. COSTELLO: I represent more than South Queensland. I represent the country people whole-heartedly in regard to this Bill. No person is more anxious than I am to prove the genuineness of this Bill, and no one is more sincere than I am in wishing to help the Government to put it through. We have had a good deal of discussion on the Bill. Some of the speeches have been interesting, while others have been very monotonous. Nevertheless, my attitude ever since the Bill was first mooted has been to

advise the people to accept the Bill and to take the Government on their merits. I have said to the farmers in my district, "I am going to help the Government if the Bill has anything genuine in it at all. I am not going to bear any animosity for the past, nor show suspicion, and I ask you as farmers to take the Bill and everything you can possibly get from it."

With regard, first of all, to the personnel of the Council of Agriculture, members on this side take exception to the fact that the Secretary for Agriculture is to be president of the Council. If we want to keep the Bill free from political influence, we must amend that provision. If we wish to convince the farmer that there is no party politics in the Bill, we cannot do so with that hon. gentleman's presence on the Council. We have been told that the farmers are very suspicious, and I know they are; and they have every reason to be so; and the presence of the Secretary for Agriculture on the Council will destroy all their confidence in the Bill. We are also to have on the council the Commissioner for Railways. His interests are not our interests entirely. His business is running the railways to the best advantage of the State. Why do the Government hold him up as one of the big factors in making this Council a success, and as the man who is going to help us out? I ask the Secretary for Railways what the Commissioner knows about the producers' interests? He may know all about railways. Then there are other Government nominees on the Council. They may be experts, but where is the practical man, where is the business man on this council?

The PREMIER: There is Mr. Short, the general manager of the Central sugar mills.

Mr. COSTELLO: He may know all about sugar, but the fruit interests and the sugar interests are as far apart as the east is from the west. Why should we rely on a sugar man?

The PREMIER: Business considerations are the same in all industries.

Mr. COSTELLO: He may have commercial ability, but I say his interests are not identical with ours. We should have our own representation, and not be governed by sugar men, or by cotton growers, or wheat growers, who do not know anything about fruit. That sort of thing is confusing the people.

The PREMIER: They have agreed to the constitution of the Council.

Mr. COSTELLO: They are prepared to agree to anything, on the principle that half a loaf is better than no bread. My own attitude to the Bill is that I am prepared to take half a loaf rather than no bread at all. That may not be the opinion of every hon. member on this side of the House, but something is necessary, and I am prepared to go that far.

The advisory board, of which we hear so much, may be all right in its place; but, if we are going to have one officer advising about wheat, another about sugar, another about dairying, and another about fruit-growing, what sort of confusion are we going to have?

Then, as to the duties of the Council, we have heard so much that we are likely to find out that it has been considerably over-

rated, and that the farmers' hopes will be somewhat dashed. I say the

[4 p.m.] Government have boomed this thing too much, and have led the country to expect too much from it. I am afraid the Premier and the Secretary for Agriculture will never carry into effect the promises they have made.

The PREMIER: In Stanthorpe, you told me you had considerable hopes from the scheme.

Mr. COSTELLO: It was only initiated at that time; it had not been boomed like it is being boomed at the present time. Why all this booming? Is it political publicity, or do the Government really intend it to be a genuine scheme? What is the need for this council? It arises from the fact that the wrong people have been governing the country. If we had a Government who represented the interests of the people, there would have been no necessity for this new Parliament—if I may call it such. The Government have failed to legislate in the interests of the primary producer. At the eleventh hour they realise the position they are in, and, not having the ability or the experience, they are putting the responsibility on the shoulders of the Council of Agriculture. We have organised considerably in our own way during the last six years. We are told that the organisation of the sugar people represents 90 per cent. of the full strength of those engaged in the industry. The fruitgrowers in the granite belt were organised with their own funds, because they realised that, without organisation, they could not do anything. What is to become of this organisation? Is it the wish of the Government that they should close up their books and have no further organisation except that provided for under this scheme? There is no intention on the part of the organisation with which I am connected to disband. We are going to keep our organisation in existence because the day may come when we shall need it. The organisation has been too costly to allow its members to disband before the scheme has been tried and proved successful. The question is, Why is it necessary to have this agricultural scheme?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is a nice question to come from a member representing a farming community.

Mr. COSTELLO: I would like to draw attention to the policy of this Government when they went to the country in the year 1920. I will quote some of the Government's schemes which were outlined at the opening of Parliament ("Hansard," volume cxxxv.). The first thing on the list is a "Provision of Water for Settlers Bill." Where is that?

The PREMIER: That Bill was postponed because of the opposition of the Nationalist party. (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. COSTELLO: It is two years since that Bill was promised to the people, and there was no sign of it in the Governor's Speech this year. A rural bank was promised to our people. Where is that to-day? Then there was also to be an amendment of the Co-operative Agricultural Production Act. That was promised also last session at the request of the primary producers in Southern Queensland. What has happened to it? Where was the sincerity of the Government when they closed up Parliament and we were told they had to get away to see the Melbourne cup? Their troubles about the primary producers! That was less than twelve months ago. Now we have this great change of front. Look at

Mr. Costello.]

the speech which was made at the opening of this session. No one else but the man on the land was to be considered. I wonder what the industrialists are saying? They are not considered in the Government's programme.

Mr. COLLINS: There are a good few industrialists in your electorate too.

Mr. COSTELLO: I am looking after their interests as well as the hon. member for Bowen is looking after the interests of those in his electorate. Let us go right back to the time when this Government first came into power. What did they tell the people on that occasion? Speaking to the primary producer, they said—

“He has no other course but to support the party that will assist him with capital, experience, and advice.”

Hon. members on the other side have not the experience of a lamb. (Laughter.) Then they said the primary producer should support the party—

“That will help to establish a modern farm and enable him to carry on his industry under modern conditions.”

Let them go to the south-western parts of Queensland and see the people who are living away from the railway; let them see the modern farmers there, and the manner in which the people are eking out a bare existence.

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

Mr. COSTELLO: I am endeavouring to show that the sincerity of the Government is open to doubt. The question has been raised, “Why are the people so doubtful about this scheme?” I am giving the reason. This manifesto continues—

“There is only one such party. It is the Labour party.”

After the election, what did we get? We got the land tax, price-fixing, and increased railway fares and freights. I want specially to draw the attention of the Secretary for Agriculture to the fact that, from 1st July, 1915, to 30th June, 1921—a period of six years—only £24,500 was advanced under the Co-operative Agricultural Production Act; yet the Government borrowed in that period approximately £30,000,000! That is the reason why people are so suspicious. Why should they not be suspicious?

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: What did the Denham Government do?

Mr. COSTELLO: We hold no brief for the Denham Government, but I venture to say that, if that Government had been in power, the primary producers would not be in the struggling position they are in to-day, and it would not be necessary to create a Council of Agriculture to pull them out of the mud into which they have been forced. A considerable amount of money has been spent on State enterprises, and if only one-fourth of that money had been made available to settlers under the Advances to Settlers Act, look at the opportunity they would have had to establish themselves. How would the co-operative companies have fared in the establishment of industries if a proportion of that money had been made available? The primary producers have been crying aloud for help for six years, and have got absolutely no assistance from the Government. The fruitgrowers from Stanthorpe asked the Secretary for Agriculture in all sincerity to introduce a measure on their

behalf, and that was promised to them. No reason was given as to why that measure has been shelved. The Council of Agriculture under this Bill will be asked to deal with those matters. The Secretary for Agriculture will be the chairman of that body. If the members of the council should recommend the re-establishment of the system of freehold, what sort of a time are they going to get from the chairman? We are anxious to see that system re-established. We do not desire that the Secretary for Agriculture should occupy the position of chairman. If the Bill contains half of what it is said to contain, it will have my support and the whole-hearted support of the producers whom I represent. We are not going to offer any direct objections or show any hostility towards the Bill, but we are going to reserve the right to criticise it, and to offer such reasonable amendments as will inspire confidence in the producers. We will give the Minister an opportunity of showing whether he is genuinely desirous of making the Bill what it should be. It is rather too early to congratulate the Government on their change of front. We should know why those bouquets are being held out to the farmers. During last session the Government were being forced on by a certain section of their supporters, but to-day I believe the Premier has got his foot on the neck of these extremists, and we have some prospects of getting some benefit for the primary producer.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*): In listening to the debate on this all-important Bill, one cannot help being struck with the attitude of Government members towards Country party representatives. It is absolutely clear from the speeches of hon. members opposite, and also from the statement made by the Premier when he first outlined the proposal at Laidley, that this Bill is going to be used at every turn by Government members for the purpose of belittling the Country party movement. Hon. members opposite have not endeavoured to show that this measure is in the interests of production, and they have not attempted to point out the benefits that the farmer will derive, but their arguments have been directed to the object of belittling the representatives of the country people. Seeing that that is taking place, how can we tell the people in the country that the Bill is free from political control? When the Premier first launched his proposal at Laidley, he definitely stated that he was going to do something in the interests of the producers. Naturally the producers are very suspicious of the Premier or the Government attempting to do anything for them at this late hour, seeing that they have had an opportunity during the last seven years. The Premier went on to tell the people in Laidley and other parts of the country which he visited that the Country party members opposed every measure that was introduced in the interests of the farmers.

Mr. BULCOCK: Is that not true?

Mr. EDWARDS: Did the Country party oppose the Wheat Pool Bill, or any other measure introduced in their interests? The statements made by the Premier are plain proof that the Bill is to be used at every turn in the interests of the political party opposite. The Secretary for Agriculture at least knows a little about primary production.

Mr. BULCOCK: A little?

[*Mr. Costello.*]

Mr. EDWARDS: Yes, and only a little. The Minister, knowing the position of most of the primary producers of this State—particularly small men—should remove party politics from the measure, and leave the scheme entirely in the hands of those people to work out their own destiny.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Leave the farmers to the tender mercies of the speculator?

Mr. EDWARDS: The interjection coming from the Minister does not sound too well, especially when one considers that after the 1918-19 drought, when the butter producers of this State were trying to get back their own in order to pay off their bills to the stores, the Minister voted for the establishment of a Commissioner of Prices who would cut down the price of butter. If the Government are going to have any control under this measure, the producers are not going to obtain the best advantage. Just recently a conference of the heads of the Farmers' Union, representing the whole district, was held in my electorate, and suggested that two gentlemen should be elected to the Council of Agriculture, seeing that that Council at the present time is dealing with the maize question. Everyone who knows anything about maize-growing and the marketing of maize in Queensland realises that there is no product in regard to which there is more need for assistance in the matter of storage and in marketing. Our district suggested that these two gentlemen should be appointed on the Council of Agriculture, seeing that they possess a large amount of experience, which has been gained in the actual marketing of maize. Last year they handled about 30,000 bags of maize in a voluntary pool.

Mr. BULCOCK: Suppose you allowed every district similar representation, what would be the position?

Mr. EDWARDS: That is not the question at all. At the present time the Council of Agriculture is dealing with the question of marketing the maize grown in Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There is more maize grown in my district than in yours.

Mr. EDWARDS: I am very pleased that the hon. gentleman has made that interjection, because I am going to show now where politics come in. When those representatives went before the Council, the Council did not make inquiries to see if those gentlemen could give them the information that it is costing hundreds of pounds to gather at the present time, and which they could give, because they handled the whole crop last year voluntarily for their own organisation.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

Mr. EDWARDS: We find the Minister taking it on himself, as chairman, to say that he could be taken as representing the maizegrowers of Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The largest maize-growing district I said.

Mr. EDWARDS: You said you represented the maizegrowers of Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is not true.

Mr. EDWARDS: While the hon. gentleman may know something about the maize question in Northern Queensland, he knows

absolutely nothing about the marketing of maize in the South. In the first place, the maize grown on the Atherton Tableland in most seasons is not shipped further south than Townsville.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is wrong.

Mr. EDWARDS: It is not wrong. In some years thousands of tons of maize grown in South Queensland are shipped as far as Melbourne and to other ports in the Southern States. Therefore it was absolutely essential that these two men should have been appointed to the Council of Agriculture in the interests of the maizegrowers of Southern Queensland, and of Northern Queensland too, because they could impart any amount of information in regard to the storage of maize in Northern Queensland. Can the Minister blame the producers or the maizegrowers in this State for being suspicious when, in the first instance, the Government appoint their delegates to the Council, and the hon. gentleman takes the responsibility, as Secretary for Agriculture, of representing the whole of Queensland so far as maize-growing is concerned? Does it not, at the least, look suspicious and indicate that politics are in the scheme?

Mr. WINSTANLEY: You have a suspicious mind.

Mr. EDWARDS: And I require a suspicious mind when I am dealing with the hon. member. All the arguments used in connection with this scheme—that the farmers are going to receive the light and that everything is going to be beautiful for them—were used by members of the Government when they brought into existence that beautiful white elephant known as the State Produce Agency. What has been the result? After years of work that agency has made a loss of something like £25,000.

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

Mr. EDWARDS: I am endeavouring to show that the producers of this State require to be careful in connection with this matter, and I would suggest to the Secretary for Agriculture that the sectional organisations in existence at the present time should be taken in as organisations in connection with this scheme. My reason for suggesting that is because, after all, when you bring the maizegrowers, the sugar-growers, the dairy-men, and other sections of the agricultural industry together you find that their interests are not identical.

Mr. COLLINS: How is it, then, that they are all in the alleged Country party?

Mr. EDWARDS: That has nothing to do with the question of district organisations. At the present time they can come to the Country party, and the Country party will assist them, no matter whether they are sugar-growers, maizegrowers, wheatgrowers, or engaged in any other agricultural industry.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Won't the Council of Agriculture do the same?

Mr. EDWARDS: No; because you bring the sugar-grower, who is interested in getting a good price for his sugar; you bring the butter-producer, who is interested in obtaining a good price for his butter; and you bring people engaged in other industries into contact with those who require those articles

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as cheaply as they can get them, and I have never seen an organisation worked successfully where the interests of its members are diametrically opposed to one another. If the Minister can see his way clear to accept these organisations as they are and then anything happened to this measure, they would still be in existence.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There is no objection to do what you are asking. We will accept them. As a matter of fact, that has been done already. We have had assurances already that they will join.

Mr. EDWARDS: En bloc?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. Others can come in individually; but there is no reason why the organisations should not give its support to the central organisation.

Mr. EDWARDS: If the Minister accepts organisations such as I suggest, he will be doing a big thing for Queensland; but that is not the argument used by the organisers at the present time. These organisers are asking the present organisations to break up and merge in the central organisation, which will practically put them out of existence.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They need not break up.

Mr. EDWARDS: Proper consideration should be given to the producers' organisations, which have been working in the interests of production for years. The Minister will recognise that the great dairying industry is organised practically up to 100 per cent. of the suppliers, and I do not think he will deny that representatives from that great organisation have come to him on many occasions and asked for certain legislation and certain assistance, which he has absolutely opposed.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Mention some of them.

Mr. EDWARDS: I will. A few months ago one of the most representative deputations from the dairying industry that I have ever seen in my life waited on the Minister in connection with the cold storage question, and they pointed out that many thousands of pounds would be lost to the dairying industry if the Government went on with the Hamilton cold stores. Although the Minister gave the deputation every consideration, we find that the Government have acted in defiance of the wishes of the deputation, and have gone on with the building of the Hamilton cold stores.

[4.30 p.m.]

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The stores were nearly half built when that deputation came to me.

Mr. EDWARDS: That deputation went to the Secretary for Agriculture before there was ever a start made.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You are dealing with the deputation which came to me when the stores were half built.

Mr. EDWARDS: I am dealing with the Government, too. There is also a very important question which should be discussed in connection with this scheme—that is the establishment of a rural bank. That is one of the most important matters to consider.

Mr. BULCOCK: Don't you think that the Bill contains provisions that will lead to the establishment of a rural bank?

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Mr. EDWARDS: If the Minister has altered his principles, there is a possibility that there may be such a provision; but, if the hon. member will look at "Hansard," he will see that members on this side have asked the Government, time and again, to establish a rural bank.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Just show us that in "Hansard."

Mr. EDWARDS: It is mentioned in the first speech I made in this House. That matter has been neglected up to the present time.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You know it is not in your platform. There is no rural bank defined in your platform.

Mr. VOWLES: Yes, there is. It is mentioned in my policy speech. (Government laugher.)

Mr. EDWARDS: If we had had a bank of that description, which could have given concessions to primary producers in the times of drought and trouble they have gone through during the last few years, they would not be in the difficulties they are in at the present time. We find that, after going through a fair season last year, a great number of the producers have not been able, owing to financial difficulties, to stack fodder as they should. I maintain that it is the duty of the Government to see that the primary producers who are on the land at the present time, as well as those who go on the land hereafter, are given financial assistance to enable them to provide at least water and fodder for their stock. In support of my arguments in connection with sectional organisation, I would refer to one of the greatest organisations in the world at the present time—the New Zealand Co-operative Dairy Company, Limited. As far as I can gather, the producers in New Zealand have not only stabilised prices, but they have a business man handling their products in London, and he gives them full information in connection with the quality of their butter, and as to how it is sold on the market, and, as the butter arrives in London, he puts it through the best channels in their interests.

Mr. BULCOCK: That is a good organisation. This Bill provides for a similar organisation in Queensland.

Mr. EDWARDS: I suggest that the Government should use all their powers in organising the dairymen of Queensland on the lines of this New Zealand company, so that we can control and handle our butter on the other side of the world. The chairman of directors of this New Zealand company went home to the old country, and made a report upon his investigations. First of all, he found that, in the interests of the dairying industry of New Zealand, it would be necessary to appoint a business man to conduct their affairs on the other side of the water, and he did that while he was in London. He gives an instance of what happened just after he got there. He was fortunate in securing just the man they required for the position, and he says in his report—

"Within a few days of the appointment of this London manager, an incident occurred which at once proved the soundness of Mr. Goodfellow's policy. It is the custom with the Tooley street trade to dispose of the produce consigned to it as quickly as possible. This is but natural, for one firm have advanced to

New Zealand shippers as much as £200,000 on the produce conveyed in the one vessel. It is business to get back this money as quickly as possible. Thus, as soon as a steamer gets into the Thames arrangements are at once made to dispose of her cargo. The incident referred to occurred just as a New Zealand steamer was due to arrive. The newly-appointed manager pointed out to Mr. Goodfellow that the market was firming, and if the produce was sold as soon as the vessel was reported to have reached the Thames, it might mean a considerable loss if any delay in discharging her took place. Not a box should be allowed to be sold until the steamer had actually commenced to unload. Mr. Goodfellow at once agreed. The order was issued to the firms handling the company's consignments, and because of the large amount of business involved, the firms agreed. And what was the result? On the day the steamer arrived the market price was 130s. per cwt. The vessel was taken into dock, and then taken back into the stream, with the result that it was ten days before she commenced to unload. By that time the market price of butter had increased to 140s. This means that the company's butter on that steamer realised 5s. a box more than that of companies whose butter was sold under the ordinary custom of the trade. This advantage meant many thousands of pounds to the supplies of the company, a sum of money—made through the foresight of one trained man—sufficient to pay the whole cost of the London office for years to come."

"That is evidence that, if the dairy industry of Queensland could be organised on those lines, we would have such a controlling force over the London market as to bring in thousands of pounds more to the country. I therefore suggest that, under no circumstances should the Minister encourage the breaking up of the various organisations in the dairying and sugar industries—such organisations as the Farmers' Union, and other bodies which have been formed in the interests of the primary producers of this State. There is another point which neither the Minister nor the Premier has made clear; that is, as to how they stand at the present time on the Labour objective—the socialisation of production. I have in my hand a report of the All Australian Conference which was recently held in Melbourne. It sets out that the Labour objectives are—

"To take the fullest advantage of the great instrument of working-class progress now placed at their disposal, to urge leaders of the workers to carry out Labour's policy, as laid down, independent of whom it offends or what particular vested interest, either of individuals or institutions, it may destroy."

Mark those last words—"it may destroy." At the present time that is the objective of the Government, and it is also the objective of the Secretary for Agriculture, and he is bound to carry out that idea. As one who has had some experience in primary production, as one who knows the struggle of the people on the land, I hope that the Secretary for Agriculture will be fair enough to tell the people what his attitude is in reference to the socialisation of production, because I maintain that it is quite impossible for the farmers and the farmers' organisations to

abandon their suspicion while they are aware that the Secretary for Agriculture and the Government behind him are bound hand and foot to the objective, namely, the socialisation of all industries.

Mr. BULCOCK: The farmers have the controlling interest in this.

Mr. EDWARDS: I like the way the hon. gentleman says it. It is interjections like that which naturally lead the farmers to be suspicious of the whole concern.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Tell us where you stand. Are you going to vote for it, or against it?

Mr. EDWARDS: I am standing solidly here.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. COLLINS: That is your right place.

Mr. EDWARDS: The hon. member for Bowen has been sitting over there and professing to speak in the interests of the producers of Queensland far too long. I hope this is the last occasion on which he will speak in their interests over there. In fact, I am certain it will be the last occasion.

Mr. COLLINS: Come up to Bowen and run against me, and see how you get on.

Mr. EDWARDS: You come up and run against me. (Laughter.) I will let the hon. member for Bowen know exactly where I am in this matter. If the Minister will give us his assurance—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Do you support it, or are you against it?

Mr. EDWARDS: The Secretary for Agriculture has no hope of cornering me like that. I am going to tell the Minister that, if he is going to sit in the chair and control the Council of Agriculture for political purposes, then I am against it. That is straight. If the Minister assures me that he is going to give the primary producers of this State a fair and square go, and that he will take an interest in building up their organisations—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I will give you that assurance now.

Mr. EDWARDS: If the Minister will help the farmers in their difficulties and trials on the land, and will eliminate the objective which he is bound to, then I am prepared to help him in every shape and form in putting this scheme to the country. That is my stand, without any argument about it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There are too many "ifs" in that.

Mr. EDWARDS: I say without hesitation that, if the Government are going to use it as a political Bill, as they have been trying to do up to the present time, then I do not think that they can reasonably expect a man like me, who has spent all his life on the land, to support them.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You are a good old Tory.

Mr. EDWARDS: If the Minister will help the primary producers, then I will give him all the support I can.

Another important question I would like to put to the Secretary for Agriculture is in connection with maize-growing. If the Minister is interested in the maize-growers of this State, then I hope he will give them all the assistance he possibly can to build silos for storage purposes. If he does that, then, when they get a big crop of maize,

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they can hold it over until they can obtain a reasonable market. By doing that they will get a living wage for their crops. There is another question in connection with butter factories. If the Council of Agriculture has the interests of the producers at heart, I hope that it will take the earliest opportunity of bringing about some amalgamation of the selling and buying of the different commodities in connection with the butter factories of this State.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. GREEN (*Townsville*): I looked forward with a great deal of interest and anticipation to the introduction of this Bill after the Premier delivered his speech at Laidley in connection with the development of his agricultural policy, and, since the introduction of the Bill here, I have listened attentively to the speeches which have been made from both sides of the House. I listened particularly to the speech delivered by the Minister in introducing the Bill. The speeches made on the other side of the House certainly impressed me with this fact, that they rang true to the tone of political expediency, while, on the other hand, the speeches which were delivered by members from the Opposition side of the House rang with sincerity from beginning to end. The Secretary for Agriculture, in introducing the Bill, devoted about 70 per cent. of his time, not in explaining the Bill to members on both sides of the House, but in trying to make political capital out of it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Do you understand the Bill now?

Mr. GREEN: This Bill is supposed to be absolutely devoid of party politics and political interference, but I have no hesitation in saying that the Government are trying to make political capital out of it, and that is why they have introduced it. We have had criticisms from various members opposite regarding certain members of the Country party. It is strange that such criticism regarding the farmers' representatives on this side should come from an ex-railway employee, a blacksmith, a solicitor, and an organiser of one of the leading unions. I pride myself on being a friend of the farmer, whether members on the Government side like to believe it or not. I have proved my sincerity in season and out of season, and through cloud and sunshine. The members on this side have always stood for the interests of the primary producer. Although I represent a city electorate, I have always recognised that the prosperity of this big State of Queensland depends upon the prosperity of the primary producer. We can never develop this State properly without the help of the man on the land, and it is the primary producer who will keep the wheels of the industrial centres going, if we only give him a fair chance and a fair opportunity.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. GREEN: We have been criticised regarding our sincerity as the friends of the farmer, but I can point out that twenty-one out of the twenty-four members of the Country party are directly connected with primary production in this State. I challenge any other party in this House to show such a united front in the interests of the primary producer. More than that, the members who have spoken on this side show their sincerity in the interests of the farmers because they have spent all their lives on the land themselves. They have

been engaged in primary production themselves, and have helped to develop the State in a practical manner. Therefore, they know the struggles and adversities that the primary producers have to contend with. Members on this side who have engaged in primary production have conquered and overcome difficulties while engaged in that work, and their financial interests are absolutely dependent upon the prosperity of the primary producers of this State. We have on this side also men who realise the value of primary production as it affects the economic life of the State of Queensland. Now let us contrast this state of affairs with that which exists on the other side. I do not mean that we should contrast members here with members over there individually, but that we should look at the actions and the experiences we have had of that party during the seven years they have been administering the Government, and I think you, Sir, will agree with me when I have done that they cannot claim that they have assisted the primary producers of this State to any great extent, but rather that they have beset them with difficulties on every hand. They are introducing this Bill in order, at the eleventh hour, as some members on this side have said, to manifest their friendship towards the primary producer of this State, solely because they got such a shock at the growth of the Country party at the last election that they knew this was their last term of office if they did not take upon themselves the mantle of the farmers' friend and endeavour to convince the farmers that they are indeed their friends. But, during the last seven years, they have been taxing the farmer almost out of existence: they have been seizing his products—perhaps legally, though not justly; they have been fixing the prices of his commodities; and they have been preventing him, at a time when it was possible because of good markets, from making up some of the loss he had sustained in the past, all because they sought to appease the people they represented—those living in the industrial centres, who clamoured for something cheap. I stand here and say that I am quite convinced that even the city workers are prepared to say that a just thing should be done to the men who are developing the State of Queensland.

Let us look at the political platform of the Government, in order to contrast further the attitudes of the two sections in the House on this Bill. We find that the party opposite—and they have not denied it—stand for socialisation, and hold that production must be for use and not for profit. We find also that they still stand for the fixing of the prices of the commodities of the primary producers. On the other hand, I think every section of the Opposition stands fairly and squarely for the organisation of the farmers and primary producers of the State. I would just like to read a clause in the platform of the Northern Country party on this point—

"(a) The organisation of the Department of Agriculture to obtain the most scientific and practical administration, and the highest efficiency in production;

"(b) Adequate water conservation and vigorous irrigation policy;

"(c) The formation of a board of agriculture to work as a consulting and advisory body to the Government."

There was no question, no quibble, about the policy of the various sections of the Opposition when they went to the country; but I have no hesitation in saying that the attitude

[*Mr. Edwards.*]

adopted by the Government on this occasion is absolutely contrary to the public utterances of their supporters and the platform of their party when they appeared before the electors at that time.

Now, I should like to deal shortly with the Bill, to which we have looked forward with so much anticipation. The principles which it is supposed to contain, consisting of organisation, co-operation, and the finding of markets for primary products, are principles for which we stand absolutely. We are not here to wreck the Bill which has been submitted by the Government, but we are here, as an Opposition and a Country party, to improve the Bill by reasonable and sensible amendments, to assist the Government in making it a measure such as will be acceptable to the primary producers of the State. For that reason I intend to support the second reading of the Bill, and I hope that, when the amendments are moved by this party, the Minister will give them every consideration.

Mr. KIRWAN: Why do you not circulate them?

Mr. GREEN: They will be circulated. They are all printed, and hon. members will get them in good time. I hope the Secretary for Agriculture will realise that we are out to improve this Bill and safeguard the interests of the primary producers. Hon. members opposite have been sandbagging them for the last seven years. We are endeavouring to develop this great State of Queensland, and any amendments we propose will not be offered in a spirit of carping criticism, but from a desire to assist the Government in making the Bill in every respect worthy of the combined counsels of this Chamber.

The Minister in charge of the Bill, and others sitting with him, say that they cannot understand that we should have any reason for distrusting them. Do they not really think that we have every cause to distrust them? Do they not honestly believe that the primary producers, and even the industrialists, have every cause for distrusting them? Do they forget the Sugar Acquisition Act and the Meatworks Bill? Do they not remember that Ministers got up in this House and said that a certain interpretation could not be put upon certain words, and that, when the Bill became law, the producers realised that that construction could be put upon the measure, and was, indeed, put upon it, to the grinding down of the producers? Remembering these things, I think the Opposition and the primary producers have every right to display a fervent measure of distrust of this Administration, and a determination to see that there is nothing in this Bill, not even one little word, that can be misinterpreted by those who control the measure after it passes through this House. On the point of this distrust of the Government, it might be very interesting to see what even those who publish papers in favour of the Labour party think about having faith and trust in them. The "Railway Advocate," of 10th December last, said—

"The only people with whom Theodore and Co. have not yet broken faith are the bondholders and interest-mongers. When will their turn come?"

If one of their own papers says that they have broken faith with everyone—with pastoralists and with primary producers, and

even with the industrialists—is there not ample reason for some distrust on this side of the House in respect of the measure—perhaps, the make-believe measure—which they are introducing?

The things which I consider essential to the eventual success of this proposal are these: First of all, there must be no political interference. There is no room for it if this Bill is going to do the great work which I believe every member of this House hopes it will do when it is brought into force.

The hon. member for Lockyer referred last night to the fact that the Premier in his speech said he was not out for political advantage, but that he nevertheless proceeded to criticise the various parties on this side of the House. We had a similar instance furnished by the Secretary for Agriculture, in introducing the [5 p.m.] measure. Everyone who has listened to the interjections which have come from members on the Government side must feel convinced that those members are grasping at this Bill like a drowning man would grasp at a straw.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. GREEN: The second thing which I feel to be essential is that there should be no semblance of Government control in connection with the measure. The Minister states that, as the Government are financing this organisation to a certain extent, the Ministry and his department should have control. I admit there is a lot to be said in favour of that contention; but I would point out that the Minister must know that a strong man, occupying the chair and having all his departmental officers around him, has a certain amount of influence and control over the other members of the advisory board, and he can very likely influence them to a greater extent than could any other person occupying the position of chairman. If the success of this Bill depends on having as chairman some person other than the Minister, I hope the Minister will be prepared to agree to the election of an independent chairman. We must all recognise that this measure will have a very wide scope. It embraces a State which is nearly 700,000 square miles in extent; it embraces industries of great diversity and practically all kinds. We shall have an advisory board brought together from fifteen divisions of the State to control the whole of the State and the industries that will come within its functions. It will need a very wise advisory board; it will need someone with a great amount of ability to bring such an organisation through successfully. We hope it will be successful. The Minister has asked what amendments we desire to bring in. Those will be submitted. But, first of all, I would like to say that, in the opinion of members on this side, it is absolutely essential that the definition of "primary producer" in the Bill should be altered in such a way that a mistake cannot be made when the point arises as to who is to be included within the scope of the Bill. Then there is the question of the imposition of levies. I hope the levies will be so controlled as not to become another taxation burden. The hon. member for Mirani mentioned the amount he already had to pay to the organisation to which he belongs in connection with the sugar industry.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He organised the Carters' Union at one time.

Mr. Green.]

Mr. GREEN: He has organised, or has assisted to organise, the sugar industry very well. This State should be very grateful to him for what he has done in connection with the bringing of the sugar industry to the position it is in at the present time. I trust that the advisory council will see that the levies do not become additional taxation. This State is overburdened with taxation at the present time, and I am quite sure that no other section of the community is less able to afford additional taxation than the primary producer. Then there is the constitution of the Council. I notice that the period of its appointment will be fixed by the Governor in Council, and must not exceed a period of three years. We are practically setting up another Parliament, and it appears to me that the members of that Council cannot be removed by their organisations or anyone else for a period of three years.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The people of Townsville cannot remove you, either, for three years.

Mr. GREEN: They will not want to remove me. The members of this Council will have absolute control for three years. Even though their actions are adverse to the prosperity of the industries they are trying to organise, their organisations cannot remove them. I trust the Government will consider the advisability of making annual appointments, so that the various organisations of primary producers may have a say in the carrying on of the work by the Council. I feel sure the Minister will agree that the existing organisations connected with primary production have been valuable assets to their respective industries and valuable adjuncts to the development of the State. I trust it is not the intention of the Minister or of this Bill that they should be interfered with, but that it is intended that they should be allowed to carry on the sectional work which they have carried out so well in the interests of those for whom they are working. I have no hesitation in saying that the various organisations have no intention of disbanding, and they will not disband under any circumstances, but will continue to control the destinies of their own industries.

The State has been divided into fifteen different districts. Those districts have been divided up according to parliamentary boundaries, and not in accordance with the community of interests of those associated with the primary products. Whilst I recognise the difficulty of the task at the outset, I feel the scheme would derive greater advantage if the various industries were represented in different sections instead of having geographical divisions. Although, possibly, this Bill has been introduced in the best interests of the producers, I would like to express the opinion that it will not be effective until we get Federal control. A Federal Primary Producers' Organisation Act would be the only Act that could satisfactorily carry out the organisation of the primary producers of the Commonwealth. Where there is interstate trade, or where we have to send our products to oversea markets, this State cannot stand alone in the matter of organisation, fixation of prices, or any other matters affecting primary production. We have had that amply illustrated in connection with our great sugar industry. I venture to say, without hesitation, that, had

it not been for Federal control and for the agreement negotiated by the Federal Government, the sugar industry would not be on its present sound basis. It is because of that agreement that the cane prices boards are effective. Had the agreement not been in force, those boards would not have been worth a solitary cent. If it had not been for Federal control, the Arbitration Court would have found it impossible to fix the wages of the employees upon a satisfactory basis. The same thing applies to other great primary industries. If we have to send our products to other States or export oversea, then it will be absolutely essential to have Federal control in connection with primary production if we are going to get any satisfaction. I am going to support the second reading of this Bill, because it will then enable us to move amendments to improve it; but, if satisfactory amendments are not made in order to remove those things which we consider are dangerous to the primary producers and the development of this State, I am going to vote against the Bill on the third reading. I trust that the commonsense of the House will prevail, and will enable us to bring forth a measure that will be satisfactory to those whom it concerns.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*): Shakespeare tells us that—

“There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on
to fortune.”

It is quite obvious that the tide is now with the farmers. We desire to see that any measure which is brought in for the uplifting or improvement of the lot of the farmer is at least practicable and has common sense and reason in it. The originators of this scheme are no doubt annoyed because we do not accept with open arms the proposals contained in the Bill. Assuming that they are sincere in their belief that this scheme will accomplish all that they claim, still, our mission here is to criticise that scheme. It is the duty of the Opposition to show where the weaknesses lie, so that the Minister, with the broadness of vision which we hope he possesses, may see some advantages in the criticisms so launched and amend his measure accordingly. It is quite obvious from some of the remarks of hon. members opposite that they are of the opinion that the Country party are in a cleft stick in connection with this matter, and that this party is supposed to be in the difficult position of having to vote against a measure ostensibly for the welfare of the community that they mainly represent, or of having to support a Labour Government's measure. That is a very narrow view to take. If we recognise in this measure something which is essentially for the welfare of the farmer and the community generally, it will receive the unhesitating support of hon. members on this side of the House. Hon. members opposite, judging from their comments, seem to think that anyone who joins or allies himself with the Country party must of necessity have as a qualification the growing of pumpkins, or some such pastime. That is not the case. It must be admitted, however, to be a principle of the Labour party in this House that the first qualification for membership of that party is to be a Labour agitator and a soap-box orator. When hon. members opposite understand the broad conception of the Country party, they will appreciate that our

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visions are much wider than they give us credit for. I fail to see why it should be necessary for a man who represents a constituency in Parliament to devote the whole of his time to parliamentary affairs. The difference between such hon. gentlemen and those of us who are engaged in business enterprises is that, whereas we pay for the mistakes we make and the experiences we gain, hon. members opposite gain their experience at the cost of the country. It is ourselves or our businesses that have to pay for the mistakes we make, and I fail to see why we should be of less value by having other occupations which give us a broader outlook on economic questions generally. I want to outline to the House briefly what are the objectives of the Country party, which supports and tries to discover the good points in the measure that is now before the House. We argue that one of the greatest needs of the State at the present time is immigration. We need a large number of people to populate our empty spaces, and we recognise that this can only be done by making the lot of the man on the land much more attractive and prosperous than it is. It is no good bringing people to our already overtaxed towns—we have altogether an unreasonable proportion of the population residing in our metropolis.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We have always said that.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I am quite prepared to admit that hon. members opposite have said that. That is one of the principal reasons why we should see the hon. gentleman and some of his colleagues sitting on the benches on this side of the House or with this party before very long. They will then see that there is more in the Country party policy than we have been given credit for. Apart from any party feelings, we must recognise that this great question of immigration can only be tackled by making the lot of the primary producer more attractive; and that can be done, we argue, by a measure such as this is purported to be. Whether the Bill contains all the merit that is claimed for it is what we have to discover, and we are very sparing of our praise because we do not yet understand the true purport of many of the clauses contained therein; and, as cautious men, we must of necessity refrain from expressing an unqualified opinion before we see what happens in the Committee stages. Another question of vast importance to Queensland is the financial obligations with which the State is faced. The financial obligations in a State which relies almost entirely on primary production can only be faced and met by the prosperity of the man on the land, and we argue, further, that the main mission of this party to which I belong, and to which I believe many others will belong before many months are out, is to take steps to ensure the prosperity of the man on the land.

Again, there is the question of our railways. We argue that they are a great burden on the State. Last year we had to face a deficit of something like £1,750,000. We are only going to improve to a very slight extent the position on the railways by increasing suburban fares. That is only a drop in the ocean. The only way in which we can permanently improve the position is by increasing settlement along our rail-

way lines, so that merchandise can be carried to and from those settlements. It is the long distance, and not the short distance traffic which pays on our railways. If a measure of this description is sincere, and is sound in its objective, it should assist in that particular direction, and that is why we are endeavouring to find if there is any merit in it.

The next question, of course, is the great one of unemployment. We all know that one of the main reasons why unemployment is so rife in our midst to-day is because of the influx of population from the country to the towns. One of the great things we want to encourage is emigration from the towns to the country, and that can only be done by attending to the lot of the man on the land in the way this measure purports to do—but whether it actually does so or not remains to be seen. I have been twitted on one or more occasions with having an artificial sympathy with the man on the land. But if hon. members here knew my first introduction into Queensland some ten years ago with a wife and family, taking up 100 acres of land, living in tents, clearing that land of the virgin scrub, until to-day I remain part owner in one of the largest fruit farms in Queensland, they will understand that I certainly have some knowledge of the subject I am talking about, and that any criticism I intend to launch against this Bill is from the standpoint of the fruit-grower, which I have been for the last ten years. I do not intend to criticise it from the viewpoint of the sugar-grower from the viewpoint of the wheat-grower, or from the viewpoint of the primary producer generally, but from the viewpoint of the fruit-grower.

What are the problems that concern a man who intends to engage in fruitgrowing when he comes to this State of Queensland? The first thing he requires is a knowledge as to suitable land, and that knowledge or information should be supplied by the Lands Department. The lands of Queensland should be so scheduled that anyone coming here seeking for information as to where to go or where to direct his steps to carry out the objective he has in mind, should be helped and assisted by one of the existing departments. If that department is not in a position to give that information, then it is the fault of the department; and I can see through the whole of this measure rather a shifting of the responsibilities of the Government departments, or the shortcomings of the departments, on to an outside body altogether, which is to act as a buffer between the Government in power and the man on the land.

The next thing a man wants to study is the question of water supply. Any man engaging in the fruitgrowing industry in most parts of Queensland without having first studied the question of irrigation or water conservation is courting disaster. He must know where his water supply is coming from; and who should be better able to assist him in that regard than the Hydraulic Engineer's Department? That department is supposed to be equipped with men who are experts in this game, and they should have statistics and information available for the man seeking to carve out his destiny in this State as a fruitgrower. Why should he have to rely on a Council of Agriculture for this information? It should be the work of the

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Hydraulic Engineer's Department, and if the department is not in a position to give that information, then it is due to the shortcomings of the department.

Then, passing on to the next question, we come to the class of fruit that a man wishes to grow. He may have certain ideas himself as to what classes of fruit he should cultivate, and the Department of Agriculture should be essentially the department to direct him in that matter. I speak with some considerable experience on this subject—experience which has cost me quite a lot, for the reason that the advice given me by the expert of the department was not sound; and shifting the responsibility on to the Council of Agriculture is simply shifting the responsibility from an incompetent Department of Agriculture to a council which will in future bear the burden. Then, again, there is the question of fruit diseases—one of the greatest problems facing our fruitgrowers to-day. They may spend time, energy, and money on cultivating fruit, and then at one fell swoop some disease attacks their orchards and they are threatened with extermination. That of necessity should be something which the Department of Agriculture, through one of its sub-departments, should be capable of handling. I could, if time permitted, give some illustrations in regard to this great menace to the fruitgrower which would no doubt be astonishing to hon. members of this House; nevertheless, I argue that the Department of Agriculture should, of necessity, be the department to assist in combating that great menace to fruit culture in Queensland.

Then there is the fertiliser or food for the soil which the fruitgrower requires. We all know quite well that, if we have got a certain ailment, certain medicines will effect a cure, while others will act as a poison in connection with that ailment. So it is with the man growing fruit. He may have a limited knowledge of the soil and its requirements; but, unless he is assisted by some expert advice as to the class of treatment that soil requires, he is probably going to do more harm than good by applying some specific which some individual desires to sell to him. There again the Department of Agriculture should be the one to advise in a manner which will leave no doubt in the fruitgrower's mind as to what should be done, and how it should be done. These five issues that I have mentioned are, of necessity, ones that the present Departments should deal with, and I cannot see that the creation of a Council of Agriculture is going to assist in any way to make the position any better.

In regard to the commercial end of the business, it seems to me that co-operation can do all that the fruitgrower desires. The problems of the fruitgrower in regard to the marketing of his fruit can be reasonably solved through co-operation. What better illustration could you have of that than the work at present done by the Southern Queensland Co-operative Fruit Growers' Association? All these things can be done by co-operation amongst the industries particularly interested.

Then there is the question of excess production. This again can be overcome by co-operation. Again I say, how is this Council going to do anything to improve the lot of the fruitgrower better than he can improve it himself by co-operation such as exists amongst them to-day? Let me try to visualise

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before hon. members the position of the fruit-growing industry in Queensland to-day. You have fruit growing over something like 1,500 miles of the coast of Queensland—all kinds of fruit, from the absolutely tropical fruit grown in the Cairns and Cooktown districts down to the apple and deciduous fruits grown in the Stanthorpe district. How can it be conceived that any one or two representatives of the Council of Agriculture can know sufficient of their work to be able to deal with all the problems that beset the fruitgrowers in these various districts?

When you come to think that fruit is only one section of production which this Council intends to tackle, and that there are other industries even more important than fruitgrowing—the Bill covers, we understand, sugar-growing, wheatgrowing, dairying, maize-growing, cotton-growing, etc.—how can it be possible to conceive of any council having such a knowledge at its disposal—I do not care who the members of the Council are and who the director is—that it can tackle the problems besetting these men right from the first stage of production to the ultimate marketing of their products? It is utterly and absolutely impossible, and therefore we say, although we are anxious and glad to encourage any effort which is going to have as its object the improvement of the lot of the primary producer, that, if we see weaknesses in this measure, it is our duty to point them out; and, if the grower or producer generally is of the opinion that this is going to be the panacea of all his evils, I am sorry to say he will be disappointed. It may give us some further information; it may give us some further experience in regard to this great problem; but, if the Government think we are going to reach the millennium from the producers' point of view, I am sorry to say that, in my opinion, it is not going to be achieved.

Let us deal with the question of the director. It is proposed to pay this gentleman £1,500 per year. In dealing with surplus wool it was thought necessary to pay a director in Victoria £10,000 per year to deal with the disposal of the surplus product of that one primary industry. Yet here we have a combination of industries which are probably just as important as wool, and yet we hope to get a man with sufficient knowledge and experience to tackle these great problems, and we expect to be able to command his services for £1,500 per year. That, in itself, betrays a shallow conception in regard to this measure. We do not understand what the problems are. We do not understand how deep-rooted they are, and what great concentration of brain and effort it requires to rescue the producer from the position he is in to-day. If you think you are going to command brains at £1,500 per year to meet that situation, you are living in a fool's paradise.

Let me just illustrate. We have a Commissioner for State Enterprises, a gentleman who, in my opinion, is struggling with very great difficulties. We argued at the time of his appointment that it would be impossible to get a business man, or a man [5.30 p.m.] with sufficient business experience, to tackle all the State enterprises in such a manner as the Commissioner was supposed to do. Yet we have here something of far greater importance and significance, the ramifications of which extend

very much deeper than anything associated with State enterprises; and we expect, through a council such as is proposed, and a director to whom we shall pay £1,500 a year, to master all these great problems, which will mean the making or breaking of Queensland. Anxious as we are to see some measure put upon the statute-book which will assist in the direction of improving primary production in the State, I cannot see in this measure that grip of the position which we are all so anxious to see. In my opinion, the only way in which this great problem can be approached is by assisting the existing co-operative companies associated with these various classes of production. You have in some of them almost a state of perfection, where you have from 90 per cent. to 100 per cent. of the growers associated with their co-operative movements. Other sources of production are not so well organised, but it has to be done; and, if this Government, or any other Government, assist in that direction, by the expenditure of money and the lending of organisers, then I contend that each one of these channels of production would be much better able to organise themselves, and it would be very much more effectively done if they retain their individual identity. It is quite easy to bring these co-operative movements together, if you will, for the marketing of their produce, and to cope with other difficulties which beset the producer in the disposal of his products; but I argue—and I am quite sure I am sound in my argument—that it is much more serviceable to encourage existing organisations amongst primary producers than to attempt to tear them up, as is proposed in this measure, and bring them under another scheme, where they would lose their identity almost entirely.

The PREMIER: It is not proposed to abolish them under this Bill. As a matter of fact, the canegrowers' present organisations are represented on the provisional Council.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: That may be so, but my argument is this—and it has already been voiced by hon. members here—that these particular primary producers must come into conflict. They view things from different standpoints. You can quite visualise any sort of production that is distinctly antagonistic to another sort. For instance, here in Queensland we are asking for a continuation of the sugar agreement because it is vital to the welfare of this State; yet there are fruitgrowers in the southern portions of the Commonwealth who are harracking for the termination of the agreement, because they argue that by maintaining the price of sugar at its present level you are preventing them from profitably carrying on their various industries. To wipe out the various organisations, as it is proposed to do under this measure, seems to me to be a mistake.

The PREMIER: We are not doing that.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: For instance, take the district in which I am interested as a fruitgrower. That district embraces many kinds of production which will be served by this council. In the district council you will have a number of men engaged in the different industries. If, on the other hand, you have a body of sugar-growers, who have concentrated their attention on their problems—and concentration is essential to the

overcoming of these problems—you have some prospect of that industry being advanced in that district, as men engaged in the same class of production can, in conference, help one another. I am quite certain I am right when I say that specialising in primary production is just as necessary as in any other calling, and if you attempt to interfere with the individuality of the growers, so far as their organisations are concerned, you are going to set the clock back instead of getting improvement.

The outstanding need at the moment is so to equip our Government departments as to be of more assistance to the producers. In making this suggestion I do not want to cast aspersions on any departmental officers, or any departmental Under Secretaries, but anyone engaged in primary production in Queensland must recognise that our departments are hopelessly inefficient at the present time. I do not mean to say that individuals are inefficient. What I mean is that the information and knowledge are not available to the grower or producer that there should be. You have only to compare our position in this regard with other parts of the world where it is made a study, and where it is recognised that science is at the root of production, and that by the application of science the problems of the producer can be largely overcome. I argue that had these departments which the hon. gentlemen opposite preside over at the present time been alive to the situation, and recognised the need for greater help for primary production in this State, there would have been no need for the creation of this organisation. It is because they have been slack in their duties that this great need has become apparent to us all. The hon. member for Pittsworth, I think, put his finger upon what, in my opinion, is one of the greatest dangers associated with this proposal—that is, the effect it is going to have on interstate associations. We have had experience, particularly since the war, as to why it is essential that one State should co-operate with the others for the protection of any particular class of primary production. You may provide all kinds of safeguards which may protect you in a parochial sense, but which are no good to you from an interstate or international point of view. You must speak as one authority if you are going to get that encouragement and stability which are so necessary for our primary development. There is no disguising the fact that this measure is viewed in the Southern States with a very great amount of suspicion. It has got the Government mark on it. There is no use denying that. The Labour Government of this State is discredited throughout Australia at the present time, and it is quite clear that they will grasp at any straw they can to save themselves from perdition. I do not say this unkindly, and I look upon this agricultural measure as one of those which the Government are grasping at at the present time to give them a new lease of life. I do not blame them—it is only natural—the pity of it is that the Government have tried to tell the people that there is no political significance in the measure. We all know that is silly, and that the Government do not mean it. All that we do as politicians has a political significance, so why disguise the fact? The Bill places a number of departmental officers in a position of great responsibility on the Council.

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We would like to think that they are free and unfettered, but by periodically sacking men the Government show those departmental officers that they must be subject to their will. If those departmental officers were independent beings, as the Government try to make out they are, well and good; but the Government take care that they shall not be. We have just had an experience with the Government Printer. He showed that he had an opinion of his own, so down came the sledge hammer. Of course, we know he was too dangerous a man to them to allow him to be free to speak.

THE SPEAKER: Order!

MR. ELPHINSTONE: This is a very important point. I do not want to transgress, but I wish to point out that, if these departmental officers associated with the Council were free and unfettered and able to express their opinions, there would be some argument in it, but they are not. I have heard the hon. member for Burke saying in this House that every one of the important officers in the Government department should be made to sign the Labour platform. It is no good taking any encouragement from the belief that these departmental officers who are going to sit on the Council are unfettered. We know they are not, and that they cannot have souls of their own. The chairman of the Council is to be the Secretary for Agriculture. If he were a Minister who had some idea of the economic situation, there might be some reason for it. But when a gentleman commits himself to the statement that production should be for use and not for profit, how can you imagine for one minute that this Council is going to be free from political taint? How can you expect the people in the South, with whom we wish to be associated in our primary producing interests, to believe in this for one minute in view of the constitution of the Council. We have been sitting in this House for close on three weeks this session. The party opposite are proud of their association with the doctrine of communism, and yet we cannot extract from them one word of reference to this wonderful doctrine that is going to save the community and put Australia on her feet again? What is wrong with this doctrine when hon. gentlemen opposite are afraid to say anything in its favour, although we have been sitting here for nearly three weeks?

THE SPEAKER: Order!

MR. ELPHINSTONE: Mr. Speaker, I can quite understand you calling me to order, but how can we, while interested in the primary producers of this State, recommend them to accept such a measure as this when it is introduced by the Government, and when we know that hon. members opposite are committed—lock, stock, and barrel—to the doctrine of communism, which is going to take away and not give? How can we say that we are helping the prosperity of the primary producer by supporting a measure introduced by the Government, when, at the same time, they have placed their signatures to a document that favours communism? Disraeli at one time was asked to give a description of communism, and he said—

“A communist is one who is willing to put down his penny and take up your shilling.”

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(Opposition laughter.) That absolutely forecasts the position that exists here at the present moment. The objective of hon. members opposite is to put down their penny and take up the primary producer's shilling. Anxious as I am—as a primary producer—to give the man on the land all the help I can, and to give this Bill all the support it deserves, I have got to remember that hon. members opposite are committed to the doctrine of communism, which we know is going to put its strangling claws on primary production, and that is not in the interests of the primary producer.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*): This afternoon I have followed very closely the addresses which have been given by hon. members, particularly those speaking from the Country party. It seems to me that there may be a danger in this debate, without reflecting upon any hon. gentlemen who have already spoken. There may be a danger of forgetting one important factor, and that is, that if a man is representing the people he should realise that his main object in representing those people should be so to direct affairs that he will act in a statesman-like way, and, instead of speaking for the few, that he will speak in the interests of all the people in this great State of Queensland. There is always a danger—and probably to some extent we may all have suffered from that—of taking a narrow view of things, and letting the circumstances which surround our own particular party interests prevail and take a narrow sectional view, and so warp our judgment. Every man who has read this Bill must at once see that it is a very important Bill. It is no use disguising the fact and saying that it is not an important Bill. I am certain that it is a Bill that has appealed to members in various ways, and that is no reflection on the judgment of members of this House. Some, on viewing it for the first time, have given it their blessing straightaway, while others have said that they do not like it. At the very outset of my remarks I want to say that I speak as a member of the Nationalist party, but in that capacity I represent my own view, although I may also represent the Nationalist view as well. At any rate, I take the responsibility for my own statements. During a recent debate I heard the hon. member for Port Curtis, who is a member of the Country party, make the statement—perhaps it was a slip and was not intended—that the Country party represented the country interests, while the party to which I belong represented the cities. I feel sure that that was a slip on the part of the hon. gentleman.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No. That is why he left the Nationalist party.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I want to say straightaway, as a member representing the constituency which has the largest number of voters of any electorate in the State, that that electorate includes industries of various kinds, including fruitgrowing, general farming, and all the meatworks but one which are to be found within a few miles of Brisbane—I do not refer to Redbank. I am the representative of the electorate which contains all those interests, and I represent them in a broad way, and I represent them in the interests of this great State of Queensland. We are never going to make a great

success of this State if we are going to view things on narrow lines and from a narrow point of view, whether it be the point of view of the Government or the point of view of members on the Opposition side. If we all view things from a narrow viewpoint, then it is going to be disastrous for Queensland. In dealing with this Bill, it is necessary to look all round and try and get an idea of what is the view of the country in regard to it. Looking at it from the commercial side, in my judgment it is going to create a want of confidence. I know there are some who will think I am making a big mistake in this, but I can illustrate what I mean. If I have read the Bill correctly—I know I cannot go through it item by item at this stage—it includes some industries that are well established at the present time. Let me say that I have no interest in any of these industries, but I refer to the pastoral industry and to the sugar industry. What is the position of the pastoral industry in Queensland to-day? The pastoral industry to some extent includes the small grazing farmers, and it is controlled very largely by the market prices which are obtainable in London for wool.

MR. COLLINS: They are getting a very good price for it, too.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am thankful for that. It is a sorry day for any community when the prices of the products which are grown in the country are brought down as they were by this Government at the commencement of their life in this State. Statements were made during the election which were absolutely untrue. We saw some bills which were published during the election, which read: "Vote for — and butter 2s. per lb. ! Vote for the Government and butter 1s. per lb. !"

That is what happened when these gentlemen came into office. Go down the river, not in my electorate, but in what is known as Bulimba, and see there, overlooking the water, the tremendous buildings that have been erected primarily to deal with wool and other such products. This Bill is going to include men like these there, and it gives such huge powers that in one moment they can be taken off their feet, so to speak. So, I say it is going to create a want of confidence. The hon. member for Toowoomba—who, I regret, is not in his place this afternoon—

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: He is being married. (Laughter.)

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am very glad that he has the good sense to join the benedicts, but for some reason—whether it was due to the fact that he was contemplating matrimony and his judgment was not as sane as it ought to be—(renewed laughter)—he has said again and again, by interjection, "We are out for One Big Union." And he had something more in his mind than the union in his own personal life. Here we have a Bill which will include not only those who are specifically mentioned in it now, but also others who may be included in it later on. And what is the idea of the Bill? The idea in that particular direction is to assist towards the realisation of the ideals of the Communist party who have been urging and urging again that their aim is the nationalisation of industries.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: And primary production is one of the first of them.

HON. W. H. BARNES: As a Nationalist member, believing that private enterprise is going to be very largely responsible for the development of this great State, would I not be making a mistake if I did not, according to my conscience, get up and say that this Bill is sugar-coated and is not going to help the people of Queensland, but rather is going to damage them? During the discussion to-day, Mr. Speaker, you have allowed references to be made to policy. I am not in a position to dictate the policy of the Nationalist party, but I am here as a Nationalist, and I should like to refer to the policy of the party in 1920—and about that I can speak with some authority. In addressing the electors at that time, I said—

"I wish to impress upon you how important it is that every possible assistance should be given to men who are on the land."

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You should join the Country party.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Let me, in reply to the hon. gentleman, say that the Nationalist party and the Country party are out as one man to see if they cannot benefit the primary producer. They may not see exactly eye to eye to-day, but they are both out for that purpose. I am not here to reflect on the Country party and say that they are not out to do that, but I am here to say that we do not view it exactly as they do in all particulars. Let me complete my quotation—

"I wish to impress upon you how important it is that every possible assistance should be given to men who are on the land so as to enable them to produce more and yet more, and to encourage and assist them to avail themselves of the world's markets which are now open to Australia and for so many of the varied products of this State; and that being so, it is essential that the State should do its part to assist them by facilitating the means of transport.

"Bearing in mind the hardships which many selectors have to endure in connection with settlements on our land, provision should be made for a reduction of railway freights on the necessities of life with a view of assisting the settler and encouraging settlement, and in also granting to settlers preferential rates at a distance from the centre of export."

No man—I do not care what his brand of politics may be—can go through some parts of Queensland as I have done and see the men who are seeking to assist in the development of this great State without feeling as he watches them in their work that they are making a mighty sacrifice. And I want to say further, that we do not give half the credit we should give to the women who assist in that development—the women who, bearing hardships, loneliness, absence from friends, and distance from the amenities of the cities, are doing a great thing to help Queensland. Though I represent a suburban electorate very largely, I want to say here and now that in a State like Queensland we cannot have any success unless the primary producer is helped and encouraged, but we must seek to help and encourage them along safe lines.

Let me deal now with one of the factors which arise in considering this Bill—the question of cost. Does any sane man here think

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that £25,000 is going to cover the cost in the first year?

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: No.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Let us look at it just roughly. We have been told that fifteen organisers are to be appointed—or rather, have been appointed, at £400 a year.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Unauthorised, too.

HON. W. H. BARNES: That is £6,000, and then there are their travelling allowances. Working it out at the rate of 15s. per day—I am within the mark for the purposes of my argument—and assuming they travel only 150 days in the year—see how far you are getting on towards £10,000. Then we are told by the hon. member for Oxley that the director is to get £1,500 per annum, and that such an amount is not sufficient.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member for Oxley says he should get £10,000.

HON. W. H. BARNES: And then there is the Council of Agriculture. Then, are large offices to be run without expense? One would be very much nearer the mark if he said that this year the scheme was going to cost £100,000.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: They will never do it on twice that.

HON. W. H. BARNES: If they were going to accomplish any good, I would say, "Money well spent."

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It will knock out the middleman.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member is one of the greatest middlemen you ever struck. All his life he has been making himself a middleman to preach the gospel of discontent between employer and employee, and he has been a mighty success at it, judging him by his own standards. The hon. member knows full well that there is scarcely a man on that side of the House who is not a middleman. The unfortunate fact is that Labour men take good care to get big interest for their money. They are middlemen because they are taking it out of the pockets of someone.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You are a political highwayman.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Yet we are told that we are middlemen because at this particular time we are trying to do our best in the interests of the country.

Before the dinner adjournment I was taking the opportunity of going into the Bill as far as it relates to the present

[7 p.m.] opportunities which people have of disposing of their primary produce, &c. From the very wide scope of the Bill, I take it that the object of the Bill is to bring within its scope, by regulation, pretty well every industry. I have no doubt that one of the first steps will be to give us, in connection with legislation, the first dose of what one might call the teachings of the Apostle Lenin.

I want to ask, is agricultural development essential to the advancement of this great country? I think that question can be answered in only one way. If this country is to be successful, it must be along the lines of agricultural development, and anything which is going to make the necessary provision for men to use their brains legitimately and put forth their energies will be a good thing indeed. But this Bill, in my

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judgment, is one which, in the first place, is going to be an exceedingly expensive measure to work; yet, notwithstanding that, it is not going to be successful. It is going to create difficulties and also lead to a feeling of uneasiness in the minds of the community. I do not know whether I caught correctly a statement which was made before dinner. I do not think you, Mr. Speaker, heard it. I think the Minister made some remark about my being a highwayman.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: A political highwayman!

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman can put it in any form he likes. He had the audacity to say that a respectable member of this House is a highwayman.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: A political highwayman.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The type of man who makes that suggestion is scarcely worthy of passing notice. It is only typical of a man who has been proceeding along those lines all his life. It was unworthy of a man who is supposed, but who fails utterly, worthily to represent the Government of the country. It only shows that the criticism of the Bill must have been fairly acute, when a Minister of the Crown makes such a statement, which is absolutely untrue.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I will deal with your associations later on.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I have lived in Queensland all my life, and at least I have the honour and respect not only of my own constituents but of the commercial and business community. What are the factors which have brought about this absolute change of face and made it necessary to introduce this Bill after a period of seven years? I quite believe that the Secretary for Agriculture and hon. members sitting behind him are not genuine in bringing in the Bill unless it has one specific object. The Government are supposed to be doing a great deal for the man on the land by reason of this Bill. Not very long ago they said, "You cannot allow cattle to go out of this country to a better market unless you pay 10s. a head." Speaking from memory, am I not right in saying that the Government collected the sum of £39,000 from men who wanted to get a better market?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: And they still hold it.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am not certain on that point, and I do not want to make a misstatement from the floor of the House. Anyone who turns up the Auditor-General's report will find that from time to time there is a record of the amount of money that the Government receive. Is it not a fact, as has been pointed out again and again by the hon. member for Drayton, that butter was sold at a price less than it was worth in the world's markets? We know that the policy of the Government has been to get by the very throat the man who has been producing. The Premier says, "Let by-gones be by-gones! Forget all about it! Throw over our actions something that will make them forgotten!" The leopard is going to change his spots. This Bill is being introduced at this stage because the industrialists have had a setback, and the Government now say, "We must do something"; and so this bunch of carrots is held out to the farmers. One reason why there has not been the development which we all would have liked to see, and which has

probably made Country party members so anxious in connection with this Bill—although, judging from their speeches, they are apparently divided—is that the conditions in the city have been such that there has been a drift away from the land. I have already said on the floor of this House that I believe the time is coming when, in order to get the support of the man on the land, probably something very special will have to be done for him. That is one factor that possibly has made it necessary for this Bill to be introduced. The Government believe that it will, perhaps, be a way out of that difficulty, and a way out for themselves, too. Have not the Government, by their system of leasehold and by doing things which have made the position of the man on the land extremely difficult, contributed towards the position that exists in Queensland to-day? Settlement on the land is absolutely essential from the big standpoint of defence. I hold that one of the needs of North Queensland is to get more and more settlement, if for nothing else, for the purpose of defence only, because we are very close to foreign neighbours, and it is wise for us to have the position strengthened and fortified by having our own kith and kin there to protect us.

I notice that sugar has been brought under this Bill. It is one of those things that has been drawn in. Is sugar not to a very great extent under the control of the Commonwealth? What is the position to-day? Have not the Premier and some other members of the Ministry again and again, at the instigation of the sugar-grower, and rightly so, too, said to the Commonwealth Premier, "We want protection"?

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Do you remember your trip to Melbourne?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I remember the trip that I had up North in connection with the farmers who had been deprived of thousands of pounds, and I got it refunded to them. That is the trip that I remember. Any trip that I have taken to Melbourne I have taken in the interests of the State, and I did my job well, and the Premier knows it was well done. The policy of the Nationalist party was faithfully expressed at the last elections in these words—

"There has always been included freehold conditions, and I believe in this form of tenure in the selection of land, and that the majority of people still desire the right to finally obtain their deeds, which the obtaining of is one of the greatest inducements for them to settle."

Those are factors that must be used in connection with the settlement of people on the land, and big factors too. The policy continues—

"The inability of many settlers to finance themselves when taking up land makes it imperative that steps should be taken in connection with our land laws to provide homes on the land for intending settlers, and thus enable them to get a start under better conditions than exist at present, and this being done would relieve many a settler and his wife of some of the present anxiety and induce settlement."

MR. PAYNE: Why didn't you do something when you had the chance?

HON. W. H. BARNES: Every law which is liberal was introduced by Governments of which I was a member. Every piece of tax-

tion, and every piece of legislation which has gone in the way of tearing up agreements that have been entered into, has been passed by the Government on the other side of the House. They are the ones who did that, while I have the honour of having been associated with Governments which, at least, had to do with the initiation and development of this great country.

MR. STOPFORD: The poll tax.

HON. W. H. BARNES: A poll tax! The hon. member is a member of the union which is taking men before the court and having them fined for not paying 10s., and now he comes here and talks about the poll tax!

What are the objects of the Bill? Already we find there has been unauthorised expenditure. Fifteen men have been sent out into the country. What for? I charge the Government deliberately with sending these men out as political agents to prepare the way for an election to take place. I charge them with trying to hoodwink the farmers and the community generally, and with sending these men out for the purpose of trying to induce the people in the country to vote for them. This Bill is one of the greatest reflections on the Department of Agriculture. The Minister cannot have been doing his duty. The Minister must have failed in doing his job, because he comes along and says, "Let us throw the responsibility on to someone else," just as they are going to do in connection with another measure which will come on later, and which I cannot discuss now. The Government said they were going to take something over, and now the responsibility is to be put on to somebody else, and that is what is being done in connection with this Bill. Who, after all, are the primary producers? They are the men on the land. But is not the man—and I am speaking now of the industrialist section—who manufactures something fresh and which is going to save work on the farms—say, some new implement—also a primary producer?

THE PREMIER: No, a secondary producer—certainly not a primary producer.

HON. W. H. BARNES: A man who comes along with something new is primus, and he is a producer. In connection with this Bill, who are the voters?

THE PREMIER: Primary producers.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Bill does not say so. We are told to swallow these things, like the boy, and it will be all right. This so-called intelligent Government ask us to swallow it. I am sorry to say that many people are not going to give to it the consideration which they ought, and are going to swallow it. In connection with certain measures, the Government say voters should be everybody living in the area. The Premier has given us a direct answer to the question as to who are to be the voters under this Bill.

I want to draw attention to another point. All along the line it has been urged by members on this side—and it was urged by Nationalist members during the election—that it is essential that there should be a simplification of the laws relating to agriculture and stock, and a reorganisation of the Department of Agriculture. The following is a quotation from my policy speech:—

"It is necessary that, when advocating land settlement, and inviting citizens from both within and without the State

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to share with us more fully the responsibility of developing Queensland, and to embark into the business of agriculture and the raising of stock, that we should at the same time assist them by making provision for the simplification of laws relating to agriculture and stock, and the reorganisation of the Department of Agriculture, so as to enable them to obtain the most efficient scientific and practical direction and administration and the highest efficiency in production."

The PREMIER: Vague generalities.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman talks about vague generalities! That is what the Bill is. I have heard hon. members on this side say that they are going to support the Bill, conditionally on certain things being done in Committee. They practically say that there are vague generalities in the Bill, and that they do not know where they are going.

Mr. COLLINS: Are you supporting the Bill?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am going to vote dead against it. I want to ask who is to be the director?

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Roma street.

HON. W. H. BARNES: No; it might be William street, for all I know—it might be the Department of Agriculture in William street. I do not want to be personal, but what has been happening? At every available opportunity. Ministers who are sitting on the Treasury benches have got away from it as quickly as possible. Whenever any opportunity of a comfortable billet came along they took it. I should not be surprised if the Secretary for Agriculture thought that he could fill the job better than anybody else. (Government laughter.) We have read the regulation clause in the Bill. There is a sting right at the very end of the clause. It says that interested persons may adjudicate.

Just fancy it being laid down in the Bill that no one shall be deemed incapable of adjudicating in some matter in which he is interested. That is provided for in subclause (5) of clause 16 of the schedule. That is the kind of thing which has been introduced by the Government, who are supposed to be assisting in the development of the country.

The PREMIER: The words do not bear the implication you put on them.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am referring to subclause (5).

The PREMIER: There is no reference to it in that subclause.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Yes there is. Hon. members will also notice that it is possible for a fine to be imposed up to £100.

The PREMIER: Subclause (5) is exactly contrary to what you said.

HON. W. H. BARNES: If I made a mistake, I regret it, but that is the way that I read the subclause. Anyhow, this Bill provides for fines up to £100. It is a nice state of things to allow any body like the Council of Agriculture to fine people up to £100.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: They are fond of doing that.

HON. W. H. BARNES: We used to be told by the Labour party, when they represented the Opposition in this House, and before they went over to extreme socialism, that they had bowels of compassion; but not

so now. If a man makes a statement now that should not be made, their "no victimisation" policy is disregarded. It is victimisation every time, and they get at the man who has done something.

Mr. KIRWAN: The hon. member for Bulimba put it into effect in 1912.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Premier said I made a misstatement in regard to subclause (5). I have read the Bill very carefully, and to show that I am right I will read the subclause—

"(5) No justice shall be deemed incapable of acting in any case arising under this Act by reason of his being, as one of several primary producers or as one of any other class of person, liable in common with others to contribute to or be benefited by the fund."

The PREMIER: Do you say that that means that an interested party can adjudicate on a case?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I do say so. The hon. gentleman will have an opportunity of speaking on the Bill himself. We have not heard him yet on the Bill, and I hope he will get up and explain some clauses of the Bill. What is the primary object of this Bill? I unhesitatingly say that its primary object is to make billets.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. W. H. BARNES: I saw a statement made the other day—I speak under correction—that the salaries for the public service amount to £5,000,000 per annum.

The PREMIER: Salaries and wages.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Now this Bill is going to make it millions more. We have men exercising their influence throughout the country helping to bolster up the Government. We want to get to the country ourselves and let them know that they are doing this.

The PREMIER: We are helping the agricultural industry.

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

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I think we have all listened with a very considerable amount of interest to the various speeches which have been delivered from both sides of the House in connection with this Bill. Personally, I look on the Bill as containing some pernicious provisions, and, taking it by and large, I think that the whole Bill is nothing but camouflage, humbug, and hypocrisy that will put a leg-ropo on the primary producers of Queensland from one end of the State to the other if it is put on the statute-book in its present form.

The PREMIER: What do the Country party say about that?

Mr. TAYLOR: When a Bill is brought to this Chamber by any Government, no matter if it is a Labour Government, a Nationalist Government, or a Country party Government, if it has for its object or aim the assisting of the primary producer, it should have every possible consideration given to it by both sides of the House. I would like to make that statement right at the start, so that there can be no misunderstanding. Notwithstanding the statements that have been made to the contrary, we all in this Chamber recognise the value of primary production to this State, or in fact, to any country in the

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world. If primary production is in a flourishing condition, and if things are all right with the man on the land, then, speaking generally, they are all right with every other section of the community. Unfortunately, we know that for a very considerable time past things for the man on the land have not been all right. We on this side, the Nationalist party in particular, have been accused of being opposed to the interests of the man on the land. I challenge the Premier or any member on that side of the House to show that members here in any speech that has been made or by any vote that has been taken in this House have been opposed to the interests of the man on the land.

The PREMIER: You wanted to increase railway freights last year.

Mr. TAYLOR: Yes, and I would increase them now, as I said in this Chamber on the Address in Reply. I have been drawn off the track by the Premier, and perhaps I had better let that matter alone. I want to confine myself as closely as I possibly can to the Bill. No man of any vision at all can be opposed to the interests of the primary producers, if he has the interests of the country at heart—I think every man in this Chamber must agree with that proposition—yet we have here a Bill introduced by a Government and a party whose first and foremost plank is the socialisation of production and distribution.

The PREMIER: It is not the first and foremost plank.

Mr. TAYLOR: Well, it is the objective—the objective. I do not know whether it is a plank; I think it is the whole platform. Anyhow, we know that that is the main objective of the party of which the Premier and the gentlemen sitting with him are members. Yet they bring into this Chamber a Bill full of matters relating to production and distribution. Have they altered, or is this Bill, as I believe it is, simply a step forward which the Premier and his Government are anxious to take to bring about the socialisation of the industries of Queensland? As I said at the start, it is simply nothing else but camouflage, hypocrisy, and humbug, brought forward, not for the purpose of benefiting the farmer, as the Government would have us believe, but for the purpose of advancing that objective which they have been preaching in season and out of season in this Chamber. I am absolutely opposed to any legislation which has for its object anything of the kind, and that is the whole trouble that is running right through this Bill.

Mr. KIRWAN: What clause is it in?

Mr. TAYLOR: It is in practically every clause from start to finish. We have been told that the Bill has been brought forward in order that primary production may be assisted, and that a number of amendments are to be proposed in Committee. Those amendments are going to be introduced, and it is necessary that they should be introduced; and, if the Government accept them, I take it that there will be nothing but the title of the Bill to go on with. Organisers are going throughout Queensland telling the farmers what a splendid thing this Bill is, and probably not one of them has seen it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They have all seen it.

Mr. TAYLOR: I doubt very much if the organisers as a body have seen the Bill or discussed it with the Premier, or even with the Minister.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You are absolutely wrong.

Mr. TAYLOR: Yet they are supposed to go out as apostles of this agricultural policy and tell the people what a splendid thing the Government have on the stocks for them—that all they have to do is to join up. "We won't charge you anything for the first year; but, when we have got you in, we will have you log-roped and keep you there just as long as we please." In the case of an important measure like this, before organisers are sent out—I know nothing about their political creeds or their ability in any shape or form—they should come into contact with the Premier or the Minister and have the provisions which they are expected to explain to the farmers thoroughly explained to them, so that they may not make any mistakes.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: So they have.

Mr. TAYLOR: I am very pleased to hear it. If they have, I doubt very much if it has been done in the way in which I think it should have been done. The Bill, as one speaker has said, is practically a vote of censure on the Department of [7.30 p.m.] Agriculture. I do not think anyone can gainsay that. Here we have a Department of Agriculture which is supposed to have at its command as competent men as it is possible to get. Some of them are competent—I suppose as competent as you will find anywhere in Australia or in the whole world in regard to the duties they are called upon to carry out. Yet here we have a Bill which is stuffed full of quite a number of useless words, terms, and clauses associated with work which officers of the Department of Agriculture are supposed to be carrying out at the present time. We are bringing into existence advisory boards, district councils, and all this kind of thing. What for? To advise about pests, when we have a department which is supposed to be doing that work; to advise about quite a number of things associated with the rural industries, when we are supposed to have men who are competent to carry out that work. With all the advisory bodies you like to bring into existence, what better organisation can you have than that particular activity which is operating with regard to the breeding of wheat at Roma? But you are going to allow a district council to come in and interfere with work with which there should be no interference. That work has been carried on to the utmost satisfaction of the farmers of Queensland. No outside board, no council, should have the power to say to the man who is carrying on that work in the Maranoa district, "You shall do this," or "You shall do that."

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Who is suggesting that it should be done?

Mr. TAYLOR: There is power in the Bill which will enable them to do it; they can do whatever they like. As the hon. member for Merthyr said last night, you are constituting a Parliament outside Parliament to come along and say what shall be done in quite a number of directions—which may or may not be in the best interests of the State. Practically the whole of the matters which we

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find in this Bill could be carried out very well by the officers associated with the Department of Agriculture.

Mention has been made of the party political aspect of the question. I am very sorry to think that it should be a party measure. One has only to read portions of the speech which the Premier delivered at Laidley to find out whether it is or is not a party measure. This is what the Premier said—

“Moreover, as was pointed out by Mr. Theodore in his speech, they recognised that Agricola can never worship at the shrine where the high priests are those first five leading lights of the Nationalist gods who now amble in the political arena of the Country party's jerry-built edifice.”

The PREMIER: I did not say that.

Mr. TAYLOR: Is this a book which the hon. gentleman had printed?

The PREMIER: That is not a report of my speech. Those are the comments of the “Daily Standard.”

Mr. TAYLOR: The hon. gentleman thought so much of it that he had it reprinted.

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman should not force on me words I did not use. If the hon. gentleman wants to quote my speech, let him quote it.

Mr. TAYLOR: I take it that, before this was put in the back of the “Agricultural Journal” as political propaganda—for which, I suppose, we shall all have to pay—the Premier, or someone closely associated with him, checked the proofs.

The PREMIER: That was not in the “Agricultural Journal.”

Mr. TAYLOR: It is rather a remarkable thing that, when I bring it under the hon. gentleman's notice, he says he did not say it. However, he said this—

“The Nationalists, by making a pretence at being the friends of the farmers, actively opposed or passively resisted all measures for practical relief.”

The PREMIER: Hear, hear! I said that. It is true.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Premier knows that is absolutely untrue.

The PREMIER: It is true.

Mr. TAYLOR: I absolutely deny the Premier's statement in regard to that particular matter. Mind, this was a speech in connection with which no party was supposed to exist. The hon. gentleman said—

“I have carefully studied the Country party's attitude during this Parliament, and I have not known of a solitary constructive idea.”

The Premier knows that is untrue.

The PREMIER: It is a fact.

Mr. TAYLOR: No one knows better than the Premier that that is an absolutely incorrect statement. He went on to say—

“I am quite convinced that the members of the Country party have never given five minutes of earnest, independent thought to the real problems of the man on the land, nor to the agricultural industry.”

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

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Mr. TAYLOR: For a gentleman occupying the position of Premier to say that a body of men sitting on this side of the House have never given five minutes' thought to the interests of the man on the land is too silly for words. Yet that is the statement which the Premier makes in connection with the Country party. A little further on he said this—

“The Country party would be quite content to have Tories in office, although it knows perfectly well that the Tories represent the city interests—the merchants, the middlemen, and the squatters.”

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

Mr. TAYLOR: He proceeded to say—

“I am thoroughly convinced that the farmers have little to hope for either from the Country party or from the Nationalists. The Nationalists are openly hostile to the farmers' requirements; and the Country party is merely a joint in the tail of the Nationalist dog.”

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. TAYLOR: The Secretary for Agriculture and the Premier both have denied that this has been brought forward from a party political point of view, or that it was an electioneering stunt.

The PREMIER: That is right; it was not electioneering.

Mr. TAYLOR: I am very pleased to hear the Premier's denial, but I am very sorry that I cannot accept it.

The PREMIER: If you studied more of those speeches, you would be much more edified.

Mr. TAYLOR: They do edify me. The Premier further stated—

“Some kind of basic organisation must be established among the farmers by the farmers themselves.”

The Government propose to appoint five nominees. The Premier further stated—

“Through the agency of such an organisation the farmers will be assisted to solve the problems of production and marketing and become the driving force towards co-operative efforts.”

I think he should have said “socialistic efforts,” because that is what he intended. He further stated—

“These organisations would become the medium for the spread of knowledge and education, and would enable farmers to become articulate as a class and a real force in the land.”

I agree with that part. He further stated—

“As an organisation corresponding with the American Farm Bureaux I advocate the establishment in all farming localities of district councils of agriculture. These councils should be elected by the farmers by direct vote.”

What about the five Government nominees?

The PREMIER: How many are on the district councils?

Mr. TAYLOR: There is only one Council.

The PREMIER: The Bill provides for councils in every agricultural district.

Mr. TAYLOR: There is only one main Council.

The PREMIER: No; you have not read the Bill.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Premier further stated—

"I lay down the following as a tangible and realisable objective. Agriculture is an industry which must be made a remunerative industry to those engaged in it."

It has taken the Government seven years to find out that the agricultural industry must be made profitable and remunerative, whereas it has been preached and spoken in every possible direction by hon. members on this side of the House. The Premier further stated—

"The industry must be greatly extended, for only in that way can additional population be absorbed, and it is only by increasing the population that we can reduce our per capita financial burden."

I agree with that. After all the trouble we have gone to in connection with this particular scheme, is that any discovery to make? The Premier further stated—

"The conditions of the life of all country dwellers must be made more attractive than at the present time."

I quite agree with all that. That all shows how little there was behind the Premier's great pronouncement on this agricultural scheme which was going to be put before the farmers, and which was going to bring about the salvation of the agricultural industry. The Government have accused past Liberal Administrations of not having the interests of the primary producers at heart.

The PREMIER: They were very unsympathetic.

Mr. TAYLOR: What Government was responsible for the Gatton College, the Roma experimental farm, the sugar experiment stations? What Government sent a travelling dairy throughout Queensland to help and instruct the men on the land? The Premier had the audacity to say in this Chamber that previous Administrations had not been sympathetic with the man on the land. What Government was responsible for the erection of sugar mills in North Queensland in order that sugar-growers might have a chance in the industry?

Mr. PEASE: Who put them in the wrong place?

Mr. TAYLOR: The hon. member is in the wrong place. The Premier's charge that past Governments have been unsympathetic towards the man on the land is not true.

The PREMIER: Who was it that signed the petition to have the tickets taken off the railway trucks?

Mr. TAYLOR: This is a very serious matter, and one in which the Premier said he is sincere. Unfortunately, we cannot believe that. We know the attitude of the Government since they have had control of the Treasury benches. Hon. members opposite are the party who have been absolutely unsympathetic in every direction towards the man on the land. The proposed scheme is going to be a very extensive proposition. One of the hon. members of the Country party stated that there were splendid farmers' organisations at present throughout Queensland, and it has only been by systematising and organising the industries that they have been able to accomplish all that has been

done. The Southern Fruit Growers' Association has been able to dispose of its fruit in the Southern markets.

The PREMIER: We supplied a special train.

Mr. TAYLOR: That association was able to arrange a special trainload of fruit to be taken right through to Melbourne, and in certain directions it was done with a minimum loss. The fruitgrowers paid the Government for that special train. No man is under any obligation to this Government if he is prepared to pay the cost, and that is what that organisation has been able to do. The business which is promulgated in this Bill could have been carried out by these organisations without the enormous expenditure which is now anticipated if they could obtain a certain amount of financial assistance from the Government, to which they are entitled as primary producers. This could have been done to very much greater advantage by the people who are interested in the Bill being a success. After the first year half of the expense of the scheme has to be borne by the primary producer, and at the present time we do not know what the total cost is likely to be. The Premier has stated that a huge system of co-operation will cost probably millions of pounds. I quite realise that, but that does not matter if the results achieved are commensurate with the money expended. That is all we are out to gain by co-operation by the method embodied in the Bill now before the House. Apparently the Bill is intended to stabilise prices. I take it that is one of the main objectives of the primary producers. They want to receive at all times, and under all circumstances and conditions, a fair return for what they produce. There is nothing more pathetic to a producer than to find, after having grown produce, that it has to go on a glutted market, and that he receives little or nothing for it. Just how the stabilisation of prices is to be effected it is rather difficult to say, but it seems to me that there would have to be associated with it a system of insurance or something of that kind. I do not know what to call it. Let me give an instance. I might have a farm of 100 acres, and I might grow maize or wheat, as the case may be, and I get rain at the right time, and I get a decent crop. Another man a little further away who has 100 acres of about equal value may have a crop of wheat or maize, and it has cost him the same amount of money and energy in labour on that land, and yet he only receives half the crop that I do. It has cost that man the same as it has cost me, only that I receive double the crop. That man, with the lesser crop, if he has fulfilled all the conditions as an agriculturist, and then finds that nature has beaten him in the fight, has to be provided for in some way, so that the loss he has made in carrying out the activities on the farm must be made up from some fund established in connection with a scheme such as we are considering to-night. We are out, in a measure such as this, to assist the man who has done his utmost and then finds that he does not get the return he should have got.

Another important matter mentioned in the Bill is the question of transport. That is a very big matter, and, associated with it is the question of good roads. It is a difficult matter to transport goods to market unless there are decent roads. In the fruitgrowing

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areas in particular, the Council of Agriculture might consider the question of establishing along the roads that lead to the nearest railway station depôts where a man who has fruit to send to the different cities may deposit it and have it picked up by motor and carted to the railway station. In districts where the fruitgrowers cart their fruit to the railway station, you find probably thirty or forty men carting their fruit into the railway station, and it takes them probably nearly the whole of the day to transport the fruit from their orchards to the railway station, whereas, if a good system of motor transport were inaugurated in those districts, with receiving depôts on the principal roads, instead of those men losing the whole of the day, they could cart their fruit to the receiving depôt and thereby save a lot of time.

One of the successes of the butter factories in Queensland has been the system adopted by co-operative factories in the collecting of cream. Instead of every dairy farmer carting his cream to the factory, we find cream wagons going along the various country roads picking up the cream at the roadside and delivering it to the factory, thereby allowing the dairy farmers to carry on work on the farm. These are matters which are worthy of every possible consideration. I am anxious to see a Bill which will be of benefit to the primary producers just as much as any member of this House, but I do claim that the Bill we are considering now is not a Bill which is going to be in the interests of the primary producers, or in the interests of the people generally. We have to consider all sections of the community. We do not want one section to prosper at the expense of another. All sections of the community require to be considered in connection with a scheme such as this.

Mr. COLLINS: If you follow in that strain, you will very soon become a Socialist.

Mr. TAYLOR: I am very pleased that my friend, the hon. member for Bowen, is becoming a real blue-blooded Tory. It has taken a good while to work the change in him, but it is coming slowly but surely, and he will soon be as big a Tory as any member in this Chamber. (Laughter.)

Mr. COLLINS: Don't you believe that. (Laughter.)

Mr. TAYLOR: Another matter to be considered is that of financing the farmers with regard to their crops.

Mr. COLLINS: Are you in favour of the Bill, or against it?

Mr. TAYLOR: The hon. member will know in due course. (Laughter.) If a farmer has a good crop of lucerne or a good crop of maize, and he has it stored on his property, by the establishment of a Rural Bank or some institution of a similar nature, it ought to be possible for him to secure an advance on that produce until such time as he wishes to dispose of it. There are times when it is absolutely unprofitable for a man to sell his produce, and, if he wants money badly, he is compelled to take the ruling market rate in order to enable him to carry on.

The PREMIER: He can get an advance in regard to wheat and sugar now.

Mr. TAYLOR: Yes; and some of these advances should be given at as low a rate of interest as it is possible to give, and the

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advances should not be hedged round with too much red tape. The primary producers should have all possible consideration in all matters appertaining to their interests.

The PREMIER: I think you are secretly in favour of this Bill.

Mr. TAYLOR: Well, listen to this! I intend to move as an amendment—That the Bill be read this day two months.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You wish to side-track it.

Mr. TAYLOR: I will make it one month if you like. If I wanted to side-track it, I would move—"That it be read a second time this day twelve months."

The PREMIER: Any amendment at this stage is a destructive amendment.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Bill wants destroying as it stands at the present time. If the amendments which are to be proposed in Committee are accepted by the Government, only the title will be left. The reason for proposing my amendment is this: I claim that the people who are directly interested in this measure have not had sufficient time thoroughly to consider what it really means to them. Is it a right and proper thing that any district council, or any board associated with this Bill, shall have the right to impose a fine, amounting to £100, on any man, simply because he is not carrying out the behests of those who are controlling the Council at the particular time? I say it is absolutely wrong that such drastic powers should be given to any outside body apart from our courts. On account of that, and for other reasons I have given, I have much pleasure in moving, by way of amendment—

"That the word 'now' be omitted, with a view to adding to the question the words 'this day two months.'"

By that time, I hope the Government will have remodelled or recast it in such a way that it will be of the greatest possible benefit to the producers of Queensland.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): I desire formally to second the amendment. The objections, so far as this side of the House are concerned, have been put forward lucidly and concisely, and it is not necessary for me to make a speech. I do not intend to make a speech, but the objections are there all the same. I wish to emphasise this—that, as the Bill contains principles which are absolutely repugnant to the principles of the party of which I am a member, I am going to oppose it tooth and nail, and, if I had my way, I would throw the Bill out at once.

The PREMIER: The hon. member for Kurilpa spoke in favour of it.

Mr. KING: We are choosing a middle course, as the hon. member for Windsor says, so that it will give the [8 p.m.] parties interested a chance to consider the position. I say that the Bill is not likely to be altered in principle during the course of the debate, and even when we get into Committee the principles are not going to be altered, so when we see that we are not going to get anything approaching what we want, and as the Bill is in part against our principles, the honest thing is to vote against it. I second the amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I think I can safely say that the country will agree with me that during the ten years I have been in Parliament I have never seen such a disgusting exhibition as we have had during the last few days with regard to an important national measure of this character.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Withdraw!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: A section of the anti-Labour Press has applauded the Premier for once in his lifetime rising above party, and bringing forward a scheme that would assist to place agriculture on a sound footing. We had hoped to see that condition of things which Lord Macaulay speaks about as happening in the days of ancient Rome—

“ Then none was for a party;
Then all were for the State;
Then the great man helped the poor,
And the poor man loved the great;
Then lands were fairly portioned;
Then spoils were fairly sold;
The Romans were like brothers
In the brave days of old.”

Apparently, it is not possible for the so-called farmers' friends to rise above party and assist the passage of a measure which means so much for Queensland. Of course it cannot be expected of the National party. I think the hon. member for Port Curtis was right in his indication of his attitude in saying that the Country party stood for the country and the National party for the city interests. That is the natural line of cleavage; otherwise it is difficult to understand why there should be two parties. It cannot be expected that middlemen—men who profit by the farmer, and who build up great wealth by the efforts of the farmer, should welcome a measure of this kind. I did not expect that the Nationalist party would support it, but I certainly did expect that the leader of the Country party would rise to the plane of the hon. member for Murilla, who said that this measure was a good thing for the country, and he would support it.

The SPEAKER: Order! I would point out to the hon. gentleman that if he replies to the debate which has taken place, he will not then have the right to reply. He may deal with the amendment without forfeiting his right to reply.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not wish to take up time. The only thing I wish to say is that I think I ought to have the same general latitude which I think you, Sir, wisely gave to hon. members on both sides.

The SPEAKER: The hon. gentleman may speak to the amendment, and, later on, reply to the debate generally; but, if he replies to the criticism which has taken place this afternoon, he will forfeit his right of reply after the amendment has been disposed of.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am going to deal with the whole question before I sit down.

The SPEAKER: Order! I am afraid that, if the hon. gentleman deals with the whole question now, it will debar other hon. members from speaking.

Mr. KERR: I do not see why the whole thing should not be postponed for two months.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I will confine my remarks to the amendment. I think the country will be able to appraise the general attitude of the leader of the Nationalist party in attempting to delay this important measure for two months. The provisional Council of Agriculture is meeting to-morrow, and it has been the wish of the Government, and the expressed wish of hon. members who spoke on the other side, that the election of the permanent Council should take place as early as possible. That is also my desire. I have no doubt that the House will defeat the amendment and that the Bill will be gone on with. We see the attitude of the Nationalist party towards anything that makes for the assistance of the primary producers.

Mr. KERR: What has that got to do with the amendment?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It has this much to do with the amendment—that the party moving the amendment have no desire to do anything for the primary producers, nor can it be expected that they should, because they are dominated, as the hon. member for Pittsworth said on one occasion, by trusts, combines, and middlemen. The amendment itself is moved by a commission agent.

Mr. G. P. BARNES interjected.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member who interjects is very sore about the Wheat Pool Act.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Not a bit.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He called on me some time ago, protesting against the Wheat Pool, which protects the farmers, and he wanted me to exercise my powers under the Act to reduce the price of wheat. He is going to stand by the general attitude of the hon. member for Bulimba when it comes to a question of middlemen. If this measure is placed on the statute-book, it will, in my opinion, do more to bring the producer and consumer together than anything else which has ever been attempted in Queensland, and it will naturally cut out middlemen. It is not surprising that a commission agent moves an amendment to hang up the Bill for two months, and that a city lawyer seconds it.

Mr. KING: He is not afraid to express himself, at any rate.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Of course, as the Premier points out, this amendment will delay the passage of the Bill.

Mr. KERR: No; it will give the people a chance of reading the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Bill is most urgent, and, as has been indicated, the Government desire to have it placed on the statute-book as early as possible, in order that an election may take place, and that the permanent Council of Agriculture may displace the provisional Council which has been appointed, to some extent, by the Governor in Council. If the hon. member for Kurilpa were sincere when he said that his party would support this measure—

Mr. FRY: The introduction of it. Do not put words into my mouth which I did not use.

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The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I can only assume that the commission agents—a class of individuals who live by the primary producer—have had a meeting, and decided that, in order to spar for time, the only thing to do was to move an amendment to delay the passage of the Bill. I am not going to say any more just now than to express my regret that these tactics have been adopted. It has been said time and again, and I think we all agree, that agriculture is the most important industry, and that we all depend on the progress and success of agriculture in this State. Whether we are a highly civilised or a barbarian community, our first necessity is food. That being so, we should have some gratitude towards the man who is producing food, and that is the reason for placing the measure on the statute-book as early as possible. It will be interesting to see how some hon. members who claim to be the friends of the farmers will vote when a division is taken.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): It is not my intention to support this amendment.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Hear, hear! come over here!

Mr. VOWLES: I will be over there later on. This scheme is necessary to assist the farmer at the present time to get him out of his present difficulties. The Government have brought forward a Bill which we do not approve of in its entirety. There are some good things in it, and probably we will agree with them to a certain extent. We have foreshadowed what our intentions are, and that is to move certain amendments. We propose to accept the Bill on its second reading, and then, when it goes through the Committee stage, if it is to our liking, we will support it. If it is not to our liking, we will take what action we think is necessary at the time. Personally, I think it is a mistake to defeat the Bill on the second reading. We should let it get to the Committee stage, and then we shall know exactly where we are. If the Government are not prepared to listen to reason, then I am prepared to vote against the third reading, or to submit an amendment similar to that moved by the leader of the Nationalist party, and have the matter referred to a referendum so that we can get the opinion of the farmers themselves. That is the attitude which I take up for the present. We intend to support the second reading, and then, if there is business in it and no politics from a Government point of view, we will support it. The Bill may be wrecked, or it may go through by the Government's majority of one. Anyhow, we should give it the consideration to which it is entitled, and, if the Government will not assist us to make it a really good Bill, they must take the responsibility.

The PREMIER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): The hon. member in moving his amendment—"That the second reading of the Bill be postponed for two months"—is moving a purely destructive amendment, and it cannot be regarded by the Government in any other way. If that amendment were carried, it would mean the destruction of the Bill. We know that this is an important measure, and it has been debated as such this session; so, when the hon. member moves an amendment such as this, I am going to let the

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House know the real effect of the amendment. "May's Parliamentary Practice" deals with the practice of moving amendments at the second reading stage of a Bill. It says at page 357 of the 12th edition—

"The ordinary practice is to move an amendment to the question, by leaving out the word 'Now' and adding the words 'three months,' 'six months,' or any other term beyond the probable duration of the session. The postponement of a Bill in this manner is regarded as the most courteous method of dismissing the Bill from further consideration, as the House has already ordered that the Bill should be read a second time; and the amendment, instead of reversing that order, merely appoints a more distant day for the second reading. The acceptance by the House of such an amendment being tantamount to the rejection of the Bill, if the session extends beyond the period of postponement a Bill which has been ordered to be read a second time upon that day 'three months,' is not replaced upon the notice paper of the House."

Now the hon. member will see the effect of his amendment. No doubt it was fully intended to deal with it in that way. Probably the Nationalist party wished to attempt to prevent it passing. The hon. member is quite within his rights in moving the amendment, but the effect of it, if carried, will mean the destruction of the Bill, because, if it is postponed for two months, it will prevent Parliament from dealing with it during the session.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Will the session be over in two months?

The PREMIER: I do not know—probably not. There is a large amount of business to deal with yet. Probably it will not be over in two months, but I have shown from "May's Parliamentary Practice" what the effect of the amendment will be if it is carried. Probably the amendment may be taken as an expression of the intentions of the Nationalist party. Perhaps that party does not want the Bill to be gone on with.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Until the people know something about it.

The PREMIER: It is no use trying to burke the question in that way. I take it that the hon. member who has moved the amendment realises his responsibility in taking such a course. Perhaps he is doing all he can do to prevent the Government from going on with this legislation. At any rate, that is the effect of the amendment. Of course the hon. member has a perfect right to take up that attitude. I think it was the seconder of the amendment who said that he would vote for the entire dismissal of the Bill.

Mr. KING: I did say that.

The PREMIER: Therefore, the attitude of the Nationalist party is quite clearly defined.

Mr. KING: I spoke for myself.

The PREMIER: I do not want to make any complaint of the attitude members of the Nationalist party have taken up. They are masters of their own actions on questions of this kind. It is a good thing that the atmosphere regarding this matter has been cleared, and we know where we stand in

regard to the respective attitudes of the various parties of the Assembly. This measure has been brought forward by the Government to assist the farmers to organise themselves. The question has been discussed on a great many occasions, and the intentions of the Government are well known in regard to this Bill. I do not desire to deal with the matter at this stage, for, in my opinion, the Government's actions have already been put forward in a *bonâ fide* way in the policy submitted this session. It was put forward by me in the speech which I delivered at Laidley from which the leader of the Nationalist party so freely quoted. I never indicated in my speech at Laidley that it was a non-party speech. I was there as the head of the Labour party speaking to the farmers, and I told them that I was prepared to assist the farmers to organise themselves on non-party lines. I pointed out to the farmers at Laidley during my speech that the Labour party was sympathetic towards the primary producers, and we were prepared to assist them. I did not take up the attitude that it was a purely non-party speech at all. That would be a ridiculous attitude for me to assume. I said that, if the farmers showed some indication that they desired to organise on the lines which I laid down, or on somewhat similar lines, then I was prepared to come to their assistance in regard to organising, free from party lines, and free from any party entanglements whatever. What I claim is that the Bill will enable the farmers to form a non-party organisation—a farmer-controlled organisation. Practically the whole gist of the speeches against the Bill has been based on the misconception that it is not a farmer-controlled Bill.

Mr. VOWLES: It is a "controlled farmers' controlled Bill."

The PREMIER: We can well understand that any measure brought forward by any Government, which may be introduced with the purest of motives, can be criticised in a carping way by those willing to do so. I say that this Bill has been brought forward in the interests of the farmers after consultation with the farming interests outside Parliament.

Mr. CORSER: Is that correct?

The PREMIER: Yes, it is correct. The scheme of organisation was considered at a number of representative meetings of farmers. I do not say that every detail of the Bill was considered, because that was impossible; but the organisation was advocated and launched as a result of the various conferences of dairymen and others interested in primary industry, such as the South Queensland Fruit Growers' Association, and the representatives of the United Cane Growers' Association, and the Australian Sugar Producers' Association. We had conferences with such farmers' organisations, when the broad outline of the scheme was adopted. The objects set forth in this Bill were the objects agreed to. The proposed Council of Agriculture was agreed to, and all these various associations were agreed to. The provisional Council was agreed to, and it is now in being. The provisional Council has held several meetings, and is going ahead with its work. To my mind, there can be no allegation that the Government has any sinister purpose to serve, or that there is any hidden motive in this Bill.

All this clap-trap about the Government using the Bill as a means for gulling the farmer seems to me to be so much reflection on the farmers themselves. The leader of the Nationalist party does not seem to understand that the Government is not to be represented on the local producers' associations, and that it is not to be represented on the district councils. The Government is only to be represented on the Council of Agriculture.

Mr. VOWLES: That is the final authority.

The PREMIER: It may be the final authority.

Mr. VOWLES: It is the chief authority.

The PREMIER: There are twenty-five members provided for the central Council in the scheme, and the Government has the right to nominate five. If the Government exercises its right it will have as representatives four experts, who are at present in charge of various departments in the Government service. They are considered to be men who will be useful on the Council of Agriculture. They are not men who are likely to be manipulated politically by the Minister or anyone else. The four Government representatives will probably be the Commissioner for Railways (Mr. J. W. Davidson), the General Manager of Sugar Mills (Mr. W. J. J. Short), the Public Service Commissioner (Mr. J. D. Story), and the Director of Agriculture (Mr. H. C. Quodling). I do not know if any one of those four gentlemen has any political connection with the Government or the Labour party. I do not know what their politics are, because they are never inquired into, and I am quite sure that not one of those gentlemen would lend himself to any scheme of manipulating the Council for a political purpose.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: If that is acknowledged—and surely one must have faith in gentlemen occupying such positions—we can cast aside any suggestion of a political aspect in connection with the Council of Agriculture. In any case, they could only exercise any sinister influence if they were in a majority, and the farmers themselves will always be in a majority. It is true that an hon. member on the other side pointed out the fantastic possibility of a bare quorum of six members, five of whom might be Government nominees, in which case the Government nominees would be in the majority. If there is any suggestion that a danger of that kind can operate—and I cannot conceive of it, because it is not likely that only one representative of the farmers out of twenty will attend at any meeting—the provision can be amended. The Government is perfectly willing to safeguard against any fantastic possibility of that kind. It only shows what strange arguments hon. members have had to resort to in their poverty of criticism of the Bill when they have to introduce as an argument an almost inconceivable possibility.

Mr. VOWLES interjected.

The PREMIER: That would assume that the full number of Government nominees would be there, and that they would be there, too, for the purpose of carrying out some ulterior motive on the part of the Government. I think hon. members should have more trust in the Government than that. The only man with any political complexion

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on the Council will be the Secretary for Agriculture for the time being, whoever he may be. Hon. members opposite have attempted to suggest that one man out of twenty-five may impose his political views upon the Council. There is no danger of that, because, no matter what Government may be in office, the Government would desire to keep in touch with the Council, because it must act in co-operation with the Council if full effect is going to be given to the measure; and it is only in his capacity as Minister that the Secretary for Agriculture will take any active part in the proceedings. To my mind, no possible danger can arise from that. I ask the leader of the Opposition whether he can show that any impartial observer studying this scheme can come to any other conclusion than that the whole organisation is a farmer-controlled organisation. The local producers' associations, the district councils, and the Council of Agriculture are each of them controlled by the farmers—by direct vote of the farmers—and, that being so, where comes the danger?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: That is a matter for the Committee stage.

The PREMIER: I say that hon. members can pass judgment on that now. The leader of the Nationalist party has some extraordinary suspicion that the director to be appointed will be some politician or organiser of the Labour party.

Mr. TAYLOR: I did not say that.

The PREMIER: Some hon. member said it. Was it the hon. member for Bulimba?

Hon. W. H. BARNES: You are fishing.

The PREMIER: At any rate, the hon. member for Bulimba made the statement. Why did he remain silent when I made the mistake? The hon. member must have known that there was nothing in that, because he is wide awake enough to know that applications for the position have already been called and closed, and that tomorrow the Council are making the selection, and, as the Secretary for Agriculture himself announced in this Chamber, there are seventy-two applicants.

Mr. KERR: What right have they to organise before the Bill is passed? There is the political taint—the organisation.

The PREMIER: There was sufficient justification for the Government to move in that way, because it was stated that the conditions of the agricultural industry are so parlous, not only because of lack of organisation, but also because of actual dis-organisation, that the Government was urged to move to put it on a proper footing without delay. When I made my speech at Laidley I was accused by representatives of the Nationalist party, as well as by other politicians, of enunciating a catch cry—an electioneering policy—without any intention of putting it into effect. We have shown our bona fides by putting it into operation even without waiting for parliamentary sanction, and now the objection is that we are going too fast. We are not accused of postponing it until the eve of an election; we are charged with moving too rapidly; and the hon. member for Windsor comes along with his motion to destroy the Bill altogether. I have no hesitation in saying that the amendment will be defeated, because I believe that sufficient members of the Country party

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realise the destructive nature of the amendment, and will vote for the Bill. I can assure them that the Government is acting honestly and in good faith, and it hopes to get the Bill on the statute-book without much more delay.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): Speaking to the amendment, I would like to say that the interpretation put upon the action of the Nationalist party is entirely wrong. The real and only object is that the people most concerned—actually the whole of the people of the State are concerned, although the primary producer is concerned in particular because he is having foisted upon him a Bill containing all kinds of conditions and penalties—the people most concerned should have an opportunity of making themselves thoroughly cognisant with the measure before it becomes law. I question whether the people on the land are at all aware that the Bill will link up the whole of the industries of this State, and that, whether they like it or dislike it, they are to live under it. The people require enlightening before the Bill passes, particularly with regard to the cost that is to be incurred in connection with this vital undertaking. The whole of the industries are to be manipulated by one Council.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member has spoken to the main question. He must confine himself now to the amendment.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I have not said one word except as a reason why the two months' delay should be granted. I say the people are ignorant, for one thing, of the great cost which is involved. I find that the administration of the wheat pool for six months up to June of last year, deducting railage and shipping expenses, cost £24,605. That has to do with one industry only, and I know of primary producers who are very concerned as to what this measure is to cost. I know of one instance in the administration of the wheat pool—there may have been more—where a woman failed to communicate to the board the fact that she possessed six bags of wheat. The wheat was handed to a neighbour, but the board eventually got wind of it, and sent a letter—which may some day appear in print—intimating that unless she did certain things she would be fined £50. There is a case where a widow woman was threatened with a fine of £50 under another measure. Is this right? Before the people have imposed on them an Act taking out of their hands the government of their own industry, is it not a fair thing that they should have an opportunity to give the matter careful thought?

We fail to realise what this proposal means to our various industries. The agricultural crop last year was worth no less than £10,386,233; the meat exported was valued at £2,957,158; hides and skins at £458,874; wool at £8,371,560; or a total of over £22,000,000.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The whole of this business may get into the hands of a comparatively small number of men [8.30 p.m.] who cannot be in direct sympathy or direct touch with, or have a full knowledge of, the business they are going to control. I think this House will be doing

wisely in allowing people to be informed of the conditions of the Bill, otherwise we shall be foisting on them something which is going to be a very serious charge. There is another argument: Is it possible that the Government, in bringing this Bill forward, have in view the fact that some of their enterprises connected with primary production have been a signal loss? The State stations mean a desperate loss.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not dealing with the amendment.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Is there to be a transfer to the primary producer of the burden of the cost that has been incurred in working enterprises like the station properties? No doubt the temptation to transfer that burden will be very great. If one primary producing enterprise goes to the wall, the whole of them go, including the station enterprise. I think the Premier would do well to accept the reasonable proposal made, to allow time in order that the people on the land shall have an opportunity of giving consideration to this matter and deciding upon it.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*): I want to say at the outset that the Nationalist party are more friendly towards the farmer, the primary producer, than are the Government. Because of our friendship towards him, we think that it is advisable that the Bill should be held for further consideration. There is no desire on the part of any member of the Nationalist party to kill a Bill that is going to be for the benefit of the man who makes his living from the soil. When I spoke on the introduction of this measure it had not come before the House and we did not know its contents. All we had was the title of the Bill and the explanation of the measure given by the Secretary for Agriculture. Believing that the Government were going to bring into operation a Bill which would commend itself to all parties in the House, every member in the House voted for its introduction, showing their bonâ fides and their expectancy. The introductory stages gave promise of a good, honestly-constructed Bill. I believed that the Bill was going to be all that it was said to be, and I said this—

“It cannot, therefore, be reasonably expected that the Nationalist party will offer any serious objection to the introduction of this measure, and for that reason we will give it all the assistance we possibly can.”

(Government laughter.)

Mr. KIRWAN: Now you are going to strangle it.

Mr. FRY: I said further—

“I, for one, am happy to see that the Government have wakened to their duties to the community even at the eleventh hour, and have introduced a Bill which is going to make for the betterment of the man on the land, and generally for the happiness of the people and the reduction of unemployment.”

I still hold that, for seven years, the man on the land has been exploited by the Government; and that it was an eleventh-hour, death-bed repentance which prompted the Government to bring this in. They have realised that they have lost the support of the industrial workers; that the workers throughout Queensland have turned them down and

have no confidence in them; and, in order to save themselves from political death they have grasped this measure and are now pleading with the farmers. I am quite with the Premier in believing that everything that has been said has an alluring feature; but the contents of the Bill prove whether it is going to be what it was expected to be. We know very well that there are people who advertise that they are selling probably fresh eggs; but, when the shell is broken, these eggs stink very badly. This is one of those measures which resemble, in some way, certain hen fruit. We were told that the organisers who were sent out had a copy of the Bill. What does that imply? It implies that there shall be no amendment; because the organisers have been instructed on the contents of the Bill. Parliament knew nothing about the contents of the Bill; we were not given any information before it was introduced; but the organisers were engaged and sent broadcast to tell the farmers what the Bill contained. If the Premier were in opposition, would he not say that the Government had done a wrong thing in not having come first to Parliament with the Bill? Would he not also say that it would naturally lead to the conclusion that the Bill was not to be amended in any way whatever?

The PREMIER: You are doing a political juggling act on this business.

Mr. FRY: I am not; I am doing the straight act. Everything went all right in this Chamber until we heard the speech from the hon. member for Toowoomba. Up to that point I thought everything was all right. I had not really studied the Bill very closely until then.

Mr. KIRWAN: Why attack a man on his wedding day? (Laughter.)

Mr. FRY: I am not responsible for this being the wedding day of the hon. member for Toowoomba. (Laughter.) The hon. member for Toowoomba told us that this was the first step towards organising the O.B.U.; that this was the first step towards accomplishing the new objective of socialising production. The debate from that point took a rather changed course. Quoting from the official documents, I have previously told the Chamber that the principles of the O.B.U. are against co-operation. Whilst it may be argued by the Premier that this is co-operation, we must consider the circumstances which surround it. If the principle of this Bill is the embodiment of the objective of the O.B.U., then we have to consider it from that standpoint.

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not propose to allow the hon. member to continue on those lines.

Mr. FRY: I would like to hear the Premier assure the House that the Bill will not be carried in its present form, and that the Government will accept any amendments for its improvement. I am not going to cast any reflection on any Government appointees to the council, for I hope that those men will carry out their duties faithfully.

The PREMIER: You are simply obstructing the Bill.

Mr. FRY: No. Government servants are always under the control of the Government.

At 8.40 p.m.,

The PREMIER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move—

“That the question be now put.”

Mr. Fry.]

Question—That the question be now put (*Mr. Theodore's motion*)—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 34.

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

NOES, 30.

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

Resolved in the affirmative.

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

AYES, 54.

Mr. Barber	Mr. Huxham
„ Bebbington	„ Jones, A. J.
„ Bell	„ Jones
„ Brand	„ Kirwan
„ Bulcock	„ Land
„ Cattermull	„ Larcombe
„ Clayton	„ Logan
„ Collins	„ McCormack
„ Conroy	„ Morgan
„ Cooper, F. A.	„ Mullen
„ Cooper, W.	„ Nott
„ Corser	„ Payne
„ Costello	„ Pease
„ Coyne	„ Pollock
„ Dash	„ Riordan
„ Deacon	„ Roberts, J. H. C.
„ Dunstan	„ Ryan
„ Edwards	„ Smith
„ Elphinstone	„ Stopford
„ Ferricks	„ Swayne
„ Fletcher	„ Theodore
„ Foley	„ Vowles
„ Forde	„ Warren
„ Gilday	„ Weir
„ Gillies	„ Wellington
„ Green	„ Wilson
„ Hartley	„ Winstanley
Tellers: Mr. F. A. Cooper and Mr. Forde.	

NOES, 9.

Mr. Barnes, G. P.	Mr. Macgregor
„ Barnes, W. H.	„ Maxwell
„ Fry	„ Roberts, T. R.
„ Kerr	„ Taylor
„ King	

Tellers: Mr. Fry and Mr. Kerr.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. SIZER (*Nundah*): I have paid particular attention to the speeches that have been delivered by members on the other side of the House, and I have been actuated right through the debate with a desire to do what I consider a reasonable thing and a fair

[*Mr. Sizer.*

thing in the interests of the State generally. I can see in the Bill certain elements of a very clever political manoeuvre which will undoubtedly help the Government very considerably in the near future. It will probably be called "The Theodore Government Salvation Bill." I believe it is introduced entirely for electioneering purposes, and I am one of those who are not prepared silently to allow the farming community to be misled by a scheme such as this, just because the farming community is anxious for some organisation. If I could expunge from my mind the past record of the Government—their affinity for nationalisation and socialisation—probably I might feel in a different frame of mind so far as the Bill is concerned. The point I am somewhat afraid of, and what the farming community ought to be aware of when accepting the principle of this Bill, is that they may find themselves in the very near future asked to accept the principle of nationalisation in other directions.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is reiterating arguments already used a dozen times during the debate on the second reading of this Bill. I hope he will not continue on those lines.

Mr. SIZER: The Bill is so closely allied to the Government's policy of socialisation that I can only come to the conclusion that, once the farming community have accepted the principle, they will be called upon in the very near future to accept a similar measure so far as the industrial workers of the State are concerned. For that reason I view the Bill with a good deal of suspicion, and certainly unless it is very materially altered in the Committee stage, I shall have no hesitation in voting against it on the third reading. I certainly am prepared to assist to make the Bill better by deleting the nationalisation principles it contains. The farmers are anxious to get better prices. That is the thing which is actuating the whole business. There is nothing in the Bill which will help them in that direction. The only thing that counts particularly is the price, and that is to be controlled to a great extent by the local producers' associations. The local producers' associations can make recommendations as to the standardisation of prices, but they cannot, under any clause in this Bill, make them effective. Even if the recommendations are accepted by the Council of Agriculture, and the price of any commodity is fixed in Queensland at a higher price than that for which it can be purchased in the other States, all you will be doing will be to create a market in Queensland for Southern products.

Mr. DUNSTAN: That is a matter for the council.

Mr. SIZER: Realising that the Federal Constitution provides for interstate free trade, how can locally fixed prices in Queensland hold out against Southern goods which can compete, probably, shillings under the prices ruling in Queensland?

Mr. POLLOCK: That has nothing to do with the Bill.

Mr. SIZER: The fundamental point of this measure is to give some assistance to the primary producer, and the best way to do that is to increase his revenue. The Bill attempts to do that by setting up a board to fix prices. That cannot possibly work for the reasons I have mentioned. No locally fixed price can withstand Southern competition

unless you exclude Southern goods. If you are able to exclude Southern products from this market, you can certainly bolster up a fictitious market; but the Federal Constitution provides for interstate free trade, and for that reason no practical benefit can accrue to the farmer under this measure. For that reason I say that no material good can come in that direction.

Mr. POLLOCK: Is not your objection that the Bill will provide for a reduction in the cost of marketing?

Mr. SIZER: That has nothing to do with the argument. The hon. member is continually talking about middlemen. This organisation could have been established under the Department of Agriculture. They have competent men in that [9 p.m.] department who could have handled this measure very well from the distributing point of view. One of the experts in the department handled the whole of the Danish butter on the London market, being the sole distributor, but he was considered to be incompetent to deal with the distribution of butter or any other product. Yet it is necessary to build up a department which will eventually become a gigantic institution, filled with political friends of the Government, and used and exploited for political purposes by its organisers. All that work could have been done by the Department of Agriculture. The information which is being given to farmers to help them to improve their condition could also have been furnished by the Department of Agriculture. There is an urgent necessity for an organisation in the country. These proposed local producers' associations will supplant the farmers' political organisations which happens to be opposed to the Government, and for that reason it may be worth while from the Government's point of view. If they can effectively nullify the effect of the farmers' political associations which are opposed to them—and which have other objects besides politics—if they can stultify them and establish in their place this proposed organisation, the Government will have secured a tactical advantage. But from the country's point of view it is not worth the £40,000, which it is estimated will be the cost under this scheme. There are very few members who would not have been prepared to subsidise the Department of Agriculture to a greater extent in order to bring about an effective scheme to assist the primary producer. But I, for one, am not in a position to say that I believe it is worth while in the interests of the community to build up a vast organisation which could be done without, when the signs of the times are in the direction of economy. The scheme will cost a great deal eventually. Hon. members opposite talk about middlemen. I suggest that they should have farms of their own and cart their own produce to market and sell it themselves, and then collect the accounts and go back to work. They would find out that it will cost them infinitely more than a middleman's charges for performing that function. Half of the cost of the upkeep of this organisation is to be paid by the farmers and the other half by the general taxpayers. But the farmers come under the heading of general taxpayers, so that indirectly they will be paying a great deal more than half. From that point of view there will be no saving in any shape

or form, and I am convinced that there will not be the efficiency in the quick handling of the farmers' produce under this system that there has been under the old marketing system, and that needs improving very badly. The Wheat Board, for instance, has not been as expeditious in its work as when the organisation and distribution was left in the hands of individuals.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The farmers get a better price.

Mr. SIZER: How can the farmers get a better price? If their produce is sold by public auction, how can they get more than the market price under this organisation? It is impossible for them to do so, unless you fix a fictitious price and by so doing create a market for Southern goods which will compete with our own goods, and the farmers will be left with their own produce on their hands. The hon. gentleman remarked about the Wheat Board getting a better price, but is it not a fact that, in spite of that, wheat was brought from Southern States and sold in Queensland at a cheaper rate than that fixed by the Wheat Board.

Mr. PEASE: That was done by people who wanted to smash up the Queensland Wheat Board.

Mr. SIZER: The hon. member knows that that is not correct. Consumers will buy in the cheapest market. If two articles were placed before hon. members opposite—one from Queensland and one from a Southern State—and the Queensland article, by virtue of this organisation, was 1s. or 2s. dearer than the other, would they buy the Southern article? That is where I have grave suspicion of the attitude of hon. members opposite. They know that, if they create fictitious prices for the farming community, it must mean an additional burden upon those whom they call the under-dogs, who will be called upon to pay more for the farmers' products. I say that hon. members opposite cannot be faithful to both sections. They have either to throw overboard their policy of giving cheap food to the community, and keeping the cost of everything down to the minimum, or else they are not sincere in regard to this measure. There is great room for suspicion on that score. I am a strong advocate of co-operation, and I believe that farmers should have an organisation federally controlled. We should certainly control the price of certain commodities throughout the Commonwealth. That would regulate interstate competition. If we were able to do that, the farmers might control the home market; but even that control must fail as against competition from overseas. As we know, maize from other countries has been landed in Australia cheaper than the locally grown article. I only used that as an argument to show what can be done in the face of such circumstances. Therefore even that is no escape so far as direct benefit from the world's conditions can be offered under this Bill in any shape or form. There may be some virtue in a Federal control scheme, and it may assist the agriculturists.

Mr. PEASE: Not with a Nationalist Government.

Mr. SIZER: I am prepared, and members on this side are prepared, to assist in making this Bill farmer-controlled to the fullest extent. If the farmers control the scheme and it is absolutely shorn of all idea

of nationalisation—because I am not going to be a party to nationalisation in any shape or form—then we can give assistance to the farmers. We do not want to give the Government an opportunity of using constitutional methods to bring about socialisation. If that was the only point on which the Premier split with the other representatives at the conference, it is just as well that we should know. They all realise that they want socialisation, but some want it by revolution, and the Premier in his arguments wanted it by evolution, by parliamentary methods. I am of the opinion—and I will continue to have that opinion until I am convinced to the contrary—that this is a step in the direction of carrying out that platform. If that is so, then the farming community should be very wary of this measure before they give it their benediction, otherwise they may find themselves trapped into supporting a measure that has brought about the first plank of socialisation. Having done that, they may say to the industrial community, "Here is a simple measure for you." If the farming community object, the Government will say, "How can you object when you yourselves accepted the same principle." Having accepted it, they cannot deny it to every section of the community. I am not prepared to support that yet. I hold that political control is not in the interests of the farmer, having regard to the extreme powers described under the Act, whereby the Government propose a policy of pursuing the farmer to the courts and recovering his subscription the same as the Australian Workers' Union does when a man does not pay his demands. In this Bill we are upholding that same principle and imposing it upon the farmer, and that is why I say that the farmer should consider it carefully before he gives the measure his benediction. I for one will take the opportunity of asking the people of the State to look at the Bill and see where it may lead them. I intend to assist in remodelling the Bill. If it is not remodelled and its objectionable features are not removed, then I shall have the pleasure, and consider it a duty, of voting against it at the third reading.

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

The consideration of the Bill in Committee was made an Order of the Day for tomorrow.

At 9.15 p.m.,

Mr. KIRWAN (*Brisbane*) relieved the Speaker in the chair.

LAND TAX ACT AMENDMENT BILL. SECOND READING.

The PREMIER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): The Land Tax Act Amendment Bill has been in the hands of hon. members for some time, and as it contains matters which bear an explanation on the face of it, it will not require much explanation from me. This Bill does two important things. First, it continues the super tax, which is necessary from financial considerations this year. It is intended to continue the super tax for this year, and next year the matter will have to come up again. When the super tax was introduced it was intended only as

a temporary measure during war time, but that has expired, and, as it will be required again this year, it has to be re-enacted. The sum of £100,000 was received from the super tax last year, and we cannot afford to forego that revenue for the ensuing financial year. The next important thing that the Bill does is to extend further relief from land taxation to the farmers. It proposes to give complete exemption for any lands used by a farmer when the unimproved value does not exceed £1,500. That exemption is to be allowed to farmers who work their own farms. The exemption will decrease in a certain ratio, as set out in the Bill, until an unimproved value of £2,500 is reached, when the exemption shall be £500. The effect of this legislation will be practically to lift the land tax off all the small farmers in Queensland. It will take it off the backs of all working farmers.

Mr. EDWARDS: What do you mean by farmers who work their own farms?

The PREMIER: It means exactly what it says. It is very clear. It means a farmer who is actually engaged on his farm, or a man who is managing his own farm. They will both come under the operation of this Bill.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: He has actually to be on the land?

The PREMIER: No. He has to work it or manage it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Suppose he employs a man as well, what then?

The PREMIER: No matter how many men he employs, so long as he is on the farm himself, he will get exemption from the land tax.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS: Is it not only so long as he lives on the farm?

The PREMIER: So long as he is managing the farm, or so long as he works the farm. It may happen that a country storekeeper owns a farm. His family may live on it, and the storekeeper will be the manager of it and will really supervise it. In that case he will be entitled to the exemption. Practically everyone comes under it, except those who own farms and never work them.

Mr. SIZER: What is the position of a man appointed by a trustee company to manage an estate?

The PREMIER: If the manager appointed by a trustee company is actually working the farm, he will come under the exemption. We can make that perfectly clear. It is intended to cover such cases as that.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: How much revenue will you lose by this exemption?

The PREMIER: I will deal with that later on. It may be asked why, in view of these facts, it is found necessary to amend the Act. I should like to explain that the reason is that, although under the present law small farmers—at any rate, those owning land up to £1,230 in value—practically escape any land taxation, unfortunately many of them, through ignorance of the law, have omitted to take full advantage of this concession.

Mr. LOGAN: What will happen if a farmer has no income?

[*Mr. Sizer.*]

The PREMIER: The hon. member explained last night that he himself had paid land tax and did not claim it as a deduction from his income tax, although he was entitled to do so. I have found on my tours that quite a number of people labour under the misapprehension that they have no right to deduct their land tax from their income tax, whilst many others deduct it from their incomes and not from the tax payable, so that the amount of the concession in those cases is infinitesimal. The hon. member for Lockyer asks what would happen in the case of a farmer who has no income tax to pay. That can only happen, from my understanding of the position, where a man has suffered some loss through drought or flood or some other such reason, and we are not dealing with that, although in that case he could get complete or partial exemption from payment of land tax. The farmers of Queensland have not fully availed themselves of the concessions in the Income Tax Act whereby they are allowed to deduct in certain cases I have mentioned their land tax from their income tax payable in that year, so that at the end of the year they are no worse off than if they had paid no land tax; and, because they have not availed themselves of this concession, we are trying to provide a simpler or more direct form of exemption. That will save a great deal of loss and inconvenience to the farmers, and remove those difficulties as a result of which in the past they have been deprived of the concession. Hon. members will remember that the provision in the Income Tax Act under which the concession is granted provides—

“From the amount of the tax payable on the income of any taxpayer derived from any agricultural, dairying, or grazing pursuits carried on by him, there may be deducted the amount of any land tax actually paid by the taxpayer in respect of the same year”----

Mr. BEBBINGTON: We advocated that three years before you gave it to us.

The PREMIER: The hon. member has been labouring under a continual misapprehension. The fact is that the very year when the land tax was enacted—1915—the concession was put into the Income Tax Act.

Mr. CORSER: But after the forms were sent out.

The PREMIER: It was put in in the same session—I think within a week or two.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS: It was not put into the instructions.

The PREMIER: The hon. member is shifting his ground now. The hon. member for Drayton made the positive statement that this was only enacted three years after he advocated it, whereas the fact is that it was enacted in the same year as the land tax was introduced. What the hon. member may have in his mind is that it was slightly altered in order to make it clear as to what a dairy farmer was, I think it was in 1917 or 1918; but the fact remains that the full concession has been made every year since the land tax was first imposed. Hon. members have been frequently contending, especially the hon. member for Drayton, who has made a speciality of this subject, that the farmers paid land tax, and that they are oppressively burdened with land tax by this

Government. I want to dissipate that opinion, because it is a wrong opinion. The hon. member has quoted mythical cases almost every session, which, on examination, were found to be misleading.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I was a few pence out in the amount—not very much.

The PREMIER: We heard of an alleged farmer who was practically forced into insolvency by this taxation, but upon investigation it was found that he was not a farmer but a retired business man who had bought an orchard on one of the repurchased estates, and who had other landed estates on which he was taxed, and that his land was not farming land, except as to a small portion, but city property.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It was a good farm. His son could not make a living on it. That is the information he gave me.

The PREMIER: The tax was not on farming land at all, but city land. The hon. member quoted the case of another farmer who received no remission or concession, although he had no income off his farm. I asked him to show me the papers, and I found that it was not the payment of the tax he was complaining of but the assessment notice, and that the farmer who was supposed to be crushed in this horrible manner was himself.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: And I had to pay £17.

The PREMIER: Another hon. member in a previous debate a night or two ago referred to the imposition of this heavy taxation on the farmers in cases of land up to £1,000 in value, showing that that misconception still continued, either intentionally or unwittingly on the part of hon. members opposite. Notwithstanding the constant assurances they have had and the many times that I have taken occasion as Treasurer to point out that the farmers pay an infinitesimal portion of the land tax paid in Queensland, these statements are repeated. The land tax is not, in the main, paid by the farmers. The deduction of the land tax from the income tax, and the exemption, practically relieve the farmers as a class from the payment of land tax. Roughly, £450,000 was collected last year in land tax, and of that sum the agriculturists, the fruit farmers, and the sugar-growers paid not more than £20,000.

Mr. VOWLES: That was too much.

The PREMIER: And, no doubt, most of that could have been deducted from their income tax. It was only one twenty-third of the tax collected in any case. Recognising that, how can anyone assert that it is the farmers who are paying the land tax?

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Why does not the department point that out to the farmers?

The PREMIER: How could the department do that? Every taxpayer makes a return showing his net income. That return goes before the income tax assessors—not the land tax assessors—and how is the income tax assessor to know if the taxpayer does not claim exemption?

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Could they not look it up?

The PREMIER: We would require a staff of 100 clerks doing nothing else. Recognising

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that many farmers have failed to avail themselves of this opportunity, unfortunately for them, the Government introduced this provision in the Bill. It is a justification for the Bill.

Mr. SIZER: Will they be able to make a claim for arrears?

The PREMIER: No doubt they can.

Mr. W. COOPER: Many of them have.

Mr. SIZER: Will they be able to get it?

The PREMIER: I am not quite sure. Presumably they will apply. I have referred to the small amount of tax paid by the farmers, and now I would like to refer to the way in which land is held in Queensland. Hon. members over there assert year after year that the freehold land which is taxable is held by the farmers. An examination of the statistics relating to freehold land will show that approximately there is £35,000,000 worth of taxable freehold land in Queensland, and of that the farmers own only £2,500,000, or, roughly, one-fourteenth.

Mr. FLETCHER: Your Government will not give them freehold.

[9.30 p.m.]

The PREMIER: Where we grant perpetual leases, they are not subject to taxation.

Mr. VOWLES: A quarter of a million of the taxation comes from country lands.

The PREMIER: Yes, from large land monopolists who hold land, and who ought, therefore, to pay the land tax. Much of that land is not productive. It has been urged from the other side, even during this session, that we ought to force into use that land which is near the railway. There is something in that suggestion.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Has not the land tax had the effect of preventing the holding of land in large areas?

The PREMIER: The land tax has had some effect, but not the full effect we expected and hoped for. There has been a considerable number of subdivisions of freehold estates in country lands in Queensland since 1915, presumably as the result of the operations of this tax; but it has not gone as far as we hoped it would. That is a question the Government have to study, with a view to finding other means of forcing that land into use, to enable the man who wants to use the land for agricultural purposes to get it. I have mentioned that the farmers hold only one-fourteenth of the total value of the freehold land, and pay only one twenty-third of the land tax which is collected. That will be very considerably altered as the result of this Bill, for, under this Bill, I might reasonably claim that practically no working farmer who occupies a living area will be subject to land taxation in future in Queensland. The man who owns up to £1,500 worth of unimproved land will be exempt entirely. Of all the farms that are subject to taxation, the average experience is that 50 per cent of the value is unimproved value, and 50 per cent, is the value of improvements. Therefore the average experience shows that, where a farm has an unimproved value of £1,500, the total value of the farm to that man is £3,000. The average varies in some districts as compared with others.

Mr. VOWLES interjected.

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The PREMIER: Does the hon. member suggest that selectors take up farm lands for the purpose of working coal?

Hon. J. G. APPEL: The coal exists when they take them up.

The PREMIER: At the present time it is the practice—and it always has been the practice in Queensland and in the Commonwealth—for that coal to be taken into account in arriving at the unimproved value of the land.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: But they do not take up the land for the coal; that coal already exists.

The PREMIER: If they do not, there is no hardship in taxing the coal.

Mr. VOWLES: You declare he has so many thousand tons of coal under his land.

The PREMIER: Surely the hon. member is not suggesting this is any innovation?

Mr. VOWLES: You have been doing it without authority.

The PREMIER: No; it is in the definition of the original Act.

Mr. VOWLES: As a matter of fact, you charge income tax when the timber is sold; and you charge it every year.

The PREMIER: All that is to prevent evasion of the tax. The Commonwealth are adopting the same system. What happened in regard to some of the landowners who took up land for the coal or the timber value on them? Both the Commonwealth and the State, in valuing those properties, included the value of the coal and of the timber; and, in order to evade taxation, some owners sold the timber to a new owner and retained merely the land without the timber.

Mr. VOWLES: Why do you make them pay every year on the unimproved value of standing timber?

The PREMIER: It has a different value if they are taking the timber off every year. If they do not take it off, the value remains the same. If there is any depreciation—through wastage or harvesting or whatever it may be—the land can be revalued. Is the hon. member contending that the unimproved value of land which contains standing timber should not be in accordance with the value of the timber as well as the value of the land? That would be a new doctrine in taxation.

Mr. VOWLES: Should it be done every year?

The PREMIER: It is done every year on the then value of the timber.

Mr. VOWLES: Oh, no!

The PREMIER: It is. If a landowner has harvested the timber off the land he makes a new valuation—a reducing valuation—every year.

Mr. GREEN: It is better for him to destroy the timber.

The PREMIER: If that is so, it is a strange thing that no one has destroyed the timber—and they have been subject to this for years.

Mr. GREEN: Yes, they have been destroying it.

The PREMIER: It appears to me that the hon. member for Townsville has not considered this question, or he would not make that interjection.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: But there are cases where you cannot get rid of the timber. Take hardwood timber where the distance from the railway exceeds a certain mileage. You cannot get rid of it, and it has no value to the owner.

The PREMIER: If there is no value, it is not included in the unimproved value of the land.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Will the Commissioner exempt that?

The PREMIER: He has done so. What is the use of suggesting any other course? If timber land exists in some places where the timber cannot be marketed and has no value, it adds nothing to the unimproved value of the land.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The Commissioner says, "Have it valued twelve months hence." In the meantime, the taxpayer has to pay.

The PREMIER: No, not in the meantime. The Commissioner taxes on the assessed value; and, if the assessed value is unfair, the land owner appeals against the value.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: How long does it take to get that appeal heard?

The PREMIER: The tribunal sits frequently, both for the Commonwealth and the State, and there is complete protection for the landowner.

Mr. VOWLES: I had to threaten High Court proceedings to get them to take action.

The PREMIER: The Commonwealth?

Mr. VOWLES: Yes.

The PREMIER: I know the Commonwealth are very unreasonable at times. (Laughter.) I would like the hon. member to give a concrete case where real hardship has been imposed by the present Commissioner of Taxes. I guarantee to look into it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He likes his pound of flesh, but he is fair.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: He has to carry out the Act. I have never heard any direct complaints from taxpayers that he has treated them unfairly or screwed them down, or anything of that kind. Last night in the House, I received a deputation from the Taxpayers' Association, consisting of men who are expert in taxation matters; and they spoke in complimentary terms of the State Commissioner of Taxes; they had no complaint to make against him.

Mr. VOWLES: Most of them came out of that office.

The PREMIER: If they did, it shows that our office trains men well.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: I hope you will give favourable consideration to their recommendations.

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

The PREMIER: I am always willing to give reasonable consideration to recommendations. I do not know that I need stress this any further. The gist of the measure is in these two points—the re-enactment of the super tax and the further exemption of farmers. We are taking advantage of the introduction of the Bill to make certain amendments in the matter of administration

and procedure. The details I am quite willing to discuss with hon. members when we get into Committee.

Mr. VOWLES: What is meant by the section dealing with mutual life assurance companies?

The PREMIER: They become taxpayers.

Mr. VOWLES: For what reason?

The PREMIER: For the reason that there is no justification that I know of for exempting them. I can see no valid reason why they should continue to enjoy that exemption. I have had a deputation already from the mutual life assurance companies, objecting to that provision in the Bill. To my mind, a mutual life assurance company has no greater claim for exemption from this tax than a bank or any other corporation carrying on business of a like nature.

Mr. VOWLES: They are co-operative concerns.

The PREMIER: No more than a joint stock banking company is.

Mr. VOWLES: The State Insurance Office is competing with them, and you want to put a burden on them?

The PREMIER: Not in the least; there is no such suggestion.

Mr. VOWLES: It will not apply to the State Insurance Office, which is competing against them.

The PREMIER: It would apply if there were any reason or logic in applying taxation to a State department.

Mr. VOWLES: It puts the State office in an advantageous position compared with other companies.

The PREMIER: No. The hon. member sees all kinds of ulterior motives in a Bill of this nature. The hon. member might suggest that we ought to charge income tax against the Insurance Commissioner. That would be simply a puerile suggestion. I would ask hon. members to consider that mutual life assurance societies have large numbers of policies and do not carry on the business for the sake of profit in the ordinary sense of the term, but whatever they make is distributed by way of bonuses amongst the policy-holders. In all these mutual assurance companies there are no proprietary interests except such as are possessed by the policy-holders. We know that there is a difference between them and a concern such as a joint stock company or a banking institution, which has a large number of shareholders. But the latter are just as much mutual and co-operative in their way as mutual assurance societies, and if the banking associations have to pay land tax, why should the mutual life assurance societies not have to pay land tax? To my mind, there is no justification for specially exempting mutual life assurance companies. For the same reason there is no justification for exempting building societies which carry on a banking business. Some of these large mutual life assurance societies have premises situated in the heart of this city, and which return to the societies very considerable revenues by way of rent. For that reason, why should they not be taxable like any financial or banking institution in the city? I see no justification for exempting them, but I am willing to listen to argument.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Are the industrial unions taxable under this Bill?

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The PREMIER: No; nor employers' associations, or clubs, or associations that are not carried on for profit.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Will the tax be retrospective?

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. SIZER: How will that apply to a working agriculturist who leases his farm?

The PREMIER: If he leases the farm, it is taxed.

Mr. SIZER: He will not get the benefit of the exemption?

The PREMIER: He is not a working farmer if he merely leases his farm and lives in the city. In such a case, I do not see any justification for exemption.

Mr. VOWLES: What is the position of a man working a farm on the share system?

The PREMIER: The man working a farm on the share system gets exemption.

Mr. VOWLES: He is not one of the workers on shares.

The PREMIER: A man working on the share system is one of the sharers. The Bill provides that—

“When land is being used for agricultural, dairying, or grazing purposes by the owner of the land personally (not being an absentee or a company) the following exemptions shall be allowed.”

Working on the share system he is one of the sharers and entitled to exemption. I think that any further explanation in matters of detail can be better made in committee. I have much pleasure in moving—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Will you tell the House what revenue you are losing by these exemptions?

The PREMIER: I promised that information to the hon. member. Taking into account the fact that many of these farmers will be entitled to deduct their land tax from their income tax, a rough computation shows a reduction of about £8,000. The actual loss will be about £16,000 or £17,000.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: It is hardly worth while.

The PREMIER: That is one side; but I would point out to the hon. member who has interjected that it is hardly worth while, yet on the other side it is worth while. The total land tax paid by working farmers in Queensland at the present time is not £20,000, and they are entitled to deduct some of that from their income tax. That will reduce land tax payable by them to £16,000 or £17,000. For land of a value of less than £1,500 they will now be able to claim as a deduction from income tax any amount they may pay in land tax, so that practically it can be said that no working farmer in Queensland will in future be subject to land tax.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dolb*): This is essentially a committee Bill. In the first place, we are dealing with super taxation which was authorised by Parliament to be imposed during the war.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Nationalist Government in New South Wales has reimposed the super taxation.

Mr. VOWLES: The time has now expired, but the Treasurer still requires money to carry on the Government, and it is therefore

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necessary to bring in legislation which to some extent will be retrospective. The Premier stated that this is only a temporary measure.

The PREMIER: We are only enacting it for this year.

Mr. VOWLES: This taxation only affects one class of land, and that is chiefly the land which is producing. On the other hand, land of a similar quality, only under a different tenure, is not taxed in this way. We have two sets of landlords—one a freeholder, and the other a leaseholder—who are taxed on two different conditions.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Do you propose that leasehold land should be taxed?

Mr. VOWLES: I would not be so silly. Clause (5) is to be altered by allowing an exemption of £1,499 if the unimproved value does not exceed £1,500. That has been asked for by hon. members on this side more especially with respect to land producing revenue, such as agricultural, dairying, or grazing land. I am glad to see that principle is being adopted. So far as I can see, the whole of this Bill embodies principles which have been advocated for the last three years by the Country party.

The PREMIER: If that is so, you ought to join forces with us. (Laughter.)

Mr. VOWLES: This will give an opportunity for some hon. members on the other side to come over here.

The PREMIER: If we went over there, we could not legislate at all.

Mr. VOWLES: It is also proposed that land of an unimproved value of £2,500 shall have an exemption of £300. The hon. member for Nundah asked a very pertinent question, and one that I desire also to ask. The Bill provides that—

“for the purposes of this paragraph land shall be deemed to be used by the owner of the land personally.”

“(c) If a trustee where he personally manages the working of the land.”

We have two very important trustee companies here. We also have the Public Curator's Department, and the Public Curator will not be personally managing trust properties, and such estates will be deprived of the benefits of that provision. When the Bill is in Committee I will ask that that clause be made definite, and I will ascertain what the interpretation is. After all is said and done, so far as the strict letter of the law is concerned, it is not really so much what a section actually says as what is the interpretation put upon it by the Commissioner when the taxpayers send in their returns. Building societies, which in the past were exempted from the operations of this Act, are now included, and I am sorry to say that our mutual provident societies and life insurance companies, which hold valuable properties, are going to be subject to land tax. For very good reasons in the past that property which belongs to a collection of individuals—for instance, the landed estates of the Australian Mutual Provident Society throughout Queensland and Australia—were exempt. It strikes one as rather strange that a Government which now has a life assurance department of its own, competing against mutual provident societies, should put an imposition upon those institutions

which its own institution has not to bear, as a result of which the State institution will be able to compete on somewhat better terms with the public than the old-established concerns merely from the fact that they are possessed of some very highly valued properties.

The PREMIER: The Mutual Life and Citizens Life, and various other associations of that kind, now pay the tax. They are partly proprietary.

Mr. VOWLES: I am talking of the Australian Mutual Provident Society particularly.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Only by reason of their having amalgamated with another company.

The PREMIER: No, because they are partly proprietary.

Mr. VOWLES: They have ceased to be wholly mutual provident societies. Good reasons were shown for that exemption, and, so far as that principle is concerned, I am quite in accord with it, and trust that these mutual societies will continue to receive the benefit they now have under the principal Act.

Now, as regards the question of timber and coal. I think this is a most important innovation. The Premier tells us that this has been in vogue for some considerable time, and I understood him to say that the interpretation of "unimproved value" under the principal Act is sufficiently broad to include those two items.

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. VOWLES: If that is so, why is it necessary for the Bill to provide—

"After section 13 of the principal Act the following section is inserted:—(14) Land tax shall be chargeable on the value of marketable timber growing on and on the value of coal contained in any land"?

The PREMIER: Follow it on.

Mr. VOWLES: It continues—

"Provided that, where the owner of the land is not the owner of the timber or coal, as the case may be, the owner of the land and the owner of the timber or coal, as the case may be, shall be deemed to be joint owners of the land for the purposes of this Act, and their respective interests in the land shall be determined by the Commissioner."

The PREMIER: That is the object.

Mr. VOWLES: Simply for that part of it. It does not refer to gravel or other merchantable asset which may be under the soil, but only to coal which has not already been won from the soil, and you do not even know for a certainty that it exists. If a man is going to suffer that penalty in respect of timber and coal, you are going to put his values up to such an extent that you are going to make it prohibitive in some cases for him to hold the land. I can give one instance. The hon. member for Pittsworth can give the particulars of where land is valued to-day at £27 10s. an acre simply because it has standing timber on it. There is no market for that timber. The owner was originally assessed at 16s. per 100 superficial feet, and the quantity was put down at something like 500,000 superficial feet. He came down to Brisbane and started a dispute as to the value of the stumpage. It was brought down at first to 12s. per 100

superficial feet, and at last they settled on the basis of 10s. per 100 superficial feet. Then the question of quantity came up, but the Commissioner would not budge. This man cannot get a market for his timber, and yet the value of that farm will be assessed at £27 10s. an acre until such time as he can remove the timber and sell it, and he has to pay every year that enhanced value on something that he cannot utilise, and when he does sell it he has to pay income tax on the proceeds.

The PREMIER: Under this Bill, if the total value of the farm is less than £1,500, he gets entire exemption.

Mr. VOWLES: That is so, but it does not take much land at £27 10s. per acre to get a total value of £1,500. On 160 acres this man has to pay a tax of £80 simply because there is timber on the farm. That is one of the things that want ventilating. In regard to coal, if you go to the Geological Department you will find that every acre of the Jimbour Estate has coal under it. Shafts have been sunk on the Jimbour lands, and they have diamond drills boring all over the place, and as soon as they discover a seam of coal at a respectable depth—they know it is there—it is competent then for the department to come in and value every acre of that land as coal land, and yet the people have not the slightest intention of doing anything but grazing sheep on it. It is not going to assist to sell the land, more particularly as it only applies to one class of land, and that is the land which can be converted into freehold.

The Premier made a most remarkable admission when he told us that his department has a knowledge that farmers in the past have been paying taxation which was not legally chargeable.

The PREMIER: I did not say the department. I spoke from my own experience.

Mr. VOWLES: I take it that the experience of the Premier is taken from information he personally got from the Commissioner.

The PREMIER: No; I got it from the farmers themselves.

Mr. VOWLES: I heard it at the Herbert election, when that constituency was represented by a Minister of the Crown. I informed the farmers, notwithstanding the fact that they had a Minister representing them, that not one of them knew the effect of the land tax and what deductions they were entitled to, and they were astonished. I venture to say that every farmer in that district was paying a lot of taxation which should not have been paid, and I put them wise to that fact.

The PREMIER: I published it at least a dozen times.

Mr. VOWLES: There is a clause in this amending Bill which says—

"(5.) If within three years after the advertised date when any land tax for a particular year became payable it is discovered that too much in amount has been paid for that year, whether by reason of duplicate taxation or otherwise, the Commissioner upon being satisfied thereof shall alter the assessment accordingly and order the excess to be returned to the taxpayer entitled

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thereto, but if the Commissioner subsequently discovers that additional tax should be paid he shall have power to recover such additional tax."

[10 p.m.]

I sincerely trust that every farmer who is entitled to a remission of tax wrongfully extracted from him will get the benefit of that clause.

The PREMIER: Not wrongfully extracted.

Mr. VOWLES: The point is that the whole thing is immoral. The Commissioner will tell you that it is not his function to point out that a tax has been wrongfully imposed; but if the Commissioner, on the other hand, can detect whether a taxpayer, wrongfully or otherwise, is getting at the department, it is his function then to get at the taxpayer. That is a principle which would not be allowed in business for five minutes, yet it is going on daily in the department. If they want to worry you, they will bring up all sorts of details. If they have the right to go and inspect the records of banking institutions, and look up stock purchases, as they do, why should not the Commissioner's officers, when checking farmers' returns, look up the income tax records to see what has been paid in income tax, and be able to say to the Commissioner, "You are wrong, you should not set it off as a deduction against income, but as a tax, a deduction against income tax." In many cases where they knew they were entitled to put it in as a deduction, but not to claim one tax as a set-off against another tax, it was allowed when it was pointed out afterwards to the Commissioner. It was never pointed out by the Commissioner.

The PREMIER: If you knew of that, you should have ventilated the matter.

Mr. VOWLES: I know of dozens of cases of that sort. I see that the Commissioner has now power to impose fines. That is a very doubtful sort of power to give him; but, in some cases, it works out to advantage, because he can use his discretion, and simply finalise a thing quick and lively when a mistake has taken place, and it certainly relieves the taxpayer of a great deal of worry. I remember one case quite recently where a father sold some sheep at a low figure to his son, who put them in as of average value. It was immediately detected by the department. There was only a matter of a few pounds in question, but there was £100 worth of worry caused, as far as those people were concerned, until it was fixed up. There is another thing I am doubtful about—that is, the amendment in clause 9, which says that returns "as are required by the Commissioner" shall be sent in. That strikes me as very strange. I dare say that nearly every taxpayer throughout Queensland has had a request from the Commissioner, asking him to send in a statement of his affairs, just as if, instead of being taxpayers, they were insolvent. I do not know what the reason is. A man gives his figures, and he is asked to disclose his property. I asked the Commissioner what this is for. I said, "If I give you a return I have to give you the valuations of house, property, stock-in-trade, and books, and all that sort of thing; who is going to pay for the valuation? Am I bound to?" He said, "Give us your own valuation." I said, "That is no good to me. If I give you a valuation it must be a return of things I

have no knowledge of, and it must be supported by a valuation, and I am not going to pay for it." The Commissioner will admit that his only object is to find out what property you have got, and whether it is bringing in a revenue or not. The intention is to find out how much more assets you have got on which you are not paying tax.

The PREMIER: That is in the case of absentees.

Mr. VOWLES: The Commissioner has the right to require any form of return he thinks fit. The clause reads, "as are required by the Commissioner." I think that we ought to be the people who should decide what returns should be sent in in each case. There is another principle which I think is rather a good one—that is the limitation of time in which an action may be brought. At present, speaking from memory, I think the Commissioner has the right within six months—the ordinary limitation under the Justices Act—to take proceedings whenever he finds any breach has been committed. Well, that might go into many years. I know cases where objections have been raised, and claims made by the Commissioner running into years after the original taxpayer was deceased. If you are dealing with men in the country, with cattle men, or even with business men, their records are in such a state that it is almost an impossibility for a man to furnish a correct return when you have him alongside you to explain everything. But when you cannot get the man at all, it is absolutely an impossibility to get finality. In this Bill, instead of having the limitation of six months from the time that the offence was committed, it was proposed to fix the limitation at six years. That is too long, but it is better to have it at that rather than have it for all time, because we shall have these matters being brought up by the Commissioner ten years after, and he will claim that an offence has been committed. As I said before, this is a Committee measure, and we can deal with these things in Committee. There is only the one new principle that I object to. The Premier states that the Commissioner has been assessing taxation in respect to growing timber and coal. I am inclined to think that there must be a feeling on the part of the department, the Crown Law Office, and the Premier, that the definition of "unimproved value" in the principal Act is not sufficiently broad, and they wish to introduce this principle so that it will include these matters.

The PREMIER: It applies in the Commonwealth law.

Mr. VOWLES: But it does not apply so far as the State is concerned. I am of the opinion the Commissioner has been collecting that revenue irregularly.

The PREMIER: It would have been contested if that were so.

Mr. VOWLES: I know from experience that it is very hard to get a determination in many cases unless we go practically with a pistol at their heads. That applies more particularly in the case of the land tax. I had a case recently where I wanted to establish the value of land. Demands had been made in different departments, and it was only when I was able to shake up the department that they did anything, and that I was able to bring the Commissioner into line. I know this has nothing to do

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with the amendments in this Bill, but it is up to the Minister in charge of the department to see that these appeals from various districts are determined one way or the other. That is the unsatisfactory position. There is often money lying in dispute for years. I knew one man who had money lying idle that would more than pay his land tax, but he could not get a determination, and he could not utilise it. Eventually he was unable to pay. When this Bill gets into Committee, I will have a little more to say about it.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*): Taxation, we must admit, is a most unpleasant extortion. To my mind, land taxation stands out on its own, because it is fundamentally incorrect. That is my humble opinion of it. I cannot see any difference between one man placing capital in a business and another placing capital in his land.

The PREMIER: In the latter case he gets the enhanced value.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: You tax one man on his profits only, but in the other case you tax him on his profits and also on the value of the land. That is quite unsound, and I could never understand why you should impose a land tax.

The PREMIER: I will present you with a copy of "Henry George."

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I shall be delighted to study it. (Laughter.) The only reason why land taxation should be imposed is to break up large estates which are kept selfishly from the small man. The Premier to-night informs us that the experience of the Land Taxation Department is that we have failed in that particular regard, and that other measures will have to be devised of forcing these estates into the market. In view of that admission, it seems to me an imposition to continue a system of taxation which, in my opinion, is the most aggravating one that we can conceive. The Secretary for Railways interjected to-night that the New South Wales Nationalist Government had found it necessary to reimpose the super tax.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No, I said super taxation.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: That is a distinction without a difference; and the Minister sought to find in that fact consolation for the fact that Queensland also finds it necessary to continue the imposition of such taxation. The truth is that exactly the same condition of affairs prevails in New South Wales that prevails here. It is owing to the extraordinary wastefulness and extravagance of the Labour Government in New South Wales that the Fuller Government have been forced to reimpose this super tax, and on the Premier's own admission it is necessary, he is sorry to say, to continue a tax which was imposed only as a war measure. His admission amounts really to this—that the extravagance of the Government has been such that they cannot afford to allow the super tax to go. It looks as if it is going to remain as part of the recognised taxation of the State, and not as a temporary measure to relieve some temporary situation.

The PREMIER: It is being imposed for another year. We are the only Government reducing taxation this year.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: How are the Government reducing taxation? They are

reducing it by £8,000! It is most amusing to hear the Premier make that claim. To-day we heard the Secretary for Public Instruction give notice of another Bill which is going to give further educational facilities to the man on the land. Here is the Premier introducing a Bill which has for its object the relieving of the man on the land from taxation to the extent of something like £8,000! Why is all this being done?

The PREMIER: Because it is just.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: No, because they see at the end of seven or eight years of maladministration and the imposition of taxation for which they had no justification whatever, they must start window-dressing, and it seems that the whole of this session is to be devoted to that purpose in order to appeal to the sympathies of the man on the land. The imposition of land tax on the small farmer was totally unjustifiable, and there is very little credit to be gained from the fact that only small sums were involved. It is the worry and anxiety which these taxation forms and the imposition of taxation itself bring in their train. Take the case of the small farmer. He gets a return to fill up. He has no idea of how to fill it up or what to do. It is a continual burden to him, and the Premier's admission that farmers have paid taxation which they ought not to have paid is proof of what we are continually saying. After making the lot of the farmer a little hell for seven or eight years, they turn round and, in the light of an approaching election, say, "We are going to remove it because we find we have been imposing taxation which we were not justified in imposing."

Another thing I want to mention on this Bill—and it affects both land and income tax—is the question of the institution of an appeal board on the lines of the Commonwealth Board. I am not going to criticise the Taxation Commissioner—I have had no occasion to criticise him—nevertheless, it is a relief to the people who consider they are being oppressed to have some tribunal to which they can appeal for a reconsideration of their cases. The Commonwealth Government have recognised that in the constitution of their Appeal Board, and the Premier had a deputation to him last night which stressed that point.

The PREMIER: There is an appeal to a tribunal in Queensland under the present Act.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: But not in the same form as the Commonwealth board—that is a board of practical men who are immediately available and understand the common-sense view of the position as well as the legal view. It will be a relief to the business community. It may not be of very great use, still it is there, and it is a safeguard to the man who thinks he is being harshly treated.

Another question that I wish briefly to touch upon is the question of insurance companies. I am not going to raise any protest against mutual life assurance companies being brought within the operations of the land tax. I would rather agree with the Treasurer's arguments in that regard. But I do not see why the State Insurance Department should not be treated in exactly the same manner. It is all very well to say that it is only taking money out of one pocket to

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put it into another. That is probably a reasonable argument to adopt. But you have to remember that the State Insurance Department is competing with other companies and institutions in that line of business, and the State should be on a sufficiently solid footing not to take advantage of any position such as is created by the non-imposition of a land tax, or a stamp duty, or such like things. The State Insurance Department is actively competing in life assurance and other branches not monopolised by the State with existing offices to whom this taxation applies. Surely it is placing the State enterprise in a very much fairer position, when it willingly has imposed upon itself exactly the same business and taxation obligations which apply to insurance companies as a whole.

The HOME SECRETARY: The State Insurance Office and the other offices fix the rates by arrangement.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: With all due deference to the Minister, I do not think that is correct. Each life assurance company has its own rates, and fixes its own conditions with regard to surrender values and other conditions attaching thereto. There is active competition amongst these offices. The new offices which come into existence to-day surely would not have the same conditions attaching to their policies as those which have been in existence for fifty years?

The HOME SECRETARY: The competition is more for business, not on the rates.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The bonuses of insurance companies are affected by their expenditure, the expense ratio plays a most important part in arriving at the surplus available at the quinquennial or annual period. The Minister should know that, in arriving at that expense ratio, you have to take into consideration all these taxation and other impositions which are made. If the State Insurance Department is relieved of these reasonable burdens, it is competing unfairly with the other offices. I repeatedly have said in this Chamber that it is not dignified for the State to take advantage of any such unfair competitive conditions. I do not intend to take up the time of the House further, but I think I should give voice to those opinions.

Mr. SIZER (*Nundah*): There are one or two points I want to raise. In connection with one I got my answer by way of interjection. I think we want to make it perfectly clear so far as trustee companies are concerned; otherwise, certain difficulties are going to arise. Where a beneficial estate is left in the hands of a trustee company, which is called upon to appoint a manager, it has to be made perfectly clear that the manager appointed by the trustee company and the trustees—although they may not be actually working—will come under the benefits of this Bill. I think the Premier said that that was intended, and his assurance will meet that point very satisfactorily. I am given to understand that a man who leases his farm will not be able to get the advantages of the exemptions. A man may be able from hard work and by his savings to obtain a farm, but he may not have sufficient capital to develop it at the time, and he may let the farm on lease and go away and seek a job, and then, having obtained sufficient capital, he may return. While he is working on the

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farm he is entitled to the benefits under the Act, but as soon as he leaves it, he loses those benefits. If he was to remain on the farm and work it on the share system, he would also receive the benefits. I think the Premier should give that matter some consideration or intimate whether he is prepared to accept an amendment in connection with the matter. I would also like to refer to clause 13. If there were six beneficiaries in an estate and four were over twenty-one and the other two were minors, the four would be able to reap the benefits under this Bill: but the two minors, whose interests would be controlled by trustees, would not be working farmers, as the other four would be, and the minors would probably not receive any benefit under the Bill. Minors should be allowed the full exemption. The Bill may inflict some hardship on a certain section of the community, and I would ask the Premier to give the matter serious consideration. Dealing with the reimposition of super tax, I intend in Committee to move an amendment making that clause applicable to 1922 instead of 1923. It will be said that the difficulty will be the official date of the termination of the war and the fact that the financial years are still running. Although the war officially terminated in 1921, yet hostilities really ceased in 1918, and that is popularly regarded as the date of the termination of the war. Under the amending Act enacting super taxation the clause had a retrospective effect, and it was to be continued in force until one year after the termination of the war. Seeing that the Government were able to make the tax retrospective, I think it would be only fair to provide that the tax should terminate on the 30th June, 1922. If they do that, it will be only fair to themselves and fair to the taxpayers. Very large powers have been given to the Commissioner in the matter of declaring any person to be an agent. Probably the Treasurer will tell us, in Committee, why he is prepared to give such wide powers to the Commissioner. It may be possible for the Commissioner to declare a man who collects the rent of an estate to be the agent for the owner of the estate, though he may know nothing whatever about his employer's land transactions other than the mere collecting of the rent. If the Commissioner has that power, it may lead to a certain amount of misunderstanding, and I hope the Treasurer will make it clear as to what the new definition of "agent" is to mean.

Now, in regard to clause 5—

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is now proceeding to discuss the details that can be better dealt with in Committee.

Mr. SIZER: I think we may get over the difficulty if we make that clause apply to all agricultural, dairying, and grazing lands. I think the object is to grant relief in regard to land which is being used for production, and we can do that without all the provisos at the end of the clause. If we can induce a man to invest his capital in country land, he should not be treated differently to the man who invests his money in any other direction, and, when we get into Committee, I intend to move an amendment in that direction.

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

The consideration of the Bill in Committee was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

The House adjourned at 10.30 p.m.