Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 7 SEPTEMBER 1922

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The SPEAKER (Hon. W. Bertram, *Maree*) took the chair at 11 a.m.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—TWELFTH ALLOTTED DAY.

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

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS.

COURT OF INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION.

Question stated—

"That £5,183 be granted for 'Court of Industrial Arbitration.'"

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I listened very carefully yesterday when hon. members opposite were speaking on this vote, and the only conclusion I could draw from their remarks was that they were taking up a sort of "Yes-No" attitude. One hon. member appeared to be against the Court, and another hon. member for it. It was very hard, indeed, to find exactly where the Government stand in regard to the Arbitration Court. I want to make it quite clear as to where the Nationalist party stand, and I will quote from the platform of the Nationalist party with reference to the matter. It reads—

> "The settlement of industrial disputes by arbitration and the development of conciliation and co-operation between employers and employees. Due observance by both of industrial awards and agreements."

This is a further plank in their platform—

> "Encouragement of co-operative companies and manufactories, co-operative schemes and profit-sharing by employees. Legislation to prevent trusts, monopolies, and combines operating in restraint of trade and injuriously to the public."

The Government for a considerable time have been claiming the credit for various Acts which were passed, not by them, but by Liberal Governments. It has been the policy of the Government not to bring in anything new, but to build on what is already in existence. Dozens of amending measures have been brought before the House during the last five or six years. The Government have merely been building on the substantial basis laid down by the legislation of Liberal Administrations. To say that the present Government have done very much for the worker is misconstruing the position. Queensland is not in a leading position in Australia in regard to arbitration. Victoria—where they had a Labour Government for only a few hours—is leading in arbitration to-day, and has always led in Australia. Let us turn back to 1912, when we had the Wages Boards Act in force. I think that everyone will agree that that Act was a good one, and did a great deal to improve the relations and conditions between employers and employees. Its aims and objects sought to regulate wages, the regulation of hours of work, and protection to both employer and employee. In 1912 the Industrial Peace Act came into force, and the aims and objects of that measure were the same as those of the Wages Boards Act. But it provided, in addition, for a Court of Appeal, to which both employers and employees could submit any matters in dispute.

Let us have a look at the legislation of the Labour Government and see how they followed the legislation of previous Governments with regard to industrial arbitration. What happened when this Government introduced industrial arbitration? The same thing, but under another name. They followed exactly the same objectives and principles that were expounded in previous legislation, though there is a slight difference with regard to the functions that the Court performs. The round table conference which previously existed only passively functioned, and, in my opinion, that is something which should never have been.

Mr. GLEDSON: It has not been abolished.

Mr. KERR: It has not been abolished so far as legislation is concerned; but it is not used now as much as it was under previous legislation, because the Court is performing the functions of the round-table conference. In my opinion, the principle of arbitration in the State is a settled principle, and any employer to-day who does not recognise arbitration is blind to the signs of the times.

Mr. PEASE: The hon. member for Oxley does not say that.

Mr. KERR: I do not care what the hon. member for Oxley says; I am giving my opinion. I consider that arbitration and conciliation are principles which we should have in every State throughout the world, and any man who does not believe in them is blind to the signs of the times. I do not say that our arbitration system is complete. It is not complete. There are many faults noticeable, but the faults are not with the court or with the system. The faults are with the extremists on the side of the Government, the leaders of the Trades Hall. We know perfectly well that the economic conditions must come into this business.

Mr. PEASE: Do you know that the leaders of the Trades Hall are the only people who are looking after the unemployed in Victoria?

Mr. KERR: In Brisbane at Parliament House to-day we have 200 or 300 unemployed congregated, and the members of the Government will not recognise them at all.

Mr. PEASE: That is rubbish.

Mr. KERR: It is not rubbish. Your actions towards the unemployed here are contrary to what you have just said about the Trades Hall looking after them. The arbitration system is not giving entire satisfaction either to the employers or employees. There is nothing wrong with the court, and there is nothing wrong with the system. The reason it is not giving satisfaction is because of the extreme element, and because the objective of socialisation of everything has replaced the old objective of the Trades Hall. We had the hon. member for Ipswich last night saying that the tribunal should be in charge of the workers. That is only a crude way of putting the objective. I will show before I sit down how damaging it is to put forward the objective of socialisation. I will quote from the objective agreed to at the Labour Convention held in Brisbane in October, 1921, to show why arbitration is not a success. I will show what has militated against the success of arbitration. This was the objective of the Australian Labour Federation prior to October, 1921—

> "1. The cultivation of an Australian sentiment, the maintenance of a White Australia, and the development in Australia of an enlightened and self-reliant community.
>
> "2. Emancipation of human labour from all forms of exploitation, and the obtaining for all workers the full reward of their industry, by the collective ownership and democratic control of the collectively used agencies of production, distribution, and exchange.
>
> "3. The maintenance and extension of fraternal relations with the Labour organisation of all countries.
>
> "4. The prevention of war through the settlement of international disputes by a tribunal clothed with powers sufficient to enforce its awards."

That was the old objective. Now, let me read the new objective, which was approved by the Australian Labour Party's Conference held in Brisbane in October last—

> "The socialisation of industry, production, distribution, and exchange."

Mr. GLEDSON: Hear, hear!

Mr. KERR: And the methods by which that is to be achieved are set out thus—

> "(*a*) The constitutional utilisation of industrial and parliamentary machinery."

Mr. GLEDSON: Hear, hear!

Mr. KERR: That is approved by certain hon. members opposite, but not by the Premier and some of his colleagues, so that in their own ranks they are divided. They are afraid of the people in this matter, and they are not honest in regard to it—

> "(*b*) The organisation of the workers along the lines of industries;
>
> "(*c*) The nationalisation of banking and all principal industries;
>
> "(*d*) The municipalisation of such services as can best be operated in limited areas;
>
> "(*e*) The government of nationalised industries by boards, upon which the workers in the industries and the community shall have representation;
>
> "(*f*) The establishment of an elective Supreme Economic Council by all nationalised industries;
>
> "(*g*) The setting up of Labour research and Labour Information Bureaux and of Labour educational institutions in which the workers shall be trained in the management of the nationalised industries."

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KERR: Hon. members opposite ask us what is wrong with that. I have statistics here which I want to use to show where these men are leading, or attempting to lead, the workers who, they say, are not getting a fair share of the goods of this world.

Mr. GLEDSON: That is so.

Mr. KERR: I have gone to a little trouble to ascertain where the workers are going to come in under the socialisation of industry, and what extra remuneration they are likely to get, by taking a concrete example from the statistics of 1919-20. In the engineering establishments, iron works, and foundries of Australia, the proportion of salaries and wages, fuel, materials used to the value of the total output is 89.7 per cent., leaving a balance of 10.3 per cent. for overhead charges—which are pretty severe—distribution costs, insurance, taxation, interest on money invested, and profits. I suppose that, if hon. members opposite socialise those industries, it will mean, on the basis of Knibbs's figures, that every worker might get one penny per week more than he is getting now. Is it not recognised that the Arbitration Court was set up for the purpose of giving a fair deal to both employer and employees; and anything attained by the adoption of these principles, in opposition to the Arbitration Court principles, is unjust and unreasonable? It will have a boomerang effect on the workers of the State. It is recognised by hon. members opposite, now that a Federal election is coming on, that they must in some way cover up this socialisation objective, so that the people of the Commonwealth will not realise what is being propounded by the Labour party. Let us see what some of them say in regard to it. Mr. M. A. Davidson, M.L.A., said—

> "When they were able to take control of industries, what were they going to do with them if not socialise them? Why fence with words? Some of the delegates 'got the wind up' simply because Labour lost the recent elections."

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have allowed a very wide latitude to the discussion on this vote. While I have no desire to restrict the hon. member, I would like him to connect his remarks with the administration of the Arbitration Court, which is the vote under discussion.

Mr. KERR: I am connecting up in this way—that, in my opinion, this policy, which is the policy of the present Government, is militating against the success of the Arbitration Court. It would not be right of me to make a direct statement to that effect unless I were able to support it by substantial facts. I want to quote some authorities on the socialisation of industry. Let us see what Senator Gardiner said on the matter—

> "They would lose seats throughout the Commonwealth unless the old objective was restored. Didn't they realise that in elections they had to sidestep? They had to compromise. To bring in the new objective was stepping backwards."

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would point out to the hon. member that that quotation deals with the prospects of a party's success at an election, and has nothing to do with the Arbitration Court.

Mr. KERR: Of course that is correct. (Laughter.)

The CHAIRMAN: I hope that the hon. member will see the necessity for discussing the administration of the Court of Industrial Arbitration.

Mr. KERR: I will simply say that the whole principle of socialisation is, in my opinion, a menace to Australia and to our arbitration system, which the Nationalist party, of which I am a member, include in their programme. I am not going to say that the present system altogether meets the requirements. Let us go back to February, 1921. The Full Bench of the Arbitration Court in Queensland on that date determined the basic wage. It will be noted that no minimum wage was laid down at that time, although the Act provided for one. The basic wage was fixed at £4 5s. per week. A few short months before it was fixed at £3 17s. Let us see whether the court meets the requirements of the day. The Commonwealth Government appointed a Royal Commission, of which, I think, Mr. Piddington was the chairman. That Commission said that the cost of living in Brisbane was £5 6s. 2d. per week. Yet at that very time the Full Bench of the Arbitration Court here decided on a basic wage of £4 5s. per week. If £5 6s. 2d. was a living wage for a man, his wife, and family, was the Arbitration Court doing its job by laying down a basic wage of £4 5s.—which has since been reduced? We all know that the industries of this country will not carry a higher rate of pay. The judges of the court realised that, and left open the question of whether a lower or a higher rate could be paid. Although Mr. Piddington said that £5 6s. 2d. was a living wage, he did not say how industry was going to pay it. The matter came before Mr. Justice McCawley, who said he could not take any action in the matter, that it required legislation. If hon. members opposite were true to the principles which they expound in this Chamber, would they not bring forward some legislation to provide for the payment of a basic wage such as that recommended by that Commission? Mr. Justice McCawley said that it was a question of legislation. The Government have power to bring in legislation to provide a better basis for fixing the wage for a man, his wife, and three childen. The Arbitration Court has no power to depart from the present basis laid down. Will the Government alter that basis? Are they prepared to say that after seven years of administration they have done the right thing? An article in the Sydney "Sun" sums up the position in connection with the basic wage. The article states—

> "Here, for example, is a youth who on Saturday morning is standing on the corner of a street in an industrial suburb. He has completed his week's labour of forty-four hours the night before, and drawn his pay, and is now considering whether he shall spend the leisure hours of Saturday at the pony races or at the picture show, or whether he shall go to one of the local 'pubs' and there enjoy, at greater leisure than was possible overnight, a little steady drinking with some boon companions. All these courses are open to him. This youth is little over twenty-one. He is an unskilled labourer. He left school when he was fourteen, and since that age he has never read a book, studied any subject, or done anything to improve his education in any way. He has learnt a little gambling, a little drinking, and a little debauchery. Without being in any way a criminal or a waster, he is a bit of a loafer, and a seeker after easy jobs and easy money. He did not volunteer for the front during the war, and has a bitter contempt for the fools who did; he is unmarried and has no idea of marrying, unless he is forced into it by the victim of one of his affairs or her parents. His social value and his economic value are alike negligible quantities. This youth is not, thank heaven, typical of Australian workers as a whole. Nevertheless, he exists, and to-day he dominates the problem of the basic wage."

According to the law to-day, if an employer desires this young man's assistance in his enterprise, he can get it by paying to that man each week an amount that is necessary to maintain in decent comfort a man, his wife, and three children. Single men are paid on the same basis that is provided for a man, his wife, and three children. The article further states—

> "Having looked upon that picture, let us now look upon another. Here is a man who is married, and who is a father of half a dozen children—a good worker, sober, self-respecting, trustworthy, ranking also as an unskilled labourer. He, under the law, gets precisely the same wage as our friend whom we saw standing on the corner—neither more nor less. His children are stinted, and he and his wife only carry through their family responsibilities by privations and sacrifices which it would be painful to enumerate, but which can be readily imagined. For this man the basic wage, so called, affords no basis. It does not give him enough to live on."

Judge McCawley suggested that the basis on which the basic wage was fixed could be altered by legislation. Are the Government going to do that? We have heard a lot of talk from hon. members opposite about the care for the poor children. Will the Government come forward with some concrete plan to deal with this matter? They are afraid to tackle the single man of twenty-one years of age. What for? For the simple reason that they would lose his vote. Hon. members opposite are not game to tackle the arbitration system in that respect. There is also the aspect of efficiency which has been often expounded by the hon. member for Oxley, and rightly so. The article further states—

> "The question of efficiency still remains. There are men doing so-called unskilled labour—working as storemen, say, or carters, or doing bush labour, or work with a pick and shovel—who could 'lose' this youth; could do each hour three times as much work as he does. What provision is made under the existing system for giving these men some remuneration commensurate with their enormously greater value? The answer

is: none whatever. These men, like him, receive the basic wage and nothing else. Their energy and experience count under the law for absolutely nothing."

I am not a believer in Parliament fixing a minimum wage. I am broadminded enough to look at it from a broad aspect, and to say that there are employers to-day who would take advantage of any minimum wage laid down by Parliament. At the same time, there are many employers who are prepared to go beyond the present rate of wages if their men give satisfaction. But I do not think Parliament should provide a loophole by laying down a minimum wage.

Mr. GLEDSON: Do you say that employers pay above the award rates?

Mr. KERR: I remember that, when the wages boards were in existence, more especially in the secondary industries, an efficient man who gave a good return received a good deal more than was laid down by the wages board, and so it always will be.

I want to explode a little thing that is very often brought forward by secretaries of the unions. The unions have persistently sought to sheet home the charge against employers of wilfully causing unemployment.

(The bell indicated that the hon. member had exhausted the time allowed him by the Standing Orders.)

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): I would like to make a few comments on this very important question of arbitration before the vote goes through, and I intend to comment on the salary of the judge, which is shown in the schedule, and also that of his associate. It is a marvellous thing that this judge, after a very exhaustive inquiry and the examination of various statistics by "Knibbs" and others, should arrive at the conclusion that the working men were being paid too much and that the basic wage should be reduced, while at the same time the amount of £1,000 is still on the Estimates as the salary of Judge McCawley. If the judge's contention is correct, and the cost of living has dropped 5 per cent., it means that he is better off to-day than he was a year ago by £50. He has practictally got an increase of £50 a year, making his total salary equal to £1,050, as against a reduction in the minimum wage of the workers of 5s. a week. That is an anomaly that should not be allowed to exist, and an amendment of the Arbitration Act should be passed to provide that the salaries of the judges and their associates, as well as the salaries of everybody else, should be fixed on a sliding scale according to the wages paid in industry. If that were done, then Mr. Justice McCawley would have a bigger idea of the difficulty that a man has to rear a family in decency and comfort—I do not say in luxury—than he has at the present time. I am exceedingly sorry to see that a salary of £1,000 has been placed on the Estimates for the judge of the Arbitration Court instead of a salary of £950.

Mr. COSTELLO: Move a reduction.

Mr. HARTLEY: Will you support it?

Mr. COSTELLO: Try it and see.

Mr. HARTLEY: That is very much like the argument put forward by the hon. member for Enoggera. I think the appointment of members of the legal profession as judges of the Arbitration Court is not a sound principle. I was never a believer in the idea that a lawyer is qualified to give an opinion on questions of everyday life. He may be well served in the intricacies and in the interpretation of the law; but in most cases that is as far as his ability goes. So far I have not had much need of the services of a lawyer. I have always acted with common sense and kept out of the law court. That is a good place to keep out of; it is nearly as good as a gaol to keep out of. If we are to continue this arbitration system, then some scheme ought to be devised whereby the men who give decisions that vitally affect the interests of the workers in the State should have first-hand acquaintance with the conditions in the various industries. I should not be averse if, under the heading of incidental expenses, a sum was provided so that Judges McCawley and McNaughton, and other people connected with the Arbitration Court, could have a term of apprenticeship in the various industries. I have worked in a few callings through stress of circumstances myself—as a miner, a fireman, an engine-driver, and an engineer, and in various other occupations which would bring in a little sixpence now and again. I think that experience like that broadens a man's sympathies with humanity; it broadens his knowledge and puts him in a much better position to speak on the affairs of life as they affect other people. I certainly think it would do Judge McCawley good to put in three months' apprenticeship with the waterside workers, so that he could find out what the loading of ships entails, and what human wear and tear is involved.

[11.30 a.m.]

Mr. VOWLES: What about shearing?

Mr. HARTLEY: Shearing, too. I do not think it would do the hon. member any harm to get a little experience in a shearing-shed. I think it would not be a bad line for these gentlemen to have a little first-hand experience of the rough and seamy side of life. They would then be careful before taking off a few pounds from a man's wages and thus reducing the possibility of his buying a crust for his children. In regard to the contention of the hon. member for Enoggera about the basic wage, the hon. member said a good deal, but he did not get anywhere. So far as I can see, if he was allowed to say what he thinks, he believes that Mr. Piddington's estimate of a basic wage sufficient to maintain a man, his wife, and three children in comfort is a fair basic wage. Why is he associated with the party which made a squeal throughout Queensland and Australia, and used all the associations they had—the various Chambers of Commerce and the Employers' Associations—and raised a terrible cry that industry could not be carried on if Mr. Piddington's recommendation with regard to the basic wage was adopted? I can only come to the conclusion that the hon. member is just as much behind Judge McCawley with regard to the basic wage of £4 5s. per week. It is a "Yes-no" attitude to take up.

Mr. KERR: You do not understand it.

Mr. HARTLEY: I do not think the hon. member understands it. I do not think he has ever been associated sufficiently with the affairs of the ordinary working man outside a departmental office to know the A B C of the fixation of wages, or its effect on the working man or on industry. Anyone who knows anything about industry and wages knows that, if you pay the best wages, you can get the best men; and the best employer of labour is the man who keeps that objective

in view and does not tie a man down to a paltry minimum wage. At the present time the effect of the Arbitration Court awards has been to fix the minimum wage, and the employer has made it the maximum. That is where the fallacy of the thing comes in. The Arbitration Court award should not be the maximum; it should be the minimum. If a man shows keenness and interest in his work, there is nothing in the award to prevent him being paid a higher wage. If employers worked more on those lines, they would get a great deal more satisfaction than they do at the present time. There is another point I wish to touch upon. The hon. member for Enoggera referred to the payment to the average single man. The average single man is not a loafer nor a gambler either.

Mr. KERR: The article did not say that.

Mr. HARTLEY: It implied it.

Mr. KERR: No, it gave the basis for the basic wage—what was possible.

Mr. HARTLEY: Does the hon. member say that the basic wage for a married man and his wife and three children should not be the same standard as the wage to a single man? That is absolutely wrong. Where would the married men be to-day if there had never been any single men? (Laughter.) There had to be single men. How is it that we, as married men, have turned out such paragons of virtue? It is like the old yarn of the father who has forgotten how to play football. He says, "When I was a boy we used to play football," and the "kiddy" of to-day could run him blind in about five minutes.

Mr. KERR: You say the basic wage should be based on the single man?

Mr. HARTLEY: The basic wage should be based on the single man. That is my opinion, and I think it is a sound position to take up. We must bear in mind that a single man has prospective responsibilities to the State, to himself, and to society. If he becomes the decent man we expect him to be, he will at some time assume the responsibilities of married life. There is no reason why he should be paid under the rate paid to the married man, because he must make provision for the day when he will get married and take on the responsibilities of a home. If differential rates of wages are fixed for the married man and the single man, the single man will have to remain single, until some day in a spirit of foolhardy enterprise he gets married and chances it, whether he is able to make the necessary provision for his wife or not. That would be the effect if the hon. member's contention that the rate of pay for a single man should be lower than that for a married man was carried out. That is practically what the hon. member is recommending.

Mr. KERR: I am accusing your Government of not doing the right thing.

Mr. HARTLEY: While the hon. member accuses the Government of not doing the right thing, he is afraid to say what is the right thing.

Mr. KERR: I have had my say.

Mr. HARTLEY: The hon. member has had his say, but he has tried not to say anything to antagonise the people whose servant he is. The effect of his remarks was to recommend a lower rate of pay for the single man.

Mr. KERR: No.

Mr. HARTLEY: No other inference could be drawn from his remarks. If the hon. member's recommendation was carried out and a single man was paid a lower rate than a married man, the bosses would employ single men instead of married men.

Mr. KERR: Don't you think that some protection should be given to married men?

Mr. HARTLEY: No protection could be given, as you could not bind an employer to engage married men in preference to single men. There is a certain line drawn in connection with legislation that every lawyer, or any man with common sense, recognises. It comes to a dead end when it begins to interfere too intimately with the individual liberty of the subject. There is a point beyond which no legislation can go, because public opinion would very soon upset it. No sane award can be made in that respect, and the effect would be that, if such an award were made, wherever the employers could dispense with a married man they would dispense with him and put on a single man. Then, as soon as a single man became a married man, when he would be entitled to the higher rate of pay, they would dispense with him. We have seen all that happen before.

Mr. STOPFORD: They discharge a young man as soon as he becomes eighteen years of age.

Mr. HARTLEY: It is quite true, as the hon. member for Mount Morgan says, that because of the age fixation in the arbitration award, when a lad arrives at the age of eighteen years he has to go on to the higher rate of wage provided for all above the age of eighteen years. The employer immediately dispenses with him. They did it in the old days under the Factories and Shops Act. We know that when a girl served a certain time under that Act and she had then to receive the wage of a female adult worker, the employer dispensed with her services; and that will be the effect if we introduce the same system to-day. The hon. member for Mount Morgan reminds me that under the old Factories and Shops Act, when the fixation of wages was the rule, the employees had to work first for three months for nothing. I can give a direct instance of that, because my own wife had to work for an employer for three months for nothing, and then she got 2s. 6d. per week for six months. That was the rule at that time. We know that girls were paid 2s. 6d per week for six months. At the end of that time, when they should have got the minimum fixed, they were dispensed with. The same thing would apply if we agreed to the recommendation of the hon. member for Enoggera.

Mr. KERR: I made no recommendation. Do you believe in the Commonwealth subsidising a man with a family?

Mr. HARTLEY: No; I do not agree with the Government supplementing wages.

Mr. KERR: Well, I do; because I think it is right that a married man should be subsidised.

Mr. HARTLEY: The solution is to pay a single man such a sum as will enable him to maintain himself in comfort and make provision for the future. He should get sufficient to enable him to establish a home and rear a family. If our legislation provides for arbitration on those lines, and it

is carried out on those lines, it will be much more satisfactory. The main objection to arbitration to-day is that the judges fix the most meagre payment that it is possible to fix, because they say that it will affect industry if they give too much, and the industry cannot stand it. God knows, if you are going on those lines, then the poorer an industry becomes by the manipulation of the big financial interests in keeping down prices, it will mean reduced wages, and it will put the whole of the working population on the starvation line. That is very undesirable, and I am sure hon. members opposite would not support that for one instant. A solution of the problem lies in giving what is a fair return, and giving something that will provide the necessary comfort, necessary provision against sickness, and, incidentally, loss of life, and also ensuring a man against coming within the scope of privation and want. At the present time our Arbitration Court is lacking in that respect, and until our judges get a better idea than that they should fix the wages at the merest pittance to enable industries to exist, we shall not arrive at a solution. They should fix the wages so that the industries will be able to support a happy and prosperous population. When they get that idea into their heads we shall be in a better position in this State than we are to-day.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): I wish to say something in connection with this vote before it goes through the Committee. The principle of arbitration has been the subject-matter for debate in Australia and elsewhere for many years. No one who has studied the question will argue that the arbitration system now in vogue is a perfect system, but everyone must realise that it is an earnest endeavour to do the best that can be done under an imperfect system of society. We realise also that those who argue against the present system of arbitration do not tell us what they will substitute in place of arbitration. Members opposite who have discussed this question seem to have a very vague idea as to the general principles of the Act under which the court in Queensland functions. It might be just as well to quote the title of the Act for the edification of hon. members opposite. This Act was passed by the present Government, and the title of it is—

> "An Act to provide for the regulation of the conditions of industries by means of industrial conciliation and arbitration; to establish a Court of Industrial Arbitration and certain subsidiary tribunals, and define their jurisdiction; and for purposes consequent thereon or incidental thereto.'

I venture to say that this Act is the most advanced Act that has been passed by any Parliament up to the present time, and the Queensland Court in carrying out its functions has been more successful than any similar court. I do not claim any infallibility for the court, nor am I going to argue this morning that all the decisions of the court are right. That is a matter for the judges to deal with, having regard to the powers vested in them. I may not agree with some of their decisions, but that does not say that I do not approve of arbitration or of the general administration of the Act. The first part of the Act lays it down that there shall be conciliation, and what is really done under the Act is that a properly constituted tribunal is established whereby the contending parties in industry can be brought together, and a basis laid down whereby industry can be maintained and carried on. Now, we know that the interests of those engaged in industry under an Act such as this, and under the matters which the court has to deal with, are naturally opposed one to the other. A man carrying on an industry, generally speaking, desires to carry on that industry as cheaply as possible. We know many people have raised the cry of late months that costs in the community and costs of production must come down. That is being said on all sides. What do they mean when they say that costs must come down? They are also asking that wages must come down.

Mr. KERR: Taxation also.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: On the other hand, the workers having only their labour to sell, that is the factor which they bring to industry. They do not own the means of production or the instruments of industry. Consequently, they have to seek employment from those who own the instruments of industry, and it is to the workers' interests to get as much as possible for their services. Consequently, there are two contending interests there, which must be dealt with by the court. The Act lays down the conditions which the court must take into consideration in arriving at what seems to it to be a just basis as between the two contending parties. The Act lays down in section 9 that—

> "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, having regard to the conditions of living prevailing among employees in the calling in respect of which such minimum wage is fixed, and provided that in fixing such minimum wage the earnings of the children or wife of such employee shall not be taken into account."

In that section a basis is laid down for the guidance of the court in determining the minimum wage of an industry, but, of course, certain other factors are later on taken into consideration. The prosperity of an industry and the various degrees of skill necessary in various phases of industry may be considered, but it is on that basis generally that the court hears evidence and finally makes an award. It may be argued that the basis laid down in the Act is not a sound basis, and some people make out a specious case for the proposition that a man's wages should be based on the value of the work performed. That may appear reasonable at first sight, but we immediately come upon difficulties when we ask who is to assess the value of such services. The men who use that argument are really using the old argument that has been in vogue ever since the wages system came into existence. Employers of the past used to say that they desired to give their employees the best of conditions. How often have we heard employers say that they believe in paying their men well and giving them what they were worth? But, generally speaking, they want to be the judges of what they are worth.

Mr. J. JONES: Not always.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: That system left much to be desired, and every student of

social problems will admit that under it low wages prevailed, and bad conditions of industry and service operated. What is the alternative to arbitration? There are two factors in industry—the people who own the instruments of industry and those who work them for a consideration—that is, their wages. Those two parties contend on various occasions. In the past their disputes were referred, as it were, to the arbitrament of strikes or lockouts, in which the interests of the community were not represented in any way efficiently. Consequently, the Arbitration Court has the power to call those contending parties together and lay down a basis on which they shall carry out the varied functions of industry as a very important work in the public interest.

After all is said and done, arbitration in some shape or form must continue to exist. Even when a strike took place under the old conditions, some form of conciliation or arbitration was used to bring about a settlement. Consequently, I say that, so long as industry is carried on under the existing system of society, there must be some form of arbitration, and, in my opinion, there can be no better form than a legally constituted tribunal such as we have established under this Act.

At 11.55 a.m.,

Mr. F. A. COOPER (*Bremer*) one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved the Chairman in the chair.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: One of the difficulties of the system from the workers' point of view, which has a direct bearing on this question, is due to the fact that in fixing the standard of wages the court has no means of stabilising the standard of living. Immediately awards are made, immediately the basic wage is declared, the cost of living may alter, and continue to alter from time to time, making that basic wage inadequate, so that it speedily becomes unsound. One of the difficulties of arbitration lies in so arranging the cost of living that after an award has been made the worker may maintain himself at that standard of living which the court has endeavoured to give him under the basis laid down in the Act. In that connection some very important factors are to be considered. Hon. members opposite who have spoken, not only during this debate but during other debates of this session, have argued that in some cases industries cannot be carried on with the existing wages; but I wish to draw the attention of the Committee to the fact that industry in Australia and other countries is in the great majority of cases carrying altogether too great a capital burden. We know what takes place in joint stock companies and large industrial concerns. They start off with a certain capital, but immediately they are in the position to pay large dividends to their shareholders we find them adding to their capital by reserves, on which further interest has to be paid by industry. Consequently, when companies to-day say that they are unable to carry on, we are justified in scrutinising their balance-sheets very carefully, and finding out what was their original capitalisation and how much of the declared capital represents really paid-up capital. Industry in Queensland and Australia is called upon to pay dividends on capital which has never been subscribed, but which is represented by payments from reserves built up by profits made but not distributed. That is one of the means adopted by these corporations to hide their true profits, and so long as that over-capitalisation is allowed to continue, I contend that industry is called upon to bear a burden altogether too great. Every member of the Committee can call to mind instances where stock has been watered in the way I describe, and the companies are now asking industry to carry too great a burden, with the result that there is no margin from which to pay increased wages, which would result in increased comfort for the employees, nor any margin for a reduction of prices of the articles they produce. So I say that the court should have and exercise power to ascertain the paid-up capital of companies which are being dealt with under awards.

[12 noon] We know that companies are cited as parties to cases in the Arbitration Court. They produce balance-sheets, and the court has power to make investigations to a limited extent. I consider that, before a true judgment can be formed in regard to what a company is able to pay in wages or the margin it may have available for reducing the cost of the commodity it produces, it is necessary for us to have some means of ascertaining the amount of paid-up capital in the concern. If regard were had to those factors in declaring an award, much advantage would accrue, and much valuable information would be available to the general public.

Let me deal with a further phase which arises out of the points I have just made. The court lays down what is regarded as the minimum wage in an industry. The hon. member for Fitzroy pointed out that, unfortunately, in Australia the minimum wage laid down by the Arbitration Courts is regarded as the maximum wage. I know of a number of instances of firms having paid men over the minimum rate for special services. No one can argue that that is in any way general—it is the exception, not the rule—and the minimum laid down by Arbitration Courts is generally regarded as the maximum.

Mr. VOWLES: Don't the Government work on that basis?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: That being so, we should consider whether such a wage continues to be adequate after the award comes into operation. We know that the court has no control over the cost of living; and an award made this month on the basis laid down by the Act may be altogether inadequate towards Christmas time—due to an increase in the cost of living which may have taken place in the interim. It has often occurred to me that, if the court should fix the amount of remuneration which the worker shall receive for his services, the same court—or another tribunal—should have the power so to regulate industry as to fix a maximum profit in an industry. If it is a fair thing for a man's wages to be declared by the court, what argument can be used against having a maximum margin of profit for the capitalists who own the instruments? If that were done, we know that there would be no incentive either to reduce wages or to profiteer by unduly increasing the prices of commodities, because any margin over the maximum could be absorbed into the consolidated revenue or dealt with in some other way devised by Parliament. If there

is an argument in favour of a minimum wage or the fixing of the remuneration which labour shall receive, there is good argument for fixing the maximum profit for industry. We know that capital and labour are the factors in production, and that the use of capital by labour is the source of all wealth production. One could plant a bag of sovereigns in a field, but it would not have increased in value at the end of a year. But give a man tools and put him to work in the field to carry on production, and he will create actual wealth. So we see labour in industry is entitled to supreme consideration; and, if the award to labour is to be declared by the court, the award to capital or the interest on capital also should be subject to regulation. By that means the cost of living would be standardised, we would have a true realisation of the interest to which capital was legitimately entitled, the community would benefit, and there would be a greater margin for extra payments to the workers, thus improving the standard of living.

Mr. KERR: There would be no production.

At 12.5 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: The alternative to those things which I have set out in defence of arbitration is direct action. There are certain schools of thought which favour those matters, and they are not confined to any one section of the community. We know that certain sections in an industry representing wage-earners have sometimes argued that Arbitration Courts are of no value to them; they have said that direct action would achieve for them greater advantages. I do not agree with that conclusion. As a matter of fact, I regard the apostles of direct action as being preachers of a gospel of despair. Wherever direct action has taken place to a very considerable extent the effect on the workers concerned and the effect on the community generally has been disastrous.

Mr. J. JONES: Like your legislation.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: We know what took place in France some years ago in connection with a general strike. Direct action failed to bring about any advantages to the workers. Certainly the workers were badly treated and there was no Arbitration Court to which they could go for redress. We also know of industrial disturbances that have taken place in Great Britain and America which have had a disastrous effect on the community and have impoverished the workers engaged in those disputes. The men who took part in those disputes had no other course open to them under the brutal method adopted and supported by men of the political calibre of hon. members opposite. They are forced to take that drastic action on many occasions in order to assert their manhood and endeavour to improve their conditions. In Queensland, under the Act we are now considering, we have provided a means whereby such resort to force is not at all necessary. The workers have received advantages from the court, which has been a benefit to them and has improved their standard of living.

I have said that the apostles of direct action are not confined to the wage-earning section of the community. We know that friends of hon. members opposite have done everything they could to stultify the operations of the Arbitration Court; they have done everything possible to prevent those operations being a success. I have here some of the true views of the Employers' Federation in connection with this matter. A meeting of the Employers' Federation was held in the Union Bank Chambers—which can be described as the Trades Hall of the secret junta which supports hon. members opposite.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I rise to a point of order. When I tried to state the views of Trades Hall officials as an argument against arbitration, I was stopped. The Minister is about to quote a similar document relating to the Employers' Federation. I ask that the same action be taken in his case.

The CHAIRMAN: If the Minister does not connect his remarks with the vote, I shall certainly call him to order. I shall do the same in the case of any other member of the Committee. The hon. member would have been quite in order in quoting the views expressed at any conference—Labour or otherwise—and the attitude of the speakers in regard to arbitration; but the hon. member was not doing that when I called him to order.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: It is interesting to note that hon. members opposite do not like the course of argument that I am pursuing, and they try to prevent my putting it before the Committee. (Interruption.) I am here as the Minister having charge of the administration of the labour laws of Queensland, and, while I am in that position, I am going to see that those laws are protected, and that any attempt to undermine their stability is exposed to the community. There are apostles of direct action in every section of the community, including employers. At that meeting of the Employers' Federation Mr. Bowen said—

> "It is my opinion that arbitration is not going to last very long. We are going to be thrown back again on the same old thing—gloves off, and the stronger man wins. The idea of the insurance company is to strengthen the weakest link, and the weak link is the small emp'oyer."

In dealing with the question of arbitration as it affects the interests of employers, we find one advocate saying that we are going back to "the same old thing—gloves off, and the stronger man wins." Here we find one section of the community openly preparing for the brutal methods of direct action by establishing an insurance fund to enable them to wage this civil warfare in a way which will benefit their interests. In connection with the fund to be raised, Mr. Bowen states—

> "It can also be used if it is found necessary in the employers' interests in Parliament, or in the municipality, or in the support of activities wherever the common interest of the employer is concerned."

We see the Employers' Federation having funds which they intend to use in whatever way their interests appear to be affected, either in a municipality, in Parliament, or in any other direction. We are confronted with that proposal by a body of people in the community who are directly opposed to the operations of the Arbitration Court, and who are raising funds to carry on a form

of industrial warfare which will enable them, perhaps, to do something to their advantage.

Mr. VOWLES: Why should they not?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: In considering the question of the Arbitration Court and the adequacy of the court for their protection, the workers should keep that fully in mind. We know that during periods of dull trade and depression in industry every effort has been made in the past by employers to use economic pressure to force the workers down lower and lower in the standard of living by securing a reduction in wages. When the workers have not sufficient employment through depression, they are not in a position to put up any strong defence when their rights are being assailed. During a difficult period in our history, when an effort is made by the combined money power of Australia to assail the workers' position, the Arbitration Court, properly constituted and carrying on its function in a proper way, stands between the workers and the onslaught of unscrupulous employers. The hon. member for Enoggera raised the question of enforcing awards of the Arbitration Court. I pointed out earlier in my speech that one of the principles of the Industrial Arbitration Act is conciliation. When disputes take place, the court's endeavour is to bring the contending parties together as early as possible, and thus prevent an extension of the industrial dispute. The court has been very successful in that regard. In addition to that, my department, which administers the awards, has also been very successful. The arrears of wages secured by the Department of Labour and Factories are—

Arrears of Wages Secured by the Department of Labour and Factories.

	£	s.	d.
Year ending—			
30th June, 1916	9,110	6	5
30th June, 1917	11,196	1	3¼
30th June, 1918	8,385	15	11½
30th June, 1919	11,855	5	0
30th June, 1920	13,770	17	1
30th June, 1921	13,428	12	2½
30th June, 1922	9,456	12	6¼
	£77,203	10	5½

Mr. PEASE: No wonder the other side want to get the Government out of power.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Hon. members opposite do not like the facts that I am making public this morning. I intend to show the public what is actually taking place. Full particulars in connection with prosecutions undertaken by the Department of Labour and Factories are set out in the following table:—

PROSECUTIONS UNDERTAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR AND FACTORIES.

Year.	Against Employer.	Against Employee.	Successful.	Unsuccessful.	Total.	Fines. £	s.	d.	Costs. £	s.	d.	Totals. £	s.	d.	Costs Against Department. £	s.	d.
1916	431	..	403	28	431	855	0	1	393	7	4	1,248	7	5	76	6	10
1917	217	13	212	18	230	350	6	8	215	13	2	523	19	10	63	0	4
1918	157	51	192	16	208	239	7	0	155	14	7	395	1	7	53	11	0
1919	188	36	208	16	224	286	13	6	164	19	8	451	13	2	43	2	0
1920	252	32	274	10	284	471	12	0	240	6	10	711	18	10	17	7	6
1921	324	31	345	10	355	611	19	6	189	5	0	801	4	6	45	16	0
1922	454	89	526	17	543	874	6	8	189	0	2	1,063	6	10	45	6	10
Totals ..	2,023 (2,275)	252	2,160	115	2,275	3,689	5	5	1,548	6	9	5,195	12	2	344	10	6

So far as the administration of awards is concerned, important work is being carried on by my department. The department has secured arrears of wages amounting to over £77,000, which employers have been forced to make good to employees who have been underpaid. These factors are of importance in dealing with the maintenance of arbitration and furnishing some reasons for its continuance. While I do not claim that the arbitration system in Queensland is perfect, nor do I say for one moment that it cannot be improved upon, I say definitely here and now that it has been the best tribunal yet established to deal with such matters, and has carried on its work under the Act very successfully, and has been a bulwark of defence in the interests of the employees of this State.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I really thought that, when we were discussing this vote, we would get some information regarding the Arbitration Court; but, instead of that, we have had to listen to dissertations on the part of the Minister.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. gentleman brought it on himself.

Mr. VOWLES: It is all very well to talk about wild socialistic theories in connection with arbitration, but all that should be delivered from the stump or the butter-box. I do not see why it should be inflicted upon us here. The Minister has the right to monopolise any time he thinks fit, but I consider that, if he is going to monopolise the little time that we have got, he should keep to the subject under discussion, and not give us theories about matters dealing with the Arbitration Court.

Mr. PEASE: He gave facts. His department saved £77,000 in arrears of wages.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. member for Fitzroy said that he was not satisfied with the constitution of the court. He also takes exception to the gentlemen who constitute the court, and said that they had not sufficient experience to adjudicate on matters that came before them. So in future, instead of the judges of our Arbitration Court studying law, we shall require them to qualify by being so many months working with a pick, so many months in the mine or in the shearing-shed, and so on, in the various industries and callings, so that they will be

practical men. But they will know nothing about the law.

Mr. HARTLEY: You supported that proposal once in connection with wages boards.

Mr. VOWLES: In connection with the wages boards the principle was very different. In that case there were representatives from both sides, with an independent chairman. Hon. members on that side are supposed to support the policy of the Labour party, which is arbitration.

Mr. HARTLEY: It is not arbitration by barristers.

Mr. VOWLES: We have been told that it is a dreadful thing for the employing section to create a defence fund to look after their own interests. We are told that the Employers' Federation have actually put their heads together and are supplying funds for their own defence. Have not the workers been doing it for a very long time in Queensland? Is not the whole system of unionism dependent upon it? What is the object of paying levies if it is not to provide a fund to protect their own interests in the Arbitration Court and otherwise? What is claimed to be legitimate for one section of the community is condemned by Ministers of the Crown when it is applied to other sections. The Minister spoke about some of his ideals, and said that there should be a maximum profit in industry, and that, if you are going to regulate wages, you should also regulate profits, and that all excess profits should be paid into the consolidated revenue for the benefit of the general public. If we are going to introduce principles such as that, where is the additional capital to come from for the extension of industries in order to create employment in the future? We all know in many quarters that capital is being destroyed, and being destroyed wilfully in many cases.

Mr. COLLINS: Where?

Mr. VOWLES: In regard to the "go-slow" policy, and in not giving fair value for the money paid, every £1 lost in that direction means £1 lost in circulation, and it has to be made up by extra profits, otherwise we would not have the necessary capital for the expansion of industry as time goes on.

I heard the Minister deprecate direct action, which he says has been taken in some places. It is a funny thing to hear him condemning direct action now, because it is very fresh in my memory that during the maritime strike in 1917 the Minister was one of those who publicly advocated direct action in the Domain in Brisbane.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Are you sure? You should be sure of your facts.

Mr. VOWLES: I am sure of my facts.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Those men had not access to the Arbitration Court?

Mr. VOWLES: That is not the point. If the hon. gentleman advocated direct action in other days, it is a funny thing that he should change his view and deprecate it to-day. The hon. gentleman occupied quite sufficient of our time, and I do not propose to take up too much of the time of the Committee; but, as the hon. gentleman referred to the principles underlying the actions of the judges in arriving at the basic wage, perhaps it might be just as well for me to read to this Committee some of the observations which were made by the judges of the Federal Arbitration Court when dealing with the Metropolitan Gas Company's case in 1921. The observations are very brief and very much to the point, and I want the Committee to take notice of them, because they are not the observations of persons interested on either side, but they are the observations of impartial individuals—the judges themselves—who are experts in this matter and who deal with these matters free from any bias. The first observation reads—

> "The court cannot, by any order, secure to the workers more than the industries can pay, and the court cannot fail to recognise that any great additional burden placed on industries at the present time is bound to cause further unemployment and misery to workers, especially to those on the basic wage whom it is intended to benefit."

Is that not common sense? If you are going to put a higher rate of wage on industry than it can bear, you are going to create unemployment; and that is the thing we desire to prevent.

Mr. HARTLEY: Suppose you do not create unemployment?

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: I never argued against that so long as the industry concerned is not over-capitalised by means of the watering of stock.

Mr. VOWLES: You may find in certain cases an industry is over-capitalised. I admit that is so where stock has been watered, and the returns showing the percentage of profits as a result of watered stock are not honest. These are some further observations by members of the Federal Arbitration Court—

> "The court has no power under the Constitution, or under the Act, to fix housing conditions in the different States generally, or to raise the standard of living in Australia from time to time, because of the personal humane feelings of the judge or judges for the time being.
>
> "The court has no right to fix wages at a higher rate than the employees of any employer think fit to work for, or to compel them to be idle if the industry cannot pay the wages it thinks reasonable. If employers and employees are not in dispute and can agree to wages and conditions, the court cannot make any award.
>
> "The court has to recognise the right of workers to live in Australia in their own way and not to submit to the Commission's or the court's standards, if they think fit to work and live on different standards."

Further on in this judgment the judges give certain reasons which I desire to put on record. They say—

> "The court may award increased wages, but that can have little effect upon the world's prices and will not enable them to be obtained if the industries cannot pay them.
>
> "The price of goods in Australia now that shipping is resumed is determined by prices in the world's market, not by local rates fixed by this court.
>
> "The common enemy of employers and employees at the present time is the economic position, and both labour and

capital should work together instead of fighting each other, and help to secure greater production so as to allow industries to be carried on and a decent standard of living to be maintained in Australia."

Mr. HARTLEY: Do you support that contention?

Mr. VOWLES: Of course I support it, I say the economic conditions have a great deal to do with the trouble; but I strongly object to men coming into this Chamber and talking about a minimum wage being established; telling us that nobody ever thinks of paying the maximum wage; telling us that employers use every opportunity to rush into the Arbitration Court to reduce wages. And what do we find? We find the Government themselves doing the very same thing. The very first opportunity there is of getting a reduction in the salaries of the public servants, they rush into the Arbitration Court. I admit there were some members opposite who for a time stood up and said they would not be a party to it; but they have all come to heel since.

Dealing with the question of the basic wage, the hon. member for Enoggera pointed out that the whole thing was a fiction, because you have to take into consideration that you are paying single men precisely the same wage as you are paying married men with responsibilities, and the basis of the whole thing is the amount of money required to keep a man with a wife and three children in ordinary comfort. It has been claimed that the single man should get less than the married man because he has not the same responsibilities; but, if that were done, the single man would have preference for work, because he could be employed at a cheaper rate, to the prejudice of the man with responsibilities. I admit that that is a very difficult matter to get over.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: You are repudiating your colleagues.

Mr. VOWLES: The suggestion has been made that, as a solution of the trouble in connection with a single man receiving the same wage as a married man, a proportion of the wages a single man receives should be set aside monthly and [12.30 p.m.] be placed to the credit of a fund for his benefit in anticipation of the time when he will assume the responsibilities of married life. That fund could be established, and he could draw on it when the occasion arose. If that were done, it would be a solution of the difficulty; but under present circumstances I am inclined to think that, as time goes on, the single man, when he comes to the time when he wants to marry, will have nothing at all in hand. The report goes on—

> "Under the circumstances it is difficult to understand why the claim for £5 16s. per week—an increase of £1 10s. per week—should be pressed for at present by the executive of the combined unions of Australia for all wage-earners. I am satisfied that this court, if it granted the request, would do so much harm to the workers of Australia that they would have to abandon their unions to get employment clear of award rates, or Parliament would have to brush aside the court and its awards to let industries be carried on.
>
> "The competition from other countries, where lower wages are paid and longer hours are worked, would compel the workers in such a case to resign from their unions to enable them to work at lower rates than award rates or those fixed by the unions, as they have done, and are doing, in the United States.
>
> "Mr. Gompers, the head of Labour in the United States of America, is fighting against reductions of wages and increased hours in the States, and will not agree to compulsory arbitration in the States. No court, or no combinations of unions of labour, no one big union, or no Parliament of capitalists or socialists can prevent a fall in prices after a great war such as the world has just suffered. Mr. Gompers admits that the unions have already lost 750,000 members. Men will not continue to be unemployed simply because a court fixes a higher wage than industries can pay, or because unions advise them not to accept wages at reduced rates when the cost of living is reduced. They want to live in reasonable comfort, but they recognise unemployment causes them to live on a bare existence instead of on a reasonable wage."

Those are the things that have to be faced; it is no use coming in here and trying to gain votes by trying to protect one section of the community and bringing forward ridiculous theories which are not practicable. We have to deal with the practical side of the matter, and anyone who reads the conclusions of the judges in this case must recognise that they are founded on common sense. I have heard hon. members opposite refer at different times to the Nationalist party and the Country party as the "low-wage party." There has been a suggestion made previously—it may not have been made to-day, but we have heard it at different times before—that it is the intention of the Country party in particular, if they get into power, to do away with the Arbitration Court. While hon. members opposite call us a "low-wage party," we find the workers of Queensland are calling hon. members opposite a "low-wage party." They have reduced the wages of the public servants. What is the good of having a high rate of wages if people cannot get a job? The intention of the Country party is to retain the Industrial Arbitration Court.

Mr. PEASE: The hon. member for Oxley distinctly denied that.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: He is only one man.

Mr. VOWLES: I never heard him deny it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Are you speaking for the party?

Mr. VOWLES: I am speaking for the party, and speaking for our platform, which provides for the retention of the Arbitration Court; but we say that awards must be obeyed by both sides. We say that, if we are going to have Arbitration Court awards, they must be binding on one side as well as on the other.

Mr. FERRICKS: Would you give the workers in rural districts the privilege of going to the Arbitration Court?

Mr. VOWLES: I would not. You people over there would not.

Mr. HARTLEY: We do.

Mr. VOWLES: What is the good of the hon. member saying that they do? We know very well that the Government found it necessary to exclude workers in certain avocations from the Industrial Arbitration Act. When the measure was going through the House, a rider was added to save the face of hon. members opposite with the industrial workers. The rural workers referred to could have been provided for if the Government had so desired. We know that all that is necessary to be done is for someone in the Trades Hall to say that a dispute has arisen and the matter should go before the Court, and it must be done. But even the Government did not think it was necessary to include the rural workers in the Act.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You do not understand the matter.

Mr. VOWLES: I understand it better than most hon. members opposite. I know that it is quite a simple thing for the Trades Hall to bring forward a fictitious quarrel. We have had experience in other directions. Complaints are brought forward, and an alleged accredited representative of the union in connection with a certain class of workers has appeared in the court, and has not been able to substantiate the assertion that there is a dispute.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: There you are. You say it is being done.

Mr. VOWLES: It can be done.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is not done in our Arbitration Court.

Mr. VOWLES: The Premier is not prepared to go so far as to apply the principles of the Arbitration Act to farming districts. When it does apply to farming districts, I shall see that hon. members individually define what their attitude is to be in the future in regard to its application. I do not want to go into the question of its application to farming districts, as it has nothing to do with this vote, nor has the question of whether the Act can be applied to the agricultural industry. I want to define the attitude of our party. Our attitude is not to interfere with the existing Arbitration Court, but to see that, when awards are made, they are observed by both sides. When an award fails owing to the act of a union or any particular organisation, and the law is unable to control it, we can only come to the conclusion that the court is a failure, and there is only one thing to be done, and that is to make some new provision. What that new provision is to be will have to be considered when the proper time arrives; but the difficulty with regard to the observance of the awards is not likely to occur in connection with the employing class. We know that they have property which can be levied against. The people who have caused the Act to be valueless in the past are the unionists.

Mr. DASH: Is that in the Country party platform?

Mr. VOWLES: I will give the hon. member a copy of it, and then he will be able to digest it. I notice that many of the principles which are contained in the Country party platform are very readily received by the Premier and his colleague the Secretary for Agriculture, who cling to them as a sort of last straw—in connection, for instance, with the Primary Producers' Association which has been formed.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Is that the front window copy?

Mr. VOWLES: I will give the hon. member a front window copy. Hon. members opposite say that the public servants should have full civic rights. That is something else which has been taken from the platform of the Country party. What do full civic rights mean? According to the interpretation placed on it by the Government, they are allowed anything but full civic rights.

Mr. HARTLEY: Your Government in the Federal Parliament wanted to give the Japanese full civic rights.

Mr. VOWLES: I remember reading a statement made by Mr. Tom Walsh, the president of the Seamen's Union of Australia—he has had something to do with the Arbitration Court—and he said that all blackfellows should receive the same conditions as the white workers.

Mr. HARTLEY: He did not.

Mr. VOWLES: He did. He said that the blackfellows were entitled to the same conditions as any other men. I never believe in criticising the judges and their actions on the bench. I might think that the judges in their conclusions and decisions are not absolutely correct; but we have always got to remember that people view these things from different standpoints. I always give a man credit for being honest in his deductions, even if a decision is given which I do not approve of. Perhaps I look at it through different glasses to those which the judge may look through; but we must remember that very often argument is put forward by counsel for two conflicting interests. Both arguments seem reasonable and right from the respective points of view, and the judge has to give an impartial decision. In the same way we can see where the theories advanced by the Minister differ from some of the statements made by the hon. member for Fitzroy.

Mr. FERRICKS (*South Brisbane*): The leader of the Opposition was not altogether correct when he stated that the awards of the Arbitration Court operate differently in the case of employers as compared with employees. The hon. gentleman overlooked the fact that when the Federal Arbitration Act was launched its operations, so far as its limitations would allow, were fairly successful. The first people who defied an award in Australia were the Broken Hill Proprietary, Limited. They defied the award by promptly locking their employees out as soon as the award was given. The same thing applied in connection with the closure of the Mount Morgan mine. When the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company decided that a reduction of wages was necessary they went on strike by closing their mines and locking out the men, in defiance of the existing Arbitration Court award. We are told that capital and labour should be fine friends, and all that sort of thing. We are told that they should agree to be brothers. I will show how it applies in regard to hon. members opposite. When a man is selling a horse he is out to get as much as he can for that horse, while the prospective buyer endeavours to get the horse as cheaply as possible. There is no community of interest between those two bargainers. The same thing applies to the man who is selling his commodity—which is his labour—

to the employer. In fact, the worker who is selling his commodity of labour to the employer is in a worse position than the man who is selling the horse, because, whereas the man selling the horse can refuse to accept the price offered, the worker, through starvation, must sell his labour, even at a reduced price. That was well illustrated in the case of Mount Morgan, where the workers had to accept a reduced rate of wages.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Would it not also apply equally to the buyer and seller when goods are sold overseas?

Mr. FERRICKS: In the case of goods the buyer, who is probably on the other side of the world, has the opportunity of refusing to buy, and the seller has the privilege of not selling his goods if he does not get a sufficiently high price. But the man who has only got his labour to sell has to cut down his price, because of the necessities of life. The leader of the Opposition took exception to the speech delivered by the Minister. I am sure that, if that speech had been delivered at a street corner, there would have been a better interpretation placed on the Minister's remarks as to the aims and objects advocated than was shown by many members sitting on the opposite side. On a previous occasion I pointed out that, while the present Industrial Arbitration Act has achieved a great amount of good, the conditions operate very unfairly against the employees as compared with the employer. In making the award, consideration is always given in favour of the employer in regard to the amount of capital invested, and interest, depreciation, and working expenses. That is all on the employer's side; but on the worker's side the only thing taken into consideration is the bare cost of living. I pointed out on that occasion that that was unfair in its application and its incidence, and that the result is that the worker is placed at a disadvantage. There is nothing wrong with the Industrial Arbitration Act of 1916. As the Minister pointed out, it is the most advanced legislation of its kind in the world. The hon. member for Gregory last night pointed out very ably and fully the shortcomings of the Federal Arbitration Act in its application to disputes which may arise in only one State, and compared it with the simplicity of working of our Act. The hon. member for Pittsworth then asked by interjection what the Fisher Government had done to overcome that difficulty. I replied to that interjection by stating that the Fisher Government endeavoured to widen the scope of the Act. We know that in 1911 the Fisher Government submitted certain questions to a referendum of the people, and one of those questions asked for the authority of the people to alter the Commonwealth Constitution in order to allow the Arbitration Court to deal with a dispute that might arise in one State. The people, however, voted against it. The result of that was that in 1916 this Government introduced the Industrial Arbitration Act, which is working successfully, because, in intra-State occupations like those connected with the waterside workers, shearers, station hands, and so forth do not want to bother any more about the Federal Arbitration Act. They prefer to come under the more smoothly-working Queensland Act. The leader of the Opposition asserted that the Government, while carrying on their State enterprises, acted the same as the private employer, but that is not so. There is this difference: In the case of the private employer, due regard is paid to interest and depreciation, as well as working expenses, and these are embodied in the profits and dividends declared by the private employer. It is on these factors that the Arbitration Court bases its awards. The position in regard to the State and the State controlled institutions, which hon. members opposite criticise so much because they do not show a profit, is quite different, because no regard is paid to any profit. Hon. members overlook the fact, as has been stated by the hon. member for Leichhardt, that interest and depreciation in connection with the returns of the State enterprises are not taken into consideration in the comparison.

Mr. FLETCHER: That is a mere bagatelle compared with the total loss.

Mr. FERRICKS: The profits of capitalistic concerns are taken into consideration, by inclusion of interest, depreciation, and so forth. Consequently, the dividend or profit must appear higher than under a system of State capitalisation or State enterprise, where interest and redemption are first charges. Hon. members must see that a privately-owned institution may show a big profit, but out of that profit it has to pay interest and redemption. A State enterprise pays its interest and redemption first; consequently, it cannot show that big profit.

Mr. FLETCHER: It is a mere bagatelle.

Mr. FERRICKS: It is so big a bagatelle that the Arbitration Court, even under our advanced Act, has not taken it into consideration from the workers' point of view, although it is taken into consideration from the employers' point of view, and if, on investigation, the court concludes that an industry is not of average prosperity, it must reduce the wages of the employees. That is the only alternative the court visualises.

There was nothing very academic in the exposition of the working of the Act given by the Minister. His speech was a sound demonstration of its workings, but our Act can be improved in administration, because I contend that the court has not gone far enough in fairness to the employees. Nevertheless, the Act empowers the court at present to take into consideration more than the mere cost of living or the working expenses of the workers, because, as I have previously pointed out, section 8, subsection (1), paragraph (*b*) provides—

> "The court shall be entitled to consider the prosperity of the calling and the value of the employee's labour to the employer in addition to the standard of living, but in no case shall a rate of wages be paid which is lower than the minimum wage declared by the court."

In fact, the powers of the court are very wide: but, in my opinion, the court never does take into consideration the matters I have been referring to, otherwise there would never have been any necessity to reduce the basic wage in or outside the public service. Not only in recent times but during the war, when the inflation of prices was going on we often saw articles in the Press by persons opposed to a system of arbitration on the subject of the cost of living as increased by increases in wages. Immediately an award is given a

rise in the cost of living follows. Unfortunately, there is a great deal of truth in that statement, with the result that the system resolves itself into what is termed a vicious circle. It is like a dog chasing his own tail. I venture to assert that, if our Arbitration Act were operated scientifically, the cost of living would be controlled. Provision should be made that, when an award is given for an industry producing a manufactured article, if the selling price of that article increases, the individual or company producing it shall not be entitled to the increased price. It is not theirs. It is due to the application by the worker of his energy to the machinery, building, or factory turning it out. Suppose that an article selling at 1s. is jumped up on profiteering or other grounds to 1s. 3d. The extra 3d. should go to the workers who turn it out, and not to the employer, who does nothing towards turning it out. The system of allowing for interest and redemption is already in force under the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act, under which they are allowed for in fixing the price of cane for sale to a mill. I would not agree that any sliding scale of wages in conformity with variations in prices of commodities should operate downwards, because any such sliding scale would mean a decrease in the standard of living, notwithstanding what members of the other side or people outside who support our party may say to the contrary. Some of them take the view that a decrease in the rate of wages does not mean a reduction in the standard of living; but I would not agree to any sliding scale that would bring down any further the standard of living in Queensland or Australia, if the Act operated over the whole of Australia. The principle I advocate was recognised in the case of Mount Morgan negotiations, and, if the market went up, the rates of wages for the miners were to go up, so that there is nothing very new or far-fetched in it. If the wages of the workers in any industry increase in proportion to the advance in price of the articles produced by that industry then, as the Minister said, the incentive to inflate prices is removed, and there is no encouragement to profiteer. Many of us took up a similar position on the War Time Profits Tax Act, in which the Federal Government decided that the Treasury would confiscate or take 75 per cent. or 70 per cent. of the excess profits, leaving to those who made them the remaining 25 per cent. or 30 per cent. That Act put the Federal Government in the very strange position of somebody who sees a man burgling a bank and says to him, "You can go on with your job so long as you give me 75 per cent. of what you get." Our arbitration system does that unless the court pays greater attention to the value of the employee's labour to his employer, in addition to the standard of living, as set out in the section I have quoted. I submit that the Act gives full power to the court to do what I suggest, but the court has not taken these things into consideration, with the result that the community at large goes on suffering indefinitely. I repeat, the Arbitration Court never allows anything for depreciation from the workers' standpoint. There is the solitary exception of a very slight recognition of that principle in an award which was given to cover the work of
[2 p.m.] the worker in the dangerous airlock section of the operations of the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board. That practice operated very detrimentally in the resumption of operations at Mount Morgan. The items to which I have referred were all taken into consideration in arriving at a decision as to whether the industry was one of average prosperity and could carry on. When the workers were forced to resume, many of them knew that they were going back to a lingering death from miners' phthisis or to incapacitation as the result of a mining accident. It operated painfully against the workers generally during the currency of the war, owing to the inflation of prices on a profiteering basis, and it had a detrimental effect even after the war was over. The failure of the court to take into consideration—as it is empowered to do by section 8 of the Act—the value of the employee's labour to his employer in addition to the standard of living, has that bad effect which is operating to-day, notwithstanding the fact that awards were made during the currency of the war. The reason is that, while the wages appeared high during the war, prices were such as to allow of only a bare existence for the workers. The result was that the workers were living from day to day or week to week. When they are thrown out of employment, almost instantly, in the absence of being able to secure further work, they are on the bread line. That was responsible for the increase in the amount of outdoor relief provided for men out of employment. That fact has been brought home to us repeatedly. We know that it exists to-day. As soon as men are out of a job, by virtue of the fact that, when they are in work they cannot make provision for a time of unemployment, they have to fall back on outdoor relief for subsistence for themselves, their wives, and families.

There is a contention that single men should be placed on a different wage. There is a danger there, as has been pointed out by the hon. member for Fitzroy. If that system is once commenced the employers would not be content unless they employed all single men, with the result that there would be a greater number of married men unemployed. That system would operate unfairly, as it operated very unfairly during the war, when single men were jeered at because they did not see their way clear to enlist. It is well known that some single men have more dependents and greater family responsibilities than a great many married men. It is said that the single man, in receiving a wage fixed on the basis of a wage provided for a man, wife, and three children, is receiving an undue advantage. Many single men receiving a wage on that basis very often have great family responsibilities, and, in fact, many of them are not able to marry for that reason. Many young men and young women stick to the home instead of getting married.

Mr. FLETCHER: That is not the general rule.

Mr. FERRICKS: There are a great many men in the Commonwealth service to-day who are not married, and who have greater responsibilities than many men who are married, consequently they are greatly handicapped in that regard. It has been contended that, if an industry cannot continue to exist, the wage in that industry must come down. Why we are very suspicious and do not approve of that contention, and believe that those who advance it are not sincere, is because we remember that ten or eleven years ago we were told that the

sugar industry could not afford to pay more than 5½d. an hour, or 3s. 9d. a day.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Look at the price of cane then.

Mr. FERRICKS: It was said that, if the rate was fixed at 5½d. an hour, or 3s. 9d. a day, the sugar industry would be ruined. The Press and the associations that support hon. gentlemen opposite reiterated that from one end of Queensland to the other, and resolutions were passed by the hundred in protest against an increase in the wages. The Liberal members in the Senate and the House of Representatives representing Queensland at that time waited upon the then Federal Treasurer and told him that it would mean absolute ruin to the sugar industry if he interfered with the rate of wages. In connection with Mount Morgan the question which chiefly concerned the Arbitration Court, I believe, was the opening of the mine, and the men had to go back under conditions extremely disadvantageous in comparison with those allowed the company under the then existing award. The speech of the Minister this morning should bring before those who are responsible for administering these matters that it is intended to go further than place the workers' wages on the basis of the mere cost of existence. That, unfortunately, has been the practice of the court up to the present time. The court does not always go into the question of the standard of living, as I have pointed out in regard to Mount Morgan.

The working classes, therefore, are placed at a distinct disadvantage in the fixing of these awards. We deprecate the sentiments which are expressed by hon. members opposite very often and by their supporters outside that, when an Arbitration Court Award is in operation, there should be no resort to strikes. The Minister pointed out that at the time the strike to which reference was made took place the men could not get to the Federal Arbitration Court because of the congestion of the court. If, when an award is made, the employing institutions concerned in the award take upon themselves to set at defiance the award of the court, would hon. members deny the same right to the workers? It is not a doctrine to be encouraged, because we know from experience in Queensland what the men had to go through in the 1911 sugar strike. Many of them were compelled to lie on gumleaves, and they had to subsist on credit. The hon. member for Albert knows all about this, because he was in charge of the police at the time, and there was some question between the hon. gentleman and myself concerning the administration of that department. For that reason we do not encourage direct action, but, if men are denied the right to go to the court, or if they cannot get to the court because of manipulation, then it is the only thing left for them. I feel sure that the workers generally never will give up the right to strike.

Mr. FLETCHER (*Port Curtis*): The Minister made a long speech, and gave us a dissertation on the operations of the Arbitration Court, the reason apparently being to fill up "Hansard" and take up time on these Estimates so as to prevent us from getting to the Trust and Loan Funds on which, as the Minister knows, we have some important subjects to discuss. They are determined that we shall not get that far, and we are now satisfied that there is no chance of it. The hon. member for South Brisbane stated that the Minister showed how the Arbitration Court could be improved, but the hon. gentleman's speech did not convey that impression to me. He did not show how the court could be improved at all. All he gave were some unsound theories which, if put into operation, would cause almost a revolution in society, and would upset all our finances—a thing which we cannot permit to take place if we want the country to advance. The Minister referred to a meeting of the Employers' Federation and to some remarks made by Mr. Bowen at that meeting. I do not know whether Mr. Bowen made those remarks, but he is declared to have said that it was time the gloves were taken off, and the Minister inferred from that that the idea was to reduce wages and make them lower and lower. The people of Queensland know that a statement of that kind is absolutely ridiculous, and no one knows it better than the hon. gentleman. It is just like the statement he made last night in referring to the minutes of an executive meeting, when he said his party would refund the £500,000 collected under the Repudiation Act when they were returned to power.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Mr. Garbutt did say that.

Mr. FLETCHER: The Minister knows that it is quite impossible for us to do that; but is suits his purpose for propaganda. We have no concern at all with outside bodies. If individuals in these associations and organisations make statements, we are not responsible for them, and neither can we be connected with them. I would like to know how the Government get this information. Have they got a secret service and a system of spies for obtaining such information? What would happen if we adopted the same tactics? It never enters our mind to do such things; but, if we had secret service men going round to collect information about Government caucus meetings to use it as party propaganda, it would be a terrible state of affairs. Yet that is apparently what hon. members opposite are doing. They are always getting hold of speeches made in private meetings and using them as party propaganda. The people know that we, as a party, do not stand for that sort of thing, and that, when we are returned to power, we will conduct the affairs of the State on sound and common-sense lines, and with justice to all. That is what I came into Parliament for, and nothing that the Minister says will alter that. That sort of thing will not have any effect in the Port Curtis electorate.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Is that why you left the Nationalist party? You practically could not get justice from the Nationalist party.

Mr. FLETCHER: I practically stood as a Country party candidate. (Government laughter.) The Minister also dealt with the subject of capital, and drew some deductions from the fact that capital is increased from time to time and reserve funds built up. The hon. member knows that the country could not last long without capital, and that it is necessary for us to get more capital. It is necessary for a company to have a reserve fund and to build up its reserves. The hon. member should know from his experience in connection with State stations that reserves are necessary, and he should not wish to

curtail the reserves of private companies. If that was done, unemployment would become more rampant. The Minister's deductions are very unsound. In all matters concerning capital you have to walk circumspectly, otherwise your cure may be worse than the disease. We are not ready yet for any other social system. The reason why there is so much unemployment is because private enterprise has been hampered so much during the last few years. I believe that we can give good wages and conditions under the system we are living under and greatly improve the conditions by a process of evolution. The hon. member for South Brisbane made some reference to Mount Morgan, and said that the wages system there should so operate that, when there is an increase in the price of copper, the wages should advance. That may be a sound argument in ordinary circumstances under a mutual agreement between employers and employees; but, in the case of Mount Morgan, it must be remembered that even under the present system of subsidising wages which the company are operating under they are losing money. The suggestion of the hon. member could not be accepted by the company, seeing that they are already losing heavily. The Minister, and also the hon. member for Fitzroy, asked why employers did not give higher wages than those fixed by the Arbitration Court award. While a few employers might give an increased rate of wage, that could not operate throughout the State generally. That practice would be unsound and would undermine the Arbitration Court system, and cause dissatisfaction amongst those who did not get the increased rate. We must abide by the Arbitration Court awards.

Mr. HARTLEY: Do you repudiate the doctrine of payment by results?

Mr. FLETCHER: Certainly not. The Arbitration Court fixes the rate of pay in an industry. The Minister dealt with the word "conciliation" in the title of the Industrial Arbitration Act, and said that the aim was to bring conciliation into operation. It is a pity that he does not practise what he preaches. If we had more conciliation and a better feeling created between employer and employee, we would get along much better. But instead of a conciliatory spirit being shown, we had the hon. member for Ipswich last night stating—the Minister agreeing with him—that what we want to establish is an Industrial Arbitration Court with one of the workers as president of the court. That is what he meant, but no sensible or common-sense man will agree with him.

Mr. STOPFORD: Why?

Mr. FLETCHER: The worker may be an estimable man in every way, but he may not have the qualities to fit him to hold such a position. The hon. member also said that what he advocated and upheld was class consciousness and class hatred between employer and employee. That is a damnable doctrine to preach, and any member of this House who advances such ideas should be ashamed of himself.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. FLETCHER: A man who says that is no friend of the worker. I consider I am 100 per cent. better friend of the worker.

Mr. STOPFORD: You are 150 per cent. worse. (Laughter.)

Mr. FLETCHER: Instead of hon. members opposite wasting their time in theories and unsound and destructive principles, they should deal with something that is possible under our present system of working, and bring in something which is of some benefit, such as profit-sharing. There are many industries in which profit-sharing can be carried on, although, of course, it cannot be carried on in all industries. Instead of hon. members opposite trying to foster class consciousness and class hatred between employer and employee, it would be better to talk of something that is for the benefit of the workers. Hon. members opposite are up against the practice of piecework in industry. I believe that piecework is a good thing for everyone engaged in industry. In many industries it is possible to give small contracts to sections of men engaged in those industries—to give them a certain amount on contract and let them complete their work and go home. That would be much better for the men, because they would take more interest in their work. It is not possible to bring piecework into all industries but you can do it with some. The policy of the Labour unions, however, is against it, and every time piecework has been advanced for the good of the industry they have absolutely turned it down.

Mr. WEIR: It is no good.

Mr. FLETCHER: It is an absolutely good thing. We want to encourage industries and to provide opportunities for young men to make a start on their own, so that they will become employers instead of employees. The more employers we get the better for this State. The whole method of the present Administration is against allowing young men to make a start for themselves. The hon. member for South Brisbane dealt with and the hon. member for Enoggera read some extracts concerning the question of the wages paid to single men and married men. I contend that there is no more inequitable or unjust thing in this country than the present wage system. A boy of eighteen years of age might be drawing up to £6 a week and a man forty years of age, with six or eight children, draws only the same wage. Is there anything fair or just in that? When a young man of eighteen draws that wage, it has the effect of demoralising him. He does not know the value of money, and he does not take the opportunity to learn a trade. When a young man gets money like that, he is likely to get into bad habits. If he were going to save up and start out for himself it would be all right. A great number of them waste their money in "two-up" or by going to the races, and so forth. I consider it is most demoralising, and no good for the future of those men or for the future of the country. On the other hand, the married man with six or eight children finds that the wage he receives is not sufficient to live on and keep and clothe his wife and children befittingly, as well as provide them with decent comforts.

Mr. HARTLEY: That means that the married man's wages are too low.

Mr. FLETCHER: I know of nothing more inequitable than the present system. The hon. member for South Brisbane made reference to this, and I believe that hon. member is a very sincere man, and tries to do the best he can for the workers according to his views. He said that it would be impracticable to alter the system, because the employers would engage only single men. That

may seem a sound argument on the surface, but there are ways of overcoming the difficulty.

Mr. HARTLEY: How would you overcome it?

Mr. FLETCHER: When we get the opportunity we will find a way of overcoming it.

Mr. HARTLEY: There is only one way of overcoming it, and that is by paying the married men higher wages. I will bet you are not game to say that.

Mr. FLETCHER: An industry can only stand a certain award. You have a single man, on the one hand, getting £6 per week, and on the other hand a married man with eight children drawing the same amount. It is too little in one case and too much in the other, and I consider that the single man might put a portion of his wage into a pool, which could be distributed equitably amongst the married men. That is one way of dealing with the matter; but there are other ways.

Mr. WEIR: Which produces more revenue for the State?

Mr. FLETCHER: I should say the married man every time. Does the hon. member not know that for every child of the married man the State gets £1 5s. from the Commonwealth?

Mr. WEIR: Is that revenue?

Mr. FLETCHER: Of course it is. It is population that makes revenue.

Mr. WEIR: You are contending that a married man with eight children turns out more than a single man.

Mr. FLETCHER: I say that the married man does better than the single man, because, for one thing, he is more interested in his work.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: He is more reliable.

Mr. FLETCHER: The hon. member for Gregory last night said that he believed in arbitration and defended the Arbitration Court, whereas the hon. member for Ipswich, if I understood him aright, said something totally different. The hon. member for Gregory declared that if we were in power we would abolish the Arbitration Court and revert to the system of round-table conferences. I say that there is not the slightest likelihood of that. We have tried conferences, and they have not been a success. They prolonged the issues interminably, and were really debating societies for young men who wished to practise with a view to getting into Parliament or becoming organisers. We never got anywhere. We were weeks and weeks and weeks on awards, and then they operated unsatisfactorily. I say that arbitration is the very best thing we have discovered, and we stand for it. Anyone who is going to knock it out has to provide some alternative scheme.

Mr. FERRICKS: Who said that?

Mr. FLETCHER: The hon. member for Gregory said that, if we were returned to power, that is what we would do.

Mr. GREEN: The hon. member for Ipswich also said it.

Mr. FLETCHER: Hon. members opposite are continually trying to make political capital out of such statements, but there is no foundation for them. We stand for arbitration as the best thing that we have yet devised. The greatest weakness in the arbitration system is that the awards are not sufficiently binding. If the employees do not get all they want, they are liable to strike—go in for direct action. I consider that an award should be so binding as to make it impossible for anybody to strike.

Mr. HARTLEY: Make it impossible for employers to lock their men out?

Mr. FLETCHER: If the Arbitration Court says that it is unjustifiable or against the law, most certainly. I consider that the Arbitration Court could be very greatly improved in many directions, but I have no time to go into that now. The Act is too rigid; it requires to be more elastic. It does not give sufficient opportunities for men to introduce apprentices to learn trades. We have too many unskilled men growing up, and there is no encouragement for anyone to start industries which require apprentices. An Arbitration Court judge occupies a most responsible position. He has to possess the qualities of justice, soundness, and firmness. If an industry requires an increase in wages, he should undoubtedly give it, and if it requires a reduction of wages, he should likewise give it, because it is impossible for an industry to carry on if the wages are too high to enable it to compete throughout the world. The wages should be fixed on an economic basis and according to the cost of living. An Arbitration Court judge has to be a man of great talents. I think I said in the first session I was here that I doubted whether he was not the foremost man in the land, and that is why I say it is impossible for anybody who has not a judicial mind and the gift of knowing what is a fair thing and the capacity to analyse a matter thoroughly to discharge such duties. When the Arbitration Court was first established, it was very badly controlled, possibly because of the inexperience of the judges. Since then they have had great experience, and I think they are now doing better work.

Mr. HARTLEY: Their awards are suiting you now; that is why.

Mr. FLETCHER: The hon. member has not enough intelligence to understand what I am saying.

Mr. HARTLEY: If I hadn't more sense than you I would make a hole in the river.

Mr. FLETCHER: It is impossible to keep wages above their true economic level. Did not the Government find it necessary to approach the Arbitration Court and ask for a reduction? I believe in honesty of speech. Last session I said that it would [2.30 p.m.] be necessary to reduce wages—particularly in the Government service. I was called a low-wage advocate and all that sort of thing by hon. members opposite. Things have come about as I said they would. In the case of the Government, it has been due to the fact that tremendous sums of money have been wasted in State enterprises, soldier settlements, and the carrying out of the day-labour system, etc. We have not got true value for our money. The interest bill has mounted up year by year, and we are not getting the revenue necessary to meet it. Consequently a reduction in wages was found to be necessary. Had it been possible to keep them up, they would have been kept up. When we get into power, not a penny reduction will take place unless it is absolutely necessary. We intend to inspire confidence, to encourage people to start

industries, so that we shall have prosperity in the country. If there is prosperity in the country, there is no necessity for reduced wages. I believe in telling the people the true state of affairs. If a reduction is approaching, it is our duty to tell the people rather than to say that there will be no reduction in order to catch their votes—as hon. members opposite did. That will work against them at the next election; it must. They said that we were the people who would reduce wages. They were elected on the pledge that there would be no reduction, and when they got in they broke that pledge. The leader of the Opposition, on behalf of this party, has stated that the Arbitration Court will not be abolished, nor will we resort to any other means of fixing wages; we will maintain the standard of living at the highest point, recognising it is for the good of the community that that should be done. The higher wages can be kept the better it is for all, but we cannot keep them above the economic level. If you try to overcome these difficulties by temporary expedients, your action may react like a boomerang. You have to do the sound thing right through, and by evolution gradually improve the position.

Mr. PAYNE (*Mitchell*): I would like to say a few words in reply to the charges made in regard to me last evening by the hon. member for Murrumba. He has tried to make this Committee believe that I was sweating an old-age pensioner. As I have always said in this House, facts are facts; they are difficult things to dodge. I am going to give the facts. There is certainly an old-age pensioner on this farm. He is seventy-three years of age. Would the hon. member for Murrumba give him a home at all?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

Mr. PAYNE: I do not work him; he does as he likes.

Mr. VOWLES: You cannot get away from the fact that you pay him when he works.

Mr. PAYNE: I pay 12s. 6d. per day to young men when they work on this farm. The lowest wages ever paid on that farm were 10s. per day. The hon. member for Murrumba told the Committee that this farm comprised 50 acres. That is not correct. There are 30 acres, 5 acres of which are cultivated. Everyone knows that 5 acres of pineapples in the winter time do not require a man's whole time. I will not say what I am paying the old-age pensioner, because I think I would be doing him some harm. I am very pleased that the letter which was read by the hon. member for Murrumba became public property by being laid on the table of the House. It is supposed to be signed by A. Dobson, junior. I cannot conceive that that man wrote that letter. He is a returned soldier—a fine specimen of a young fellow, reared just about there. I was responsible for getting that man temporary employment on the railway. I made a special trip to see the Commissioner for Railways. I understand he is still in temporary employment on the railway.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: If he were a man, he would not have written that letter.

Mr. PAYNE: He is an industrious young chap. He was stuck for a horse while engaged in cutting house stumps. He came to me and asked for the loan of one. I said "What for?" He said "To put in a lerry to pull house stumps. I have one good horse." I said "There is a horse there; take him and use him."

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He never wrote that letter.

Mr. PAYNE: I cannot conceive that he did. He has a brother, Jim Dobson, a married man. He had been working on this farm before, and was receiving 12s. 6d. a day. The old-age pensioner never touches a plough—he is too old. He was brought there to stop people thieving, because they had thieved about £30 worth of tools. The married brother of this Dobson is a very decent chap. Only last Tuesday I said, "What wages do you want?" He said, "12s. 6d. a day." I said, "Very well, take it on." He may be engaged at this moment on it. I fail to see where there has been any sweating.

The history of this farm is interesting. I think the hon. member for Cook (Mr. Ryan), is responsible for this farm being in existence at all. There was an advertisement in the paper one day about some land being put up as a perpetual lease. I happened to have been up to my electorate, where I met four or five pensioners, who said that they would like to come down here to do some fowl farming. I said to Mr. Ryan, "Harry, go up and bid for that." He said "What will I bid?" I said "You know all about it." He did, and he got it.

Mr. RYAN: I got it for the upset price.

Mr. PAYNE: The rent on it is 18s. a year, and the shire council rates are 10s. a year. These old chaps have been lifelong friends of mine; they live in and around Longreach. When I went back and put the question to them, they did not come, and the thing lay there for years. A lad of mine left school and said to me that, if I developed five acres he would go on to it. I paid 12s. 6d. a day for the clearing of that land. Never has a man worked on that farm for less than 10s. a day. My lad went on to it for a fortnight and did not care about staying there. I did not insist on his doing so. The farm is there, and anybody can have it for what it actually cost me. I have a lot more to say if I like to be nasty; but I am not going to be.

Mr. WARREN: I have some more for you.

Mr. PAYNE: If the hon. member does not play the game, I will let him have some more later on. I just desired to give the Committee the true facts of this so-called socialistic farm of mine. I spent £1,200 on it, and I have not received £50 off it.

Mr. EDWARDS: The hon. member should have some sympathy for the man on the land now.

Mr. PAYNE: I have given the plain and unvarnished facts of the whole case. If anyone, including the old-age pensioner employed on my farm, has not been more kindly treated than the people employed by the hon. member for Murrumba I am prepared to leave this Chamber.

The CHAIRMAN: I take this opportunity of saying, in connection with the request I made to the hon. member for Murrumba last night that he should lay on the table a certain letter that he read, that I find on consulting authorities that that can only be done by order of the House. I do not want to give any decision in this chair that

would be unfair to any hon. member, and I take this opportunity of stating the position for the benefit of every member of the Committee. It is distinctly laid down in "May" that, if a Minister of the Crown quotes from an official document, and a member of the House or Committee asks that the document be placed upon the table for the information of hon. members generally, the Minister has the right to decline if certain portions of the document are confidential; and in no instance in the British House of Commons has it been insisted that the Minister must do it. If there is a general public document in which there is no confidential information, and which may be of information to members of the House or Committee, if that document has not already been tabled as a parliamentary paper, it may be laid upon the table. This does not apply to private letters. My decision last night was given largely because I recollected that on a previous occasion the hon. member for Mirani read a letter in this Chamber from a certain farmer in the Bowen electorate, and at the conclusion of the quotation of that letter the hon. member for Bowen rose and asked that it should be placed on the table. The ruling I gave last night was based on the ruling given on that occasion. The hon. member for Mirani was requested to table that letter in the same way as the hon. member for Murrumba was requested to do last night.

Mr. VOWLES: On your instructions.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes. I would point out that in future it is quite within the rights of hon. members to refuse to table any private letters that they may read; but I might point out that an hon. member will certainly weaken his case if he refuses to place a letter on the table, and hon. members will be justified in drawing their own inference. I hope hon. members will be satisfied with the explanation I have made, and in future they will know exactly what the position is with regard to reading private letters. They need not place such letters on the table unless they wish to do so. It is only public documents that must be laid upon the table of the House, but, if they contain information of a confidential nature, and if the Minister of the Crown, in the exercise of his duty and in compliance with his oath, considers it inadvisable to disclose that information, he can refuse to lay the document on the table.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): I thank you for your explanation, Mr. Kirwan. It was only at your request that I laid the letter on the table. I am not blaming you or the Committee in any way. The young man wrote the letter to me, and then came and told me that I could make any use I liked of it. The hon. member for Mitchell has not replied to my statements; he has simply made an explanation which is absurd. His so-called explanation makes matters ten times worse. He says that he has a man over seventy years of age to protect his property. That is a cowardly state of affairs.

Mr. PAYNE (*Mitchell*): I ask that the hon. member withdraw that remark.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! While I do not wish to prevent the hon. member for Murrumba from replying, I do trust that, when the hon. member has stated his side of the question, this personal incident will close. I suggest that the hon. member withdraw the word "cowardly."

[*Mr. Payne.*

Mr. WARREN: I will withdraw it; but it is a wrong thing to put an old man in a position of danger.

Mr. HARTLEY: Don't talk like a "kid."

Mr. WARREN: I will not talk like a lunatic.

Mr. HARTLEY: The hon. member is talking like a baby.

Mr. WARREN: The hon. member talks like a lunatic. If £30 worth of property were stolen from that place, it is not right that an old man should be put there to protect the property.

Mr. PAYNE: I said "pounds' worth" was stolen.

Mr. WARREN: The hon. gentleman says that this man is unfitted for work, yet I am informed that he actually does work. The young man who gave me that information is a man of excellent character; no one in Queensland has a better character. Not only was he a brave soldier who did his duty at the front, but he is doing his duty here now. He stood up because he would not see one of his "cobbers" stabbed in the back. This farm is for sale at £900. There is not a farm at Beerburrum with more improvements than £625 worth, and this farm has no house.

Mr. HARTLEY: What rot!

Mr. WARREN: Not half of the improvements have been put on that farm that have been put on other farms at Beerburrum. I am prepared to disclose all my actions, and allow any independent tribunal to test them. I bear no animosity, but I object to a man going around my place picking up tit-bits of scandal from suspicious persons and men not of too good character. I have taken this stand only to protect myself. I did not throw the mud; the mud was thrown at me. It is not sticking to me; it is sticking to the hon. member for Mitchell. If he wants any more, I am prepared to give him more. I have got any amount more that I can give him.

Mr. BRENNAN: The hon. member said that before, and he paid for it. He had to pay £50 damages for defamation. He will not say outside what he has to say.

Mr. WARREN: I am prepared to say it outside. People who live in glass houses should not throw stones. I will give full particulars if necessary. I bear no animosity, but, as the charge was made against me, I had to defend myself.

Mr. FOLEY (*Leichhardt*): I have listened with a great deal of interest to the debate on this vote, particularly in view of the fact that the Opposition members seem to be divided in their ideas on this question of arbitration. The leader of the Opposition endeavoured to convey the impression that he was in favour of arbitration.

Mr. VOWLES: That is in our platform.

Mr. FOLEY: That is one of the things in your front window. The hon. member for Oxley has claimed on various occasions that the Country party are not in favour of arbitration, but that they are in favour of a system of payment by results, profit-sharing, and other systems which are in the interests of the class that they represent. It has been proved on more than one occasion that hon. members opposite make statements in this Chamber which they know full well are not in accord with the real aims of the party.

There are other interests at the back of the Country party and the Nationalist party movement which have a great deal to say in determining the policy of those parties. An illustration of that was given in this Chamber the other day by the Secretary for Public Works. We had another illustration some time ago in connection with a meeting that took place in Brisbane on 27th January of this year, when the big interests represented at that meeting discussed the best methods to adopt to provide ways and means in support of their parliamentary candidates, many of whom are in this Chamber. One of the organs representing one section of the big interests that support hon. members opposite, in an article dealing with immigration some time ago, had this to say—and it is from this that we get a reflex of what is in the minds of the big interests supporting members opposite, and what the parties opposite will be forced to carry out when the occasion arises.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope the hon. member will connect his remarks with the vote.

Mr. FOLEY: I will do so. This is what the "Pastoralists' Review" states in reference to the Arbitration Court—

> "To institute successful immigration we must first burn our Arbitration Court, abolish the basic wage, price-fixing, and lessen the cost of production."

Hon. members opposite have pointed out to this Committee that they are in favour of arbitration. Let us see what the hon. member for Oxley says about it. I have here an extract taken from the Melbourne "Age," which was published in the "Daily Mail," of 15th February, 1922, dealing with the question of arbitration. Amongst other things the hon. member said—

> "The industrial position in Queensland, according to Mr. Elphinstone, is worse than in any other State in the Commonwealth. The statistics showed, he said, that in Queensland shorter hours were worked and higher wages were paid than in any other State.
>
> "The Arbitration Court system of determining wages and conditions had proved a lamentable failure in his State.
>
> "It had to be recognised, he said, that while we are dependent upon the world's markets, the industry concerned and not the Arbitration Court must determine the wages."

That shows that the hon. member for Oxley, in an unguarded moment, voiced his views on arbitration, and, if other hon. members opposite expressed their views, they would voice the same opinions.

Mr. EDWARDS: You have a very suspicious mind.

Mr. FOLEY: I have not; I am taking your own statements. Hon. members opposite have continually stated in this Chamber that the wages ruling in Queensland to-day are crippling industry. What can we infer from that but that hon. members opposite claim that the wages are excessive, and that the industries cannot bear them? As a matter of fact, the opposite is shown to be the case, if we take "Knibbs's" statistics. If we take the profits from manufactures and the profit from the primary industries, and also see the progress that has taken place in the various industries in the State, the lie is given to those statements, because all these industries show a great improvement. The hon. member for Port Curtis stated quite clearly that he was in favour of arbitration, and in another part of his speech he mentioned that the workers in an industry should be paid according to results. The hon. member on 21st October, 1921, in reply to an interjection levelled at him by the Premier, stated emphatically that he would reduce wages. That was how he put it.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS: Adjust wages.

Mr. FOLEY: Adjusting wages is quite a different thing to reducing wages. If one can take the remarks of the Arbitration Court judges as correct, there has been no reduction in wages in Queensland, although hon. members opposite try to make us believe that there has been. The judge pointed out very clearly before coming to a decision that he was not reducing wages at all; that he was adjusting wages, and was not in any way affecting the real wage of the workers.

Mr. MAXWELL: Your Government said they were not retrenching men—that they were deflating them—but they "sacked" them.

Mr. FOLEY: My contention is that the judge of the Arbitration Court did adjust wages. The attitude I took up, and I think it is well known to the public by this time, is that the opportunity should not have been given to the Arbitration Court to adjust wages, or, at any rate, the wages of the public servants. Still, we must recognise that there has been no reduction in wages, if the figures upon which the Arbitration Court judge relied in fixing the basic wage are obtained from the same source as those used previously when the cost of living was on the increase, and the judge gave increased wages on account of the increased cost of living. There has simply been an adjustment of wages. That is what it amounts to. The real wage is exactly the same, if those figures are true. But I argue to some extent that the Commonwealth Statistician cuts his figures too fine. I do not think any reasonably-minded man representing the workers in Queensland can object to the principle of arbitration; but, at the same time, it must be recognised that the Arbitration Court has not proved as beneficial as was expected. That is something that can be attended to in the future. But the principle of arbi-

[3 p.m.] tration is good, and I claim, with other hon. members on this side, that since the Act has been in operation a great deal of good has resulted to the workers of Queensland. They have received increases in wages in accordance with the increased cost of living, which they would not have received if they had been dependent upon round-table conferences, such as hon. members opposite have suggested, where the employing class practically hold a whip over the heads of the workers, and say, "You can take it if you like; but if you do not, we will simply lock you out." That is what the round-table conferences amount to.

Dealing with the principle of arbitration, I am in agreement with the hon. member for South Brisbane, who stated that sufficient factors are not taken into consideration by our Arbitration Court judges when determining the rate of wage for the average worker throughout the State. The hon. member pointed out that no consideration was shown for the depreciation of the energy of the employee; while, on the other hand, consideration is given to the capitalist and

employer in all parts of Australia for the depreciation of the capital invested in industry. The same thing applies in connection with the carriers throughout Queensland. In connection with their income tax assessments, consideration is given by the Commissioner of Taxation to the depreciation on the capital invested in the industry, which means that they are allowed to deduct 5 per cent. for depreciation on the horses and stock employed in their business. There should be the same consideration given to all employees. Another point which I think our Arbitration Court judges are not responsible for, and the Government should make some amendment in the matter, is that alongside the Arbitration Court an investigation bureau should be established to inquire into the factors governing various industries. I claim that when the judge is giving his award and only using figures supplied by "Knibbs," which figures were given to Mr. Knibbs by the various agents in the States in the Commonwealth, the information cannot be absolutely accurate, and the judge is at a disadvantage. If such an investigation bureau was established to go into all the factors, the judge would be in a much better position to determine what is a fair standard of comfort, and what wage an industry can bear, and also to go into the question of whether the industry is being carried on in accordance with the standard of industries in other countries. If we have to take the bare evidence supplied by many of the employers' representatives in the court—in many cases I have attended as a looker-on—many of their statements have not been disputed; while, on the other hand, the evidence supplied by the representatives of the employees has been keenly analysed from every point of view. In that respect the Arbitration Court does not act as equitably as it should do. Take the case of a factory working with obsolete methods, where the introduction of new machines and other improvements would increase the efficiency of the employees. I have never noticed that those factors have been taken into consideration in the cases which I have had the opportunity of watching. I understand that in America and other places competition has developed to such an extent that some of the great industries there have every few years to scrap as much as £50,000 or £100,000 worth of machinery, and introduce new machinery to keep the industry up to date. If there is no investigation bureau to advise the judge as to the position—especially the state of development of the industry he is dealing with—he may be dealing with an industry which is twenty years behind the times, and is regarded as below the average degree of prosperity on account of the small rate of interest returned on the capital invested, because of the obsolete methods in vogue; and the workers in that industry have to suffer in consequence of the laxity of the employer in not keeping the industry up to the modern standard. The time has arrived when the Government should go very seriously into the matter, with a view to establishing a different basis for our Arbitration Court judges to work upon than that which is in existence at the present time. In looking up the matter I find we are no further advanced than we were twenty-two years ago, as regards the principle adopted by our Arbitration Court judges. I find that in 1890 the late Sir Samuel Griffith, who was then Premier of Queensland, introduced a measure into Parliament entitled the Elementary Property Law of Queensland, clause 21 of which read—

> "The natural and proper measure of wages is such a sum as is a fair immediate recompense for the labour for which they are paid, having regard to its character and duration; but it can never be taken at a less sum than such as is sufficient to maintain the labourer and his family in a state of health and reasonable comfort."

That is the principle we are working on to-day. I take it that our Arbitration Court judges to-day have to go on the basis of determining the cost of living, and what wages are necessary for an employee so that he will be in a position to continue his energy from week to week, and the fact that that basis was advocated in those days by Sir Samuel Griffith shows that it is practically out of date to-day. I do not say that the Arbitration Court judges have stood still. In 1906, the late Mr. Justice O'Connor, then President of the Commonwealth Arbitration Court, spoke as follows:—

> ". . . There must also be added something for the increased cost of living in Australia, not only by reason of the higher cost of some of life's necessaries, but also by reason of the increased comfort of living and the higher standard of social conditions, which the general sense of the community in Australia allows to those who live by labour."

Those remarks were made in the case of "Merchant Service Guild *v.* Commonwealth Steamship Owners' Association." He points out one particular point which is worth remembering, and that is, that to a great extent the general sense of the community regards the higher standard of comfort as one of the factors that tend to an increase in the standard of living; yet the judge has to a great extent depended upon that general sense of the community because of the fact that there is no other basis for him to work from. The only basis he works from is the cost of living. I claim that we should go further. I disagree to a great extent with Mr. Knibbs when he pointed out some time ago in reference to the report of the Basic Wage Commission of 1919—

> "In December, 1919, a Royal Commission (which took the name 'Basic Wage Commission') was appointed, consisting of seven members. . . . Their task was to furnish answers to several questions, including the following:—
>
> 1. The actual cost of living at the present time, according to reasonable standards of comfort, including all matters comprised in the ordinary expenditure of a household, for a man with a wife, and three children under fourteen years of age, and the several items and amounts which make up that cost."

There were answers to other questions, but the unanimous answer of the Basic Wage Commission to Question No. 1 was "£5 16s. per week, as at 1st November, 1920." I claim that the cost of living has not receded to such an extent that £4 a week should be considered a fair wage in Queensland at the present time. Yet our Arbitration Court has not the power to base an award on the decision arrived at by the Basic Wage Commission referred to above. I understand the reason that the decision of the Piddington

Basic Wage Commission was not accepted was because Mr. Knibbs, in a memorandum to the Prime Minister upon the feasibility of paying £5 16s. a week, pointed out—

> "Such a wage cannot be paid to all adult employees, because the whole produced wealth of the country, including all that portion of produced wealth which now goes in the shape of profits to employers, would not, if divided up equally amongst the employees, yield the necessary weekly amount."

That memorandum overturned the whole of the work of the Commission, which decided on the standard of comfort as existing at that time. I claim that it was only a get-out for the Commonwealth Prime Minister. He referred it to Mr. Knibbs, who only works on the figures supplied to him from the various States of the Commonwealth. Mr. Knibbs does not take into consideration other factors in the community that are operating apart from the wealth produced and the wages paid in the State. I claim that indirectly more than £5 16s. per week can be paid from the results of industry throughout Australia to-day. It is up to this Government in the very near future to take into consideration the fact that the standard of comfort which is awarded by the court to-day is not a fair standard of comfort, and some steps should be taken to have a thorough investigation made, to enable every factor to be taken into consideration, particularly the operation of economic laws. We might also take into consideration the question of amending the Industrial Arbitration Act, and establishing a different basis for fixing wages to that which exists at present, so that the Arbitration Court judges will be able to fix the wages on a much higher basis, and give a higher standard of comfort to every employee throughout the State.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): We are all agreed as to the need for arbitration, but at the same time I think we are also agreed that the present institution is not by any means perfect. After all, the true test to apply to anything is the result. I have the figures showing the lack of progress in our manufacturing industries during the last six or seven years. They are certainly not encouraging, and it is a question whether we should not consider if the court is not one of the factors that have influenced that retrogression. I find that in 1914 we had 1,795 factories in Queensland, employing 43,382 hands, but in 1919 the number of factories was reduced to 1,754, and the number of hands employed has decreased to 40,000 odd. It is no use saying that this sort of thing happened in all the States, because it did not. In fact, both in New South Wales and Victoria, increases are shown for that period, both in the number of factories and in the number of hands employed.

With regard to what I might call the manufacturing factories—that is, only those factories which are engaged in working up material in the towns, because many factories in Queensland are engaged in working up primary products, such as the sugar-mills—we find that they have considerably increased in the other States, but in Queensland since 1916, coincident with the passing of the Industrial Arbitration Act, the increase has been almost nil. In 1916-17 the increase in Queensland was 1.16 per cent.; in 1917-18 the increase was 1.35 per cent., and the same in the following year, but in 1920-21 the increase was only .24 per cent. There is no inducement for people to invest their capital in Queensland under those conditions; and it is a matter for consideration whether the Arbitration Court is not responsible for this very grave position. Imperfections exist so far as the court is concerned, and one of the greatest is the fact that the court cannot enforce its decisions. If there is any dereliction on the part of the employer, he is prosecuted; but the employees can commit breaches of the Act as often as they like with impunity. When the dice are loaded in that manner, it is a discouragement to investors, because they will not put their money into anything in the country when the laws are administered on those lines. This has to do with the Minister and the policy of the Government, and not the court. I have been able to show time after time where section 65 of the Act has been broken and no notice taken of it. Section 65 lays down that notice of a strike must be given; but we have had numberless strikes. In fact, since the Act came into operation, we have had more strikes than during any similar term of years before. Time after time I have asked questions as to whether section 65 has been complied with, and the answers I get are that it has not been complied with. That is a factor which discourages investors and prevents employment. It does not matter how high the wages may be fixed, if the wages are not forthcoming they are of no use to the worker. The Minister laid considerable stress on the need for conciliation, and I was pleased to hear him do so. At the same time in nearly every speech that we have had from the other side we have had one long tirade of abuse against the man who employs—the man who, by the exercise of his energy, industry, and foresight, has been able to accumulate sufficient to go into some undertaking by which he provides work for himself and for someone else. These are the men who are singled out as a target. Even the Minister could not complete his speech without making such charges; and, as a rule, nine-tenths of the speeches of other hon. members opposite has been simply invective of men who through their energy have placed themselves in a position to give work to others; and hon. members also supported most unjustifiable strikes. That is the sort of thing that has brought the court into disrepute, that has not given the judges a fair chance, and has also largely led to the present unemployment which we all so much deplore

Before I go any further I would like to refer to statements made by hon. members on the other side connecting the party on this side with outside organisations. I think I am quite safe in saying that no party in Australia is freer from outside domination than the Country party in the Queensland Parliament. (Government laughter.) We come in here pledged to our electors, and pledged to a certain platform. Outside those pledges we are entirely free. From what I know of the affairs of this party, I can say that sometimes three or four different bodies have helped us in our elections. I know that in my own case we have no assistance from anybody outside my own electorate. Just a few farmers and their friends formed an election committee and got together about £80 for advertising meetings,

whilst I paid my own personal expenses, and beyond that we got no help. I think I am safe in saying that that is the position of many hon. members on this side of the House, and that therefore we are entirely free from any outside influence. Gentlemen outside may form themselves into organisations and hold meetings, and express whatever opinions they like; but they have no influence over us; so that all these charges that we are subject to outside domination fall entirely to the ground. They cut no ice. How different is the position of hon. members opposite. I have here a copy of the pledge, taken from the "Worker," which they have to give before they are returned, and I find that, not only are they pledged to a platform—which, seeing that they are elected on it, is quite right—but they are also bound to surrender their free will to a majority of their party. We are not subject to that. We are entirely free.

At 3.22 p.m.,

Mr. F. A. COOPER (*Bremer*), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved the Chairman in the chair.

Mr. SWAYNE: Another matter to which I want to refer is the state of tyranny which is being brought about under the present system of preference to unionists. I can quite understand the arguments used in its favour in the first place. I have been secretary of a farmers' organisation myself, and I have felt the injustice of those outside the organisation reaping the advantages which it had obtained. I can quite realise, therefore, the feelings of those persons who have organised for the welfare of the workers, and their protests against others reaping the benefits they have won. But that does not justify the state of tyranny that now exists. I do not think that under any circumstances it can be said that it is just to give a monopoly to any body of men of any form of employment. Particularly is that so in certain cases, where they are fatal. I have here a copy of the rules of the Australian Workers' Union, and I notice that they contain a promise of adherence to the communistic objective—the collective ownership of all means of production, distribution, and exchange. All its members do not hold that view. It may be right or it may be wrong—I am not going to discuss that now—I think it is wrong. But, if a man is a good workman and industrious, if he is a law-abiding citizen, he has no right to be bound to express his adherence to those doctrines and join a body professing them as a condition precedent to his earning his living. Nor should he be compelled to contribute part of his wages towards the election expenses of a candidate from whose views he totally differs and who, he believes, will have an injurious effect on our counsels in Parliament if he is returned. He should not thus be compelled to assist views which are directly detrimental, in his opinion, to the interests of the State and the people who will come after us. If his views coincide with those of the candidate, there is no reason why he should not contribute to his expenses; but if they do not, it is most certainly the height of injustice that, to get a job, he must contribute to their election expenses. And the system does not even give the unionist much say as to what candidates shall be selected. Those candidates have to be endorsed by outside organisations. Then take the other side of the question. The persons subscribing to that objective are pledged to the destruction of the employer; their aim is the annihilation of all private ownership and the confiscation of all property; so that, under the Act which makes it possible to give preference in an award and under an award which gives it, the employer is compelled to give all his work to a declared enemy. Nobody can say that that is right or just; and one might just as well say that before a man can get a job he shall belong to some religious denomination—that he must be either a Methodist, a Presbyterian, a member of the Church of England, or a Catholic—as to say that he shall be a member of some political body as the price of the right to earn his livelihood. It is most unfair to curtail his liberty of action in politics in that way. As an instance of this tyranny, which is becoming prevalent, only the other day an intending unionist who applied for a ticket was told, "You shall not have it if you work for a certain man." That organiser has it in his power, if that sort of thing is allowed to go unchecked, to declare any employer "black." That is an instance that came under my notice some time ago.

Mr. HARTLEY: Came under your imagination! You had a dream.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: What is the name of the organiser?

Mr. SWAYNE: I will tell the Temporary Chairman the name of the employer and the name of the organiser.

Mr. HARTLEY: Why tell the Temporary Chairman? Why not tell the Committee?

Mr. SWAYNE: The vindictiveness of these people is so bitter that it is easily possible for any man to become a marked man. As showing the evil results of granting this monopoly to men who are not worthy of it, let me tell the Committee that only last year we had a line of agricultural railway hung up for a week at a time when the farmers were most anxious to send their produce to market—when, in fact, everything depended on getting the work done quickly—simply because the engineer insisted on his right to choose the men who were to do the responsible work of handling explosives. The line was in consequence declared "black."

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): We have all listened with a considerable amount of interest to the debate which has taken place to-day. Some things have been said which do not help us materially in the discussion, while others have been helpful. I regretted hearing the remarks of the hon. member [3.30 p.m.] for Leichhardt with regard to the figures and advice which Mr. Knibbs gave to the Prime Minister after the Commission had collected certain information to enable them to arrive at the basic wage which should be paid to the workers throughout the Commonwealth. We have a perfect right to disagree with men in high positions, but I do not think it is right to impute unworthy motives to the men who are occupying those positions. Personally, I believe in standing behind the men who are carrying out their duties in such matters. Until we can prove that what they have said is incorrect, I do not think we should impute unworthy motives to those men, but should rather give them all the assistance we possibly can.

I was rather surprised to hear some of the remarks of the Minister this morning. He

said that the minimum wage had really become the maximum wage in the majority of instances. No doubt that is correct. Following on that line of argument, he said that if the court had power to fix the minimum wage, there should be some power by which maximum profits should be fixed. What would that mean? The maximum profits would also be the minimum profits. The Minister said that any profits above what he termed the maximum profits would be contributed to the consolidated revenue. Who would make profits over the maximum for the purpose of contributing them to the consolidated revenue? Surely the Minister could not have given proper consideration to that fact! It is out of the profits of individuals and companies that the taxation is levied for carrying on the activities of the State. I suppose the objective of the Ministry is the socialistic Commonwealth or the socialistic State. I think the application of such a principle would simply mean disaster and unemployment.

I do not think anyone in this Chamber has disputed the righteousness of arbitration; it is a sound, sensible method of trying to arrive at a fair and equitable basis of payment by employer to employee. Though it has not realised all our anticipations, that does not prove that the thing is wrong. In quite a number of instances, probably, we have disagreed with the awards which have been made. I believe we should have a judicial mind to weigh the evidence submitted. A judge of the court may not have the knowledge in certain directions which other individuals may have; but he is there in a judicial capacity to sift and weigh the evidence that is presented to him. Further than that, I look upon the judge of an Arbitration Court as being an absolutely unbiassed man. He is not interested in trade and commerce or in industry; at least, he should not be. If you put some other individual in the same position, I do not think you would have such a fair weighing of the evidence which is presented to the court. While I disagree entirely with the principle of fixing the same wage for an unmarried man as you do for a married man with three children, still, in making his award, the judge acts absolutely on the evidence that is submitted to him; and until evidence is submitted showing what is likely to result from his award, he is compelled to base his award on that evidence. The question has been raised—and there is a good deal in it—that if there were differentiation between single men and married men with children, only single men would be employed. I believe that, if there were no restrictions, that would be the result. But we regulate the number of apprentices in industries.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Too much.

Mr. TAYLOR: Probably too much. Could we not regulate the number of married men and single men to be employed by firms in a somewhat similar way? In various trades and occupations we say that so many young fellows shall be trained in proportion to the total number of skilled tradesmen who are operating that industry. Could we not do the same thing, if it were necessary, to establish a different rate of wage for married and single men? If the requirements of the single man demand that he shall have the same rate of wage so that in the days to come he will be able to take a wife and occupy his right place in the community, could we not introduce some system by which 10s., 15s., or £1 per week would be paid into consolidated revenue, to be given to him when he gets married?

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: A bachelor tax?

Mr. TAYLOR: It would not be a bachelor tax; it would be a proportion of a single man's wages, which he would not be able to waste, but which would be put aside for him until he took on matrimony.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: A compulsory saving!

Mr. TAYLOR: Everything is compulsory now; we have no free will; we are compelled to do this, that, and the other thing.

Mr. HARTLEY: Why not pay a family maintenance endowment after a man is married and has a family in lieu of making that reduction?

Mr. TAYLOR: You want that in addition to the wage?

Mr. HARTLEY: You fix your wage on the value of a man's work in an industry?

Mr. TAYLOR: Yes.

Mr. HARTLEY: That is a standard value. Over and above that, why not fix an endowment for family maintenance?

Mr. TAYLOR: The hon. member wants to give that bonus in addition.

Mr. HARTLEY: You want to get away from a standard.

Mr. TAYLOR: I do not want to get away from a standard.

Mr. HARTLEY: Your proposal would have that effect.

Mr. TAYLOR: It is not the standard of living which we want to cut out of our national life; it is the standard of extravagance. Every man who has boys and girls who are reaching the age of twenty-one years knows that they do not value money to-day in the way in which they ought to value it; they waste too much of their money in frivolous amusements and dress. Not only the young people, but probably some of us a little older have got into an extravagant way of living, and we need to cut it out.

Mr. POLLOCK: The hon. gentleman wants to see the motor-cars outside Cremorne and His Majesty's Theatre.

Mr. TAYLOR: Some of us, when we went to amusements, had to "pad the hoof"; and I do not think that we were any worse for having to do it.

Mr. POLLOCK: The people at the Belle Vue don't have to walk.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member for Windsor was seen coming out of the Queensland Club smoking a big cigar.

Mr. TAYLOR: I do not think that awards should be based simply on what it costs to maintain a man, his wife, and family. They should be allowed to have something to put by to provide comforts in their old age and in order that the family can be brought up in decency and in comfort. Things that were considered luxuries twenty or thirty years ago have become the necessaries of the people to-day. People are not satisfied or content with what was in existence at that time. I do not think that they should be. We are living in an age of progress, and we want our progress to be of such a character that it will be substantial and real, and not of such a nature as to create

unemployment. I am not casting any reflections upon our judges but I am of the opinion that the conditions granted to younger people in the awards of the Arbitration Court have been the means of creating a certain amount of unemployment. I do not think I stand alone in that opinion. I think that, because of the extra money that has had to be paid, there is more unemployment. Take the award recently made to shop assistants. I think I am correct in stating that a shop assistant of twenty-one years of age is now to receive £4 or £4 5s. a week.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: The basic wage has been granted to them at the age of twenty-one, the same as in other industries.

Mr. TAYLOR: That is too much for young people with no responsibilities.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: When does the hon. gentleman think they should receive the basic wage?

Mr. TAYLOR: If a young fellow marries at twenty-one, he should get the basic wage right away.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Should no notice be taken of the value of their work? A man might be a better tradesman at twenty-one than some older men.

Mr. TAYLOR: If we have to take into consideration the value of a man's work, we shall have to introduce the system of payment by results.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Not at all. If men are skilled in a particular occupation, there is a classification of the work carrying a salary for that position. The difficulty is, who is to be the judge of the value of a man's work.

Mr. TAYLOR: The difficulty seems to be that there are just as many industries to which the system of payment by results could not be applied as there are industries to which the system could be applied. Take the case of a shop assistant. What are his results to be reckoned on? Probably the amount of business he does. He might stand behind a counter all day and not attend to any customers, whilst another man a little further along might have to attend to half a dozen customers. In some occupations the system is absolutely impracticable. It could be applied in the shearing industry, where the men receive so much for a certain number of sheep shorn.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: There is piecework in the sugar industry.

Mr. TAYLOR: I believe that, since the adoption of arbitration in Australia, it has been the means of preventing a lot of big strikes. We have had some strikes, but, taking it by and large, we have not had as many strikes as we otherwise would have had.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: We have had no big national upheavals.

Mr. TAYLOR: No, and I sincerely hope that we will not have any.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: The court acts very promptly when a dispute arises, and calls a compulsory conference.

Mr. TAYLOR: I disagree absolutely with the principle of preference to unionists. Prior to the establishment of the wages board system or arbitration, there might have been some justification for the argument adduced in favour of preference to unionists. To-day, as conditions are in Queensland and in Australia, I consider that there is no justification for preference at all. We have Arbitration Courts to deal with the whole matter, but hon. members opposite know as well as I do that the unions now are largely political in character. There are no purely industrial unions to-day, as there were twenty or thirty years ago. There should be no preference to any organisation of any kind which recognises politics in connection with its operations.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: How could they approach the Arbitration Court as individual units?

Mr. TAYLOR: I am not advocating the dissolution of unions at all; I am simply speaking in opposition to preference to unionists.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The unionists brought the system about.

Mr. TAYLOR: No doubt they have largely contributed to bringing it about. There is no necessity for the organisations to go out of existence; but I think the preference clause should be cut out, and a man's ability should be the only thing that should count when employed by any individual in the community.

Mr. HARTLEY: That would very soon cut the unions out.

Mr. TAYLOR: I do not think so. We recognise the struggle that the unions had to arrive at and maintain their present position before the adoption of arbitration. They succeeded in getting to that position notwithstanding the difficulties and obstacles that were placed in their way. Surely they are just as able to-day to fight their way as they were in days gone by, when they did not have the backing that they have got to-day. The day has gone by when any employer or man in the country can live for himself. The selfish man has to get out of the road. There is no time or room for him in the community. Every man in the community owes a duty to the State in which he lives. Those who do not recognise that, and those who do not honour that, are not in the majority to-day. There has been an evolution of thought during recent years which has quite altered the state of affairs existing in Queensland, and has made them quite different from what operated twenty or thirty years ago.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: The hon. gentleman is getting too radical for his party.

Mr. TAYLOR: No. I have not changed a bit.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: I am not blaming the hon. gentleman.

Mr. TAYLOR: My attitude to-day is the same as it has always been on this particular matter. I have had to work for my living just the same as hon. members on the other side, and I am working for it to-day—twelve hours here and a few hours besides.

Mr. GLEDSON: Your friends outside are trying to smash the unions.

Mr. TAYLOR: No—your friends. The charge has been made that we on this side want the whole of the reduction in costs of production to be taken out of wages. It is not fair to make that charge, as we do not want anything of the kind. Hon. members on the other side know perfectly well the

reason why the Government had to shut down their copper mines at Chillagoe. It was because the markets of the world had slumped and the cost of production of copper is such that they cannot produce at a profit, and therefore, until some change takes place, those mines will have to remain closed. I must confess that it is a very difficult proposition to solve just exactly where the reduction has to come about in order to make good that loss. It cannot all come from wages, and it cannot all come from the cost of material, because in quite a number of directions the cost of material has not fallen sufficiently to enable that enterprise to be carried on at the present time. However, we have been up against problems before to-day; we have been up against difficulties before to-day; and it is the duty of everyone of us to see if we cannot find a satisfactory solution of these difficulties. Hon. members opposite think the solution is to be found in the socialisation of industry. I do not believe that for a moment, and there is no evidence before us to prove that that is going to solve the problem. If you are going to do anything at all in Australia to bring the whole mass of the people down to the one dead level, then, instead of progressing, we will go back. I personally, and the party with which I am associated, stand for the Arbitration Court, notwithstanding that there may have been things with which we disagreed and there may have been failures in connection with the carrying out of awards. By continuing the court we shall have a satisfactory method of adjusting the disputes which are continually cropping up between employer and employee at the present time. Immediately we develop into a contented community, quite satisfied with the conditions that exist, then we shall start to go back. I am not one of those who believe in every individual in the community being satisfied with the present position he occupies in life. Immediately we get to the stage when we are satisfied that everything in the garden is lovely, then, as a State and as a people, we shall start to go back and not make the progress we should make.

Mr. RIORDAN (*Burke*): I am very pleased to see hon. members on the other side are coming round to arbitration. I remember years ago, when members of the Labour party first advocated arbitration and conciliation, they were considered extremists and dreamers, and were told that it would never be accomplished; but to-day we have hon. members on the other side supporting it. We must admire the hon. member for Oxley on his outspokenness in regard to arbitration. He said it was time arbitration was thrown overboard.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The Arbitration Court, I said.

Mr. RIORDAN: They are shifting their ground, and now we find them behind arbitration. The leader of the Opposition claimed that arbitration was a plank of their platform. The Country party is only a late addition to politics as a party, and arbitration is a very old plank of the Labour party's platform. It will be remembered when Judge Dickson made his award in connection with the sugar industry what a squeal was raised throughout Queensland by the employers, who at that time claimed that it would ruin the industry. They said the industry would close down; yet to-day the sugar industry is paying a higher rate of wage than was fixed by Judge Dickson. That is the cry that is always used against increased wages by the Arbitration Court. I do not claim that the court is perfect; but I claim that it is the best thing we have had up to the present for the settlement of disputes, and it can be improved. The working class is the class directly affected by arbitration. Hon. members on the other side have no need to look forward to any tribunal for the fixing of wages, and therefore they do not believe in arbitration.

I have nothing to say against the judges They are appointed to sift the evidence, and, so far as I know, they endeavour to do their best; but we have the friends of hon. members opposite asking the judge to take no notice of the evidence given by the workers in support of their case. At the time of the Dickson award two men appeared on behalf of the Australian Workers' Union. When they came along to conduct the case of the workers in the sugar industry they were sneered at by the employing class, and were told that they would not be able to hold their own. The employers said they had the best brains; they had legal advice, and they went so far as to send for the Colonial Sugar Refinery expert, Mr. Waterman. The judge in summing up said the workers' representatives had brought documentary evidence forward which had proved their case up to the hilt. On the other hand the employers had muddled all their evidence. Yet we find that Mr. Waterman asked the judge to take no notice of the evidence brought forward by the workers. The employing class asked for depreciation on their machinery and all that sort of thing, but there was no request made for depreciation in the human machine.

Mr. STOPFORD: It is not admitted.

Mr. RIORDAN: When I was employed in the smelters in the Chillagoe district, men were forced to do a hard day's work when there should have been absolutely no necessity for the "bullocking" that went on, had the company used their best efforts to devise some more convenient method of handling the ore. But, as labour was cheap, they employed labour in what

[4 p.m.] you would call a "bullocking" occupation. I remember men who worked in Chillagoe for four or five years and then went away. Where are they to-day? They are practically incapacitated from the result of lead poisoning received from the fumes while working in the industry. What do the companies offer to those who are dependent on those men? They have been forced by this Government to give families a miserable pittance of a few shillings a week in place of their breadwinner. I do not think that the Arbitration Court has yet given the workers the full benefits which they should receive from it. I think there should be greater benefits from it than we have had in the past. It has been the means of preventing many an industrial dispute, and it is better than the old strike method, although I do not think the workers will ever forego the right to strike. I do not think that any legislation will block the employer from locking out the workers or the employees from striking. It is like leading a horse to the trough; but, if he does not want to drink, you cannot make him. If the employer wants to lock out, he will lock out in spite of legislation, and the worker will retain as long as he can the right to strike. I notice that the item in the vote for

"Travelling expenses, postages, telegrams, and incidentals" has been increased from £700 to £1,000. I do not want anyone who is travelling for the State to be at a loss, but we are living in days of economy, and I think it is worth while inquiring why an extra £300 has been put down for travelling allowances.

Mr J. JONES: Hear, hear! You have wakened up.

Mr. RIORDAN: If the hon. member was a wakeful man, he would not find himself, as he is to-day, practically without a seat. He has been done out of his seat by his friends. I hope to see in the near future an amendment of the Industrial Arbitration Court which will make for greater efficiency and improved conditions for the working class generally.

Mr. SIZER (*Yundah*): We have heard a good many speeches from members on the other side dealing with the question of arbitration in its various phases, and there seems to be somewhat of a misconception as to how members on this side stand in regard to arbitration. We do not want the strike method, because it is antiquated; and the Arbitration Court has been introduced to deal with industrial matters. No one will say that the system of arbitration is the acme of perfection in connection with industrial matters. I have been waiting for a long time to hear hon. members opposite, who are the governing force to-day, offer some suggestion by which we can cope more successfully with industrial problems, in the light of the experience gained from the working of the Arbitration Court for some years. But hon. members opposite are barren of ideas; they have no suggestion to make.

Mr. HARTLEY: How do you know? You have not been here all the time.

Mr. SIZER: The hon. member knows that I have been here. The hon. member for Burke expressed the hope that an amendment of the Act would be made in the near future; but he made no suggestions as to the lines on which the amendment should go. He was quite prepared to go on the fact that the Arbitration Court is here, and pointed out that a little more money was being spent in travelling allowances, and that was the sum total of his speech. Like other hon. members opposite, he harped on things which had taken place twenty or thirty years ago. The stock in trade of hon. members opposite is something which happened fifty years ago. The hon. member for Ipswich went a long way back, and painted a sorrowful story of a case which happened in England probably some years ago. Those things may be all right in their way, and no one sympathises with people who are suffering hardships more than hon. members on this side Hon. members opposite are not prepared to offer any suggestion to improve the work of the Arbitration Court. They are simply prepared to allow the court to go on while it suits them. When it happens to give them a reduction in wages, they complain about it. Some hon. members opposite say they will wipe the court out; some say that they will go in for direct action; and others say that they will block the awards of the court by the "go-slow" and other "white-ant" methods; but not one of them is prepared to discuss the definite question of remedying the position. The Arbitration Court is certainly a better means than the old strike method of overcoming difficulties. I agree with the hon. member for Ipswich that the court is not efficient, but I maintain that the status of the court is of such a nature that it is quite impossible for it to deal with the industrial problems of to-day, because it has not the necessary information at its disposal; neither have the judges of the court sufficient practical experience to enable them to deal absolutely in the best interests of an industry. No one will question the ability of the judges of the court to interpret the law; but I maintain that hon. members opposite who have worked in industries and people outside who are managing business concerns are more competent to deal with industrial problems than a judge of the Arbitration Court. My complaint about the Arbitration Court is that it proceeds on a wrong basis in fixing wages. It should be clearly laid down whether it is intended to continue the system of fixing the same basic wage for a single man as for a married man with a family. The basic wage is fixed the same for a single man as for a married man. That is excellent, perhaps, for the single man, but it is doing an injustice to the man with a family. I have always heard it said that the natural increase is the best possible immigrant we can have, and I am inclined to agree with that. If on the other hand they are prepared to allow the present position to continue, then an injustice is being done to those worthy citizens who are rearing families; and we are fast coming to the position when we, as a nation, will be forced to adopt the Malthusian ideas which are devastating France and other countries that have adopted them. I would like to see another system come into operation so far as the Arbitration Court is concerned, which would make it more effective than it is to-day. It is a Court of Arbitration and Conciliation, but, personally, I would prefer to see more conciliation and less arbitration. When two contending parties go into court, and go before the judge, and after fighting one wins and the other loses, they leave the court bad friends.

Mr. BRENNAN: No; they will pass it on to the consumer.

Mr. SIZER: The majority of the consumers are workers, and, that being so, then it must be passed on to the workers.

Mr. BRENNAN: We want to stop that.

Mr. SIZER: The hon. gentleman is not able to do that

Mr. BRENNAN: Yes, we have a price-fixer.

Mr. SIZER: To talk about fixing the prices of commodities is like talking about regulating the rain and saying when it shall rain. When the Arbitration Court gives a few shillings a week more to an employee without understanding the industrial position, it takes away from him in another manner. That is where hon. members are entirely unsound in their advocacy of arbitration. The hon. member for Burke referred to the sugar industry. We know that the sugar industry has placed Queensland in an exceptionally fortunate position, because we are practically the only State in the Commonwealth that grows sugar to any great extent.

Mr. PEASE: New South Wales grows it.

Mr. COLLINS: Victoria also produces sugar—I have been there.

Mr. SIZER: I am quite aware of that, but no one will gainsay my argument when I say that Queensland produces the greatest quantity of sugar, as what is produced in the other States is infinitesimal. For that reason we are able to set up a fictitious price for labour in the cane fields by virtue of the sugar agreement, and so bolster up the sugar industry. I may say that I am in favour of the sugar agreement, but I am quoting this as an argument. If we fixed the price in connection with every other industry as we have done in the sugar industry, we would have an outcry throughout the length and breadth of Australia. We must admit that it suits Queensland to have the agreement, and we all stand for it; but it has to be recognised that it is only because we are the sole sugar-producing State that we have that advantage. If sugar from overseas were allowed to come into Australia, we could not maintain our present position in the sugar fields and abide by the award made by the Arbitration Court. If we had an open market for sugar, it would be impossible to pay the award rates. The Labour party in the Federal Parliament contend that the people of Australia are paying more for their sugar than they should, in order to fulfil the conditions of the agreement.

Mr. GLEDSON: Owing to the blunders of the Nationalist Government.

Mr. SIZER: What is necessary in connection with the Arbitration Court is the establishment of a bureau to supply correct information to the judge and the officials of the court. We should be able to get the figures connected with any industry at any given time. If we take our "Year Book," we are a year behind, and the conditions in industrial matters change considerably in twelve months. We should have this information brought up to date and supplied to the court, so that the judges can meet situations as they arise. Look at the position of the meat market. Who would have anticipated what actually took place? Coming back to the arguments of fixing the basic wage for single men and married men, one of the arguments used by the court was that they could not give awards commensurate with the value of the worker. It will be admitted that to strike a mean wage for all classes of men in one industry would be quite unsound, because you would either do an injustice to the incompetent man or an injustice to the competent man, and please neither.

Mr. GLEDSON: You want the survival of the fittest.

Mr. SIZER: The present position offers an incentive to those who are competent to remain where they are and take things easy, because there is nothing to be gained by becoming more competent, seeing that they get the same wage. All that is considered in the community to-day is: How will it benefit the individual? Hon. members opposite will say that they are waiting to bring about a revolution when they will start levelling down; but the masses of the people to-day cannot wait for the revolution, because they want something to-day. The system that hon. members opposite are bolstering up so persistently will not lead them anywhere, and will only end in a cul-de-sac. What is inherently wrong in the system of profit controlling? Hon. gentlemen realise that, if an industry makes enormous profits—which they maintain it should not make, and which they say are illegitimately made, and go to the wrong people—what is wrong with altering the system and adopting a system by which they can get some of those profits? There is nothing wrong with that system. The Arbitration Court, as we have it, or something in its stead, should be flexible enough to enable us to bring a system into operation whereby we could strike a living wage when it is necessary, and so enable a man to live, and prevent sweating by unscrupulous people. At the same time it should go further, and should make provision for the distribution of some of those profits which hon. gentlemen opposite speak so much about. There is no sound, economic argument why they should not do that. If they were able to introduce a system whereby men would become actually better off than they are to-day and would receive some of those profits, then their stalking-horse about the big profits and unscrupulous employers would disappear, their parasitical officers would be gone for ever, and they themselves would be in the wilderness. That is the only argument that they can bring forward against the system, and it only needs a lead from some Government—and I hope the Government which will come from this side will give that lead—to induce the workers to grasp the opportunity to get a living wage and participate in a fair and equitable distribution of the profits of the industry in which they are engaged. I feel sure that something on these lines will be done, whether hon. members opposite do it willingly, or whether this House forces it upon them, or whether somebody else does it; and if the employees by that means get what I honestly believe they will get—fair consideration and an addition to their weekly wage—competence will be rewarded, and the stalking-horse of hon. members opposite will be gone, and they will be forced to realise that though they may fool some of the workers some of the time, they cannot fool all the workers all the time.

This system has been attempted in many industries, and I have been extremely interested to see the result of the experiments. I would ask the most competent of the agitating class amongst the workers to attempt to go into the works of Lever Brothers, for instance, and stir up strife there. They would not be tolerated by either the employers or the employees. The remedy for the present position has to come from the workers. In Lever Brothers' works the principle on which they work is competence, and it gives them a fair wage and that share of the profits to which hon. members opposite say they are entitled. One would think that in an enlightened community such as this we would have had some constructive ideas from the party sitting opposite, who allegedly represent the industrialists and that they would have recognised the weaknesses of the Arbitration Court, and have been prepared to enlarge their vision and attempt something original. But no; they are barren of ideas—perhaps not because they do not realise the truth of my argument, but because they also realise the force of my suggestion as to why they are not prepared to accept the principle. I think that we would be safe in proceeding along those lines. I believe that the Premier would be making a bold stroke were he for the moment to condescend and invite the industrial factions to meet in conference, as he

did the men engaged in the primary industries, and endeavour to evolve some scheme by that means. It is admitted that the irksome regulation of industry affects employers far more than the wage question.

Mr. DASH: Did you read the proceedings at the Prime Minister's Conference?

Mr. SIZER: I did, and hon. members' friends were not prepared to help except in one way. All they wanted was the socialisation of industry. Let me tell them that they will never get it; but if they did get it, they would be infinitely worse off than they are. They are like a child who wants something very badly and feels very hurt because his parents will not give him what he wants; but, at the same time, it is far better that they should not give way to him. So I say that really we are the friends of the workers in saving them from such a hair-brained scheme as the socialisation or communalisation of industry, which has brought disaster wherever it has been tried. The desire for it was the only reason why that conference broke down. Let me repeat that I think the Premier would be making a bold stroke if he called the leaders of industry together, as he did in the case of the primary industries, and honestly tried to solve the problem, instead of continually shelving it. I realise, as do hon. members opposite, that it is deplorable to have to reduce wages. Reduction of wages is never going to solve the difficulty in its entirety, but hon. members opposite, when they find themselves up against a certain amount of trouble in the finances of this State, are compelled to admit their barrenness of ideas by rushing away, exactly as the most reactionary person in the world would do, and reducing the wages of their employees. They made not one attempt to solve the problem; yet they say that they are democratic and progressive, and that we on this side are conservative and prepared to grind down the workers by placing on them the burden which the situation entails. Let me say in all earnestness that hon. members opposite are not likely to solve the problem by such action or such talk. Let them be more sincere, and I believe we shall be able to make the court more effective than it is to-day, by making innovations on the lines I have suggested, and so do more to benefit their supporters than by the means they have adopted.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): I believe more in the old Industrial Peace Act than I do in the present Industrial Arbitration Act. Under the former we not only had an Act just as effective as the present Act, but we also had the opportunity of calling in the assistance of experts in an industry to assist the judge. He had the right to call in anybody he liked to assist him in discussing any matter and arriving at his decision. I was one of those who in 1912, when that Act was passing through this House, said that it was the first time a judge had the right to call the workers of the State to sit alongside him and give him practical information; and a section was inserted to the effect that such a worker was to be paid not less than he could have earned in the same time in his industry, and his expenses in addition. I think that system was a big improvement on the present Act, because, whilst a judge may have a very great knowledge of law and be a very honourable man in every way, he may not have the practical experience necessary to enable him to deal with questions that come before him.

Another thing I should like to emphasise on this vote is that we shall certainly have to reduce the cost of production in some respects, or we shall find ourselves unable to compete with other countries, even in the making of our own clothes, boots and shoes, and so on. This is not the fault of the worker. The trouble is that the worker of Queensland to-day—and the remark may apply to a good part of Australia—is not treated fairly in the matter of labour-saving machinery. I know men who have gone to America and studied industrial conditions there, and have arrived at such conclusions. One gentleman I know studied the industries of America for two years, and on coming back said that the Australian worker turned out more work than the American worker, and was a better workman; but he said that he was not treated fairly, because sufficient labour-saving machinery was not provided for him. I quite believe that is the reason for our position—more especially on Government jobs.

At 4.30 p.m.,

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Under the provisions of Standing Order No. 307, and of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on the 30th instant, I shall now leave the chair and make my report to the House.

The House resumed.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN reported progress.

The resumption of the Committee was made an Order of the Day for a later hour of the sitting.

QUESTIONS.

DISPOSAL OF BALANCE OF VOTE FOR OWEN CREEK RAILWAY.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"How has the balance of the £50,000 loan raised in the Mackay district for the construction of the Owen Creek Railway, remaining after the cost of the same has been defrayed, been disposed of?"

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

"The amount subscribed was £47,510, which was insufficient to cover the cost of construction."

RAILWAY EMPLOYEES, REVENUE, AND TRAIN MILEAGE.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"Have the figures yet been prepared to enable him to answer the question I asked on 6th July in respect to temporary and permanent employees in the Railway Department?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

"The figures are now available—

"1. The number of employees on 30th June, 1922, was as under—(*a*) permanent, 13,932; (*b*) temporary, 1,794.

"2. The net revenue per employee earned in the year 1921-22 was £21 17s. 8d.

"3. 9,634,532 train miles were run in the year 1921-22."

ALLEGED SHORTAGE OF CATTLE TRUCKS AT CHARLEVILLE.

Mr. MORGAN asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. Is it a fact, as reported from Charleville, that there is a shortage of cattle trucks for the removal of fat cattle?

"2. If so, what action does the department intend to take to fulfil the requirements?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

"1. All orders for cattle trucks have been met, and the department has had no complaint.

"2. See answer to No. 1."

GOVERNMENT MOTOR CARS.

Mr. MORGAN asked the Premier—

"Has the information yet been obtained to enable him to answer the question I asked on 11th July re motor cars owned by the Government?"

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

"I will endeavour to have the information tabled next week."

REPORTED CURE OF "BUNCHY TOP" DISEASE IN BANANAS.

Mr. KING (*Logan*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

"1. Has his attention been drawn to Mr. W. J. Marks's reported cure of the 'bunchy top' disease in bananas?

"2. If so, will he cause investigations to be made as to its efficiency?"

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

"1. Yes.

"2. Mr. Marks, who is a resident of the Tweed River, New South Wales, has informed me that he is in communication with the Department of Agriculture, New South Wales, regarding his reported cure for 'bunchy top,' and that department is also conducting investigations into this affection, and an entomologist is engaged now upon that work. It is, therefore, not considered advisable to interfere with the arrangements in that State, where 'bunchy top' is more prevalent than in Queensland, and particularly so, as the results of the investigation will be available for this State."

WORK AND EXPENSES OF ORGANISERS UNDER PRIMARY PRODUCERS' ORGANISATION ACT.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS (*Pittsworth*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

"1. In view of his answer on 5th August, 1922, to paragraph (3) of my question, is he aware that H. McAnally attended a Royal Commission in Toowoomba during the month of August?

"2. Will he ascertain and advise the number of days occupied by him in this way, and the payment (if any) he received for such attendance?

"3. Is it his intention to ask Messrs. Purcell, Harris, Plunkett, and Holt to furnish a report as to the business transacted by them during their trip to Sydney and Melbourne in April last? If a report is furnished, will it be made available to members of this House and to the co-operative butter and cheese manufacturing companies; and if not, why?

"4. What other persons went with Messrs. Purcell, Harris, Plunkett, and Holt, and what was the total cost of this trip?

"5. As it is a fact that an article was widely distributed throughout the Downs relative to the questioner, and that stamps on the envelopes containing such articles were perforated 'OS,' thus showing that such article came from official sources, will he have inquiries made and advise who was responsible for the issue of this article, and what authority the person or persons so responsible had for using official stamps? Also, what was the cost of issuing this article?"

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE replied—

"1. Yes.

"2. Yes.

"3. No. My interview with these gentlemen upon their return regarding the result of the business transacted on behalf of the Dairy Advisory Board was satisfactory to me, and I have no intention of asking for a written report.

"4. Mr. J. F. F. Reid, the editor of the 'Queensland Agricultural Journal,' and Mr. J. E. Dean accompanied the gentlemen mentioned, and the total cost of the visit to Sydney and Melbourne was £351 0s. 1d.

"5. Yes."

EXPENDITURE IN OPENING UP STATE COAL MINES AT BOWEN, WARRA, STYX RIVER, AND BARALABA.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*) asked the Secretary for Mines—

"1. What amount, to 30th June, 1922, was expended in opening up and working the following coalmines, viz.:—Bowen, Warra, Styx River, Baralaba?

"2. What amount has been charged to revenue and loan in connection with the mines named?

"3. What returns have been received from the respective mines—(*a*) gross; (*b*) net?

"4. What was the debit against the respective mines on 30th June?"

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

"1 to 4. The information is being prepared."

INDEBTEDNESS OF CO-OPERATIVE WICKER FACTORY TO BLIND, DEAF, AND DUMB INSTITUTION.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*): asked the Home Secretary—

"With reference to the indebtedness of the Co-operative Wicker Factory to the Blind, Deaf, and Dumb Institution to the extent of £350 in 1919, liability for which was assumed by the Federal Furnishing Trade Society, Queensland Branch, and of which £110 has been paid off, will he state—

(1) When was this £110 paid, and by whom?

(2) What steps are being taken to recover the balance?"

The SECRETARY FOR MINES, in the absence of the Home Secretary (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*), replied—

"1 and 2. The money was paid in instalments by the Federated Furnishing Trade Society of Australasia. The balance will be paid by the society mentioned."

INDEBTEDNESS OF BUILDING TRADES GUILD TO STATE ENTERPRISE.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"It having been acknowledged by him as a fact that there is or was in existence a Trades Hall organisation known as the Building Trades Guild, which is in debt to the Forest Service Sawmills to the extent of £1,189, will he state—

(1) When did the guild start operations?

(2) Is it indebted to the Government for any sum other than £1,189 owing to the Forest Service Sawmills; if so, to what amount?

(3) On what date or dates was the liability of £1,189 incurred?

(4) What sum have the Forest Service Sawmills received from the guild?

(5) What steps are being taken to recover the amount owing?

(6) Is the guild still conducting active operations?

(7) If so, are they still obtaining supplies from the Forest Service Sawmills, and on what terms?

(8) Can he give any reason for the guild's inability to meet its obligations?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS, in the absence of the Secretary for Public Lands (Hon. J. H. Coyne, *Warrego*), replied—

"The hon. member is wrong. I did not mention a Trades Hall organisation.

"1. I cannot say.

"2. Not that I am aware of.

"3. From April to December, 1921.

"4. £578 5s. 6d.

"5. The affairs of the guild are in the hands of the Public Curator, with whom the Forest Service has lodged a claim.

"6. No.

"7. See answer to No. 6.

"8. This question should be addressed to the secretary of the guild."

BRITISH IMPERIAL OIL COMPANY'S TRAMWAY AND WORKS BILL.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS.

The PREMIER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): I beg to move—

"That so much of the Standing Orders relating to the introduction and passage of Private Bills be suspended as to enable a Bill to authorise the British Imperial Oil Company, Limited, to construct, manage, maintain, and work certain lines of tramway and certain pipes, conduits, and other works in, along, over, under, and across certain public roads within the Shire of Toombul, in the State of Queensland; and for other consequential purposes, to be introduced by a private member and passed through all its stages as if it were a public Bill."

Question put and passed.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS.

APPROPRIATION BILL, NO. 2.

The PREMIER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): I beg to move—

"That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended for the remainder of this session as would otherwise preclude the receiving of Resolutions from the Committees of Supply and Ways and Means on the same day on which they shall have passed in those Committees, and the passing of an Appropriation Bill through all its stages in one day."

Question put and passed.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—THIRTEENTH ALLOTTED DAY.

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

COURT OF INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): In my opinion, the Arbitration Court awards do not go far enough. There seem to be some difficulties that they do not overcome. The Arbitration Court gives an award for an industry, but does not show how the industry will be able to pay that award. In some cases it is very difficult to pay the rate that is awarded, and in other instances the employers are allowed to pass on to the consumer two or three times the amount awarded. What is to prevent the Arbitration Court having power to say in the case of the boot industry, "This award means an addition of a certain percentage upon the manufacture of a pair of boots"? For some reason or other the Arbitration Court fails to see some of the difficulties that have to be overcome.

Honourable members talking in a loud tone,

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I appeal to hon. members to endeavour to assist the hon. member for Drayton. I understand that his health is not of the best, and I am sure hon. members will be sympathetic and give him every consideration.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: In regard to the cost of production, the primary industries have set an example which might easily be followed in other industries. I can remember the time when men engaged in those industries were paid 15s. a week and their keep. The primary industries were not as successful then as they are now, and the cost of production was probably more. In those days we gave a man a pair of horses and a one-furrow plough and expected him to plough an acre a day; but now that we have to pay possibly £3 a week and keep, we give him about eight horses and a ten-furrow plough. That man is able to earn £3 a week to-day just as easily as he was able to earn £1 a week under the old conditions. I asked a question some time

ago as to why the Government did not supply their workers with the best labour-saving machinery so that they would be able to construct more miles of railway for the same money, and I was informed by hon. members opposite that, if the Government did that, there would not be sufficient work for the men. We have got to carry on our work on a business-like basis. It is no use commencing irrigation works and building railways merely to employ men. We want to give the men the best machinery so that they can do the work at a reasonable cost. I would like to deal with the Inkerman irrigation scheme.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope the hon. gentleman will be able to connect his remarks with the vote "Court of Industrial Arbitration."

Mr. BEBBINGTON: All the work in connection with that scheme was carried out under the Arbitration Court awards, and while it was being carried on everyone seemed to have a good time. Dozens of motor-cars were racing about the area. There seemed to be no one in control of the men. There is too much political interference in these matters. The person in charge dared not say anything, because he would have been called to account for interfering. Somebody has always got to pay in the end. Everybody seemed to be having a good time during the several years that work went on in that area. There are some men who would pay £500 to get out of the benefited area.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. gentleman is not connecting his remarks with the vote "Court of Industrial Arbitration" by discussing the method by which the work in connection with the Inkerman irrigation scheme was carried out. This vote deals with the Court of Industrial Arbitration and its administration. The hon. gentleman will be in order in discussing awards applicable to that particular work, but he will not be in order in discussing the method under which the work was carried out.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Some of the awards were not successful in connection with that work.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. gentleman will be in order in discussing that.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The awards have been responsible, not only for placing upon the primary producers burdens that they cannot carry, but they have been responsible for placing burdens upon the taxpayers. Everybody had such a good time while that work was in progress that the cost has gone up so much that it is absolutely impossible for the scheme to return anything like 1 per cent. interest on the money invested. There is a burden of £7 an acre for water rates, which the primary producers are unable to carry. The primary producers of Queensland to-day are carrying along in a way that should be an example to all the other States. I have travelled through the other States, and I have not seen the labour-saving machinery that has been purchased in Queensland. They have some machinery, but they have not gone in for it to the same extent as the primary producers here. If the employers of labour and big manufacturers in the city would adopt the method of the primary producers and supply their men with the highest class of labour-saving machinery, the men could turn out more work, we would have less foreign goods coming into Queensland, and there would be more men employed, and consequently less unemployment.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): While I believe in arbitration as a general principle, I do not think the present system is beneficial to the State or to Australia as a whole. The men who are appointed to settle disputes should be men who have a thorough knowledge of the inner working of the industry for which they are fixing wages, and on those grounds I do not think the present Arbitration Court has been altogether a success. It would be far better to revert to the old wages board system. That system had a great deal to recommend it, as it brought together the employees and employers in an industry—men who were thoroughly acquainted with the practical working of the industry. They were able to meet together at a round-table conference, and any dispute was generally settled satisfactorily to all concerned. The employee was concerned in the industry, as it meant work for himself and a living for his wife and family, and he did not desire it to be closed down. Under existing conditions the judge of the Arbitration Court is not concerned personally if an industry is closed down owing to the high rate of wage fixed. I am of the opinion that we started wrongly in selecting legal men as Arbitration Court judges. I am not enamoured in any way of the ability displayed by legal men in connection with fixing wages, although I quite agree that they are capable of sifting evidence and that they understand the procedure of the court; but I am satisfied, after years of experience, that the wrong men have been selected to give decisions in the matter of the wages to be paid. If the present system is to be continued, I would prefer to see thoroughly practical business men at the head of the court—men who have had a life-long training in the employment of men, and men who thoroughly understand the conditions in the various industries; and certainly the legal men who have been appointed as judges of the Arbitration Courts, either in the Federal or State courts, have not had that knowledge. They give a decision which may be based on the evidence given in the court, but some of that evidence has been ridiculous in the extreme. How some of the Arbitration Court judges can sit and allow such evidence to be given and take it seriously is something I cannot understand. I am perfectly satisfied that the system of arbitration in Australia to-day is not satisfactory. Hon. members on the other side have recognised that. When there is a dispute in an industry there is no one more capable of settling the dispute than the employees in the industry and the men who are finding the capital and the brains to carry on the industry. Throughout Australia people of all classes are dissatisfied with the existing Arbitration Courts, and it is time something was done to bring about a change and introduce a system which is likely to promote industry instead of, as at present, bring about its destruction.

Mr. DASH: That is not true.

Mr. MORGAN: It is true. We know that, owing to the high rate of wage fixed in the mining industry, men cannot be employed. Why is it that the Chillagoe mine is not working at its full strength? Simply because the cost of taking out the ore is so great that it cannot be done at a profit and valuable copper is left in the

mine. Why is the cost so great? It is because wages are so high.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: They could not work that mine if the men worked for their tucker.

Mr. MORGAN: That does not seem to be the case when the Secretary for Mines stated distinctly that the copper industry was flourishing in 1914 when copper was £60 a ton. At that time the men got more than their tucker; but now, when copper is £70 a ton, they cannot be employed.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: There is something besides wages.

Mr. MORGAN: Wages have got more to do with it than anything else. Copper is £10 a ton more to-day than it was in 1914; yet men found plenty of employment in the copper industry in 1914, and to-day they cannot get employment because of the high wages. There may be other things that have caused the closing down of the copper mines. It may be that coal is too dear. Why is coal too dear? The high price of coal is caused by the high wages paid in that industry.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Explosives are dear, too.

Mr. MORGAN: What makes all these things dear? The high wages paid in the different industries. If there were a general reduction of wages in connection with all industries, we would be much better off than we are to-day. If there were a general reduction, shipping would be cheaper; explosives would be cheaper; and everything else would be cheaper. I am not one of those who advocate a reduction of wages in regard to the men whom I employ and high wages in other walks of life. If any reduction is to take place, then everybody should participate, and that is one reason why I resent any reduction in the salaries of the public servants. I was opposed to certain clauses in the Salaries Bill which was recently passed by this House because it did not provide for a reduction in the salaries of the Arbitration Court judges. I would like to move a reduction in this vote to see whether hon. members opposite are sincere. The hon. member for Fitzroy complained very much because there has been no reduction in the salaries of the Arbitration Court judges, and rightly so. The Arbitration Court judges are really getting an increased salary owing to the fact that the cost of living has come down while their salaries remain the same.

Mr. DASH: If you look at the vote, you will see that the salaries of the judges are not included.

Mr. MORGAN: I know the salaries of the judges are not included, but there is nothing to prevent me from moving a reduction in the vote of £1 as a protest. It might not affect the salaries of the judges, but it would show that hon. members on this side consider that the salaries of the judges should be reduced, and it would prove whether hon. members opposite are prepared to act and vote in accordance with their speeches. The hon. member for Fitzroy spoke very convincingly in connection with this matter, and he said the Arbitration Court judges should be prepared to accept a reduction in their salaries. He also said that, owing to the cost of living having been reduced, the judges were really getting increased salaries.

[*Mr. Morgan.*

I say that they are really getting an increase in salary. Then again, the hon. member for Burke referred to the increase in travelling expenses as requiring explanation. I am one of those who think that the present system of arbitration is not altogether satisfactory. We have had experi-

[5 p.m.] ence of it for many years now. I believe in arbitration and not in the old insane method of striking, which never did and never will do any good. If the employer and employee are represented by sensible men who meet together and are prepared to give and take and recognise the importance of industries, there will be a great deal of good done. I feel sure, notwithstanding the assertions of hon. members opposite, that we will not find 5 per cent. of employers who want to sweat their workmen and pay them less wages than an industry can afford to pay. I am sure that 95 per cent. of the employers realise that they should give a decent living wage in order to enable their employees to buy the necessaries of life. Unless employees get a decent wage they cannot afford to buy those commodities. We must all agree, as sensible men, that the wage-earner should get a decent living wage; but the point is, what is a decent living wage? As I have said before, £3 per week may be a living wage in some cases, while under other circumstances £5 per week would not go as far as the £3 per week. The conditions of the workers cannot be altogether gauged by the wages they receive. It is a matter of the effective value of the wages. We know that the purchasing value of a sovereign is much less to-day than it was in 1914. We know that the workers are no better off to-day than they were then, although their wages have been increased; except, perhaps, in the case of single men. Housewives know that wages are not giving them any more comfort now than in 1914; but notwithstanding that, there is a continual effort on the part of hon. members opposite to show what they have done for the working classes. No matter what Government had been in power, wages would have increased during the period of the war. They increased just as much in Victoria, where they never had a Labour Government in power. The Governments in other States have as much right to claim that they were responsible for the increased wages which obtained there as the Government of Queensland are for the increases in wages which occurred here. Hon. members opposite refused to give the Victorian Government any credit for giving better conditions to the workers during that period. We on this side say that the Government have not been responsible for bettering the conditions of the worker in Queensland, and that the same thing would have happened whatever Government had been in power. If you go back for a period of fifty years, you will find that wages have gone on increasing year by year and the hours of work have been reduced. But notwithstanding the increase in wages there are many industries which have been closed down in Queensland. That is owing to the fact that the court has not been sympathetic with regard to the conditions obtaining in industries that they have been compelled to close down. If judges give an award which causes unemployment, they are responsible for that unemployment. It is owing to the conditions operating in numerous industries to-day that we find so many unemployed workers.

Were those industries treated more sympathetically, unemployment would not be so great, and employment would be given to those who need it so much.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): No one will question the importance and necessity of having an Arbitration Court. The Minister stressed the point that an Arbitration and Conciliation Court was essential if properly constituted. I am not quite sure what was at the back of his head when he referred to the proper constitution of the court. It may be that he did not care to disclose what it was. Hon. members on this side have at all times supported arbitration and conciliation, and it was not left to this Government to be the first to introduce a measure of that nature. Prior to the advent of this Government into office we had an Act which dealt with the matter in as satisfactory a way as the Act passed by the present Government. If it were possible to revert to the old Industrial Peace Act, greater satisfaction would be enjoyed than under the existing Industrial Arbitration Act. Anyone who has to do with men to-day knows that it is necessary that there should be someone to appeal to when differences arise. We can imagine the confusion that would arise in the event of not having a court to appeal to. Bad as the court is sometimes through not being properly constituted, without it we would be in an extremely bad way, and strikes, which are certainly frequent enough now, would be very much more frequent then.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: How do you suggest that the court should be constituted?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I contend that the mistake we are making in connection with the court is by planting a man in the position of judge who is not, and never has been, in touch with the industrial life of the community. He takes his seat on the bench and has everything to learn; and, as a rule, all that he learns is gathered from extremely prejudiced sources. I maintain that if we want peace—and we all want peace and desire that our community should grow—we can only get peace and prosperity by having a good feeling between employers and employees. The right thing to do would be to assist the judge who may be appointed for the time being in two directions. In all cases a representative should be appointed to sit with the judge on behalf of the employers of the industry concerned and another person representing the employees in the industry. The judge, who is invariably a wise and educated man, will be able to grip the evidence fairly and squarely, and having heard all the statements and arguments from the representatives of the men and the representatives of the employer, he will be able to give his decision.

Mr. STOPFORD: That is really the present system, because more cases are decided by a compulsory conference than are decided in the court.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: We know that for the best part of the year the court is unable to hear the cases presented to it. I certainly think that a round-table conference is the best thing. It could be made compulsory, and I am sure it would be for the good of the community and the good of the workers concerned. A huge mistake is made by hon. members opposite in making an attack upon capital. Their tirade against capital, and in regard to men who are out to better themselves, is astounding and unworthy. We see evidences of the aspirations of men to better themselves all around us. We know that men generally wish to enjoy more of the good things of this world. That applies to hon. members opposite, yet we rarely see any evidence of a desire on their part to share the benefits which they possess. It applies to hon. members who occupy positions in this House. We know that in the Commonwealth Parliament members of the Labour party have occupied the highest positions, yet they never showed any disposition to "whack" their advantages with any of their fellows. Every man is out to do something for himself and better himself; and, whilst a man is making an earnest endeavour to better himself and at the same time better others in the community, we have no right to object to it. Hon. members opposite should not attack capital, and they should get away from the notion they hold, and show some better way.

A great deal can be said for and against the basic wage. It seems to me that it is impossible to disturb the basic wage, no matter how disadvantageously it may operate in connection with a great deal of our life. But there is a disparity. It is unfair that a boy of twenty-one should receive the basic wage of £4 5s., while a man of ripe experience only gets another 5s. a week. That is wrong. Hon. members must realise that those young men receive far more than they ought to receive, while the married men with long experience are not receiving what they should receive. That is a disparity which is against the basic wage principle generally. No doubt, employers will reward in the highest degree the services of men. Any man in business will be ready to acknowledge services rendered. It is a pleasure to an employer to recognise the work of men in his employ. It is always pleasing to reward men who put their best efforts into their work. I have been amazed sometimes to see the difference in the value of men occupying similar positions. It is incredible to see the returns some men will make regarding their service as compared with others. In every well-regulated business the actual returns of the individuals are kept, and it is well known who really gives the best service. Those who give the best services are certainly not kept on a low salary. The advantage to the firm they are connected with is so apparent that their services are recognised, and they are advanced from time to time. Amongst other things said this afternoon, which were not in accord with fact, was the statement of the hon. member for Herbert regarding the £77,000 which the Arbitration Court paid within a certain number of years. The hon. gentleman said that the court secured the payment of that sum to employees within a period of six years.

Mr. PEASE: That is the amount which the employers should have paid but did not pay.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: It is infinitesimal.

Mr. PEASE: The employees would have been robbed of that amount but for this Government.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I do not believe that the great bulk of employers wilfully commit breaches of the law. I know something about business, because in my own business we work under a number of awards, and, as we employ several hundred people, it is almost impossible, except for a legal man, to work it out so as to be on the right side every time. No doubt small amounts which might be due to the employees are not paid.

Mr. PEASE: This is not a small amount. It amounts to £1,000 per month.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The Minister said that the total amount was £77,000, and covered six years. On looking at the Queensland Statistics, I find that in the year 1921 there were 43,196 persons employed in the manufacturing industries, and they received a sum of £6,718,905. We have no figures to guide us as to the full wages paid to the whole of the industrial workers of Queensland; but, instead of there being 43,196 employees, the number would not be less than 200,000, so you can readily see that the amount paid in wages would be five times greater than the amount I have just mentioned as being paid to those engaged in the manufacturing industries. When we think of that number of employees, then £77,000, covering a period of six years, is not a very large amount. I do not say that it is right to keep one penny back from the workers, but my contention is that the Minister, when he gave the figures, should have stated that the percentage was infinitesimal when worked out in connection with the whole of the employees of the land. Spread over that number of years, I believe —I have not worked it out accurately— that it would not amount to one-fiftieth of 1 per cent.

Mr. PEASE: The Minister's point was that, had this Government not been in power, the workers would not have been paid that £70,000.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: It does not follow. The hon. member knows that in many instances, when employers have realised that a shortage has been paid, the amount is made good.

Mr. PEASE: You cannot give me an instance of an employer making it up without being forced to do it.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I can. The hon. member is an employer of labour, and, if he has escaped——

Mr. PEASE: I have, because I have always paid a fair rate. That is why they sent me to Parliament.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I would be sorry to accuse the hon. member of not having paid a fair rate. Do hon. members opposite feel that they are filling a worthy position in trying to create bad feeling between employers and employees? I believe firmly that there was never a day in the world's history when the two classes of men were more ardently desirous of doing the right thing than they are to-day. I am sure the employers are.

Mr. PEASE: There are a good many good employers, but there are some very bad ones.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Why make this continual charge against capital? I do not think that at the bottom of their hearts hon. members want to do away with capital. They seem extremely anxious to secure capital, and we have evidence of unrest elsewhere because of the lack of capital. Why the trouble in Germany? Why the trouble in Russia? Simply for want of money! Simply because they want capital! And here hon. members, who rail at capital and attack it at every opportunity, are as hungry as they can be for it.

Mr. COLLINS: And they are hungry in India under British rule.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: They know right well that, if we were reduced to the position of having no capital, we would be in a condition like to that of Russia. Instead of cavilling at what capitalists are doing, they should be asking for more capital, because it will be a day of calamity for them when there is no more capital. They should be grateful that there are some men in the community who have been able to save money and provide capital. Here is a concrete example of what employers are doing. The statistics for 1919-1920 relating to the engineering establishments, ironworks, and foundries in Australia show that salaries, wages, material, and fuel account for 89.7 per cent. of the total output, and that there is a balance of 10.3 per cent. for overhead charges, distribution, insurance, taxation, profits, etc. How much would remain for the workers under socialisation? They cannot get out of industry more than there is in it.

Hon. members will notice from the newspaper only yesterday that Mr. Walker, President of the Trade Union Congress in Great Britain, had been indulging in language very similar to that which our friends opposite use. Hon. members opposite are against the employer.

Mr. PEASE: Against the bad employer— not against the good employer.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I am very glad to hear that. The employer who cultivates a bad feeling between himself and his employees ought to go to the wall. I will tell hon. members the attitude I took up in connection with the opening of our business in the Valley. I addressed the hands the morning we opened—there are from 100 to 200 there now—and I told them that we believed in our State, notwithstanding what the Government had done.

Mr. BRENNAN: Then why do you defame this party?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Because of what they have done.

Mr. BRENNAN: You have robbed the farmers all your life.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Withdraw!

Mr. G. P. BARNES: This impudent man says that I have robbed the farmers all my life. He knows that there is no better friend of the farmers.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope the hon. member for Toowoomba will withdraw the expression.

Mr. BRENNAN: I withdraw.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: It is very much to be regretted. That man knows better than that.

Mr. BRENNAN: I do not know better than that.

Mr. BRAND: He is not worth taking any notice of.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope the hon. member will address the chair.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I shall have pleasure in doing so. I was about to read what had happened after Mr. Walker's address. The "Courier" report says—

> "When Miss Hartley, mayoress of Southport, arrived for the purpose of officially welcoming the delegates, she was too late to hear Mr. Walker. She declared that wages were better and holidays were longer and more frequent than formerly. The death rate had been reduced by half, the status of women had improved, and the savings of the workers vastly increased.
>
> "She demanded: 'Why all this unrest? What ails the world? We are all trying to obtain something for nothing. Excessive selfishness is the root of all evil. We are asking for the impossible.'"

There is a note of warning for us in that. We can appeal to our Savings Banks for evidence that the workers are better off than they ever were. We know that the lot of the woman and of the child is better than it ever was. Things are progressing, and it is because the capitalists go hand in hand with the industrial classes.

I would like to refer again to the evils of our present system, and the effect which the administration of the Government has had. If you will look up the "Industrial Gazette" for August, you will find that the number of skilled labourers out of employment is given as 155, whilst the number of ordinary labourers without work is 336. I maintain that the present Govern-

[5.30 p.m.] ment have aided in manufacturing men who have no trade at their hand; and, in consequence of that, they are the unemployed of to-day. We have to look at the conditions which exist, and make it easy for the young life to learn a trade. Why should a stigma rest upon the young life simply because they have not been able to improve themselves and fit themselves for life's work? I believe that this Government will do great service if they bring in the apprenticeship system again, and so give an opportunity to the young life of our land to be brought up in the enjoyment of the knowledge of some profession or trade.

Mr. WEIR (*Maryborough*): Dealing with the Arbitration Court question generally, looking at it from the viewpoint of the working class, I think it can safely be said that the workers as a whole have come to the conclusion that the Arbitration Court has not served the purpose for which it was intended. Rightly or wrongly, that is the decision to which they have come. This Government, in their wisdom—and I say it was in their wisdom—established the court for a specific purpose. I take it that the function of the court should be to ensure a more equitable distribution of the wealth of this country; that is the only function which an Arbitration Court can perform. The machinery—which was set up by a Government who, after all, can be credited with knowing at least what the workers of this State demand—was, in my opinion, really good machinery. Destructive criticism cuts no ice. If we can give some constructive criticism, or make some suggestions as to how the work of this court can be made more effective, this Chamber is the place in which to give it. I am satisfied that the joint intelligence of this House, particularly of the working class representatives in it, is equal to the task of evolving, from time to time, a system for the improvement of this court. I have heard a good deal of interesting criticism, particularly from this side, which was given with a view to improving the court. My criticism is going to be on similar lines. My contention is that an old axiom could very well be applied to the Arbitration Court and to the industries that come within the operations of the court—that is, that all industries should maintain all the people engaged in those industries in a standard of decency. I recognise that the man who has capital invested in an industry has certain rights; I have never made any bones about that. I do not think that a man can be expected to be a philanthropist and put his money into industry, and not get a return for the money invested. I say that clearly. But I also am justified in saying that industry should provide a decent standard of maintenance for everybody engaged in industry from the top to the bottom. It clearly is the duty of the Arbitration Court to see that that is done. I am going to prove that, so far as relates to ensuring an equitable distribution of the wealth in industry, the court has failed. I am going to prove also that the court has failed only because it has not used the machinery that is at its command—not because the court has not been able, but because the machinery of the court has not been used. Taking industry generally, the first question, naturally, would be: Can industry stand a bigger burden? Can it pay more wages? I say here and now that industry in this State can pay more wages. It is no use making these statements unless one can bring forth some argument to back them up. Evidence has been produced here which shows conclusively that industry can pay more wages. Let us look at the evidence.

Mr. BRAND: Why did you support the Government in asking for a reduction in the wages of public servants?

Mr. WEIR: As a working-class representative, I am trying to give the Committee the views of the working class. I have never heard that the hon. member has been responsible for giving any intelligent criticism in this House. Dealing with the question generally, I say that this State has produced wealth and industry. I heard the Premier shortly after the opening of this session say that he thought that industry in this State was producing more than industry in any other State, in the way of interest on the capital invested. I want to refer to some figures that you, Mr. Kirwan, have read in this House, as being the most conclusive. I want to refer to some statements which have been extracted from the papers which, in my opinion, prove conclusively that industry is productive in this State. I take two cardinal features—the present share values—the scrip market, if you put it that way—and the number of new companies being floated in this State. In my opinion, we do not need to go any further for evidence. Some people will mix up the question of the flotation into companies of already established firms with the question of the flotation of new companies. To me, it does not seem logical to argue that,

because a firm is floated into a company, it means the subscription of a great deal of extra capital. I do say, however, that every new company registered in this State—representing, as it does, a handsome amount of capital—denotes that industry is successful in the State. Why would these people invest capital if that were not so? Why does the hon. member for Burrum invest his capital in a new life insurance company?

Mr. BRAND: Because I have faith in Queensland.

Mr. WEIR: Why does any other member in this Chamber invest his capital in industry in Queensland?

Mr. BRAND: You would not invest a penny in Queensland.

Mr. WEIR: If I had been born into a wealthy family, perhaps I would be chucking my money about as the hon. member does.

Mr. BRAND: You may have more money than I have.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Cane Price Board's legislation put him on his feet.

Mr. WEIR: If the hon. member for Burrum depended on his intelligence, he would not invest in a ferry ticket. Those are the two cardinal features—first of all, new companies denote a successful State; secondly, a high share list denotes successful companies. That goes without saying. I think I have proved on those two points alone that industry in this State is successful. If industry is successful, who makes it successful? As the hon. member for Warwick admitted, and as everybody knows, industry cannot work twenty minutes unless by the efforts of the workers. We ask ourselves who, after all, does produce the wealth of the State? And are the people who are producing the wealth of the State getting a fair return for the efforts they put forth? In other words, is this charge which is everlastingly being hurled at the workers of the State, that they "go-slow," founded on fact? Let us take the official statistics of the Commonwealth regarding the output of each individual. The first table which I will take is to be found at page 419 of the Commonwealth "Year Book" for 1921. We find there the total output of the factories in the Commonwealth. I will take the column showing the output per head of workers, which is the fairest means of comparison we can find. We find that in this State the output per head was £605 in 1915; it rose to £639 in 1916; to £790 in 1917; to £746 in 1918; and finally to £794 in 1919-1920. So we can clearly demonstrate that the workers in industry in this State have given of the best that is in them. They have played their part better than the people who represent the capital invested in industry—I will show afterwards by comparison. That is not the only comparison in that table. We find in the table also that the only other State in the Commonwealth where the workers engaged in industry gave a better result was New South Wales—also under a Labour Government. The output in New South Wales was £853 per man; we are next with £794; then there is a drop to £743 in the case of Victoria; and, ultimately, down to £566 in Western Australia. We show there a decided advantage over every other State except New South Wales. I will go further and take the next page.

On the next page we have the table dealing with the value of production of manufacturing industries. In this case the table shows the amount added to the value of the raw materials by the process of manufacture per head of the population. That means the manual effort added to the cost of raw material. We find that the men in Queensland have done particularly well. We find that in 1915 the amount per man in Queensland is £226, which grows to £320 in 1919-20. The next highest State is New South Wales, where the amount in 1919-20 is £291. From New South Wales we go back to Tasmania, where the amount is £265. Tasmania is a State which has only recently gone in for the installation of hydro-electric machinery. Notwithstanding that, Queensland ranks far ahead. We find that in Victoria the amount in 1919-20 was £263; in South Australia, £254; in Western Australia, £238; and the average for the Commonwealth, £278. Queensland is far and away above that with £320. Those figures show that the working man has done his part nobly and well. The next table is perhaps the best table of the lot. It deals with the value of output and cost of production. I am taking only what seems to one who has studied the question carefully the best argument in connection with the matter of output, and that is the relative percentage cost of wages and salaries to the output. In other words, what is the percentage cost of the wages compared with the total value of the output? I will take all the States again. For the year 1918-19 the salaries and wages charge in Queensland was only 16.76 per cent. There is one State lower, and that is New South Wales, where the charge is 16.18 per cent. That means, roughly, £16 some odd shillings is the salaries and wages charge per £100 of output. In Victoria the charge is 17.56 per cent.; South Australia, 17.55 per cent.; Western Australia, 24.71 per cent.; and Tasmania, 16.96 per cent. Our only rival is New South Wales, where the charge is 16.18 per cent., against 16.76 per cent. here. Turning to another page, the statistics show Queensland in a still better light. For the year 1919-20 the percentage cost of salaries and wages to total output is 16.53 per cent. in Queensland, which is the lowest of all the States. In Victoria the charge is 17.44 per cent.; in New South Wales, 17.60 per cent.; in South Australia, 19.49 per cent.; in Western Australia, 24.91 per cent.; and in Tasmania, 19.40 per cent. Those figures show that the workmen in this State are doing better than the workmen in any other State except New South Wales. After hearing those figures, I want hon. members opposite to be decent enough—most of them are—there are only a few who are not—to admit that the working men are not going slow. That charge is absolutely unfair. I heard the hon. member for Nanango the other night call out, "Go slow." That charge has been absolutely refuted by the figures I have quoted. I think I have proved, on the Commonwealth statistics, that industry in this State has had a fair go, so far as the workers are concerned. Is industry having a fair go so far as capital is concerned? I am going to prove that it has not. The men have given the best that is in them, and I now come back to my old axiom that industry should pay a decent standard of living to everybody. Industry should maintain every man and woman working in an industry in a decent state of existence. If any

court, knowing those figures—I know that the Arbitration Court does know them—lowers the basic wage or the wages of workers generally in an industry—that is to say, reduces the effective wage of men and women in an industry—that court is not carrying out the functions that it was proposed should be carried out when it was established. I will now deal with the effective wage. Anyone who has studied economics knows that the nominal wage does not matter for purposes of argument. The index number dealing with the effective wage is shown, according to the Commonwealth statistics in 1901, to be 1,172 for Queensland. In 1915 it was 912; in 1916 it was 991; in 1917 it was 1,078; in 1918 it was 1,083; in 1919 it was 1,064; and in 1920 it was 1,085. The effective wage index figure shows now 1,085, as against 1,083 in 1918, and 1,078 in 1917, and against 1,172 in 1901, 1,095 in 1910, 1,090 in 1911. I am arguing that, in the face of those figures, we can contend that the Arbitration Court has not been fair to the people producing those profits. I want to show what has happened in other States. In Tasmania the index figure for 1920 was 911; in 1919 it was 900; in 1918 it was 880; in New South Wales in 1920 it was 994; in 1919 it was 948; and in 1918 it was 902. Those figures show that there has been a better growth of the effective wage in other States. They show that the employer has failed, and industry has failed, to pay the worker a fair return for what he has turned out. That state of affairs has been due entirely to the failure of the Arbitration Court. Let me show what I think is a weakness in the court. Section 7 of the schedule to the Industrial Arbitration Act lays down the powers of the court to enforce the presentation of the financial standing of any business engaged in a trial in the court. I recollect distinctly two cases in Australia—probably there are others—in which the workers tried definitely through legal channels to enforce the presentation of the finances of the people who matter. I remember one hon. member stating that Senator Crawford, in giving evidence, said that the workers' children did not need boots—they were luxuries. That satisfied me. If the workers have to produce proof of their financial standing, what is wrong with getting the balance-sheets belonging to the employing class? The court has power to compel that to be done. Section 7 (*e*) states—

> "All books, papers, and other documents produced before the court, whether produced voluntarily or pursuant to summons, may be inspected by the court, and also by such of the parties as the court allows; but the information obtained therefrom shall not be made public without the permission of the court:
>
> "Provided that books, papers, and documents relating to the profits or financial position of any witness or party, shall not, without his consent, be inspected by any person except the judge, unless such witness or party contends that the profits of an industry are not sufficient to permit of the payment of the wages, or the granting of the conditions claimed or proposed to be paid, or granted by any award, order, or industrial agreement."

In my opinion, that section gives the court full power to look into the financial records of companies, businesses, and trades, which come into the Arbitration Court. In my opinion, the financial records of those concerns are valuable. The court also has power to compel them to put their balance-sheets on the table, or, in other words, to put their cards on the table and show the working class why they are asked to accept 7s. 6d., or 14s. 6d., or whatever it is. If you can prove to the working class that an industry cannot pay, the contention would be different. My contention is that industry can pay, but will not pay. There can be nothing wrong in compelling these people who are enforcing the Act to put their cards on the table. Only last year a short measure went through this Parliament—an amendment of the Income Tax Act—which gave the Commissioner of Taxation access to the stock values of big concerns. They thought it was quite a harmless thing to have stock values on this year's balance-sheet different to what they were last year. The hon. member for Warwick was almost rebellious on that question. Surely they did not object to these people showing their stock values? I say definitely that the bulk of the financial concerns of this State are building up reserves and not showing decent profits; they are dodging their liabilities. In nearly every case when you see a balance-sheet published in the "Investors' Quarterly Review" you will see "Brought forward to reserve, so much." No mention is made as to what those reserves are for. No one would cavil at a reserve if it was a reserve for a specific purpose. But what we do complain about is the fact that these amounts are hidden in reserves instead of being carried forward to profit, and further, that assets are undervalued designedly to hide "profit." The Taxation Department get their tax out of these reserves in most cases, and why should the worker not get his share of the profits as well? I want to emphasise that point—there can be nothing wrong in asking these people to disgorge their profits If their balance-sheets are honest and aboveboard, it is only reasonable to ask that they be put on the table. So soon as we can get the court to accept that dictum you will hear a roar from the other side of the House. At the present time these big concerns object to putting their balance-sheets on the table. That is why I say industry is not playing the game, when the men who are producing the profits in the industry cannot get honest figures. The hon. member for Port Curtis indulged in a long tirade about married men versus single men. That question is not concerned in industry at all, as the single man does just as much work as the married man. Nobody will gainsay the fact that the married man and the single man produce just the same so far as the revenue of the industry is concerned. If there is to be any distinction, it is a question more for a subsidy by the State or the Commonwealth to the man who produces the Australian child as against the man who does not. It has nothing to do with industry, because a man's earnings are the same whether he is married or single.

I have gone into this matter very carefully, and I have satisfied myself that the Arbitration Court has not succeeded in equitably distributing the wealth of industry, but it has succeeded in bringing about what we saw during Exhibition week. Some people are wasting their money in idle

luxury, and the worker on the effective wage is not a bit better off than he was previously.

Mr. DASH (*Mundingburra*): We have heard a good deal from members of the Opposition in regard to what they consider should be done in the matter of the fixation of wages; yet they have put every obstacle in the way of the worker getting access to boards. We know that under the old Arbitration Act and also under the Wages Boards Act the workers' representatives, if they happened to be paid officials of the unions, were debarred from taking any active part in the fixation of wages. Also, when the Industrial Peace Act was framed by members of the Opposition, they took good care to leave out the public servants, and made it almost impossible for those outside the public service to get access to the court. The principle of the Industrial Peace Act was that, first of all, you must have a wages board, and, if you were dissatisfied with the decision of that board, then you had to go to the expense of appealing to the Industrial Court. Also there was a stipulation in all awards that they should not come into operation until from thirty to ninety days after they were made. We know what occurred in connection with the sugar industry. In the Mackay district, when the sugar strike was in progress, the representatives would not accept the wage fixed. The board had to sit on two or three occasions before it could bring in an award that would suit them. No wonder hon. members opposite say they believe in the old wages board system. Under the Industrial Arbitration Act they can still have a wages board if they so desire. Section 48 makes provision for industrial boards. If the employers are anxious for industrial boards, they can easily move the court to have those boards appointed.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: There has only been one industrial board appointed, and the employers appealed against the decision of the court.

Mr. DASH: Why do they refuse to ask for industrial boards? The Act provides that the employers can appoint a certain number of representatives and the employees can appoint a certain number of representatives, and both sides can meet and appoint a chairman. If they are so anxious for industrial boards, why do they not go in for them, instead of coming here and criticising the court and criticising the Government? The Government have not prevented them getting industrial boards, neither has the court. Several hon. members opposite have stated that they believe in a fair deal to the employees, whether in the public service or outside. In 1914—two years after the Liberal Government passed the Industrial Peace Act—the employees in the Railway Department in North Queensland, who were working for 9s. 9d. a day, while outside labour was being paid 11s. 4d. a day, approached the Government of the day to allow them to go to the court the same as outside workers had done. They went further than that, and asked to be allowed to have a wages board, the same as in New South Wales; but they were turned down by the Government. Those employees went to the trouble of petitioning the Government, and I intend to read a few extracts from that petition, so that hon. members opposite will realise what sympathy they had for the public servants, and what the present Government have done for the public servants, despite what has been said by hon. members opposite.

[7 p.m.]

The petition reads—

> "THE PETITION OF RAILWAY EMPLOYEES OF THE NORTHERN DIVISION OF THE GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS OF THE STATE OF QUEENSLAND.
>
> "To the representatives of the people, the hon. members of the Legislative Council and the hon. members of the Legislative Assembly of the State of Queensland in deliberation assembled.
>
> "We, the undersigned employees of the Great Northern, Mackay, Bowen, Cairns, and Cooktown railways, respectfully submit to the hon. members for their consideration the following matter:—
>
> That increase in the price of foodstuffs aggregates an average of 33⅓ per cent. and making the purchasing value 20s. of five years ago the equal value of 26s. 8d. at the present time.
>
> An adjourned application of the Townsville Harbour Board employees for an increase of wages from 10s. to 11s. per day came on for hearing before Mr. A. Dean, police magistrate. Incontrovertible evidence was adduced to show that the lowest living wage was £3 per week, leaving the low-paid employees in this position: that they are working day after day absolutely without any hope of bettering their lot under present conditions, and this prospect staring them in the face—the Insolvency Court and, as a last resource, the old-age pension.
>
> "We earnestly urge upon your consideration the foregoing matter, because at present 50 per cent. of railway employees are working below the living wage, and this, we respectfully submit, justifies your petitioners in approaching the supreme tribunal from whom alone they can obtain redress."

The minimum wage of the railway employees was 9s. 9d. a day, as against 11s. 4d. a day for workers outside the service. That was the time the railway employees wanted the Denham Government to reconsider their position—

> "Your petitioners respectfully submit that what is fair and equitable in one industry is only just when applied all round, as it costs a railway employee just as much to live as anyone outside the service, and we respectfully submit that the basic principle upon which your consideration will be given to this should be on the lines laid down by the learned judge of the Industrial Court."

I am just reading this to show what the railway employees wanted at that time and the way they were treated by hon. members opposite—

> "That your petitioners respectfully ask that a wages board in connection with railway employees, on the lines of the New South Railway Act, be appointed, failing that the appointment of a Royal Commission, failing that a delegation from the railway employees be heard at the bar of the House."

That was the position of the railway employees in Townsville in 1914. The Denham

Government refused to hear them, and, as a consequence, the men went on strike. Immediately after they went on strike, war was declared, and the then Commissioner for Railways, acting on behalf of the Government, told the employees to be patriotic and get back to work. The employers of labour took up this patriotic stunt at that particular time, and induced the railway men to go back to work pending better treatment from the Government. The Government was asked to allow these employees to have a judge to hear their grievances, even if he did not decide what wages they should be paid. That request was refused. Yet hon. members opposite tell us that they are in favour of arbitration and in favour of wages boards. If they were in favour of wages boards at that particular time, why did they not allow the employees the right to go to the court? When they had the opportunity they specially excluded the public servants from the court. The consequence was that the public service had to wait until this Government got into power and placed the Industrial Arbitration Act on the statute-book; that gave the public servants the right to go to the court. When the Labour party were before the electors in 1915, they told the public servants that they would allow them the right to go to the Arbitration Court, and immediately they were returned to the Treasury benches the Labour Government repealed the Industrial Peace Act and passed the Industrial Arbitration Act, which gave the public servants the same rights and privileges in regard to approaching the court as other employees outside the service. The Labour Government also gave the public servants a substantial increase, and it is just as well for the public servants to remember that, because we have the Opposition at the present time telling us what they are prepared to do, and condemning the Government for the action they have taken in regard to the public servants. The members of the Opposition are just the same as the Tories in the other States. We find on reading the papers this morning that the New South Wales Government have decided to exclude public servants from the court altogether. We also find that in South Australia the Government are going to abolish the Arbitration Court altogether. We have heard the cry from the Opposition that they believe in round-table conferences. I have had experience greater than any man in this House with regard to round-table conferences and Arbitration Court proceedings, and I know what the employees' representatives have to put up with when they go to a round-table conference. The employers decide the issue on the question of supply and demand. If they think there are sufficient men available for work, then they will sit back and tell you that you can go your hardest and that they have no intention of increasing wages or improving the conditions. Since the Industrial Arbitration Act has been passed, the employees have not only received higher wages, but, what is more important to me, the conditions of the workers have been greatly improved. The workers have received conditions from the Arbitration Court that they had no hope of getting under the previous Government. There was no hope of getting a reduction in the working hours under the Denham Government, and no hope of getting an improvement in the conditions, although at that time the conditions that the employees were asked to work under were a disgrace to any community You have only to take the sugar industry and take note of the accommodation provided there. Through the action of the Arbitration Court we have been able to improve the working conditions of the workers generally. I do not say that the Arbitration Court has done everything that it might have done with regard to the industrial worker. We know that the court has not put the wages as high as it might have done for the workers in these industries. We must realise that it is not the court altogether that is to blame. We are to blame for this reason—that we set down in the Act for the guidance of the court what shall be done. I want to read a couple of sections to show that we cannot altogether blame the judge of the court or the court itself.

Section 9 of the Industrial Arbitration Act of 1916 provides—

> "The minimum wage of an adult female employee should not be less than is sufficient to enable her to support herself in a fair and average standard of comfort, having regard to the nature of her duties and to the conditions of living prevailing among female employees in the calling in respect of which such minimum wage is fixed."

Section 8 provides—

> "Provided that in fixing rates of wages in any calling—
>
> (*a*) The same wage should be paid to persons of either sex performing the same work or producing the same return of profit to their employer."

This requires females, in the circumstances specified, to be paid a sum equal to males, and therefore not less than sufficient to maintain a man, his wife and family of three. The doctrine of equal pay for equal work is not based upon the requirement of human needs, but it is an expedient having for its object the prevention of women being preferred to men on account of cheapness, just as equal pay for single and married men is an expedient. The Act also lays down a principle for the court in fixing wages generally, that such wages are to be based on the average needs of a man, his wife, and three children. In my opinion that is not a sufficient standard, but it is no use blaming the court. If anyone is to blame, it is the Government and this party for not altering that state of things. I realise the difficulty in which the judge finds himself and the difficulty in which the employees find themselves. In the first place, the representative of the employees has to prove what the standard of living should be, and it is a very difficult task for him, because he does not get from the industrial worker the full assistance he ought to get to enable him to state his case fully. Furthermore, when it comes to a question of reducing wages, a similar onus or hardship is placed on the representative of the employee of proving that the industry can pay the wages prescribed by the court. To my mind the Act should go one step further than it does. Everything is discussed from the point of view of the wages of the industrial worker alone; no account is taken of the work of the wife in maintaining the home and caring for the children and seeing that they are decently clothed and properly educated.

There is one way in which this difficulty may be overcome, and that is by the fixing of a standard wage by a Royal Commission appointed by the Commonwealth, and also the fixing of what standard of comfort employees throughout the Commonwealth should receive. With one State fixing one wage and another State fixing another, we shall never arrive at a definite basic wage or definite standard of living. The mere fact that one State competes against another in industry is not in the interests of the States or of employers or employees. Therefore a standard wage should be fixed for the whole of the Commonwealth, and then the differences necessary to maintain a decent standard of living in the various States should be worked out and the basic wages for the States determined accordingly. At the same time a wage should be fixed below which the court cannot go. That should be reviewed from time to time by a tribunal appointed for that purpose. This is a very big matter, and to do it justice one would have to devote considerable time to working out the details. It is no use our harping here about what the court should and should not do; we are responsible for the position in which we find the court, and it is our duty to alter it. I hope the time is not far distant when we will. Any shortcomings in connection with the Act we will bring before the notice of this Chamber, and we will see whether members are prepared to give us any assistance. Several hon. members opposite have stated that the court has been responsible for closing down industries in this State. I challenge any hon. member on the other side to prove to me that any award of the court has been the means of closing down any industry. The court has never yet fixed a wage which has resulted in the closing down of any industry. The court has not been responsible for the position in the mining industry. The fault has been the high cost of fuel, explosives, and transport, together with the low price received for metals. Some hon. members say that the condition of the pastoral industry has been brought about by awards of the Arbitration Court. That is not so. With regard to Arbitration Court awards the condition of that industry to-day is no worse than it was two years ago. The fact is, the oversea markets have been lost to this State and this Commonwealth. During the war, the pastoralists and those who were living on the products of the pastoral industry were more concerned about making profits than about retaining the market. We had that spectacle with regard to meat as well as with regard to copper and other metals. The Commonwealth Government could have easily looked after this matter while the war was on, and not have allowed that market, after years of battling, to be closed up. I have worked in the pastoral industry a good many years, and know what it is capable of doing. It is an industry which can be worked as cheaply as any industry in the State, especially the cattle portion. It is a very big station which will carry more than twenty employees for two periods of the year during the branding season. I do not know so much about the sheep portion of the industry. The wages paid have not been the means of crippling the industry in any shape or form. Speaking generally, the industries can well afford to pay the wages that are at present fixed. Under present conditions, the men employed in some industries are placed at a disadvantage. The first that gets into the court receives the first increase. That increase is immediately passed on, and, when the next industry gets in, the cost of living has advanced, and any increase given to those employees is counteracted. Wages can never keep pace with the increased cost of living. Before wages should come down, a marked decrease in the cost of living should be brought about. Under this system of arbitration everything is based on the cost of living in an industry. It is of no use the employers talking about more production to solve this problem. If the workers have not sufficient money to buy commodities, so much surplus value will be created that the workers will not be able to keep pace with it.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*): In face of the statements made by hon. members opposite in connection with the Industrial Arbitration Act, it is only right that we should make a pronouncement, not to hon. members, but to the people outside, so that they will understand exactly our position.

Mr. PEASE: Are you on the defence?

Mr. MAXWELL: We are not placed on the defence. One of the planks of the Nationalist party platform is the retention of the Arbitration Court. It will be a revelation to the people outside to read some of the speeches delivered to-day by hon members opposite as to their attitude towards the Arbitration Court. I remember when the Industrial Arbitration Bill was introduced. It was promised that it was going to be a panacea for all evils, and that the industrial millennium had arrived. So far as hon. members opposite were concerned, so long as wages were soaring, everything in the garden was lovely, but when applications were made to the court for a reduction in wages because of a decrease in the cost of living, the trouble began.

Mr. FOLEY: The employers were always squealing.

Mr. MAXWELL: Owing to the restrictions and conditions that were placed upon a big section of the people, they had every reason to squeal against the treatment meted out to them. Last session we were promised an amendment of the Industrial Arbitration Act. No mention is made this year about it in the Speech from the Throne. It was recognised by a big section of the community that it was a fair and legitimate proposition that the Act should be binding upon both sections. We have been told that it has not been binding upon the employers. Knowing the manner in which hon. members opposite secure evidence, it will not be difficult for them to prove that a lockout has eventuated. If there is a lockout, those concerned are subject to the pains and penalties of the court. It has been stated that hon. members on this side do not stand for arbitration, and that we have not done anything to help the workers to get better conditions. The hon. member for Mount Morgan, in his speech delivered on the second reading of the Industrial Arbitration Bill in 1916, said—

> "We must concede credit to our friends on the opposite side to be the first to introduce legislation, giving representation to the third party in industrial disputes."

Mr. STOPFORD: The hon. member is not going to disagree with that?

Mr. MAXWELL: No. I disagree with the statement made on various occasions by hon. members opposite that hon. members on this side, who on a former occasion occupied the Treasury benches, have done nothing to elevate the masses or relieve their conditions. I realise that the doctrine of, "might is right," has been practically removed by the passage of the Industrial Arbitration Act. I say unhesitatingly that I stand for the Arbitration Act, because, in my humble opinion, the Arbitration Act is going to prevent a great amount of the trouble and difficulty that occurred formerly. It has prevented a great amount of trouble in the past. We all recognise that the Act is not perfect; still, there is a possibility, if hon. members on the other side feel disposed to amend the Act, of making it what it ought to be. If it is right for one class to abide by an award, it is also right for the other class to do the same. We found Mr. Justice Higgins, of the Federal Arbitration Court, when giving a judgment some time ago, saying—

> "That is the wage, but it does not follow that you need work."

To me that is a reprehensible position to take up, because, if it is right for the one side to do a certain thing, it should be right for the other. Then, again, as I have pointed out on former occasions, there is no fixity of tenure so far as the Act is concerned. Under section 18 of the Industrial Arbitration Act there is nothing to debar either side from appealing to the court as often as they like. That plays a considerable amount of havoc in a number of industries. Take the building industry—the Secretary for Public Works can appreciate a simile such as this. It is not possible where the contract system is in operation—and it is in operation in outside works—for a man to estimate what his work is going to cost under a provision such as that. That is one of the sections of the Act which requires amending. There is another section which requires amending, and that is in connection with the basis of the basic wage. I have already stressed that upon a former occasion. I have already put in "Hansard" a statement made by Mr. Piddington as to what the basis should be. There should be no necessity for me to say that I stand for a fair deal to the workers. I do not stand for starvation wages, and the introduction of the Arbitration Act has prevented such starvation wages being paid. I am not going to say that bad conditions were not in existence previously, as that would be false. There were bad conditions; but why do hon. members on the other side stand up and tell us the conditions that are obtaining are bad? It is a libel on the Act that has been introduced by their own Government. It only goes to show how void they are of any argument. It also goes to show that they are dressing the shop window with a view to putting it before the public to let them see what they have done. By their own actions they have been convicted. We have heard from the hon. member for Ipswich what his attitude is towards the Arbitration Court. I presume the hon. gentleman is one of those who are favourable to the one big union scheme.

Mr. GLEDSON: Yes, I am favourable.

Mr. MAXWELL: That being the case, I just want to show what the advocates of the one big union stand for, and I am going to quote from a book entitled "The One Big Union and Reconstruction in the Light of the War," by Ernest H. Lane, with an introduction by W. R. Crampton, ex-M.L.C. Mr. Crampton, in concluding his introduction, writes—

> "I commend my friend's work to the earnest consideration of the glorious rank and file of the liberating Labour movement."

In that direction I want to point out what these hon. gentlemen stand for. I want to show the hypocrisy that exists on the Government benches in connection with the Arbitration Court and their attitude towards it. If they are true to the one big union principle, they are false to the Arbitration Court. On page 24 of this work I find this—

> "And the new unionism of Australia, if it is to prove worthy of these stirring days of redemption, if it is to fulfil the promise of a new era, of a happier day, it will assuredly disown the present short-sighted union methods of throwing all its money, energy, and enthusiasm into a sordid struggle for higher wages and range itself in line with the demand for a new order, where the evil wage system will be absent. If the one big union movement in Australia identifies itself with the movement to destroy the wage system of exploitation, instead of compromising with and approving, then will it indeed be fully entitled to be classed as big and will prove itself to be a courageous and faithful organisation of militant, intelligent, class-conscious workers."

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MAXWELL: Hon. members opposite say, "Hear, hear!" and we heard it said this afternoon when were we going [7.30 p.m.] to have industrial peace? We shall have it when we get rid of men like those who preach industrial class consciousness. Then there is a chapter headed, "The Wings of Desire"—

> "As soon as the workers realise that Arbitration Courts, wages boards, and the various other methods of 'mutual' bargaining will never bring them any nearer to their emancipation from the toils of capitalist exploitation, that on those lines nothing that really matters can possibly be attained—as soon as that position is realised, then will another big advance be made on the onward march.
>
> "Then, how can the futility of these methods, as a means of reorganising society, be shown to the workers as but a clashing of cymbals, inept, and useless? By the ever-increasing desires of the workers for a fuller share of the bounties of nature and the handicraft of man's work; by the knowledge that within the bounds of the present system of production for profit, it is impossible for the worker to ever satisfy his desire for the fruits of the earth. Within the confines of present-day ethics, laws, and precedents the worker has just about reached the limit of possibilities, and if he still persists in desiring benefits and pleasures that are now unobtainable, he will have to adopt different methods, blaze a new track, and work towards a new goal."

I will also quote what Mr. E. E. Judd says in "The Case for the One Big Union"—

"COMPULSORY ARBITRATION.

"We hold that a man has a right to withhold his labour or to use it as he may deem proper. The secretary of the Coal and Shale Employees' Federation, Mr. Willis, said recently that 'compulsory industrial arbitration means legal machinery for holding the sheep while the employers shear them.' As he has repeatedly contended, the workers, as a general law, only get from the Arbitration Courts awards in proportion to their organised power to compel the employers to pay without arbitration. The employing class have introduced compulsory Arbitration Courts, and invite the working class to settle their differences with them there. The capitalist class have chosen the Arbitration Court as the battleground. It is not wise to accept the battleground chosen by your enemy. The wiser way is for you to choose the battleground, and force the enemy to meet you there.

"Advocates of compulsory arbitration and the other existing methods will probably say that were it not for such methods conditions would probably be even worse."

Those are three undoubted authorities who put the case for the One Big Union. That is where hon. members opposite find themselves. This is where I find myself—I stand for arbitration as a proper means of settling disputes and bringing about a better understanding between employer and employee. I have here the official report of the All-Australian Trades Union Conference held in the Trades Hall, Melbourne, from 20th to 25th June, 1921, in which it is stated—

"Mr. Watson explained that he had withdrawn from its deliberations at an early stage, feeling as he did that in view of the acceptance by the committee of the principle of the One Big Union he could be of no further service, especially as he had to submit a proposal on different lines on behalf of his own union."

I think I have linked up fairly well the association of hon. members opposite with the policy of the One Big Union, which shows the inconsistency of the Government and their supporters, when they say that we do not stand for arbitration and that they do. If they are true to the principles of the One Big Union Conference held in Melbourne, and also that which was held in Brisbane, they must be against the system of arbitration, because they could not otherwise hold their position as Labour members. One plank enunciated at that conference was the socialisation of industry. That is a Communistic plank.

Mr. PEASE: Do not steal the thunder of the hon. member for Oxley.

Mr. MAXWELL: The hon. member was squealing this afternoon that the hon. member for Oxley was not standing for arbitration. If he does not stand for arbitration, how can I steal his thunder? The hon. member for Leichhardt stated this afternoon that although the public servants had gone to the Arbitration Court their wages had never been reduced.

Mr. FOLEY: I never did. I referred you to the judge's remarks, where he said that the wages had only been adjusted.

Mr. MAXWELL: The hon. member made that a portion of the case he was submitting to the Committee, and stated that what the judge had said was quite good enough for him. If that is the case, and he can convince the public servants that they have not been sacked, but only deflated, it is practically on all fours with the statement he made this afternoon that there has been no reduction of wages. This is from a Government which said that they did not believe in reduction of wages, but believed in the Arbitration Court. In connection with the personnel of the Arbitration Court, I stand for a judge being the President of the Court; but I think an improvement might be made by having two assessors to help the judge. When a particular industry is before the court, two assessors might be appointed, one from the employers and one from the employees in the industry. The representatives of both sides could appear before the court. The bench would be composed of a judge, who is experienced in weighing evidence, and two practical men. I am satisfied that better results would be obtained from that method. I realise that, however efficient the judges may be, it is impossible for them to give entire satisfaction. We had experience some time ago from the union side. When the unions were successful, they said, "We have appointed those judges, and they are doing all right for us"; but, as soon as the scales go down the other way, they say, "They are a nice crowd; they ought to be kicked out." They say they have no time for the Arbitration Court. The principle of conciliatory arbitration has now been established. Speeches such as we have heard from the Minister will not tend towards conciliation between the employer and employee. So long as we have got a section in our community who are putting out amongst the workers this infernal pernicious doctrine that there is nothing in common between the employer and employee, we cannot make any progress.

Mr. COLLINS: How can there be?

Mr. MAXWELL: The hon. gentleman has never had any experience of being an employer. I can appreciate the position that some men are placed in, and there may be occasions when men have been wrongly treated. But there are two sides to a shield. After all, who are employers of to-day? They are only employees themselves. The employers of to-day are employed by somebody else. In my business I am employed by other people to do certain work. We are all trying to see how we can best pull together. How is our objective going to be accomplished? Is it going to be accomplished by the pernicious doctrine circulated throughout the length and breadth of the country? Is it going to be brought about by introducing a Russianised system into this community of ours? No. They say they preach the doctrine of the "sermon on the mount," which they have talked so much about. Do they try to live peaceably with all men? Do they love one another and work together? The Government find themselves in a reprehensible position to-day. They find themselves right up against it owing to their tactics and owing to the shifting sands that they have been resting on. They tell the public servants one thing, but they have acted in a different way

altogether. Is it any wonder that we get this paragraph from the "Australasian" of 26th August, 1922. Speaking about Mr. Theodore, amongst other things, it says—

> "The party led by him has lived by cheating democracy, and much of its legislation has been dishonest. The explanation of this display of extraordinary righteousness in a guilty party is that the situation is desperate. Parliament is near its end, and Labour, like Carlyle's condemned felon, stares with bloodshot eyes at the darkness and listens fearfully to the hammering at the Rabenstein, where the gallows is even now abuilding."

Mr. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): The hon. gentleman who has just resumed his seat pretends he is in favour of arbitration, and refers to the "sermon on the mount." We know that during the war the Federal Government would not allow any reference to the "sermon on the mount." When it was a question of bringing about peace, the hon. member for Toowong and other hon. members opposite had a lot to say against it. They said they did not want peace, but they must have war. They said, "We must have bloodshed. We must kill." We find the hon. member for Toowong very much involved in the Employers' Federation, yet he pretends to be in favour of arbitration and conciliation. On 24th January last there was a meeting of the Queensland Employers' Federation, held at the Union Bank Chambers, Queen street. I have here the particulars of the meeting—

> "Mr. R. H. Edkins (United Graziers' Association of Queensland) will deal with the question of better organisation of employers; Mr. J. F. Maxwell, M.L.A. (chairman of trustees of Commerce House, Limited), will address the meeting on Commerce House, and be supported by his co-trustees, Messrs. J. P. Wilson and J. Dowrie; Mr. J. Plumridge (Queensland Confectioners' Association) will speak on the necessity for funds as outlined in circular letter of 8th December, 1921; Mr. R. Bowen will deal with the question of creating an employers' defence fund; Mr. A. Watson (president of the Chamber of Manufactures) will deal with the basic wage question; Mr. J. A. Walsh (Messrs. Fitzgerald and Walsh), legal advisers to the Queensland Employers' Federation, will deal with the Industrial Arbitration Act of 1916; Mr. H. R. Brown (Steamship Owners and Waterside Employers' Association), representative on the Queensland Employers' Federation executive, will explain the position of affairs so far as the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act (now being handled by the Central Council of Employers, Melbourne, with whom the Queensland Employers' Federation is affiliated) is concerned; Mr. C. W. Campbell (president of the Queensland Employers' Federation) will deal with the Workers' Compensation Act; Mr. T. Forster (president of the Ironmasters' Association of Queensland) will deal with the question of preference to local manufacturers over interstate and oversea by Government and public bodies; Mr. A. W. Beauchamp (Ironmasters' Association of Queensland) will deal with the matter of land and income tax."

Reference is made there to the necessity for funds. I suppose that is funds to defeat the Labour party. These are the gentlemen associated with the hon. member for Toowong, who tells us to-night that he is in favour of arbitration. The Press was excluded from the meeting, and it was decided to have a Press committee to give certain information to the Press. They only wanted to give out the information they wanted to put in the front window and not the information they wanted to keep back. They only wanted to give out information that would gull the electors; there was no straightforward dealing with them.

Mr. VOWLES: And no one behind a screen.

Mr. BRENNAN: I do not mind whom you have behind the screen, so long as you tell us who was behind the screen. If you are going to put people behind the screen, let us see who they are at the right time. The president, Mr. C. W. Campbell, in his opening remarks referred to the good old days, and set out what his association had been able to do. He said—

> "It had controlled the Queensland section of the big shipping strike in 1890; acted as an advisory council to the shearers' strike in 1891; assisted in handling the wharf strike in 1898; conducted the big tramway strike in 1912; and used its influence in frustrating the enactments of the Unemployed Workers' Bill."

Then, a little later, Mr. Campbell said—

> "As the president of this federation, which is a position I might tell you not of my own seeking, I have been connected with the federation for the past sixteen years, and I know the work that has been going on in this organisation. We have been doing it pretty secretly."

They have been doing it secretly—behind the screen.

Mr. J. JONES: That is your favourite way.

Mr. BRENNAN: If I get you there, Jack, you will fall in, too. Mr. Campbell continued—

> "We have been doing it pretty secretly, but I think the time has now come when we should get out into the open. If you look for a moment at the splendid organisation the employers have in South Australia, you will see an example of what might be done by a federation here in Queensland. They have a splendid organisation in Adelaide. Why, it keeps the unions quiet every time!"

Mr. Campbell further said—

> "I hope that all of those who are outside the federation will recognise the good work that we have been doing, and link up. Give us a helping hand. On many and many a night we have gone up to the House when the Liberal Government was in power and secured alterations in the legislation going through, which have all been to your benefit. They were in touch with us all the time the tramway strike was on."

Then we had a speech from Brigadier-General Thompson, the Nationalist candidate for the Senate. General Thompson said—

> "There is another aspect of the strike matter, and that is this. Have we any machinery able to provide for armed

forces? Is there any machinery to-day by which you can put your hand on some reliable force to put against the forces of——

"Mr. R. Bowen: Hooliganism.

"General Thompson: If you have a few regulars it is wonderful what they can resist. I have seen 500 men in the shearers' strike held up by seventy-five mounted infantry men.

"Mr. R. Bowen said: With regard to the question of an organised force, I say that there is none, and I do not know that we would have any chance of arranging any just now."

The hon. member for Toowong said to-night that the employer and employee should be brought together and should be friendly. The hon. member said one thing to-night, but this is what he said at the meeting of the Employers' Federation—

"Mr. Edkins told us that he wanted an army for defence, and not defiance. I am not too sure that the time has not arrived when we have got to attack.

"Mr. Maxwell next applied his remarks to 'The Daily Standard.' He said—

> My experience amongst a section of the employers is that they are afraid to speak out. We are told by 'The Daily Standard' that unless some of our employers advertised in 'The Daily Standard' they would be boycotted, and there are some who are afraid of that. In the face of what is going on, in the face of the lies right through that paper, and they are sowing seeds of disease—because it is worse than a cancer—sowing disease amongst a number of the working men, is it not time to stop this kind of thing?"

We know very well that the "Daily Standard" stands for the publication of such information as may be useful to the working classes. That is why it was launched. We never expect to get from the "Courier" or the "Daily Mail" any matter of benefit to the workers. They state the case from the capitalistic point of view. We never expected any assistance from those big capitalistic influences which are now forced to pay a good wage for a good day's work. I say that, if a man can make a profit on a painting job by simply sitting down and watching other men do the work, surely God's own gift, a man's labour, should show some profit. If he does a fair day's work, why should he not make a profit instead of giving it to the middleman? Why should the hon. member for Toowong be able to go along to the Employers' Federation and say, "We control affairs"? The hon. member for Warwick got very indignant indeed this afternoon, but I could show the Committee what the middlemen have made out of the farmers and out of the industralists over many years. If hon. members are out to smash the Industrial Arbitration Court, the system for which we stand, they will have to smash it after a great deal of trouble, because we shall always continue to defend the cause of the working classes.

Mr. STOPFORD (*Mount Morgan*): First of all, I must thank the hon. member for Toowong for having placed so much of the propaganda of the One Big Union in "Hansard," where it may reach many people who will probably appreciate it more than the hon. member who is responsible for putting it there. I trust that the hon. member will read literature such as that, together with further portions of the speech which he quoted, for I believe that we shall then find him much broader in his views. I do not desire to convey that his views are very narrow; but, if he reads such things as my speech, he will be making a valuable contribution to the debate.

Often people are prone to believe that our system of arbitration was established for the benefit of the contending parties in an industrial dispute. That was never in the minds of the men who set out to erect the edifice which we have in Australia, and particularly in Queensland. It has become recognised as a system less barbarous than that which prevailed before, and its beneficial influences have so extended in industrial matters that it is to-day occupying the minds of national leaders as a possible method of solving great international problems without the necessity of resort to barbarous wars and consequent loss of human life which attends them under our present system. I think it will be generally recognised that the Queensland Act has beneficially resulted in less industrial trouble than in any other State of Australia or portion of the British Empire. The greatest tribute to our system of arbitration in Queensland is the fact that we have passed through a period of four years of war, and we are nearing the end of the aftermath of the war, I hope, without any large industrial upheaval affecting the important interests in the community and wreaking havoc upon us. I look upon that as a tribute to an Act which, I confess, has many imperfections.

Anyone who has studied the effect of arbitration on the industrial and commercial life of this State must recognise that the president of the court is really the Government of the State. That is a big statement to make, and I desire to justify it. I contend that the condition of the masses of the people of a State determines the prosperity of the whole of the State, and therefore the persons responsible for the welfare of the masses of the people are really the governing factor in the State. I contend that that is a condition which should not exist in any democratic State like Queensland. If I, as a representative of the people, were to express my honest opinion of the judges of the Arbitration Court in their dealings with the men in the electorate I represent, you, Mr. Kirwan, would call me to order, and probably I would refuse to obey your call, and then the Committee would empty me out. I have no desire to do that; but I claim that no representative of the people should be placed in a position in which he cannot criticise men who have in their control the destinies of the people whom he represents in this Chamber. I think I can claim, without bringing any discredit upon the principle of arbitration, or the judges who for the time being may control the court in this State, that our legislation in this matter should be amended. I claim that we should have a board of inquiry similar to those which exist in other States, which can be controlled by this House, and which would lay down what should be known as the basic wage or the foundation on which the court could work in making its awards. To give to any one man in the community the right to determine the conditions of the great

masses of the people by fixing a basic wage is, to my mind, economically unsound and wrong.

Mr. MOORE: He has more power than Parliament.

Mr. STOPFORD: He is the Parliament. My contention is that the judge of the Arbitration Court who fixes the basic wage is the governing force in the State so far as the great masses of the people are concerned.

Mr. BRAND: He fixes the salaries of public servants, too.

Mr. STOPFORD: If the hon. member wants to know how I stand on that, I will tell him that my vote would send the public servants to the court every time. So far as I am concerned, there would be no first-class travelling for any section of the community. They would all have to go to the court or work with me along the lines I am suggesting here to-night in a desire to protect every unattached worker in the State from the evils of our present system. The court was equally unsound in increasing as it was in reducing the basic rate of wage. There has never been in this State a proper inquiry into the justification for either an increase or a decrease in wages. What was the spectacle in this State? First of all, the Piddington award, which no State, or the Commonwealth, was game to give effect to. New South Wales, after backing and filling, fixed the basic rate of wage at £4 5s. per week. The Queensland court, after five months, determined to follow suit. When New South Wales, by inquiry or on "Knibbs's" figures, decided to reduce the basic rate of wage to £4 2s., the Queensland court, without any inquiry, without any evidence, without going into the matter carefully, determined within a fortnight to reduce the wages in this State to the New South Wales figure. It was only when we were able, by the fight that went on in Mount Morgan, to demonstrate that the workers were prepared to resist any action of that description that we delayed for three or four months the reduction in the case of the majority of the people. We should have in this State a proper board of trade, representative of both sides, which would inquire into, not that which would allow a person to live, but that which shall constitute a standard of life. That standard will have to be determined by us in Parliament, and we will have to face our electors upon it after we have determined it. The board of trade should inquire into what amount would be reasonable to ensure a proper standard of living, proper provision for old age and sickness, and proper provision for a family. Until we have that power we may preach as we like that we govern the State, but we shall be preaching a doctrine that does not ring true, because the judge for the time being is the one who governs the people of this State. The hon. member for Burrum has asked me about the attitude of the Government towards the public service. It is contended that this Government, by sending the public servants to the Arbitration Court, reduced their wages. If that contention is right, then, logically, the electors in Mount Morgan, the electors in the pastoral industry, the electors in every other industry, can reasonably say that the Government were responsible for the reduction in their rate of wages in having allowed the court to make the reduction in the basic rate of wage. If this Government, or any other Government, have the power to withhold from the court their own employees, they equally have power to lay down by legislation a basic rate of wage that shall determine the conditions under which every other citizen of the State who is not a public servant shall live and work. Hon. members opposite who are so concerned about the condition of the public servants would not permit those men to enter the court if they had their way. During the period that this Government were making provision for the entry of the public servants to the Arbitration Court, speaker after speaker on that side claimed that we were giving away the functions of Government in permitting our servants to go to the court and get redress for their wrongs. Hon. members opposite contended that the proper place for them to appeal to was to their masters in Parliament. I have always strenuously opposed that; I have always claimed that Governments have no right to single out their own employees for any special benefits. The hon. member for Mundingburra quoted figures showing the condition which existed in the North Queensland railways before this Government permitted the railway workers to go into the Arbitration Court and have common cause with other workers. He demonstrated clearly that, in particular trades and callings, the difference existing between the wage paid in the railway workshops and that paid by the private employer amounted to as much as 2s., 3s., and sometimes 4s. per day. The public servants recognise to-day that the greatest boon this Government ever conferred on them was when they broke down the barrier erected by hon. members opposite which prevented their going, in common with their fellow-workers outside, to a common tribunal and taking what that tribunal was offering. Hon. members opposite know that, were they in power to-morrow, while they might not be prepared to alter the method of arbitration in this State, they would—as has been done in New South Wales and as is being done in South Australia—immediately remove the public servants from the scope of the Arbitration Court.

[8 p.m.]

Mr. BRAND: No.

Mr. STOPFORD: Hon. members say "No." "Hansard" will reveal that, when the police were forming their union, speaker after speaker on that side condemned the Government for permitting them to do so. Read the Tory Press at the time when we first extended to the public servants the privilege of entering the Arbitration Court. That will give a true index of the feelings of the interests which hon. members on that side represent. I want to ask, not the public servants who are howling about Brisbane, but the public servants of the State: Have they the right to barter away the greatest boon that has ever been conferred upon them? Nature demonstrates to us in more ways than one that, if we cease to use an organ, nature walls off that organ. Adenoids in children to-day are due largely to breathing through the mouth. Nature is walling up the nose, and operations become necessary to remove the growth from the back of the nose. Were it not for that operation perhaps generation after generation would pass, but sooner or later nature—which has no use for an unused thing—would wall up the nostrils, and we would be a race of people breathing through our mouths. So it is with the Arbitration

Court. If the public servants, while they have a Labour Government in power, are going to lay it down that they must barter directly with the members of this House, they will not have a logical argument to adduce against a Government composed of hon. members opposite who will say to them —when, sooner or later, their propaganda lands them on this side of the House—"You have refused to use this; you have demanded to barter with Parliament; barter with us to-day." How will the public servant to-day, who will have given away a right which is not his alone, but which is for those who will come after, answer the men and women who say, "Who gave you authority to barter away the greatest boon that was ever conferred upon you as a class?" I am not making these remarks in justification of my attitude. If the whole of the public servants were ranged in front of me to-day, I would say to them what I am saying now. If those who are howling to-day about a "low-wage" campaign will search their consciences, they will find who was responsible for the position existing to-day. The people responsible are those men who held down good jobs, sat idly by, while the men I represent stood with their backs to the wall in the first trench in the wage reduction campaign and cried to the rest of the workers of Australia to come to their assistance—not to scratch themselves even—not even to expose themselves, but to send them enough to feed their wives and "kiddies."

I am going to tell about the response by the public servants in this State. There are 15,000 workers in the Railway Department, in receipt of salaries from £500 down. If my figures are correct, there are 9,000 men in the Railway Union, known as the Australian Railway Union. During the twelve long weary months when those men stood fighting in battle at Mount Morgan, fighting the battle in the first trench of the low-wage campaign, those 9,000 men sent £97 to Mount Morgan. £70 of which came from one branch in Rockhampton. If you want to know what industrialists the public servants are, let me tell you about a little place called Baralaba, where men who are industrialists are known as Bolsheviks. Those industrial workers, in spite of the fact that they were only working three days a week, levied on themselves to contribute to the Mount Morgan men a sum of £460. Those men contributed £460, and the other 9,000 men contributed £97. Those 9,000 men constitute practically the only section of thousands of public servants who thought it worth while to send a little ammunition to help the men who were fighting in Mount Morgan. Then, when the Mount Morgan men went down, when the judge of the Arbitration Court went to Mount Morgan—to arbitrate as we were told—but who sent his ballot-box ahead of him, with the slips printed as to what the voting should be, and then took his evidence afterwards—one of the advocates of the workers stood up and asked the right to speak in court. Do you know what this Arbitration Court determined? The judge said that talking and evidence would not open the mine. I claim that the court did not go to Mount Morgan to open that mine. The court went there to determine on evidence submitted, and then absolutely refused to allow any evidence to be adduced. That is the reason why I say something better is needed. That is the reason why I say to the public servants of this State, "The fact that we send you to the court does not reduce your wages. If the court makes a determination that you do not think is a fair and reasonable one, put your backs against the wall and fight like the Mount Morgan men did. Stand there, and I will gamble this—that you will not stand there alone so far as the Mount Morgan men are concerned, because they will stand behind you and swing the towel in your corner." The public servants in this State have nothing to complain about. They were sent to the court by this Government. If the public servants and the industrialists of this State have anything to cavil about, it is that we as a Government have governed this State for seven years, and there is a section of the most lowly-paid men in this State to-day who cannot get into the Arbitration Court. We as a Government are fixing for the farmer a price for his produce in a pool. We are laying it down that he shall get a definite price for the commodity, and we are working with an Arbitration Act that refuses him the right to enter the court. I ask the public servants to remember that these men cannot get justice by themselves. I ask the public servants to remember this, that even when the men went down fighting in Mount Morgan, all had not been lost. This Government were generous enough to say for that financial year no reduction in public servants' salaries would take place. We then convened a meeting in Market Square. What for? To protest against a general reduction in the basic wage in this State; and, although the interests of every worker in the State were at stake, we had only 300 present. The trams should not have been able to run down Adelaide street that night. Had the public servants of this State massed in their thousands in Market Square, there would not have been any wage reduction in Queensland. No Government and no court would have gone on with the game. The public servants stayed away. They were fixed for their financial year, and in effect they said, "To hell with the rest."

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): It is just as well to examine for a few moments why we happen to have arbitration. I can remember the days when we had no arbitration in this State or the Commonwealth. Why did the workers advocate arbitration? The reason they advocated arbitration was because, under the system that existed, they only had what was known as direct action, and therefore, to get away from the cruelty, as it were, practised by the employers when we used to go on strike—which we had to do in those days to get our rights, and which caused untold suffering amongst our women and children, and which is causing untold suffering in other parts of the world to-day—the workers recognised that we were living in a more civilised and humane age and they advocated arbitration. We were the pioneers of arbitration in this State and the Commonwealth. As one of those who did some of the pioneering work, I do not intend to allow the vote to pass through without saying a word on it. As I said in 1915, to quote my exact words when speaking on the second reading of the Industrial Arbitration Bill—

> "We do not state, at least I do not, that this measure is the be-all and the end-all of this great movement."

I was referring to the great Labour movement. Arbitration as it exists to-day, is not the be-all or the end-all of the great Labour movement. I went further and said in that same speech that much depends upon the judge. My experience in regard to arbitration, not only in this State, but following on closely in the Commonwealth, has been that the words that I used at that time have been more than justified when I said, "Much depends upon the judge." I went so far as to say that I would much prefer that Charles Collins be appointed to the position if the workers were to get justice. I am one of those who have doubts about men who have never done a hard day's work in their lives sitting upon a bench and arbitrating what the class to which I belong shall receive for their labour. We hear all this prating about the living wage. We as workers have to submit to a man who is in receipt of over £2,000 a year telling us what we are to receive as a living wage. What is a living wage? It is very hard to define. A living wage for some people who neither toil nor spin is sufficient to stay at the Belle Vue Hotel, where they pay more for their food than the average worker is receiving altogether. That is their living wage. The day is fast approaching when the workers will demand that those people be put into the court and that the court shall decide what they shall receive as a living wage, just as the court now decides what the workers shall receive as a living wage. No exception could be taken to that.

Mr. VOWLES: Why not send members of Parliament to the court and allow the court to decide their wages?

Mr. COLLINS: We who represent large electorates, if you take everything into consideration, even with our £475 a year—if we take the effective wage—are not getting much more to-day than the worker is getting outside—that is, if we do justice to our electors. I am not one of those who believe that the Arbitration Court should fix the wages of members of Parliament, for the reason that we are the creators of the Arbitration Court, and the creators should always be greater than that which they create. Having created the Arbitration Court, and being the direct representatives of the people, we are better judges of what we should receive for the services we render the State than any Arbitration Court judge. The Arbitration Court judge with his £2,000 a year would not award us £2,000 a year.

Mr. VOWLES: He might.

Mr. COLLINS: I am satisfied that he would not. I do not agree with the hon. member for Toowong, who said that what we want is a judge sitting there with a representative of the employing class and a representative of the workers, and allow them to come to a decision. That would leave it just as it is to-day. The judge drawing the £2,000 a year would be the man to do the deciding all the time. If the hon. member wants to bring about justice to the worker, he should have advocated the appointment of a tribunal, in which the employing class should be represented and the working class should be represented, and then a working-class judge should be appointed—from the unions, may be. We on this side, as I said before, were the pioneers in regard to arbitration, but that is not the be-all and the end-all of the great Labour movement. While the Arbitration Court has done good work, better work has to be done in the interests of the masses of the people. Our wealth production, according to the figures quoted by the hon. member for Maryborough, is increasing by leaps and bounds, and there must be greater comfort for the mass of the people. When I was quite a young man I heard Sir Samuel Walker Griffith, speaking on this question, say—

> "The great social problem of the present day is not how to accumulate wealth, but how to get a more equal distribution of it."

That is the problem that should be before the court to-day. Wealth is being produced in abundance, and it is in the distribution of that wealth that we want the court to act fairly on behalf of the mass of the people. That is the problem before mankind to-day. What is the use of the hon. member for Warwick holding up his hands and looking towards heaven, and saying, "Why all this industrial unrest?" This industrial unrest will go on and on until the workers come into their own—until the workers take possession of that which they produce. What the worker is really asking is this, "Do I really belong to myself, or is some other person part-owner in me?" That is really what our present system of society is.

Mr. MOORE: Does any man belong to himself?

Mr. COLLINS: A man is not the owner of himself; some other person owns him. The hon. member for Warwick quoted a cable that appeared in the papers only yesterday in regard to the Trade Union Congress that is being held in Great Britain, and the president of that congress told the British Government—

> "This work you are carrying on will have to cease."

Then the hon. member for Warwick quoted this—I am going to quote it, too; but I am going to use it in a different sense to what he used it—

> "When Miss Hartley, Mayoress of Southport, arrived for the purpose of officially welcoming the delegates, she was too late to hear Mr. Walker. She declared that wages were better and holidays were longer and more frequent than formerly. The death rate had been reduced by half, the status of women had improved, and the savings of the workers vastly increased. She demanded: 'Why all this unrest? What ails the world? We are all trying to obtain something for nothing. Excessive selfishness is the root of all evil. We are asking for the impossible.'"

That is what is wrong. The capitalistic class, speaking of them generally, are trying to get something for nothing, and they render very little service to the community. I am not dealing with the individual capitalist; I am talking generally, because the "small fry," as a rule, do not count. The hon. member for Kennedy interjects in this Chamber from time to time as if he owned half Queensland, whereas we know he only owns a very small portion of it. These small concerns hardly count in modern times. This lady went to to say—

> "We are asking for the impossible."

That is, the working class are asking for the impossible. When we asked for the

Arbitration Court, we were told that we were asking for the impossible; but we have proved to the world at large that it was possible, and we brought about arbitration in the Commonwealth. All the cry about mankind asking for the impossible is nonsense. Years ago when stalwarts in the United States and other countries said, "We must abolish slavery," immediately the capitalist class got up and said, "Impossible! Don't ask for the impossible; you cannot bring it about." Later on in Great Britain, when they asked for the Ten hour Act the capitalists of that country held up their hands in holy horror, and said, "Impossible! You cannot have the Ten-hour Act; it would mean the ruination of industries in Great Britain." Here in Australia, when the bulk of the workers asked for an eight-hour day, some people said, "Impossible! It will mean the ruination of all our industries. We will have less wealth production if we only work eight hours." But we kept that ideal before us, and went straight on, and we lived to see the bulk of the workers in the Commonwealth working eight hours a day, and the country is not ruined. Wealth production is still increasing by leaps and bounds. What is the use of talking about the wonderful machinery that the brain of man has invented? What is the use of it if we have to work the same number of hours that our forefathers did? We have people in this Commonwealth to-day who want to lengthen the working day—who want to do away with the forty-four-hour week and revert to the forty-eight-hour week. Not long ago I read where one man in New South Wales who represents the interests represented by hon. members opposite said that we ought to work much longer hours, and he quoted what they were doing in other countries. What we want to do to-day is to organise society more than it has been organised, and I take it that this is what our Arbitration Court exists for. That is what we must keep on striving for. What is capital after all? We talk about capitalists—that is, the people who control capital.

Mr. EDWARDS: Don't you mix with the people who visit the Queensland Club?

Mr. COLLINS: You cease talking about me and the Queensland Club. I only went there once with a Federal member, Mr. Jowett, who would not be continually throwing off at a man because he went over with him out of good friendship. He is more advanced in his views than the hon. member for Nanango. I have here a [8.30 p.m.] definition, by a great authority, of "capital," which may be interesting to the hon. member for Toowong. This is what that authority said—

> "Capital is dead labour, that, vampire-like, only lives by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks."

What we wanted the Arbitration Court for was to stop the sucking of vampire-like capitalism—this dead labour, as it were, that does not produce anything.

Mr. J. JONES: I am not dead. (Laughter.)

Mr. COLLINS: I know that the hon. member is not dead, but he has only got one idea in his mind, and that is to pay less rent to the State. That is what we want the Arbitration Court to do—to stop this sucking of labour by what is termed capital, and see that the workers get a fair deal. No party or Government, no State or country, can afford to stand still. We cannot afford to rest on our oars because we have done something in years gone by. The rising generation is demanding more privileges, and rightly so. Because my father used to ride in a stagecoach is that any reason why I should ride in a stagecoach? I take an electric tram. The hon. member for Kennedy takes a motor-car to his station—he does not jog along at a rate of four miles an hour on a brokendown horse like he did thirty years ago. He takes the most modern machinery. (Laughter.) If the Arbitration Court is going to be successful, it will have to keep marching on. It will have to take the electric tram and the motor-car. It will not have to be satisfied with the old trucks and horses that we were satisfied with in our youth. I am one of those who believe in progress. I believe that my children want better conditions than I had; as the conditions I had were very poor indeed. That is what we stand for as a Labour party. I do not say that arbitration has not done good. It is educating the masses to some extent, but they require more education yet. Who does not stand for the One Big Union? Who is going to be dismayed because the hon. member for Toowong quotes from a book issued by Ernest Lane about the One Big Union? I spoke for the One Big Union long before Ernest Lane wrote that book, and my father stood for it before me. Some people in Great Britain stood for it over 100 years ago. That is why the Arbitration Court, if it wants to lessen its work, should see that there is One Big Union. I understand there are about thirty unions in connection with our railway workers.

Mr. FLETCHER: Where will you be when you get the One Big Union?

Mr. COLLINS: We will take possession of all the Governments in Australia. (Laughter.) When the workers in the Commonwealth have sufficient intelligence to form the One Big Union intelligently, there is no power on earth that can stop them from taking possession of all the Governments of the Commonwealth; and what is there wrong in that? Who has a better right to take possession of the government of the Commonwealth than the workers themselves? The workers are in the majority. If you were to withdraw the workers from this State, who would be left?

Mr. WARREN: You would be there all right.

Mr. COLLINS: If we had One Big Union, hon. members opposite who control the means of production would have to take off their coats and roll up their sleeves, and do a little work themselves. Mr. Frederic Harrison, one of the grandest men who has ever lived in the British Empire, and who is now over ninety years of age, said that, if you took the working class out of Great Britain, there would be practically nothing left, as the working class was really the nation.

Mr. FLETCHER: How would you capture the Government?

Mr. COLLINS: We would take possession of it through the ballot-box. When our people have sufficient intelligence to organise into One Big Union, they will see that men like the hon. member for Port Curtis do

useful work outside Parliament. (Laughter.) I hope the day is not far distant when we shall take control of the Governments of Australia.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: You are asking for the impossible.

Mr. COLLINS: We are not. When Tom Paine, over a hundred years ago, was asking for old-age pensions, it was thought that he was asking for the impossible; but some of his countrymen lived to see it brought about. I have been in this movement all my life, and I remember over and over again being told that the attainment of what I believed in was impossible. It is astonishing how many things I have lived to see brought about which were thought to be impossible. But I am not content with the few things I have seen brought about. I am like the young men to-day—I cry out for more. As I said a few moments ago, we live in an age of machinery, when the forces of nature should have been harnessed up for the benefit of mankind and not for the benefit of a few. Look at the position in the United States to-day, where the railway trusts and big monopolists control Congress and the House of Representatives, to the detriment of the workers.

Mr. VOWLES: Tell that to the people of Bowen.

Mr. COLLINS: The people of Bowen must be fairly intelligent, or else I would not be here. (Laughter.) The people of Bowen are more advanced than some of the people down here.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: What about the Inkerman irrigation works?

Mr. COLLINS: I am not dealing with that question now, but I will deal with it when it comes before the Chamber, when the hon. member will find what is wanted is to irrigate his brain a little bit, and to allow some progressive ideas to get into it. We are living in the most important age the world has ever seen, and our young men are crying out, the same as I am crying out, "What is the use of all this machinery? What is the use of telling me about this wonderful production of wealth, if I have to continue to live in the same position as my forefathers lived, and see other people in positions, like hon. members opposite or the people whom they represent—the people who subscribe thousands of pounds towards their election funds—people who can subscribe £25,000 for the Prime Minister?" That money is all taken from the worker. What is the use of being disheartened like some people are, because we are not making the progress which it is thought we should make? As I have said again and again in this Chamber, we are advancing step by step towards our ideal. Our ideal is that man shall be emancipated from man, and that is what the Arbitration Courts should be attempting to bring about. We have gone a step forward; but there are many more steps remaining before we reach the ideal I am seeking to bring about. I think that we can be cheerful on this side of the Chamber. We know that we represent the intelligent workers—I do not say all the workers. I admit there are many misguided workers who vote for hon. members opposite. One is utterly puzzled as to why hon. members opposite have been able to get here by the votes of the workers But the people do not know where hon. members opposite really stand, as they speak with many voices. I do not know where they really stand, and I have been endeavouring for seven years to find out. To-day we have the leader of the Opposition saying that they stand for arbitration.

Mr. BRAND: One of your members only pays 10s. a day.

Mr. COLLINS: I do not pay 10s. a day to anyone because I have not got it to pay. The hon. member for Burrum should not talk about any member paying only 10s. a day, because I remember the days in Bundaberg when the kanaka was employed at 2s. 6d. a week. I remember that certain things were said in Bundaberg at that time, and, amongst other things, it was said that the canefields at Bundaberg were manured with the bones of the kanakas. I was in the Bundaberg district when the kanakas were there—long before the days of arbitration.

Mr. BRAND: At any rate, I pay more than 10s. a day.

Mr. COLLINS: We have moved on since then—not because of any assistance we get from hon. members opposite, because they are always opposed to every reform introduced into this State. It is the men we had in the Labour movement in the early days that we have to thank, because they stood with their backs to the wall against tremendous odds, and later they came into this House and framed the laws which are now on the statute-book.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): Since my previous remarks on this vote, the leader of the Opposition has taken me to task for advocating a board of practical men experienced in the industry concerned to assist the judge presiding in the Arbitration Court. The hon. gentleman criticised that recommendation as absurd. Nothing could be more absurd than the hon. gentleman's remarks, because he supported the Government which practically started that very system. That system was carried out in the Wages Boards Act, passed by the Government which the hon. member supported. The wages board was composed of employers and employees of a certain industry, and the chairman was selected by them, or, failing them, by the Minister. The leader of the Opposition supported that system, and yet, when it is recommended from this side, he talks about it as being absurd. It was the insincerity of the Denham Government and previous Administrations in that respect that led to the passing of the present Industrial Arbitration Act. Hon. gentlemen on the other side represent the master class—the capitalists and the employers—and they are never sincere in approaching the question of the fixation of wages. They have always juggled with figures and side-stepped every section in the Act to try and defeat the fixing of a fair wage in any industry. I had the pleasure in an honorary capacity of fighting one of the first awards that was ever obtained under the wages board system.

Mr. STOPFORD: I was with you.

Mr. HARTLEY: Yes, in conjunction with the hon. member for Mount Morgan, we were interested in that matter, and it took a year and nine months to get an award. It was in connection with the furniture trade, and it took one year and three months to get the award, while another six months were occupied with an appeal. That showed the

absolute insincerity of the board as it was then constituted, and of the power behind the Government of that day. In that award I think we had the pleasure of obtaining for the first time in the history of Queensland a forty-four-hour week. If that Act had been administered with sincerity, it would probably be on the statute-book to-day. As the hon. member for Mundingburra pointed out, that provision is possible under the present Act. It is remarkable that the Arbitration Court have never taken advantage of section 39 to appoint a board composed of employers and employees to give advice and assistance on these questions. There is just one other question, and that is the difficulty that the leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Port Curtis found themselves in with regard to differential pay for married and single men. It is absurd for the hon. member for Port Curtis to say that, because a man is single, he should be paid a lower rate of wage than a married man. The fact that he is single has nothing to do with the question. The question is the value his labour has put into the article produced, and his wages should be fixed accordingly. This party contends that a man shall get full value for his work in the production of any article. As regards fixing an extra remuneration for a married man, if the hon. gentleman wants to support any proposal that is sound, then the only thing to do is to support an endowment for family maintenance. If a man is married and has a certain number of children, seeing that the State benefits by the increase in population and by the settlement of married people in the State, a contribution should be given by the State to workers according to the number of their families. That is the only sound way you can differentiate between the married and the single man.

Question put and passed.

INSPECTION OF MACHINERY AND SCAFFOLDING.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: I beg to move—

> "That £16,330 be granted for 'Inspection of Machinery and Scaffolding.'"

The vote shows a reduction of £2,803 as compared with last year. During the last financial year we spent £16,649.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*): This is a very important vote. The inspectors of machinery and scaffolding are doing their work well. It is not so many years since numerous accidents took place in connection with boiler explosions and machinery and scaffolding accidents. I remember that I was almost knocked out myself through faulty valves in connection with machinery. In another two or three minutes I might have been gone altogether. I have to thank the department for the way the Inspection of Machinery and Scaffolding Act is being administered, because the inspectors are caring for the lives of the workmen as they have never been before. The report says—

> "It is again pleasing to be able to report that there have been no fatalities in connection with steam boilers under working conditions in this State, thus carrying out the principal intentions of the Inspection of Machinery Act and Regulations in safeguarding life and property."

I want to congratulate the Minister and his staff, including the Chief Inspector of Machinery and Scaffolding and the other inspectors, for the good work they have done during the year. They carry out their duties under great difficulties. They are often called on to inspect boilers, and have to crawl into the boilers when the heat is almost unbearable. I do not know how they do it. They are protecting the lives of the workmen in a very able manner, and for that I congratulate them. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I am not very familiar with this department, but there are one or two things mentioned in the report that I would like some information on. On page 2 of the report it says—

> "The control of all departmental motor cars throughout the State in the matter of supplies of oil and spares, using the machinery department as a central agency, is working satisfactorily."

I should like to have some particulars about the motor garage and the number of cars that are handled there. I presume that they include motor-cycles. Perhaps the Minister could give us particulars as to the cost to the department of the garage, and also information which will enable us to arrive at the cost per car per annum. The other matter to which I want to refer is a paragraph on page 2 of the report—

> "It will be noticed that a large percentage of such accidents occur with high-speed wood-working machinery which, according to our records, is the most dangerous in operation: no further guarding can be done without interfering with the efficiency of the machine."

The Chief Inspector is there dealing with non-fatal accidents, and I think the paragraph calls for some explanation. I would like to have the Minister's interpretation of those last few words, because it seems to me that they mean that to get efficiency with high-speed machinery you have to risk life.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): I was pleased to hear the remarks of the hon. member for Ipswich with regard to the staff of this subdepartment, and I endorse what he has said. We have some very capable men, who are carrying out their work conscientiously and well, and it is work of a very valuable character, because on it depends the safety of the men working the machinery of this State. They have to see that it is in such a state of efficiency that human life and limb will not be endangered, and they do their work faithfully and well.

With regard to the inquiry of the leader of the Opposition as to the dangers of high-speed machinery, anyone who goes into a large foundry or sawmill will recognise that the machinery is dangerous from some points of view. Machinery working at a high speed is naturally more dangerous than machinery working at lower speeds; but it is necessary in certain occupations that the machinery should be allowed to operate at high speed. Every effort is made by the department to safeguard life, so far as is humanly possible: but take, for instance, the operation of a circular saw in a sawmill. When timber is being cut, accidents often happen if the saw strikes something embedded in the timber or the tailer-out makes some slight error. It is very difficult to provide a saw bench with

such safeguards that accidents will be impossible and the machinery will be able to operate at the same time in the way in which it was intended. All the department can do is to reduce the element of risk to a minimum, and everything is done by the department with regard to all classes of machinery with that objective.

The department does work at the motor garage for the various departmental cars there. Officers of various departments use cars for their inspection duties and for other purposes. I have here a list of repairs and other services done for various departments for last year, and it shows that the value of the work done in each case was as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
Agriculture and Stock Department	905	19	5
Garage (Government) ...	285	13	8
Labour Department	50	1	5
Lands Department	771	16	5
Machinery and Scaffolding Department	1,477	16	3
Public Instruction Department	458	13	6
Public Works Department	3,285	16	3
State Advances Corporation	560	18	8
State Butchery Department	376	1	10
State Canning Department	15	12	2
State Fishery Department	166	2	0
State Insurance Department	584	17	6
State Stations Department	267	9	5
State Trade Department ...	485	8	9
Water Supply Department	149	5	9
Workers' Accommodation Department	703	9	7
Workers' Dwellings Board	353	10	0
Total	£11,398	13	8

That covers the cost of repairs and general working of all the departmental cars, including motor-cycles. The number of cars owned by the Works Department is something like forty-five. They are in various portions of the State. That number includes
[9 p.m.] motor-trucks used for the conveyance of building materials. The Factories and Shops subdepartment finds it economical at times to place cars at the disposal of the inspectors. The same thing applies in the case of inspectors of machinery and scaffolding. They can cover a greater area and carry out a larger number of inspections than would be the case with any other means of transport. The same thing applies to the workers' accommodation inspectors. The motor-cycles used by the stock inspectors also are included.

Mr. VOWLES: Are they all sent to Brisbane for repair?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: No.

Mr. VOWLES: There is work done on those cars outside the department?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: There may have been some work done outside of the department. As a general rule, with respect to places on the railway line, if the repairs are at all extensive, the machines are sent to our own garage. We find that that is a very wise provision. We know how much work is required. I am just informed that all the outside repairs are included in this list. The leader of the Opposition is beginning to shake his head. I am giving information supplied to me by the head of the department. If the hon. member asks for information and it does not appear palatable to him, he need not shake his head as though he disbelieves the information given.

Mr. VOWLES: I know that one of your cars was in a workshop in Dalby.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: I do not deny that some work is done outside.

Mr. VOWLES: What is the good of telling me, when I have it for a fact?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: The hon. member behaves like a querulous child. The last few weeks he has been going about thinking he has made a tremendous discovery because, forsooth, a car is in a repair shop in Dalby. I have already intimated to the Committee that in some cases work is done outside.

Mr. VOWLES: In the next breath you say it is not.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: I said that the costs which I had given included the cost of repairs done outside the Government garage. Surely the hon. member is satisfied with that?

Mr. VOWLES: You did not know anything about it yourself.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: The hon. member's psychology is somewhat peculiar. He works himself into a rage at not getting information about certain things. He seeks to make people believe that, if the information was disclosed, the people would be shocked at what they would get to know. Then, when he is given in complete detail the information that he has asked for, he is not satisfied. I have indicated the cost to the various departments of the work done in connection with the cars under the control of this department.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): All I have asked for is information. I find that the Minister knows nothing about it. He does not even know whether the cars are repaired in his department. He goes backwards and forwards; he tells me one thing in one breath and something else in another. Then he wonders why I doubt him. I think anybody who has watched his performance will have realised that he knows nothing about the department.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): The conception of the leader of the Opposition regarding Ministerial functions is somewhat peculiar. No doubt, that is due to the fact that he has never occupied a Ministerial position. It will be a long time before he has that experience. The leader of the Opposition complains of my lack of knowledge in regard to certain repair work done to motor-cycles in this department. Surely he does not think that the Machinery and Scaffolding Department cannot carry on its functions without referring to the Minister every question of a new motor-tyre, or repairs, or something of that kind? If that were done, the twenty-four hours in a day would not be sufficient to do the work. All that a Minister can be expected to do is to control the administration of the financial part of his department—that is, to see that the money is appropriated properly and expended properly. Details can be left safely in the hands of those who are responsible for the carrying on the department. As the hon. member for Ipswich has just pointed out, it is in the capable hands of Mr. Henderson and the various officers under his

control. If any other department requires urgent repairs to motor-cars or cycles outside Brisbane, it is done under the control of the local inspector of machinery and scaffolding.

Mr. FLETCHER (*Port Curtis*): I would like the Minister to say what the reduction of £2,741 in "Contingencies" represents.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: It represents economies in a large number of directions.

Mr. FLETCHER: It is reduced by about 40 per cent.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): There is an item here about which I would like some explanation. There are two inspectors of scaffolding whose salaries total £630. The Act has been in operation since 1st January, 1916. Since 1st August, 1921, the scaffolding fees have been raised by something like 48 per cent. to 50 per cent. Seeing that in six months we received more revenue from scaffolding fees than the total amount of the vote for 1922-23, it seems to me that this is more of a make-believe than an actuality.

Mr. GLEDSON: It does not say so in the report. The report gives you the expenditure and the fees.

Mr. KERR: I think some explanation is due to the Committee in regard to this matter. It seems to me that it is impossible for two inspectors to inspect the whole of the scaffolding throughout Queensland. The inspectors can inspect only a few buildings in the city; the rest of Queensland is not being inspected. At the same time, where a scaffolding is erected in connection with any building costing £200 and upwards, a fee must be paid, and it is paid. We know perfectly well that a man using scaffolding will, in nine cases out of ten, or ten cases out of ten, see that the scaffolding is safe before he gets upon it. Seeing that we have received in six months more revenue in the way of fees, the Minister should give some explanation to this Committee.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): In moving this vote I pointed out that there was a decrease this year of £2,803. I also pointed out that the expenditure last year was £16,659, which was not the full amount of the vote for the year. The hon. member for Port Curtis was wrong in his percentages again. (Laughter.) He said there had been a reduction of 40 per cent. For his information I will tell him that the reduction in the total vote is 15 per cent. The hon. member for Enoggera referred to the increased scaffolding fees. That was due to our desire to make the department, as far as possible, self-supporting. The hon. member also complained that there were only two inspectors in Brisbane. He must remember that we have a number of district inspectors of machinery and scaffolding. In the metropolitan area, where large building operations are carried out involving scaffolding of a comprehensive nature, we have experts who confine their activities to the inspection of that scaffolding. We have two most capable men, who thoroughly understand that work. Outside Brisbane, the inspectors who are in charge of machinery do the scaffolding inspecting, too. Fees are only charged where an inspection is made.

Mr. PEASE (*Herbert*): We have the report of the Chief Inspector of Machinery and Scaffolding. He gives us information which will dispel some of the gloomy propaganda by hon. members opposite. It gives valuable information showing the expansion of building activities in the capital cities. The report shows the number of buildings which were erected in the metropolitan area for the year ended 30th June, 1922—

		£
75	brick buildings, valued at	224,625
1,318	wooden buildings, valued at	729,591
53	other buildings, valued at	58,053
34	alterations and additions to existing buildings, valued at	84,264
	Total value	£1,096,533

It is not necessary for me to say any more, as the figures speak for themselves.

Mr. FLETCHER (*Port Curtis*): I would point out to the Minister that the percentage increase in the vote is 30 per cent., and not 15 per cent., as he stated.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: It is 15 per cent.

Question put and passed.

LABOUR, FACTORIES, AND WORKERS' ACCOMMODATION.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): I beg to move—

> "That £28,362 be granted for 'Labour, Factories, and Workers' Accommodation.'"

The amount expended last year was £27,448. There is an increase in the vote this year of £2,030.

Mr. BULCOCK (*Barcoo*): We have quite recently suffered a national loss in the death of Mr. Harry Lawson. He wrote a very fine book entitled, "On the Tracks and Over the Sliprails," in which he described the conditions existing at that time in connection with accommodation at shearing-sheds. To show the true type of accommodation prevailing at the time, one cannot do better than put on record the opinion of that great man. In his story entitled "A Rough Shed," he says—

> "A clearing in the scrub—bare as though the surface of the earth were ploughed and harrowed, and dusty as the road. Two oblong huts—one for the shearers, and one the rouseabouts—in about the centre of the clearing (as if even the mongrel scrub had shrunk away from them), built end to end, of weather-boards and roofed with galvanised iron. Little ventilation; no verandah; no attempt to create, artificially, a breath of air through the buildings. Unpainted, sordid—hideous. Outside heaps of ashes still hot and smoking. Close at hand 'butcher's shop'—a bush and bag breakwind in the dust, under a couple of sheets of iron, with offal, grease, and clotted blood blackening the surface of the ground about it. Greasy, stinking sheep skins hanging everywhere, with blood-blotched sides out. Grease inches deep in great black patches about the fireplace ends of the hut, where washup and 'boiling' water is thrown."

Continuing, he said—

> "On each side of the hut runs a rough framework, like the partitions in a stable; each compartment battened off to about the size of a manger, and containing four bunks, one above the other, on each side—their ends, of course, to the table."

That is a description of the conditions relating to accommodation in the pastoral industry up to the time that the late Mr. Hamilton, a Labour member in this House, when sitting in Opposition, introduced a Bill to provide satisfactory accommodation for shearers and shed hands employed in the pastoral industry. Unfortunately, that Bill was confined in its operations to shearers and shed hands. The condition that Lawson portrays in that very vivid picture dealing with accommodation was the true type up to the time the late Mr. Hamilton introduced that Bill. That story indicates the necessity there was for the introduction of that Bill. I think most people will agree that we have progressed a long way away from the condition Lawson describes. The unsatisfactory condition was accentuated by the fact that power was not given to the inspectors to deal with the question of portable plants. Since last session that matter has been dealt with. A Bill was introduced last session amending the Workers' Accommodation Act, and making certain changes that were very necessary and very desirable. I have in my mind that during the course of that debate the hon. member for Murilla, speaking as the acknowledged mouthpiece of the Pastoralists' Association—a reference to the records in "Hansard" on this question will show that he frankly acknowledged that he got the ammunition for his attack on this Government in consequence of the proposed amendment of the Workers' Accommodation Act from the secretary of the Pastoralists' Association—speaking on the second reading of the Workers' Accommodation Act Amendment Bill, said—

> "I want to enter my emphatic protest against any interference with the Act at present in force."

Later on, he said—

> "The amending Bill will prevent men with small capital going on the land."

Since the passage of that Bill certain selections have changed hands and the values that were obtained were equal to the values obtaining at the time that we put that Bill through the House. Further, certain areas have been thrown open for selection since the Bill went through, and instead of there being a diminution in the number of applicants who desire to go on the land, the number of applicants has actually increased; so that the hon. member's argument has not been borne out by facts. When he said it would prevent men with more capital going on the land, he overlooked one very essential fact, and that was the availability of local scours in the majority of cases, and applications are coming in to-day as they did in the past in overwhelming numbers. The only thing I regret is that there is not more land, so that the hunger may be satisfied to a greater extent than it is being satisfied at the present time owing to the long leases due to the actions of hon. members opposite. The hon. member for Murilla also said—

> "When the industry becomes more prosperous will be the proper time to consider this question."

The hon. member felt that there was a great amount of justice in the claim that was advanced from this side of the House—that there was a very grave necessity for an amendment of the Act to abolish portable plants and all the evils incidental thereto. I would like to ask the hon. member, if he was in the Chamber now, in view of the fact that the wool market is buoyant, and in view of the fact that big dividends are being returned to the big pastoralists engaged in the sheep-raising industry at the present time, whether he considers the time prosperous. I am afraid that the hon. member would be prepared to state that the time is not prosperous, and that the time is not opportune. But my experience leads me to believe that, in the minds of Conservative gentlemen, the time is never ripe for any reform. Going on further, the hon. member said—

> "Men prefer to live in tents. If a vote were taken of the men concerned, they would vote for tents."

The last annual meeting of the Australian Workers' Union, which was attended, in the main, by men engaged in the pastoral industry, a resolution was carried protesting against any further exemption being granted, which means that the men entered a protest about exemptions being granted that would force them to continue to live in tents. So there is another argument of the hon. gentleman's exploded. The hon. member said the Bill should be withdrawn because it would occasion hardship. Since that Bill went through I have never had any communication from any small selector asking me to endeavour to secure an exemption for him so far as his shearing was concerned; and, speaking to the Director of Labour, he confirms my experience that, in the main, the small selector is prepared, when the market is buoyant, as it is at the present time, to go on with his buildings. The time was well chosen for the passage of this legislation, because, while the price of timber and building material was dropping fairly rapidly, the price of wool was advancing, thereby putting the sheepmen in a fairly happy position. Therefore the contention that the Bill should be withdrawn does not stand analysis. The hon. member said, further—

> "If the Bill passes, it will cause men to sleep on the ground on the river bank and secure doles from the Government."

Just imagine an argument like that being adduced in support of an objection against the passage of that Bill! In the first place, the sheep have to be shorn, because the wool represents a potential source of wealth to the owner, and whether he has to erect accommodation or whether he does not have to erect accommodation does not affect the ultimate result and objective—that is, the shearing of the sheep and securing a price for the clip. The hon. member said, further—

> "If this Bill is passed, a lot of the small holders will have to sell their selections."

The hon. member made that statement twelve months ago, and as one who watches fairly keenly sales of leases in the pastoral area, I am forced to say that I do not know of one single man who has been forced to sell his holding in consequence of the passage of that amending Act or its administration, proving that that argument was not founded on fact. The hon. member for Port Curtis, when that debate was in progress, said—

> "In the wide stretches it is not a hardship for men to live in tents when the flaps can be pulled up."

I have seen portable plants where there were no flaps to pull up. A resolution was passed

by the men working in the pastoral industry demanding that the portable plant system shall be wiped out entirely and proper accommodation erected. It is only right and proper that adequate accommodation should be found for the men who work in the pastoral industry.

I now want to address a few remarks to the question of exemptions. I am of opinion that in the past too many exemptions were granted. I know many men who were in a position to erect adequate accommodation for their men took advantage of a loophole in the original Act and refused to erect that accommodation, and continued to employ portable plants in order to get exemptions. I know recently the position has been reviewed, and the question of granting exemptions has been reconsidered; so that those people who refused to provide proper accommodation for the workers producing their wealth are now obliged to erect that accommodation, and it was because they knew they would be obliged to erect that accommodation on the passage of the Workers' Accommodation Act Amendment Bill last year that the hon. member for Murilla came into this Chamber as the mouthpiece of the Pastoralists' Association and entered a protest against the workers enjoying that degree of comfort to which every rightminded man believes they are entitled.

Reviewing the work of the accommodation inspectors and the administration of the Workers' Accommodation Act, I have come to the conclusion that satisfactory progress has been made. I know that one inspector during a period of six years in the district under his charge has been responsible for £100,000 worth of buildings being erected. Think of the conditions that must have existed before that money was expended; because my experience leads me to say quite definitely that in no case where the accommodation is satisfactory, would the inspector force the individual concerned to erect new quarters. That is a tribute to the worth and integrity of one inspector in particular. Speaking generally, the inspectors are an earnest body of men, who are doing the best they can with the machinery at their disposal to provide adequate living conditions for the men who live under the hardships imposed on them by the natural environments of the bush. We have had many painful experiences in the past in connection with the outbreak of diseases. I remember some few years ago a very severe outbreak of typhoid in Kynuna, in the Gregory electorate, and considerable mortality resulted as a consequence of that visitation. The accommodation inspectors at the present time are empowered to examine into the question of drainage and into the question of a water supply. It is a very laudable action, and the [9.30 p.m.] inspectors are loyally carrying out their work. There is no doubt that in connection with the outbreak of these diseases the source of infection has been the water placed at the disposal of the men. While the Government have gone a certain distance and have been responsible for the amelioration of conditions of the men who are following shearing and shed work, one cannot but be struck by the wealth on the one hand and the comparative poverty on the other hand. If you visit an up-to-date station, you will find a well-appointed homestead and every sign of comfort. It is no use saying that the accommodation we ask for is beyond the means of the squatter or selector, because, in the case of small men who have less than 1,000 sheep, this Act will inflict no hardship, because the accommodation inspectors and the chief inspector are not prepared, and rightly so, to inflict any hardship on a small man who is legitimately unable to provide accommodation for his men. But with regard to the individual who is shearing a few thousand sheep, you see a palatial residence on the one hand, while, poked away a considerable distance from the house, you will find the shed, and the feeling you have when you see it is similar to the description that Henry Lawson gives us in that little story of his from which I have quoted. There is another matter I would like to touch upon—that is the amount of money inflicted by way of fine for deliberate breaches of the Act. I do not think that the fines imposed have been adequate. In the first place, the men who have been responsible for dereliction of duty under the Act have been warned time and again. They have exhausted the patience of the inspector. They have been given every possible opportunity to comply with the Act. I can quote cases where the accommodation inspectors visited places times out of number, and did their best to induce the owners to comply with the requirements of the Act; but, in spite of that, those owners did not comply, and in the end had to be hauled before the magistrate in some local town. I had in my mind a case where the owners of Thornleigh were prosecuted for a breach of the Act. They were found to have had pigs wallowing in the drain right against the shed. That was a deplorable and disgraceful state of things. I was a witness in the case. The total fine inflicted was 10s. The average fine ranges from about £2 to £5. It is obviously cheaper for a man to pay £5 and escape providing accommodation for a period of twelve months. I want the Minister to consider whether it is not possible to inflict a fine of greater amount. I would like to see the fines increased, so that people who are to-day deliberately evading the provisions of the Act shall be made to do their duty. The cattlemen are the chief offenders. I am pleased to know that we have accommodation inspectors in some parts where a year or two ago we had none. In settled districts there are still instances of dereliction of duty on the part of the owners. Owners and managers of well-established sheds in the West, where shearing has been in progress for quite a number of years, are deliberately evading their duty and not providing accommodation. I will quote from the report of the general secretary of the Queensland branch of the Australian Workers' Union, Mr. Dunstan, who is now on tour inquiring into union matters in the Southern, South-western, and Western districts of Queensland. In dealing with the question of accommodation, Mr. Dunstan said—

> "The shearers' accommodation at Noorama is bad. The Noorama shearers' hut is the old Noorama wool shed. I understand that this shed has been reported as "O.K.," in accordance with the Accommodation Act. This case has been placed before the chief inspector, and on my arrival in Brisbane I will personally see the inspector on the matter."

In instances where individuals deliberately evade their duty under the Act they should certainly be punished, as a deterrent to others who are loath to comply with the conditions. That is not an isolated case, because Mr. Dunstan also complains of other cases of non-observance of the provisions of the Act. I think the time has arrived when we should tighten up our administration in this regard. Drainage and sanitary accommodation should be promptly attended to at the sheds. The Government have done a great deal for the shearers in Queensland. I would point out that in New South Wales, where there is no Workers' Accommodation Act, the old system of one bunk upon another—the two-tier system—still prevails. In the main, the new huts which have been erected on the sheep runs in Queensland are really satisfactory, and it would be unfair not to refer in terms of eulogy to some of the conscientious individuals who have erected very satisfactory accommodation as the outcome of this Act. I have in mind the station hands' quarters at Isis Downs, which are very good quarters for the men to live in. Anyone could live in them without fear of contracting disease or feeling that he was not properly cared for. But, if you went over the road from some of the sheds, you would see to-day the same kind of shed that Harry Lawson describes—a shed or hut of galvanised iron, without windows, radiating heat and discomfort, and, as Harry Lawson says, "Such accommodation is hell." The Government, with the active assistance of its zealous staff of accommodation inspectors, have brought about a very great improvement, and I hope that they will long be able to continue the work of ameliorating the conditions of the men who live under the adverse conditions that nature prescribes in Western pastoral areas.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*): I am sorry we have not the report of the Director of Labour before us to show the position in which the unions stand in Queensland to-day. The Director of Labour is also the Registrar of Trade Unions, and it is his duty to register unions, and publish their rules and also the awards of the Arbitration Court. In the "Telegraph" this afternoon I find the heading, "Union versus Soldier. Arbitration Judge's Views. Folly of Direct Action." It is pointed out that the unions are up against the soldiers, and it deals with the trouble which is taking place between bricklayers and contractors in Brisbane at the present time. We find the contractor is trying to get out of the award. He tried to get out of paying the men by closing down his works at Christmas so that the men would not be paid for the holidays. When these men were able to go back, they refused to work unless they were paid for the time they had lost. The consequence was that the employer put on a non-unionist. He happened to be a returned soldier, but that did not make him any better. As a matter of fact, it made him worse, because, if he was united with his comrades on the other side, he ought to be united with them here to keep up the conditions for which they fought. Just because the men refused to work until they were paid for the time they had lost, the employer wished to put on a non-unionist. The judge of the court said that it was a matter that could have been referred to the court. When it was referred to the court, the contractor was ordered to pay for the holidays. That is the position. It shows who was wrong. When the non-unionist was employed, he was asked to join the union, but he refused. When they asked him again if he would leave the job rather than cause any trouble with the union, he said, "I will leave the job if you will get me another job at £6 10s. a week." That shows that the employers are trying to break up the unions. The hon. member for Toowong to-night referred to the one big union, and tried to show that there was something detrimental to the country for men to form themselves into one big union. The employers are out to smash up unionism all the time. They started in Brisbane by fighting the unions. At present they have non-unionists on the job, and they are paying them more than the award rates to keep them at work. One non-unionist said he was getting £6 10s. per week, while the award rate is £5 15s. 3d. a week. The judge said that, if Mr. Taylor, the contractor, had kept to the award faithfully, none of the trouble would have taken place. Taylor did not keep to the award. The result is that the unions lost the preference clause in connection with the matter just because Taylor broke the award. We do not think that is right. The employers want to attack the unionists of the State and make them suffer. As soon as the preference clause was taken out of the award, the contractor employed non-unionists on the job. Hon. members opposite, assisted by the Tory Press, are saying that it is a matter of the unions against the soldiers, but it is nothing of the sort. It is the unions fighting for their existence. The employers are attempting to coerce the unionists in this way. The hon. member for Toowong tried to accuse the unionists of doing something that is detrimental to the people when they advocate the one big union—that is, the one big union of the workers. The hon. member for Toowong is a member of the one big union of the employers, because he not only belongs to the Employers' Federation of Queensland, but he also belongs to the Employers' Federation of Australia. The employers had a meeting in Brisbane the other day. Was it to devise means for carrying on their business in a better way or to bring about the betterment of the State? No. Was it to do something to extend commerce in this State or to increase the prosperity of the State? No. Not one word about that is contained in their report. We know how they have acted towards the workers. We know that they have stated that the best thing to do it to raise an army of returned soldiers, and then they will be able to defeat the workers at any time. Why is the hon. member for Toowong so concerned about the one big union? He knows that, once the workers are so class-conscious that they belong to one workers' body and there is one big union in Australia, then all the power of the Employers' Federation, including the hon. member for Toowong, will go. All their talk about bringing military methods to bear, and all their talk about taking off the gloves will be of no avail once the one big union is formed. Fancy the hon. member for Toowong taking off the gloves to one of the navvies down the street! Fancy the hon. member for Port Curtis taking off the gloves to one of those big hefty meatworkers! If he did there would not be much left of him. The same thing applies to the one big union. There

will not be much of the Employers' Federation left so soon as the workers form themselves into one big union, and do not remain split up in sections as they are to-day. Hon. members opposite are concerned about the one big union because it will take their power from them.

Mr. EDWARDS: You are the best preacher of class-hatred I have ever seen.

Mr. FLETCHER: His statements are the best advertisement we can get.

Mr. EDWARDS: Why don't you attempt to bring the workers and the employers together?

Mr. GLEDSON: The people of this State know me. I never at any time talked about taking off the gloves like the hon. member for Toowong did. I never advocated using a great military machine like hon. members opposite in order to mow the workers down. That is the reason that they are opposed to the combination of unions into one big union. It reminds me of the old proverb where the old man called his sons together and asked them to break the sticks. So they broke the single sticks, but when they were tied together in one bundle they could not break them. It is the same with the unions. So long as they are in separate unions, the employers can beat them all the time; but they cannot beat them if they are united into one body. They will not then be able to bring men from other places to take the positions of the workers when trouble arises. That is what we have them advocating in this Chamber. They are objecting to the formation of the One Big Union, and trying to bring discredit on us because we are endeavouring to make the workers so class-conscious that they will see that the interests of one are the interests of all. I hope that in his next report the Registrar of Trades Unions will not be able to show a long string of unions, taking in 100, 200, or 1,000 members each, but that he will have one union with all the workers in the State banded together for their own protection to fight these men like the hon. member for Toowong and the one big union of capitalism; so that we should be able to say to them, "Have your one big union. Hold your meetings in Brisbane or Melbourne or anywhere else; but, if you attempt to bring in military methods to fight us, we will soon have you and your military methods out of this State altogether. If you take off the gloves to fight us, we shall be prepared to fight you." Did the soldiers go over to the front to make this country safe for democracy only to come back and see such people filching away their rights and bringing about worse conditions? I do not think they did, and I do not think it right that these people should use them in that way at all.

The department also has the duty of policing the awards. It is absolutely necessary that the inspectors should be on the go, because the members of the Opposition and their friends are continually endeavouring to get outside the awards and avoid paying the rates set out in them. I hope the inspectors will continue to do what they have been doing in the past, and bring people to book who are working men overtime. I know myself that in some cases where men ought to start at 7 o'clock in the morning the inspectors have found them there a little after 5. Those employers would have them there the whole of the day if they had their way. If they had their way, there would be no unionists or inspectors; but I hope they will not be able to do as they like, and I think we ought to be glad that we have a Department of Labour and a Department of Factories and Shops, and a band of inspectors who will do their duty, come what may, and see that the employers carry out the awards as they should.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): I am quite sure that we could have no better speech in advocacy of a sound Liberal policy than that of the hon. member for Ipswich. If anybody has advocated class hatred and the cry of "Down with the capitalists," it was that hon. member. There is one thing to which I take strong exception in his remarks, and that is that the returned soldier has been used as a strike-breaker or an instrument by the capitalists to destroy the unions. There are no better unionists in the world than the returned soldiers, and the hon. member's remarks were a downright slander on the men who bled for their country. I am quite convinced that he dare not make that statement to a body of returned soldiers. They went over to the other side and fought for what they thought was right; they bled for it, and they do not come here to be used as tools by anybody.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH interjected.

Mr. WARREN: I am not going to bother about the hon. gentleman. He does not give anybody the civility of an answer when he is speaking. The soldiers who went to the front were the very flower of Australian manhood—men with backbone, intelligence and determination; men who stood the test of the fighting—and they are not the men to come back here to be used as tools of some society or some master. As in all walks of life, there are exceptions, and even amongst the soldiers who did so much for the employer there were some who were not up to a very high standard; but, taking the ex-soldiers as a whole, they are men who have done something to make history, and it is a downright slander to say that they are strike-breakers or can be used by any class or party.

Mr. DASH (*Mundingburra*): This is a very important department to the workers of this State, and also a very important department to employers. It gives rulings in respect of the awards of the Arbitration Court and that work takes up a great deal of the time of its officers. If the Director of Labour and his officers were not careful in the interpretation of awards, thousands of pounds might be lost to the workers. It goes to show how alert the inspec-

[10 p.m.] tors have been when we find that the department has collected for the workers during the last few years something in the vicinity of £80,000 of wages which otherwise would not have been paid. The unions, no doubt, have collected almost an equal amount. The union of which I had the honour of being an official collects hundreds of pounds during the year, representing back payments in connection with the awards. We also know that these officers are doing very useful work in their inspection of the huts and accommodation provided for the employees. Anyone who has visited the shearers' huts in the early days prior to the introduction of legislation dealing with this accommodation will realise the vast improvement that has been made in those conditions. Prior to the agitation by the workers, the shearers' huts were constructed in such a

manner that the table off which the men ate ran down the centre of the hut and the bunks—two and three tiers high—were on each side of the table. There was no place to store your pack saddles or any of your belongings; you simply stowed them under the tables or in the bunks. The food was cooked at the other end of the hut. Since the workers agitated for better conditions we have placed on the statute-book an Act which has gone a long way towards improving the health of the workers. In the shearing industry to-day proper accommodation has to be provided for the workmen; so many cubic feet of air space has to be allowed; the cooking compartments have to be separated from the huts; and, instead of the cook lying on bags of flour as they did in the early days, the cooks have separate accommodation. In the sugar industry Chinamen, kanakas, and white men were all huddled together in what in those days were described as huts. We had the spectacle of the workman going along to a little window and having his food passed out to him. The food in those days was not of the standard that it is to-day. In the awards in operation in the pastoral industry and the sugar industry now a certain standard of living is laid down; and, if it is not carried out, the workers can take action against the employers for a breach of the award.

We also have to realise the good work that has been done by the agitation of the Labour party with regard to the factories and shops legislation. Where shops used to keep open all hours of the night, to-day reasonable hours are fixed. I give a word of praise to the inspectors who have been entrusted with this work; they are very alert when any grievances are brought under their notice; and, instead of a case running on for weeks until it is outside the scope of the Act, the arrears are collected. There should be an amendment of the Arbitration Act to allow the department to sue for wages; at present, it can sue only for breaches of the award. The employers realise, however, that, if they do not pay the back wages, they will be prosecuted for a breach of the award; and it is cheaper for them to pay the wages than to suffer the penalities imposed upon them by the magistrates. When the inspector finds that an employer is not prepared to act up to the award and wishes to take proceedings, in some instances there is great delay before a prosecution is instituted. I want the workers outside to realise that the department is not altogether to blame for that. The Crown Law Department has to deal with a large number of breaches of different Acts and other matters, and it is impossible to give advice right away; each case has to wait its turn. That has been the cause of the delay. The department now realises that greater facilities should be given to the inspectors to get round the districts and do the work entrusted to them. In some instances the inspectors leave a note that certain improvements to premises are to be made. The districts being large, it takes them some time to get round. They find that their instructions are ignored, and they have to make a second visit in order to see that the work is carried out. They often find that the work is not carried out. Time and money are wasted, and there should be no necessity for that.

Mr. RIORDAN (*Burke*): The first Workers' Accommodation Bill was introduced into this Chamber by an old battler in the Labour movement—a man who stood solidly for his principles—so much so, that he was prepared to back them to the extent of going behind prison bars. I refer to the late President of the Legislative Council, the late Mr. William Hamilton. "Bill" Hamilton represented the Gregory electorate when he introduced that Bill about 1900. The Hughenden people sent Mr. Hamilton to this House. That portion of the Gregory electorate has been merged in the Burke electorate, and when I go along I find that conditions generally are far better for men than before Mr. Hamilton and other men in the movement came into that district. If there was ever a humane Act placed on the statute-book of this State, it was the Workers' Accommodation Act. The then Home Secretary, Mr. Peter Airey, in introducing the Bill as a Government measure in 1905, referred to it as one of the most humane pieces of legislation ever put on the statute-book. The men who worked in the sugar industry and the pastoral industry before the introduction of the Bill by Mr. Hamilton were dealt with under the Factories and Shops Act, which made the conditions of the workers in the city much better than the conditions of the workers outside. Mr. Hamilton said, when introducing the measure, that it would not be necessary if the employers were only decent. A few of the employers provided very up-to-date accommodation, but other employers did not see fit to house their men even as well as they housed their pigs in the styes. People who have travelled through the cattle stations in the Western and Northern districts can even now see some of the conditions referred to by Mr. Hamilton. Great difficulty is experienced by the inspectors in doing their rounds. One of the greatest offenders in regard to accommodation in the Gulf district, which is in the Burke electorate, is Kidman, the "Cattle King" of Australia. I remember tripping through the Gulf country with a hut inspector who called at one of Mr. Kidman's stations where there was a small hut, in which two or three white men were camped on bags with three or four blackfellows also occupying the same hut. When the hut inspector spoke to the manager, the manager practically ordered him off the place, and told him that he had no intention of going on with the erection of the buildings until he got instructions from Mr. Kidman to do so. I think he found out that someone else had a say in this matter besides Mr. Kidman. The hon. member for Barcoo in his remarks pointed out that one hut inspector alone in his district has been responsible for the erection of over £100,000 worth of buildings during his term of office under this Government. We know that prior to this Government taking office the Act was a dead letter; it was placed on the statute-book, but was never given effect to. In 1915, when this Government came into power, they put a comprehensive measure on the statute-book and appointed inspectors, and in many instances the accommodation has got to be something like it should be for human beings. A Workers' Accommodation Act was very necessary from many points of view. In the past men housed together in the one room where the food was cooked, and where their meals were taken. We had the galley, with a table down the centre

and the bunks at the side. As soon as a man had his dinner he could roll away from the table, where he had just eaten his dinner, into his bunk, and then rolled from his bunk into the shearing-shed in the morning. It was a continual roll. (Laughter.) It is no joking matter, so far as I am concerned. It is one of the things that concerns me, because anything that concerns the worker is of vital concern to me. I am one of those who do not stand for any class hatred. Mr. Hamilton first introduced this Bill in 1900, and again in 1901, and again in 1902. For three years he was continually urging the Government to introduce a measure of this kind. Then we came along to 1905, and they cried out about the bad times that the pastoralists were then having, but the decent pastoralist saw fit to erect decent accommodation for his fellow-men without any Act of Parliament. There is always a certain section of the community which is not prepared to do the fair thing. That does not apply to one class alone, but applies generally, and it is necessary to have legislation of this kind to bring about a decent standard of comfort for the working class. The cry then was that they were passing through bad times. Evidently, during good times they made very poor provision; because if ever a class had a "pull," it was the pastoralist class in this State. They have had the best of our land at a peppercorn rent for many years.

Mr. J. JONES: You want to repudiate it.

Mr. RIORDAN: I knew I would get on the hon. member's corns, as he is always crying about the squatter having to pay a fair rent. He says if he gets over here he is going to repeal that legislation and return the rent to the squatters.

Mr. J. JONES: I did not say I would return it.

Mr. RIORDAN: If he did not say that, he is slipping on his platform, and I accept his denial. (Laughter.) He wants an extension of lease; he cannot deny that.

Mr. J. JONES: Quite true.

Mr. RIORDAN: In all the places I have visited, these people own vast tracts of land, and they are not prepared to put up any accommodation for their workers unless they are forced to do it by the State. When the Act of 1905 was passed, it included a provision for policemen to act as inspectors. We know how many functions the police have to perform. I am pleased to see that the Government are having the Act administered in the humanitarian way that it should be. I remember, when the Act was amended in 1921, hon. members opposite saying that it would be the means of squeezing the smaller men out of the industry. The United Graziers' paper at that time contained big scare headlines, and said that the legislation would crush the small man off the land. Some small men who had taken up land got the impression that the inspectors would be after them and practically put a gun to their heads to force them to provide accommodation on their selections, even if they were not in a position to do so. Yet they knew the Minister had power to grant exemption in deserving cases. It is calamity-howlers like hon. members opposite who encourage people who are not prepared to do the fair thing to force Governments into the position of having to put legislation on the statute-book to have these requirements carried out. It is to the advantage of the station-owners as well as of the men to have proper sanitary conveniences at the stations. On many of the stations it is of vital importance to the men engaged to have these conveniences, on account of their isolation and dangers from outbreaks of sickness. No provision had been made to prevent sickness prior to the passing of the Act, and no provision for sanitary convenience, and when an outbreak of typhoid or other sickness occurred, a man had sometimes to be brought in hundreds of miles to a doctor. That state of things would not exist if the employers were to play the game decently. We had the hon. member for Murilla objecting to this provision being inserted in the amending Act last year. He said he had instructions from the Pastoralists' Association. Hon. members opposite receive instructions from these people, and they think it is not in the interests of their class to have legislation of this kind on the statute-book; but I say that it is in the interests of that class to have it, and every decent employer will admit that. I do not think everyone realises the vast extent of the Burke electorate which I represent. It is one of the biggest grazing electorates in Queensland, and a very important and progressive electorate. I want the Department of Public Works to make it more progressive by supplying the inspector at Cairns with a motor-car, instead of having to get around with horses and buggy.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: He asked for that himself.

Mr. RIORDAN: I would like the Minister to send along a motor-car for the use of the inspector, because it is good country for motor-cars, and the distances between the stations are vast. It is really too slow for the inspectors to get over that country with horses. In the pastoral districts, when the inspector has to do his inspecting, he will find it impossible to cover the whole distance in coaches. The previous inspector asked for a buggy and horses. He was a good man, and did good work, but for some reason he did not like a motor-car, but preferred horses. If the inspector had a motor-car, he could inspect all Gulf stations. Some of these stations have never been inspected, and the employers are not decent enough to provide decent accommodation until they are forced to do so by the inspector. They say that the bottom has fallen out of the cattle market, but they had good markets from 1910 up till a couple of years ago.

Mr. J. JONES: They also had high rents.

Mr. RIORDAN: The hon. gentleman owns a little paddock compared with the big stations I have been referring to. The hon. gentleman knows the country I have been speaking about, because he has been all over it. He knows that Forest Home and others stations belonging to the Queensland Meat Export Company, contain 12,000 square miles. Why, the hon. gentleman has only a horse paddock compared with that, and yet he objects to the owners of these big places paying their fair contribution towards the upkeep of the State.

Mr. J. JONES: You do not look after the small man.

Mr. RIORDAN: The Government supported by hon. members opposite never bothered about the small man, but only looked after the pastoralists.

Mr. MOORE: You should be sure of your facts.

Mr. RIORDAN: If the hon. gentleman's statements were as true as mine, he would be all right. The hon. member had some pepper in his eyes the other night, and hon. members opposite tried to infer that it was caused by some member on this side.

Mr. VOWLES: Is that the night the minutes were stolen?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I thought you said yesterday that the minutes were thrown away?

Mr. RIORDAN: The leader of the Opposition cannot accuse me of stealing anything, because I believe in straight dealing. My dealings have always been straight and above-board. I do not want to interrupt the legal fraternity of this Chamber, but, as the inspectors are doing good work without inflicting hardships on the struggling selectors or small pastoral lessees, I would like to see better transport provided for them. I hope that this good work will be continued, in the interests of the great mass of the workers. I am satisfied that this Government are progressive, unlike hon. members opposite. When I look at them, they remind me of the man who sits in a train with his back to the engine—they never see anything till they have gone past. (Laughter.)

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I am very sorry that we have not got the report of this sub-department. I can remember when we did get a report one or two years ago, and there was a certain amount of information in it. I quite agree that it is necessary to give the workers on the various stations, and also on the grazing homesteads and sugar farms, proper accommodation; but I also remember that a few years ago we had a report from one of the inspectors in the sugar districts, who pointed out that poor struggling selectors had to go out of their own houses in order to comply with the conditions of the Act.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Can you not have an admiration for a man who tells the truth?

Mr. MOORE: Of course. I have an admiration for him, and that is why I would like to see these reports, because I would like to know how this Act is being enforced. I can quite understand that it is going to be a hardship on some sections of the people if they are not going to receive some consideration. We had the hon. member for Barcoo getting up and saying that he was very glad that the Act had been tightened up, and that instructions had been given to the inspectors to carry out their duties in a more stringent manner; and, when struggling selectors have difficulty in carrying out the provisions of the law in the early days of their settlement on the land, when they have no money, it is harassing. On some of these small stations with a few cattle it is going to be a very difficult thing. Hon. members know what profits were made on their own State stations, and they know perfectly well where those profits went.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Who is harassing them?

Mr. MOORE: That is just what I am complaining of—we have not got the report, and the only time when we did have the report we found that a section of the people were being harassed. Can the hon. member not remember the report of Mr. Theodore?

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: He simply pointed out that consideration must be given to special cases.

Mr. MOORE: We find that amendments have been made, and that members on the other side are always talking about dictation to members sitting here. We have also dictation on the other side. I saw a little while ago the report of a meeting of the Australian Workers' Union in which it was said that they were going to redraft this Act and insist on it being put through by the Government. One man had the audacity to say that he did not think the Government would stand up to a thing like that.

At 10.30 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN: Under the provisions of Standing Order No. 307, I shall now leave the chair and make my report to the House.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported progress.

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

The House adjourned at 10.31 p.m.