Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 24 JULY 1923

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TUESDAY, 24 JULY, 1923.

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

ANSWER TO ADDRESS IN REPLY.

The SPEAKER: I have to report to the House that I presented to His Excellency the Governor the Address in Reply to His Excellency's Opening Speech, agreed to by the House on the 19th instant, and that His Excellency was pleased to make the following reply thereto:—

"Government House,
"Brisbane.

"MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN,

"On behalf of our Most Gracious Sovereign I thank the representatives of the people for the expression of their continued loyalty and affection to His Majesty's Throne and Person, which shall be duly reported to the King.

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

"MATTHEW NATHAN.

"23rd July, 1923."

QUESTIONS.

SUBSIDIES TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES FOR DESTRUCTION OF PRICKLY-PEAR, 1919-1922.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*), in the absence of Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*), asked the Hon. F. T. Brennan—

"1. What amount was passed by Parliament for years 1919-1920, 1920-1921, 1921-1922, for subsidy to local authorities for destruction of prickly-pear on roads and reserves?

"2. What amount was paid from each appropriation to local authorities?

"3. What amount reverted to consolidated revenue each year?

"4. What amounts have been paid to individual local authorities for the years 1919-1920, 1920-1921, 1921-1922?

"5. What local authorities are within the prickly-pear belt of this State?

"6. How many local authorities have not claimed subsidy on pear destruction on roads and reserves in their respective areas? State number each year?"

HON. F. T. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*) replied—

"1. 1919-1920, £2,500; 1920-1921, £4,000; 1921-1922, £1,786 6s. 9d.

"2. 1919-1920, £2,499 16s. 7d.; 1920-1921, £1,272 1s. 11d.; 1921-1922, £1,786 6s. 9d.

"3. Balances lapsed—1919-1920, 3s. 5d.; 1920-1921, £2,227 18s. 1d. (£500 transferred to other Votes); 1921-1922, nil.

"4.—

1919-1920.	£	s.	d.
Emerald Shire	101	14	0
Fitzroy Shire	534	10	10
Gayndah Shire	426	11	6
Jondaryan Shire	19	15	0
Rawbelle Shire	454	13	5
Rosenthal Shire	586	17	3
Tarampa Shire	375	14	7
	£2,499	16	7

1920-1921.	£	s.	d.
Bungil Shire	192	0	3
Fitzroy Shire	186	15	11
Gayndah Shire	150	15	8
Livingstone Shire ...	109	1	0
Rawbelle Shire	276	2	11
Tarampa Shire	357	6	2
	£1,272	1	11

1921-1922.	£	s.	d.
Fitzroy Shire	290	9	5
Gayndah Shire	84	7	11
Rawbelle Shire	832	9	11
Rosenthal Shire	370	16	8
Tarampa Shire	208	2	10
	£1,786	6	9

"5. It is not quite clear what is meant by 'prickly-pear belt.' The following is a list of the cities, towns, and shires in which it is known definitely to the Department of Public Lands that pear exists:—Cities—Brisbane, Bundaberg, Charters Towers, Ipswich, Mackay, Rockhampton, South Brisbane, Toowoomba, and Townsville. Towns—Blackall, Cairns, Cooktown, Coolangatta, Dalby, Gayndah, Goondiwindi, Redcliffe, Sandgate, and Warwick. Shires—Allora, Balonne, Banana, Bauhinia, Belyando, Bendemere, Booringa, Broadsound, Bungil, Burrum, Caboolture, Calliope, Callliungal, Camblooya, Chinchilla, Cleveland, Clifton, Coomera, Crow's Nest, Dalrymple, Drayton, Duaringa, Eidsvold, Emerald, Esk, Fitzroy, Gayndah, Glengallon, Gooburrum, Goolman, Highfields, Inglewood, Isis, Jondaryan, Kargoolnah, Kilkivan, Kingaroy, Kolan, Laidley, Livingstone, Maroochy, Milmerran, Miriam Vale, Moreton, Mundubbera, Murilla, Murgon, Murweh, Nebo, Noosa, Normanby, Peak Downs, Perry, Pioneer, Pittsworth, Ravenswood, Rosalie, Rosenthal, Rosewood, Stanthorpe, Sarina, Tara, Tarampa, Taringa, Taroom, Thuringowa, Tingalpa, Toombul, Waggamba, Wambo, Wangaratta, Warroo, Wondi, and Woongarra.

"6. 1919-1920, 86; 1920-1921, 87; 1921-1922, 88."

SUPPLY OF FREE COTTON SEED FOR 1923 SOWING.

Mr. MORGAN asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

"1. Owing to the poor returns, and in many cases total failure, of last season's cotton crop, will he instruct the British-Australian Cotton Growing Association to supply seed for this year's sowing free of charge?

"2. At whose instigation was it decided to allow the abovenamed association to charge 1s. 2d. per lb. for seed?

"3. Is the money so obtained retained by the British-Australian Cotton Growing Association, or passed on to the Government?"

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Euchum*) replied—

"1. The charge for seed for the coming planting will be ½d. per lb. From 10 to 15 lb. will plant an acre. The average area under cotton per cotton-grower last year was 7 acres. The total cost per farmer will therefore not exceed a few shillings.

"2. The charge is not 1s. 2d. per lb., but ½d.

"3. The money is paid into the Cotton Fund, and will either be paid to the growers or used to make good any loss arising out of the guarantee."

Mr. MORGAN: I wish to draw attention to a misprint in paragraph (2) of the question. The correct figure is ½d. per lb., not 1s. 2d. per lb.

COMPARISON OF EMPLOYEES AND TRAIN MILES, RAILWAY DEPARTMENT, 1913-1914 AND 1922-1923.

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

"1. What is the present number of employees in the Railway Department, temporary and permanent?

"2. What was the number on 30th June, 1914?

"3. What number of effective train miles was produced in the course of the operations of the railways during the year 1913-1914? What was the number of train miles produced in 1922-1923?"

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

"The information is being obtained."

EXTENSION OF OPEN SEASON FOR OPOSSUMS.

Mr. MORGAN asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

"Is it his intention to extend the open season for opossums? If so, for how long?"

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK replied—

"No."

PUBLIC WORKS COMMISSION—REPORT ON RAILWAY TO REDCLIFFE.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*) asked the Premier—

"1. Has the Government taken any steps whatsoever in connection with the construction of the Redcliffe Railway?

"2. If so, has any Executive minute been forwarded to the Public Works Commission instructing them to report on same?

"3. Has the Public Works Commission reported upon the question?

"4. If so, will he lay upon the table of the House the report for perusal?"

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

"1. Surveys have been made from various points as under:—1888—Trial survey, Dakabin to Redcliffe; 1889—Working survey, Petrie to Redcliffe; 1895 to 1914—Alternative trial surveys, Petrie to Redcliffe; 1895 to 1921—Examinations, Sandgate to Redcliffe.

"2. Yes.

"3. No.

"4. See No 3."

PURCHASE OF AFRICAN MAIZE BY STATE PRODUCE AGENCY.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*) asked the Secretary for Public Works—

"1. Is it correct that the State Produce Agency has purchased a quantity of African-grown maize in Sydney?

"2. If so, what quantity, and at what price per bushel?

"3. For what purpose?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*) replied—

"1. Yes.

"2. 100 tons; 5s. 11d. in store, Brisbane.

"3. To ensure supplies for country customers (mostly poultry farmers) at prices that will enable the agency to compete with the Queensland produce merchants, who are reported to have purchased up to 5,000 tons."

ELECTRIFICATION OF SUBURBAN RAILWAYS.

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

"In view of the proved success of the electrification of the suburban railways in Victoria, has the Government any policy in this connection so far as Queensland is concerned?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

"No action is contemplated in this direction at present."

PRIVATE SAVINGS BANKS BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

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

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to make provision for the regulation of Savings Bank business carried on in Queensland by private persons."

The Bill is on the same lines as the measure which was introduced last session, but was not proceeded with beyond the first reading. Hon. members therefore will fully understand the provisions of the measure and the necessity for its introduction at this juncture.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed.

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

The resolution was agreed to.

FIRST READING.

The TREASURER presented the Bill, and moved—

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

Question put and passed.

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

DINGO AND MARSUPIAL DESTRUCTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): This is a Bill to amend the Dingo and Marsupial Destruction Act Amendment Act in certain particulars. It is a Bill of two clauses. As I explained in Committee the other day, it is a Bill to enable the boards to pay a lesser bonus than £1 for dingoes and fox scalps. As showing the urgency for the measure, I would remind the House that since the passing of the principal Act the value of fox skins has increased enormously. Last year I find that the average value for fox skins in Sydney was £8 9s. 9d. a dozen, which is about 14s. each. I find that 118,480 fox skins were sold, which realised roughly £33,915. The position is that on the border of New South Wales and Queensland, where the bulk of the fox skins are collected, the Pastures Protection Board of New South Wales only pays 2s. 6d. for a scalp, whereas the boards in Queensland are compelled to pay £1 per scalp. I have no power, as Minister, to reduce that rate of payment, and it is to obtain that power that I am introducing this Bill. In order to save any lengthy discussion, I might explain that it is proposed in the near future to amend the Act generally. The Council of Agriculture have appointed a sub-committee to deal with the question of the amalgamation of the Dingo and Marsupial Destruction Act, the Diseases in Stock Act, the Brands Act, the Rabbit Act, and the Marsupial Fencing Act. It is believed that a consolidating measure will make for the simplification and cheapness of the administration of those Acts. I received only this morning the recommendations made by the special committee, and I have not had time to consider them. It may be possible to introduce a consolidating measure this session. I cannot definitely promise that it can be done, but I promise to give full consideration to any representations that may be made in that regard. Meanwhile, this measure is considered urgent, because a number of the boards, particularly those in the south-western part of the State, have assessed their stock-owners to the maximum—6s. per 25 head of cattle and 125 head of sheep—and even then they are unable to meet the demands. I feel satisfied that the Act at present compelling boards to pay not less than £1 for

fox skins, instead of having the effect of reducing the number of foxes has had the opposite tendency. A number of the boards are practically insolvent. Since 1st January last, the St. George Board has only been able to pay £2,313 for fox scalps, whereas they had £3,652 worth unpaid for. The board has no funds, and vouchers at the rate of £1,000 a month are being issued. The position is that the scalpers will have to wait until the board collect the assessments for the ensuing year. That is going on year after year. It now becomes necessary to give the Government power to reduce the amount of the bonus to be paid for fox scalps, and fix the price by regulation. I think that should have been done under the original Act. I know that many persons do not consider it desirable that the Government should do too much by regulation, but in administering Acts any Government who have the backbone to do things should not be tied up in cases of this kind. This is shown by the requests made from time to time by the boards to have the bonuses fixed at a reduced rate. The suggestion is that they should be reduced to 7s. 6d. or 10s. That is a matter for consideration, and I shall be pleased to hear the views of hon. members on both sides of the House. As soon as the Bill is passed, I propose to frame regulations reducing the bonuses at present paid by the boards. The four boards on the border are—Darling Downs, Paroo, St. George, and Western Downs. Last year 14,646 fox scalps were collected in the whole State, and 11,696 were collected by the four boards mentioned, indicating to me—and it is the general opinion, and is quite in accordance with human nature—that fox scalps are obtained from the other side of the border and brought into Queensland, and the Queensland stockowners are being compelled to pay for those scalps because of the fact that the authorities in New South Wales only pay 2s. 6d., whereas the boards in Queensland are compelled to pay not less than £1. Section 18 of the principal Act makes it arbitrary that the bonus shall not be less than £1 for a scalp. I consulted with the Crown Law Officers, as it might be considered a very unimportant matter for Parliament to take up much time over—whether the matter could not be dealt with by regulation. I found I could not so deal with it, and consequently it has been necessary to introduce this Bill of two short clauses to give that power to the boards concerned. Many of the boards on the border of New South Wales are now thousands of pounds in arrears in payment for these scalps. The fact that fox skins are worth 14s. apiece justifies the amendment. The Act provides now that the skins are the property of the scalper, and I propose to circularise the boards and ask them to adopt a by-law whereby a brand can be placed on the fox skin so that the man who skinned the fox would have the skin intact and may sell that skin in New South Wales or anywhere else after collecting the bonus.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Will not New South Wales fox scalps still come into Queensland on your own statement?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I quite admit that. Unfortunately, we cannot induce the New South Wales people to increase their rates. I think they should. Moral suasion has been applied to them from time to time by the various authorities. However, it is a step in the right direction to reduce the price of the fox scalps, because of the facts I have briefly related. I have pleasure in moving—

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

Hon. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): Before the Bill is read a second time, I would ask if there is not a danger, if the price of the scalp is fixed at 7s. 6d. or 10s. in Queensland, of the present evil continuing? To some of us it is a revelation that so many foxes have to be dealt with. Certainly, if the remarks of the Minister are correct with regard to a certain number of fox scalps being brought across the border by reason of the difference in the value of the scalps in New South Wales and Queensland, then the fact of reducing the price of scalps in Queensland to 7s. 6d. or 10s. will not stop that practice. I certainly shall have a suggestion to make when the Bill is before the Committee. Surely some efforts should be made to induce New South Wales to come into line with Queensland so far as the payment for scalps is concerned. As the Minister has said, it is reasonable to suppose that certain people on the border will take the scalps to where they can get the highest price for them. I earnestly suggest to the Minister the wisdom, if he has not already done so, of taking the matter up with the New South Wales Government to prevent the overlapping which has occurred in the past.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I look upon this amending Bill as an important one. While the Minister has given us a general explanation as to what is likely to occur in regard to the reduction in the price of scalps, he does not explain to us that this Bill gives the Minister greater power than he possesses under the present Act. For instance, under the present Act, the price for scalps is now fixed by the boards at not less than £1. If this Bill is passed without some provision being made, the Government, if they so desire, by regulation can fix the price to be paid for dingo and fox scalps at £4 or £5. It is wrong to give the Government that great power. I certainly think, when a Bill is introduced like this, there should be a provision that the Governor in Council shall not, by regulation, fix the price of dingo or fox scalps higher than £1. I think it is a wrong thing to give the Government that great power.

Mr. FOLEY: They are getting more than £1 in some places now.

Mr. MORGAN: But that is under a private agreement. We are giving the Government too much power in allowing them to frame regulations just as they desire governing the prices to be paid for the scalp of the fox and the dingo. This is a matter which the Country party brought before the House in 1918. We pointed out then just the position that we find ourselves in to-day. The Government took no notice of amendments or speeches emanating from hon. members on this side of the House. I had had experience in Victoria, and I knew what would happen in this State after a few years had elapsed. What is happening here to-day happened in the Southern States years ago. We told the Minister in 1918 that every board would become insolvent if the price was fixed at £1.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Was I the Minister then?

Mr. MORGAN: I do not remember. I then suggested that the fox scalps should be marked the same as they are in Victoria—that is, perforated just at the back of the ear. This would not interfere with the skins being used, and they could be returned to the persons who sent them and sold in the open market. It seems waste to think that valuable skins should be destroyed and not put to the use Nature intended they should be.

I regret that the Minister is not bringing in a new Act respecting this particular matter. The time is ripe to repeal the old Act. This amendment will give relief only for a short time, and we want something different altogether. After many years' experience in the rabbit country in Victoria, as well as in Queensland, I have come to the conclusion that paying money for scalps in order to destroy pests has been unsuccessful. It has proved unsuccessful in every part of the world. It is a useless expenditure. Notwithstanding the fact that we have been paying by way of bonus between £60,000 and £70,000 per annum, there are more dingoes and foxes in Queensland to-day than ever before. That positively proves that the bonus system is a failure.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There would have been ten times as many but for the bonus.

Mr. MORGAN: I would suggest that the Minister should repeal the existing Act, and, in place of it, collect from the stockowners practically the same amount of money that is collected to-day, and, instead of using that £60,000 or £70,000 for the purpose of paying for fox and dingo scalps, use the money for the purposes of erecting dog-prooof fences. If we were to spend that £60,000 a year in erecting dog-proof and fox-proof fencing, we would get much better results. Certain areas should be marked off where such a fence could be commenced; that is, if it is possible to erect a fence that will keep out foxes—it is very doubtful if it is possible. However, the fox is not so destructive as the dingo. He is very easily poisoned, and will take a bait, while the dingo to-day, who is more or less a half-breed, is more difficult to poison than he was forty or fifty years ago, when he was pure-bred. The Minister will be well advised if he will decide before the end of this session to bring in a Bill which will provide the necessary relief. I have a list which shows that last year the assessment levied on stockowners amounted to £59,271. The bonuses paid last year by the different boards amounted to £58,421. The Government, by way of subsidy, contributed altogether £5,000, and the amount expended on the destruction of dingoes and foxes amounted to £63,421. That money was spent uselessly. That is to say, it did not bring about any great reduction in the number of foxes. We know that in the localities infested with dingoes, although the different boards have paid huge sums of money for scalps, the dingoes and foxes are more plentiful than ever. In my own district and from other localities we get reports from travellers that the dingo is more plentiful to-day than at any other period in the history of this State, which goes to show that the expenditure of £63,000 last year has not brought about the result that the expenditure of such a huge sum of money should have brought about. It is almost impossible to estimate the loss suffered by Queensland from these pests. Queensland to-day is losing over £2,000,000 per annum because of the fact that country which would otherwise be suitable for the production of wool must to-day be used exclusively for cattle. Everyone knows that a sheep station, from an employment point of view, is far more valuable than a cattle run, and the amount of wealth produced per acre on sheep country is much greater than the amount of wealth produced per acre on cattle country. If it were possible to get right down to bedrock and estimate the actual loss incurred in Queensland to-day owing to the presence of dingoes, it would be found that it would run into several millions of pounds per annum. This matter is well worthy of serious consideration, and it is well worthy of the Minister devoting some time to bring in an alteration of the system that has been in existence for a large number of years, and which the Minister must admit has not been effective.

The present system was in existence before the present Government came into power. The only difference is that we [4 p.m.] have increased the amount of bonus, and, after several years' experience, we have discovered that the increasing of the bonus has not had the effect which we anticipated when the increase was decided upon. I think it is time for the Government to introduce a system which will do good. It is recognised by all those who have had anything to do with the dingo that the only way to prevent his spread and eventually exterminate him is by the introduction of dingo-proof fences. The same thing applies to the rabbit. In the Southern States while we employed all sorts of methods to destroy the rabbit, we found that, until we had our holdings rabbit-proof netted and cleaned them off from the inside, we were not able to cope with that pest. We discovered the netting was effective, and the result has been a great saving to Victoria. The same thing applies to the dingo. If we had Queensland mapped out, and dog-fencing erected, it would give more work to those who are in need of employment than the present expenditure of £63,000 does.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You favour the idea of groups of holders coming together and erecting a ring fence?

Mr. MORGAN: Yes. The money we collect from the stockowners of Queensland generally would be used as a loan, which these men would eventually repay, and the money would go back into the pool. If we were able to lend this £63,000 to them free of interest and the repayment of the amount was spread over a term of years, you would have each year coming back into the fund, besides the rates collected, a certain amount of money to continue the system, until eventually the whole of Queensland would be made proof against the dingo. We should give employment to the worker, and there would always be a certain amount of labour necessary to keep the fences in repair. We all know that this Bill is not a political measure, and, whatever our political views may be, we recognise that a system of that sort would be beneficial to the State, and give employment to the Western workers, and each year we should have some return for the expenditure of the money. I want to draw the attention of the Minister to the fact that the cattle-owners are contributing five-eighths and the sheep-owners three-

eighths of the money collected. I have had a good deal of experience with both sheep and cattle; and, while I admit that the cattlemen should contribute something towards the destruction of the dingo, the present proportion is too great. I think the sheepmen should contribute five-eighths and the cattlemen three-eighths of the amount which is being collected annually, but, instead of that, the cattlemen are paying five-eighths and the sheepmen three-eighths.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Are you sure of that?

Mr. MORGAN: I am sure of that. I got the figures from the Department of Agriculture this morning.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in proceeding on those lines. The proposal before the House is "to amend the Dingo and Marsupial Destruction Act of 1918 in a certain particular." The hon. member must endeavour to confine his attention to that subject.

Mr. MORGAN: I am endeavouring to stick to the scope of the Bill, but I had a promise from the Minister that he would take into consideration certain matters. In respect to this particular matter, I am pointing out why there should be some amendment even of the Bill which is now before the House. When the Bill gets into Committee I hope the Minister will agree to accept one or two amendments. Last year there were 39,723 dingoes and 14,646 foxes destroyed. Wallabies and other small marsupials were likewise destroyed; but it is not compulsory on the part of the board to pay on scalps other than those of dingoes and foxes. There are thirty-five boards in existence, and I think I am right in saying that, almost without exception, every one of those boards is unfinancial, and have not been able to meet their liabilities. The Minister has spoken of reducing the rate for fox scalps to 7s. 6d., of which I approve, but I hope he will receive a deputation within the next few days which will wait upon him with a view to having the whole system remodelled, bringing in a new Bill and wiping out the present Act, and thus give some benefit for the money expended. Stockowners do not object to paying a reasonable thing for the destruction of these pests, but we object to being heavily saddled with taxation when we find year after year that there is no benefit to be seen from the expenditure of the money. If the Minister had been able to report that dingoes and foxes had decreased since 1918, he would be justified in going on with the present system, but unfortunately the hon. gentleman and his departmental officers must admit—and they do admit—that it has not had the effect anticipated, and that dingoes and foxes are more plentiful to-day, and are doing more damage, than at any previous period. I hope the Minister will give serious consideration to the matter of wiping out the existing Act and placing a new and better measure on the statute-book.

Mr. BELL (*Fassifern*): I cannot congratulate the Minister on bringing in such a Bill as this to deal with such a serious matter as the dingo pest, as it is only tinkering with the situation. If a better system is not brought into operation, the menace is going to be perpetuated. The Minister has said that he is going to have a revision of the principal Act. That is most necessary, because the dingo menace is a very serious one to the pastoral industry in Queensland. From a return I got from the Department of Stock I find that, during 1921, 231,906 sheep have been lost through this pest; but those of us who live in the country know that that is not a quarter of the losses which have occurred. The Minister should seriously consider the advisableness of doing away with the bonus system and institute a system of fencing areas and making it compulsory for the destruction of dingoes and foxes in those areas. The Government could assist the stockowners with netting on similar lines to the old Rabbit Act. In South Australia they have a very useful measure in the Vermin Destruction Act, and I think the Government of this State would do well to follow on those lines. We know that the dingoes breed in the desert areas, and it is extraordinary how they come to Queensland; and in gravitating to the West they go through all the runs and do an enormous amount of damage. They then suddenly disappear, and a few weeks or months afterwards another wave will come through. The only way to deal with the menace is to fence off the runs, and to do that it will be necessary to co-ordinate the work of the Rabbit Boards and the Dingo Destruction Boards. Last year the thirty-five marsupial boards in Queensland collected some £60,000 odd. The administration costs amounted to some £10,000, and I think a good deal of that money could be saved—for instance, by having one central collecting authority. A matter of grave concern to the cattle producers of this State—who are going through a most serious time just now—is the basis on which the assessments are made. Under the principal Act, the cattleman pays as much for twenty-five head of cattle as the sheepman pay for 125 sheep, and I would suggest that that basis should be altered, because it imposes too great a burden on the cattle-owner. I would like to suggest also that it is unnecessary to bring the settled districts under any Marsupial Destruction Board. Take the areas on the eastern side of the Main Range. The dingo pest is not a serious one there; yet the people there are called upon to pay their levies and destroy the dogs. A similar argument applies to cattle areas, where the dingoes are not so great a menace as in sheep areas, with the result that the cattleman is called upon to pay too large a proportion of the assessments. I notice that under this measure the Minister has power to make regulations as to the payment of bonuses for foxes. As the hon. gentleman pointed out, the rate in Queensland is higher than in New South Wales, with the result that many fox scalps come here from New South Wales. I understand that the New South Wales bonus is 2s. 6d., and that the proposal under this Bill is to fix the rate at various figures by regulation, so that in some districts it may be as much as 10s.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The bonus will be uniform all over the State.

Mr. BELL: I understood that the Minister had power to make regulations fixing the rate for each district.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No—generally—over the whole State.

Mr. BELL: Even if the rate were fixed at 5s. throughout Queensland, and it was still 2s. 6d. in New South Wales, the same difficulty would occur, and fox scalps would

be brought over from New South Wales in large numbers, so that from that point of view the rate should be the same as in New South Wales. I would ask the Minister seriously to consider the introduction of a complete Bill, co-ordinating the work of the Rabbit Boards and the Marsupial Boards, as being necessary in the interests of Queensland, because this menace has reached such proportions as to become a serious charge upon the sheep industry, as I have already pointed out. The deaths are increasing year by year, and, so long as present methods are persevered with, so long will these losses continue.

Mr. COSTELLO (*Carnarvon*): This Bill interests me considerably, seeing that the dingo and the fox are pests in the district which I represent, and that we have a Marsupial Board endeavouring to deal with them, and that the district was one of the first to ask the Minister to introduce such legislation as this. We on the northern border of New South Wales know what it means to have to pay large sums annually for fox scalps. I would like to point out that the Marsupial Boards adjacent to the New South Wales border pay considerably more than the rest of the boards throughout Queensland; which is sufficient proof that we are flooded by dingo and fox scalps from the other States. There is no protection against the infestation from the South. A river is the boundary, and there is no difficulty in bringing them across, with the result that the taxpayers of Queensland pay all the time. We have been pushing this matter for the last three or four years, and we welcome the Bill, although it is not all that we desire. The rate for fox scalps on the New South Wales side is 2s. 6d. I do not see how we can fix it at less than 5s. or 7s. 6d., but at either figure it will not prevent us from continuing to be flooded with scalps from New South Wales. The dingo pest is a very considerable menace to Queensland, although, perhaps, it has not caused the damage for which the fly pest has been responsible. On this question there is a good deal of contention between the cattle and the sheep men. The cattlemen contend that it is not their duty to subscribe towards the extermination of the dingo, but the sheepman replies, with a good deal of truth, that the cattlemen are the breeders of the dingoes. At any rate, they are bred on cattle country, and, as the hon. member for Fassifern says, they come across in waves, and the small men have to suffer. The Dingo Association in my district pays £5 per head over and above the £1 paid by the Marsupial Board, and we contend that it is cheap at that if we are going to get the dingo destroyed in our district. There is no doubt that the dingo is a menace which the small man is up against very hard and fast, and the only way for the Government to deal with it is to encourage a scheme such as we proposed a few nights ago, of giving the small graziers wire netting on long and easy terms. During the war the price of wire netting rose to such an extent that it was impossible for small men to consider the advisability of erecting dog-proof fences; but now it is a good deal cheaper, and they are anxious to eradicate the pest. This method would be far better than any bonus which could be offered for dingo scalps. No doubt, £1 is too much for fox scalps. A fox skin is worth commercially at least 10s., and it is a much easier animal to destroy than the dingo, because it can be poisoned, and it is not nearly the menace to the sheep-man which the dingo is, so that I consider that the bonus could be very well reduced to 5s. I suggest that the Minister should circularise the boards asking for their suggestions on the point, although I do not think there should be any hard-and-fast rule. Some of them might be more interested in eradicating the foxes than others, whilst some might be more concerned about the dingoes. I would have liked to widen the scope of the Bill; but, under the circumstances, I am only too glad to see it introduced in its present form, although I may move some small amendments in Committee I have pleasure in supporting the second reading, deferring any other remarks I may wish to make till the Committee stage.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I wish to draw the attention of the Minister to the fact that this Bill would have been quite unnecessary if he had taken the advice which was given from this side of the House when the principal Act was introduced in 1918.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I was not in charge of it.

Mr. MOORE: No; but his party was. We endeavoured to point out the absolute absurdity of fixing the rates for scalps at the minimum figure specified in the measure at that time. The Minister in charge of the Bill was obdurate, and insisted on going on with it, with the result that a large number of boards in Queensland are ruined. When we see that, by continuing to pay a bonus, the sum paid for scalps is increasing instead of decreasing, it must be obvious to the Minister that that is a wrong policy. This Bill may be of a little advantage under present conditions. We find that the number of scalps paid for was—

Year.	Scalps.
1919	42,000
1920	53,000
1921	40,000
1922	54,000

Surely it must be obvious, with that rate of increase, that the method of eradication by the payment of a bonus is a wrong one. The cattlemen and the sheepmen agree that the erection of wire-netting fences is the best means of eradication. The authorities dealing with rabbit fencing and the authorities dealing with marsupial fencing should co-ordinate, and should be brought under one board dealing with all netting fences. We have not yet discovered in Australia that the paying of a bonus will get rid of any pest that it is intended to destroy. No bonus is paid to a man to clear prickly-pear or Bathurst burr that he may have growing. He is compelled to clear it because it is a pest. If the boards are allowed to continue the payment of a bonus for these animals, and the animals are allowed to increase, then we are only making an industry for certain persons without being able to get rid of the dingo or the fox. The prickly-pear areas are going to be harbours for these pests. The best possible way of clearing out these pests is to fence the dingo off in certain groups, and the dingo and fox can then be cleared out of those areas. There you have something to start with. You could then gradually increase the area enclosed with wire-netting. That seems a far better proposition than spending

the money that we are spending at present, and getting no material results, because under the scheme of fencing we would be able to clear a certain area each year. We have been paying money for the destruction of these pests for the last thirty years, and we are now ten times worse off than when we started. Anybody who considers the position must recognise that the system embodied under the principal Act is a failure, and that some new system is needed. We know perfectly well that if we had attempted to stem the increase in the growth of rabbits by the method of paying a bonus, they would have been all over Queensland to-day. We did not do that. We introduced an effective scheme whereby they are kept beyond the netting fences that were erected. In those areas where fences have been erected for protection against the rabbits, there would be no difficulty in erecting fences to keep back the dogs, and thus enable the people in those areas to clear them out. The erection of these fences must be made compulsory. I am not sure that the method of assessment on the number of cattle and sheep is a good one. I am not sure whether it should not be assessed on the land in the same way as local authority rates are imposed. The fact of dingoes and foxes going on certain land depreciates the value of that land, and even a man who has no stock is in a position to obtain the same benefits as a man who has stock. The method of assessing on the number of stock is not a fair one. I welcome the measure as something in the nature of relief under the existing circumstances. This Bill, which seeks to amend the principal Act, contains provisions that were advocated by hon. members on this side when the principal Act was first introduced. If the money to be expended in the next twenty years will have the effect of clearing a big area, then we shall obtain some benefit, but at the present time we are drifting further and further back every day.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): In 1918, when the principal Act was introduced into the House, I opposed it, because it appeared to me to be antagonistic to the general interests of the people concerned and to the boards controlling those matters. As on that occasion so on this, the Government have shown very little interest in giving effective help in the direction of aiding the boards. A measure of ths kind can only be considered as a palliative or a half-way thing, and there is no indication that the Government will be doing anything except giving relief in the way of reducing the amount to be paid to the scalpers. They have not indicated that, in consequence of the large sums which have been paid by the cattlemen in particular through the boards, they are going to give extra assistance to the boards. They have not indicated that, notwithstanding the huge sums of money paid to deal with the menace, which is a growing one rather than a decreasing one. That certainly leads one to infer that the high amount paid for scalps has been an encouragement rather than a discouragement. Whilst one does not know, and cannot say, still there is just the possibility that foxes are allowed to go instead of their scalps being taken. When fox furs have advanced to such a very high price, you can readily understand that fox hunting almost becomes an industry. Anyone scanning the possibilities of the fur trade will realise that the indications are that there are chances of the furs becoming higher in value instead of falling in price. The payments made for fur skins are so high, and people are so extravagant in that direction, that they are ready to pay almost any price that may be named for the article that they have set their minds on having. I think this Bill, whilst doing some good, might be delayed for a few weeks. In the course of a week or two we shall have representatives from all the local authorities in the land assembling in Brisbane, and the ideas of the men who are actually "in the know" might be obtained. Then a Bill could be brought down dealing with the subject from beginning to end. I have sometimes heard of enormous sums being paid to get the scalp of some fearful dingo. I cannot at the moment hazard a guess at the amount. There was a noted scalp hunter in the Dalveen district who was encouraged to go into far away districts to prove his prowess in conection with the obtaining of the scalp of a certain dingo which had committed enormous damage. I believe he was successful, and I believe that he was paid £40 for that scalp. Acting in the light of the debate which took place in 1918, when many things were pointed out to the Minister, I think that the hon. gentleman should give further consideration to this matter. Apparently the principal Act has not been effective. Whilst this measure offers some degree of relief, it does not tackle the question in all its bigness.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): Two matters have come out in this discussion this afternoon to which the Minister might very well give consideration. One was the suggestion by the hon. member for Wynnum [4.30 p.m.] that there might be some co-ordination between the Department of Agriculture of New South Wales and our own department as to the amount to be paid for scalps. At the present time there seems to be tremendous difference, and, so far as one can judge from the remarks of various speakers this afternoon, the Bill does not seem likely to fulfil the desire of those who have introduced it of eradicating these pests. I take it from the remarks of the Minister a few moments ago that something is likely to eventuate in the nature of a comprehensive measure during the session. He said the Council of Agriculture were forwarding to him some recommendation in connection with this matter, and that it might mean the co-ordination of the Brands Act, the Rabbit Act, and the particular Act we are dealing with this afternoon. The Minister will be well advised when he gets the information—it will come from men who thoroughly understand this business—if he will go into the recommendations, embody them in an amending Bill, and give us something which will be of interest to the whole of the people of this State.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): The need for this Bill is very great, but it does not seem to me to be nearly comprehensive enough. The various boards are now practically insolvent through no fault of their own, but this Bill will not give them any measure of relief so far as that phase of the question is concerned. After this Bill is passed they will still occupy their present unenviable position. I would like to see the whole thing reorganised. In New South Wales I was perfectly cognisant of the ravages of the rabbit pest, and I am quite convinced that what hon. members have said regarding the pest is

quite correct. We know perfectly well that the payment of a bonus, particularly in the case of rabbits, is only a means of encouraging the pest. We had an instance in New South Wales where a colony of rabbits would be discovered 80 miles from where rabbits were last located. No doubt they were carried there. We cannot blame the scalpers, who make a living out of the destruction of the pest, for attempting to get the best price that it is possible to get for them. Undoubtedly they do this kind of thing. We never effectively combated the rabbit pest in New South Wales until the Government assisted the settlers with cheap wire-netting. We believe in the affected localities being fenced, and the smaller the areas are made the greater the chance there is of destroying the pest. If the Department of Agriculture would set to work in this direction they would be taking a step in the right direction. The fox skins should be worth a great deal more than their present market value. If you go into any shop in Sydney to-day to buy a fox skin you will not get it under £2. The greater number of skins sold by scalpers to-day are mutilated. The scalp is taken off the skin, and this spoils it, to a certain extent. The various boards should have the right to mark the skins so that they could not be returned again to the boards for payment of the bonus, for they will double-bank if they get the opportunity. I am quite convinced that the skins will be worth considerably more than 15s. They certainly will be worth more than £1. I am quite certain that a trapper in the fox-infested areas can make a living without any bonus. I do not think we should give the Minister power to make the bonus one penny more than the rate prevailing in New South Wales. We know that the border is one that can be easily crossed, and we also know that men will sell their scalps in the district where the highest price is obtained. We know perfectly well, also, that that is done; it is no use us not facing that situation. I do not think that the Council of Agriculture is any more competent to deal with recommendations in regard to amending the various Acts indicated by the Minister than the dingo or other boards themselves. What we require to-day more than anything else is a conference of the men who are interested in this very matter. I should like to see some scheme evolved; and, as there are great possibilities of benefiting the country so much, the Minister will be wise if he takes the initiative when he receives the recommendations from the Council of Agriculture and calls these people who are interested together to consider them. While we agree with the measure of relief proposed to be given under this amending Bill, still I am of the opinion that it is only touching the fringe of the subject. I hope the Minister will initiate the conference I have spoken of.

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*): This is a measure that could open up a very wide range of discussion if one chose to take that course. I am satisfied that the proposal to continue the bonus on dingo scalps at the present time is a wise one, though I am not certain that the proposal to reduce the price on the scalps of foxes is so wise. I take it that the Bill will be carried, but I think, as a natural corollary to the Bill, that power should be given to all rabbit boards, and, where necessary, assistance too, to enable them to erect dingo-proof fencing on top of the rabbit-proof fences. I think that is the only solution of the dingo problem. I am not going to say that the reduction in the price of fox scalps is not going to allow them to build up their numbers. Time alone will tell. We should thank Sir Sidney Kidman and other big cattlemen for the presence of the dingo in sheep country to-day. The dingo menace to-day is a serious one, and it is time this House recognised it. From Longreach to beyond Windorah, a distance of over 200 miles, very few selectors are able to make a living without dog-netting their properties, and dog-netting small properties is expensive, and in most cases overcapitalises those properties. This legislation has all been rendered necessary because most of the country from Birdsville to Boulia has been in the hands of big companies, some of them absentee companies, and mainly in the hands of Sir Sidney Kidman. These men and companies, who are cattle-owners, have allowed dingoes to breed without hindrance, and to-day they have overrun the sheep country adjacent. It is only by dog-netting the country that the pest will be checked. The Rabbit Boards have made various proposals, although they have done nothing, beyond considering the question of erecting a high fence on the top of their rabbit-proof fence, so that they can keep out the dingoes off that area and give the selector an opportunity of dealing with the pest. Some of the Rabbit Boards have paid a considerable amount of money to the Government. The Gregory North Board, at Boulia, is a case in point. It is paying over £2,000 per annum in interest and redemption. If the board were granted some relief in that direction it could, with the revenue it is at present getting, build the top fence, and thus do something very effective.

So could all the other Rabbit Boards. I know, of course, that this is a matter where the initial expense is the trouble. However, for the sake of protecting an industry such as the sheep industry—and wool gives every appearance of bringing a good price for a long time to come—I am satisfied that the Government could do a more stupid thing than extend consideration to my suggestion. The other way out of it is, so far as possible, to give in good sheep country opportunities for men to go on it on a reasonable basis. That applies especially where we are at present holding good cattle country for sheep. There are large areas around Urandangie and up towards the Northern Territory where the dingoes are breeding fast and going into sheep country. Such an arrangement as I suggest would check this. Regarding the question of netting, again initial expense is the trouble. Twenty-five thousand pounds was put on the Estimates last year for dingo-proof netting; a further £10,000 has been expended without the authority of Parliament, and still further supplies have been asked for. I am quite satisfied that, if the Government spent £10,000,000 in a straight-out sum on dingo-proof netting, they could not completely cope with the demands. The trouble to-day is how far the Government is able to go in the matter of initial expenditure. The farther they can go the less will the nuisance be. In my suggestion we come into conflict with the Land Act and with principles that are held by this party. In the Boulia district there are some men who desire to sell out their cattle properties, before the residential conditions have been completed, to men who desire to put them

under sheep. While not generally in favour of men being allowed to dispose of pastoral property without having completed their residential conditions, I think, when the proposal is to convert the country from cattle to sheep, the Minister should consider every case on its merits, and allow sheepmen to get in and fence the properties. Only sheepmen can afford to do this.

Mr. MORGAN: There is no necessity in the cattle industry to do so.

Mr. POLLOCK: That is to say, the dingoes do not bother the cattleman, although to-day in North Queensland there are dingoes that will pull down a calf and even a yearling. The cross-breeding of the original dingo with a tame dog has brought this about, and a variety of dingo almost as ferocious and courageous as a wolf now exists.

Mr. MORGAN: We have half-bred bulldogs in my district.

Mr. POLLOCK: That has made the menace even worse than before. A good deal can be done by the Government in other ways than by the passage of this Bill, although, with the Opposition, I welcome its advent and hope that it will lead to the adoption of the suggestions I have made.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I remember on a previous occasion, when this matter was discussed, that similar speeches were made by the hon. members for Gregory and Balonne. One of the astonishing things to me is that, while they still blame the big pastoralists of the West——

Mr. HARTLEY: The big cattlemen of the West.

Mr. VOWLES: They overlook the fact that complaints are made from time to time in the Charleville district in connection with Dillalah State Station. This was sheep country, and was converted to cattle by the Government. It was neglected, and now complaint after complaint is made that the Government are doing nothing to check the progress of the dingo in that district. The Government have had ever since 1918 to consider the matter.

Mr. POLLOCK: Why pick on Dillalah?

Mr. VOWLES: Because it has been in the limelight so much. It is a menace, not only to that district, but to all surrounding districts.

Mr. POLLOCK: No sheep fence will keep the dingo out.

Mr. VOWLES: We have to introduce legislation to prevent our boards being exploited by people from adjoining States. Unless we have reciprocity and mutual agreements with the adjoining States, the Queensland Government will get nowhere. They should first of all carry out the suggestion made here this afternoon and make representations to the Governments of the adjoining States for this purpose. The combined authorities should then be able to cope with this matter. If they were all put on the same basis, we would be working in the right direction. Even in Queensland in the past, so far as marsupial areas are concerned, it was quite a common thing, when scalps were being brought in, to take them from surrounding districts to the board that happened to be financial. Scalps were then brought in by thousands until the funds were depleted. You have got to consider human nature in these matters. Again, while many people regard the dingo as their greatest curse, there are those in the West who regard the fox in the nature of a blessing, because they say that he is keeping the rabbit back. If a price were put upon scalps making it worth while for the men to make a profession of killing the dingoes, we would be working on better lines. In my own district, particularly in the scrubs in the vicinity of the Bunya Mountains, you may find all classes of these pests—even the type of dingo referred to by the hon. member for Gregory. That sort of pest is something that has to be destroyed, because it is getting more plentiful every year. The fox is an animal that can be got more easily than the dingo. He can be destroyed by any class of poison and he can be trapped; but, when you come down to the class of dingoes, more particularly in the settled districts, which do the most damage, they are so cunning that it is almost impossible to catch them. I have known as much as £20 to be put on the scalp of a particular dingo, and I have known whole parties to go out on Sundays in the hope of catching one particular dog, and they have taken months to get him. That shows what a curse they are in some districts, and more particularly where valuable sheep are run. It is the wish of the Opposition that we should join forces with the Minister and do what is best in the interests of those industries which are being affected by that class of dog.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): It is not so very long ago that the Government introduced the Dingo and Marsupial Destruction Bill, which was a Bill of the Government's own making, and the then Secretary for Agriculture, when explaining the Bill on its second reading, made one great point—that it would make possible uniform payments throughout the whole of the State—that it would compel every board in the State to pay the same minimum amount for foxes and dingoes. It was claimed then that £1 should be paid for scalps, and that all parts of the State should pay the same amount. That was the conclusion arrived at by the then Secretary for Agriculture after many conferences and much advice. I do not desire to say anything to discourage the Minister in the introduction of this Bill, but we seem to be getting back to the old state of affairs, and I hope the hon. gentleman will give full consideration to that question, and I trust that, because foxes killed over the border are a menace to the boards on the border, he is not going to remedy the fault by breaking down an Act which was claimed to be the only means of effectively dealing with the dingo pest and fox pest throughout the State. If he does that, he will only be creating trouble somewhere else. It is proposed under this Bill to reduce the minimum amount paid for scalps because it is impossible to pay £1 for foxes on the border. If you reduce the amount of the bonus in a district like the Burnett, where we kill thousands of dingoes a year, you are not going to have dingoes destroyed. If we have to increase the minimum, or were permitted to do so, we offer over £1 a head and the boards round about are only paying 10s., the trappers in those areas will take advantage of the higher amount paid by the Burnett Board, and then we shall be in the same position that we were in previous to the introduction of the 1918 Act. There will be no likelihood of dingoes or foxes killed in New South Wales being

brought to the Burnett Board, but we shall have men from the districts of boards adjacent to the Burnett, who do not want clean areas and who will not destroy the dingoes unless they are compelled to do so, coming into the Burnett area and claiming the higher bonus paid in that district.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I have already told the House that, whatever bonus is fixed by regulation, it will be uniform throughout the State.

Mr. CORSER: An amount that will be sufficient for foxes on the border will not be sufficient for the shooters in the Burnett, and will not induce trappers to keep down the dogs in our district.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am not proposing to reduce the bonus for dingoes at the present time—only the bonus for foxes.

Mr. CORSER: The Bill applies to both, and that is where the trouble is. Unless you have something definite, you will always have some of the boards endeavouring to evade their obligations. That is what I complain about. We want to kill the dingo. It is interesting to note that some sheepmen say the cattle people do not hold the dingo to be a menace at all. The dingo in a cattle district is a menace, and young calves and breeders in a cattle district will be attacked by dogs in droves and killed in tens and twenties. Night after night the dogs will attack and actually kill calves, and will sneak on calves running with the mothers.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The cattlemen in Queensland have not been able to agree on that point.

Mr. CORSER: They agree on it in a cattle district. But from what we have heard, in a sheep district where there are also cattle runs, the dingo apparently likes the sheep better than he does cattle. Dingoes are a menace, and we desire to get rid of them; but it is to be hoped that, in trying to remedy the faults on the border, we are not going to make it impossible to protect ourselves against the dingoes that we have in the Burnett district.

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

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

DISEASES IN POULTRY BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): This Bill is on the lines of the Diseases in Stock Act, and in fact, is taken almost word for word from that Act. I might mention that similar legislation is already on the statute-books of Western Australia, Victoria, and South Australia. Briefly, the object of the Bill is to protect the breeders of poultry on the one hand, and the general public, from a health point of view, on the other hand. Mr. Beard, the Poultry Expert of the Department of Agriculture, has complained to me several times during the last year of diseased poultry being offered for sale. We found we had no power to deal with the matter, and it was only because of the reasonable attitude taken up by the vendors of poultry that we were able to have destroyed the diseased poultry that was offered for sale. The sale of diseased poultry is not only a danger to the industry itself but also a danger to public health. If diseased poultry was allowed to be sold and the general public came to know about it, then the industry would suffer badly. The value of poultry and eggs produced in Queensland last year was £449,827, so that the industry is one of some importance. In order to foster the industry and protect those engaged in it, and to prevent the spread of contagious diseases, it is proposed to place this measure on the statute-book. It is not proposed immediately to apply the Bill to the whole of the State. Districts will be proclaimed from time to time, and honorary inspectors may be appointed. Owners will be compelled to give notice of disease, and, generally, steps will be taken to deal with diseases which now affect poultry in Queensland.

Several hon. members conversing in loud tones,

The SPEAKER: Order! I would ask hon. members to converse in low tones, as, at times, it is difficult to hear what the Minister is saying.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: This is a Committee Bill. It is not a Bill that the House need take a great deal of time over. It is non-contentious, and, in Committee, I will explain the various clauses and will be glad to accept any amendment that will improve the Bill. I beg to move—

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

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I certainly do not think that there is any necessity for this Bill to be made a party question. I quite believe that there is scope for such a Bill. We shall be able in Committee to deal with the carriage and transport of poultry on our railways. The crates supplied by the Railway Department will probably be provided for in the schedule to the Bill.

[5 p.m.] The crates supplied by the Railway Department when people are sending their poultry to market should be subjected to some method of disinfection after they have been used. They often get into a very offensive and dirty state, and anything of that kind tends to induce diseases in poultry. When we get into Committee we shall be able to offer some amendments, because I take it that we are out, as far as possible, to eliminate diseases of all kinds in poultry which are used for consumption. We ought to try to improve he breed of poultry, and see that they are kept as free from disease as possible. I am pleased to see the Bill brought forward, because I believe it will do good.

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

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

PEST DESTROYERS BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): This is a measure to regulate the sale of insecticides, fungicides, vermin destroyers, and weed destroyers. The Bill is brought in for reasons similar to those for which the Stock Foods Act, the Fertilisers Act, and the Pure Seeds Act were brought in—that is, to protect the farmers of Queensland. The Council of

Agriculture have been urging for some time that some guarantee should be given as to the value of the articles sold with regard to sprays used in connection with citrus orchards. The matter has been considered by the Council of Agriculture, and this Bill is now placed before Parliament. I might mention also that last year at the Agricultural Conference in Perth, which I had the honour to attend as a representative of Queensland, a unanimous decision was come to in favour of uniform legislation on the lines adopted in this Bill.

Mr. MORGAN: Must the vendors give a certificate showing the contents?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. A similar measure is on the statute-books of Victoria and South Australia, and I believe in almost every State of America similar Acts are to be found, particularly with regard to the much-dreaded Mexican boll-weevil pest—which, I am sorry to say, is present in the Northern Territory. Various nostrums have been placed on the market, and I believe we may have a lot of discussion in connection with that, and with the introduction of legislation to protect the farmer against stuff being sold which is practically of no value. Mr. Brünnich, Agricultural Chemist, has called my attention to some of the stuff being sold to farmers for the destruction of cane beetles at £4 per ton, which, when analysed on one occasion by Mr. Brünnich, was found to be worth about 10s. per ton. It is quite evident that a measure of this kind is necessary to protect the farmer when buying insecticides, fungicides, and vermin and weed destroyers. There are at the present time quite a lot of articles on the market for the eradication and destruction of the prickly-pear pest. Under this measure, when passed, vendors will be called upon to make an application with respect to registration.

Mr. MORGAN: Will this apply to the State arsenic?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I suppose it will apply to State arsenic. It will apply to everything which comes within the definition clause. Every merchant, wholesale or retail, will have to make an application for registration, and samples will be taken and analysed. Statutory declarations will have to be furnished with regard to the contents of samples, and certain particulars will have to be supplied by everyone desiring to be registered and to sell those articles after the passing of the measure. Labels and invoices will be prescribed, and the responsibility of wholesale dealers is also dealt with. Inspectors will have power to enter premises at reasonable times and take samples. I do not think there is any occasion to make a long speech on a Bill of this kind, because the necessity for it is obvious, especially to those who desire to see the farmers protected against people who endeavour from day to day to take them down by charging very high prices for articles that are worth very small sums. I have much pleasure in moving—

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

Mr. KING: Will the measure bind the Crown?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not suppose it will bind the Crown. Acts of Parliament do not usually bind the Crown.

Mr. KING: I know they do not; but I was wondering whether it would apply to State enterprises.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): This is a Bill which, by and large, we can all support, although in some directions it is somewhat drastic. In connection with the preparation of some of the compounds or mixtures sold in this direction, the Bill specifically states that the whole of the constituent parts are to be specified by name, not only in the declaration which is made to the department, but also on the labels, and just exactly how far that is going to prove a benefit or otherwise it is hard to say. There is no doubt that, in making some of these insecticides and fungicides, a considerable amount of money is spent by reputable firms, who employ analytical chemists to get the best results with regard to the goods which they put on the market. I quite recognise that the Bill is out to prevent the sale of specifics by men who are unprincipled, and who do not care what they sell so long as they make money out of it; that is, I take it, the whole object of the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Hear, hear!

Mr. TAYLOR: While that may be the real object of the Bill, we should not penalise firms or individuals who are putting a good article on the market. Just how far we should compel them to disclose on the label the secrets of the composition of the article, which may have cost them a lot of money to produce, it is difficult to say. However, when we get into Committee we may be able to offer some amendments, which I hope the Minister will be prepared to accept. I am pleased to note that some of these recommendations are coming from the Council of Agriculture. I certainly think that the men composing that Council are competent to advise the farmers as to their needs and requirements, and if, by the passage of this Bill, we are able to prevent the sale of certain unsuitable goods at high prices, good will be done.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I am glad to see that the Government desire to protect the interests of the primary producers throughout the State who wish to use insecticides, sprays, or pest destroyers generally; but, at the same time, there is another side to the question. We must not discourage people coming along to help us with their knowledge and qualifications, and, if we are going to compel them to divulge the formulae of their remedies, it may not always be to our advantage. I understand that under this measure the formula of Roberts's improved poison may have to be exposed.

Mr. MORGAN: It is known now.

Mr. CORSER: That may be so, or it may not be so, in such cases. The point is that we shall have that state of affairs in respect of every formula in the future. We do not want to eliminate the possibility of the producers taking full advantage of the brains which certain persons may have been using for years to the advantage of the men on the land, and I am sure that none of us desires that anything unfair should be done. I notice that, under clause 11, provision is made for analyses of poisons. I remember that not so long ago I had occasion to have some arsenic analysed, and I was very nearly put in gaol for it. I was submitted

to police examination, and the sample was seized and brought to Brisbane—after being sealed by a constable—and opened in front of Ministers of the Crown, the Commissioner of Police, and the Press.

Mr. KIRWAN: If they could analyse the arsenic, they could not analyse your speech.

Mr. CORSER: You cannot analyse if you have not the ingredients necessary, and the hon. member may not have them. (Laughter.) At any rate, the chemist was able to give us the arsenical content of my sample, and it turned out to be only 17 per cent.—the rest of it was something else—and, when the Government came to analyse their sample, it went only about 14 per cent. of arsenic, and that was sold to the farmers. A Bill of this kind is essential to protect the farmers against that sort of thing, but apparently the Government are not going to allow their own State arsenic to come under the provisions of the Bill. That is the unfortunate part of it. There we had an illustration of where I, as a representative of the country people who were supposed to be buying arsenic of 90 per cent. purity, and were getting only arsenic of 13 per cent. purity, was supposed to be a criminal for bringing it down to Brisbane. The Minister himself said: "What do you think of a member who would bring a stone from Mount Perry to be analysed as State arsenic?" whereas the Government's own analysis, after all sorts of safeguards, turned out to be less than the one I gave. Nevertheless, I was to be branded as a criminal for defending the interests which this Bill is out to defend.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: You should be pleased at the result.

Mr. CORSER: I do not want to claim the credit for it. I only hope that the Government will allow their own productions to be sold to the farmers under the protection which this Bill provides.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): As a member representing a constituency interested in agricultural pursuits, I welcome this Bill. I recognise that it is necessary that the farmer should be protected. I know a case in which certain material was bought for the purpose of destroying a pest on a certain crop, but the result was that the whole of the crop itself was destroyed. Many farmers see something in the Press, and in good faith send along for some, but on using it they find that it is of little or no use, and the whole of the crop is destroyed. The fact that some person, out to make money, imposes on the farmers in that way may mean an enormous sum to them, and I am glad to know that the Minister proposes to apply to the so-called pest destroyers provisions of the law which will prevent the sale of articles which are unsuitable for the work they are supposed to perform. I would however, like to know whether the Minister intended to convey to the House that any poison which the Government themselves may manufacture will not be subject to this Bill. If so, I think that is absolutely wrong. A Prickly-pear Commission is taking evidence at present, and it may recommend that the Government should manufacture poison ready for use, instead of supplying arsenic in the way they do, which is wasteful and silly, and out of date. Are the Government then to be placed in a position different from that of people with whom they may come into competition? I think even the Minister will admit that that will be a wrong thing to do. The Government should stand or fall, as the case may be, on their merits; they have no right to be treated differently from anybody else who is manufacturing something of the same kind. If the manufacturers of pear poisons are compelled to certify to the contents—I quite admit that the Government should have a complete record of the composition of these things—the Government should not be treated differently if they are going to engage in the same business. Are the State butcher shops, which compete with the ordinary private shops, subject to prosecution if rats are discovered on their premises?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes.

Mr. MORGAN: I am pleased to know that. If the Government are placed in the same position with regard to their State enterprises as those engaged in private enterprise, then the Government should be placed in the same position with regard to State manufactures as those engaged in manufacture in private enterprise. I hope the Minister will accept an amendment whereby the Government will be placed on the same footing as those with whom they compete in the manufacture of pest destroyers. I think it is a good measure, and it will protect the farmers in a direction in which they are unable to protect themselves.

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

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

TRUST ACCOUNTS BILL.

SECOND READING.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): This Bill provides for the proper regulation and management of trust accounts. Trust moneys will be paid into special or general trust accounts, and these accounts must be periodically audited. The principle involved in the Bill is not new so far as paying trust money into special accounts is concerned. The principle is already embodied in the Farm Produce Agents Act of 1917, and the Auctioneers and Commission Agents Act of 1922. At present there is no official control over trustees in the keeping of their accounts except that secured by the Supreme Court in connection with administrators and executors. That, so far as experience has shown, is hardly sufficient to meet the case. Solicitors and others who now receive trust moneys can put them into their own private accounts, and that money then becomes liable for the debts of those persons. We have ample evidence in Queensland to show that the Bill is absolutely necessary. Trust moneys amounting to tens of thousands of pounds have been embezzled, and scores of people have been ruined for the want of some supervision over trust accounts. During the last four years two solicitors have defaulted to the extent of £14,000 and £20,000 respectively.

Mr. MORGAN: Only two solicitors?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I am merely instancing those cases. That might have been avoided if some provision such as is now proposed had been in operation.

I will give some examples to show the need for the measure. In one case the solicitor was trustee for a widow and infants, and he disposed of some property and

claimed his usual commission through the Supreme Court. He was not satisfied with that, but dabbled into the funds up to the amount of £14,000, and he practically ruined the people concerned. He was later on discovered, and he left the State and the police are still looking for him. In the second case the solicitor had a very thriving practice, and was a man whom everybody respected and trusted. He got into the habit of taking from small farmers sums ranging from £200 to £800 for investment. This money was obtained because of the high rate of interest that he was paying. He paid that rate of interest very promptly, but, unfortunately, he paid it out of the capital. He eventually was discovered, convicted, and imprisoned. In one of these cases a family at Dalby lost £6,000, and lost their whole life savings through the embezzlement of that solicitor. Probably the hon. member for Dalby will remember that case.

Mr. VOWLES: It was not a solicitor in that case.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I am informed that the man was a solicitor.

Mr. VOWLES: No; he was a conveyancer.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: In the case to which the hon. member for Dalby refers, the person in question was a conveyancer. He, unfortunately, got away with £20,000. He induced quite a number of small investors to invest their money through him at a very high rate of interest, and, like the solicitor in the other case, this man paid the interest from the capital and the whole money was lost. I can assure hon. members that there are a large number of other instances that have not come under public notice for many apparent reasons.

Mr. MORGAN: This Bill will not prevent that.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: If this Bill had been in force before the instances I have set out occurred, those embezzlements might not have taken place. Perhaps the audit of the accounts might have debarred those people from doing something disastrous alike to themselves and their clients. At all events, with a Bill like this, under which there will be periodical audits, such men cannot go as far as they have been able to go in the past. The Bill will be welcomed by every honest man concerned, because we are only asking the honest man to do that which he is doing already, or that which he should be doing. He is going to be asked to place trust moneys in a special or general trust account, and not in his private account. The Bill is a short measure. It clearly defines a trustee as—

> "Any barrister, solicitor, legal practitioner, conveyancer, public accountant, auctioneer, commission agent, or farm produce agent."

The term includes an auctioneer and a commission agent licensed respectively under the Auctioneers and Commission Agents Act of 1922, and a farm produce agent licensed under the Farm Produce Agents Act of 1917.

[5.30 p.m.] The reason we have brought in the auctioneer and commission agent is that, although under the Auctioneers and Commission Agents Act we provide for the keeping of special and general trust accounts, we do not provide for audits. We propose to provide for audits under this Bill. There is another point, too. The Act, so far as commission agents are concerned, is not in operation in every part of the State, and, therefore, it is necessary to apply this Bill specially to those commission agents who have not yet been, and who may not be for some considerable time, brought under the provision of the Auctioneers and Commission Agents Act. The definition of "trustee" will also include every other person who may from time to time be brought under the provisions of the Bill by an Order in Council.

The Bill provides that trustees must bank trust moneys to a special or a general trust account. These moneys, the Bill further provides, will not be attachable for the debts of other creditors of these trustees. It provides that banks must disclose to the auditor, or auditors, appointed by the Government, full particulars of the trust accounts of trustees, otherwise it would be useless to go on with the audit. As hon. members know, no audit is of any avail unless the auditor has access to bank records. The regulations which may be made under the Act provide for a regular audit of trust accounts. Of course, the whole success of the Bill depends upon the proper and regular auditing of these accounts.

Mr. MORGAN: Who pays for that audit?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I will come to that directly. As I said before, these regulations will provide that bank managers must produce to an authorised auditor all trust accounts. I propose, when we go into Committee, to include a provision for a fidelity bond. The fidelity bond is a somewhat difficult matter I admit, because in some very large estates it may involve a considerable sum for a fidelity guarantee.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Have the fidelity bonds to be got solely from the State Insurance Department?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We will deal with the aspect of whether we shall confine them to the Insurance Commissioner or not in Committee. I am quite open to discuss the matter when we get to it, but I think it would not be an unfair thing to propose a fidelity bond not to exceed £5,000. I do not say that it should be that amount, but it might be fixed so that it can be increased or decreased according to the amount of the trust account.

Mr. MORGAN: Where auctioneers have already taken out a fidelity bond under their Act will it be compulsory under this Bill for them to take out another one?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Not for the purposes of the Auctioneers and Commission Agents Act, but they may have to take out another for this purpose. That matter, however, together with the amount of the bond, is a detail with which we can deal in Committee. We have also provided for the question raised by the hon. member for Murilla—the payment for the audits. Auditors must be paid, and it would be a reasonable thing to make a trustee pay for the audit unless he has some special agreement with the person whose trust fund he is controlling.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: What do you mean by special agreement with the person whose trust fund he is controlling? Can he make an agreement with the person for whom he is controlling the trust funds that there shall be no audit?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No. The Bill provides for an audit, and provision is

made for the payment for that audit. We provide for a special fee, which may be paid by the trustee or the person whose trust funds he is investing.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: You are going to pass it on, though.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Naturally. There will be a penalty of £100 for an infringement of the Act, and the right of civil remedy in action is fully protected. The principles of the Bill are not new. They are already in vogue in New Zealand. I am sure that hon. members will look upon the Bill as a reasonable attempt to prevent occurrences such as those I have referred to. Every honest man should do his best, and the Government are doing their best, to protect the public from heartless scoundrels, who, from time to time, are prepared to ruin families as has been done in the past. I do not think there is anything more that I can usefully add at this stage. In the Committee stage, if any question arises concerning the details of the Bill, I shall be very pleased to supply them. I have very much pleasure in moving—

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

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*): If the Minister can assure us that the provisions contained in this measure are going to prevent what we know to be an existing evil, that is the purloining of trust moneys, we welcome it. The unfortunate part of matters of this description is that these moneys are generally wrapped up in the livelihood of widows and children, and the results, as a rule, are very disastrous. The Minister has given us two illustrations as to why this Bill should be introduced, both of which apply to the legal profession. I hope the impression left by his speech is not that the legal profession are prone to shortcomings of this description.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Because I am sure, when you come to consider the large number of legal gentlemen practising, and the tremendous sums of money they handle, the number who do not meet their obligations is very small indeed. If the Minister had gone outside the legal profession, he would have been able to give just as many instances, if not more, of the disastrous results of the purloining or misuse of trust funds. I wonder whether the Bill can be construed to embrace the misuse of moneys by public officials, such as secretaries of unions and other such institutions, who have the control of moneys belonging to bodies of people. I am sure the Minister must admit that we have seen or heard of quite a number of instances lately where union officials and other officials have been guilty of similar offences to those he mentioned, and where large sums of money were involved. I should like to know, before the measure passes its second reading, whether this Bill cannot embrace possible offences of that description. The utility of the Bill might be very much improved by making it more embracing than was indicated in the speech of the Attorney-General. As I have said, his speech was practically confined to defalcations of solicitors. There are several points on which I desire information, but the Minister has forecast that they will be dealt with in Committee.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You must admit that solicitors, perhaps more than any other section of the community, deal with big trust moneys.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I do.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is why they were particularised.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: That confirms my remark that the rarity with which one hears of any one of them doing anything amiss is an indication that the members of this profession as a whole are not prone to offences of that nature. There are many instances outside the legal profession where moneys have been entrusted in trust where the defalcations have been very much greater. Therefore I suggest that, if the scope of this Bill can be enlarged to embrace such people, it should be. With regard to the question of insurance, the Minister will, I am afraid, experience some difficulty in putting this particular provision into operation. In my experience, where big trust moneys have been involved, it would have been difficult to have got the bonds which would be required under this Bill. We are extending the amount of the fidelity bond so considerably in the Bill that the Minister will find it impracticable to get the fidelity bonds to anything like the extent he has foreshadowed. It may be that the Insurance Commissioner, who is rather more accommodating in that regard than some of the insurance companies——

Mr. HARTLEY: Indeed, he is not.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Who look more carefully into their risks.

Mr. HARTLEY: As a matter of fact, in connection with the Auctioneers and Commission Agents Bill he was not nearly so accommodating.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: That has been my experience. I am sure that in certain directions there are evidences where it is easier to get accommodation from the Insurance Commissioner than from some of the outside companies. Of course, I admit that there are companies which have sprung into existence during the last few months who will probably take business on any basis whatsoever. I hope that, when the time comes, we shall be able to fortify the position and stop these mushroom growths that undertake trusts that are nearly as important as those made reference to in this Bill.

If the matter can be considered in a sufficiently broad sense, it will be welcomed. If it is circumscribed or hedged round with restrictions that will prevent it operating in a broad sense. I hope that the Minister will give the Opposition an opportunity to extend its usefulness.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I represent the auctioneer in the country districts who handles trust moneys in small sums. Is he to be compelled to give a fidelity bond of £5,000?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He will only have to pay £2 14s. per year

Mr. MORGAN: In some instances the Insurance Commissioner has refused to issue a fidelity bond, and the applicant has been compelled to go elsewhere——

Mr KIRWAN: He can't get a bond elsewhere under that Act. A man like that should not be allowed to start such a business.

Mr. MORGAN: Simply because he is a poor man.

Mr. KIRWAN: No; because his character is undesirable.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No man is refused because he is a poor man.

Mr. MORGAN: The Minister has stated that it might be necessary to have a fidelity bond to the extent of £5,000.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is only in connection with big estates.

Mr. MORGAN: Who is going to discriminate?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You must discriminate.

Mr. MORGAN: In respect to the auditing of accounts, many small country auctioneers may have a great number of dealings. A man may sell a horse for one individual and handle only £10; he will have to pay it into a trust account. He may have a number of even smaller accounts, and be compelled to pay them into a trust account. In that case the audit must take much longer owing to the many small items.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You are creating difficulties.

Mr. MORGAN: I am not. The Bill is like others introduced by this Government. It has been thought out only from the Queen-street point of view, and not from the point of view of the man in the country. The Government are going to penalise men in a small way and close many of them up, and at the same time they will create larger monopolies. I quite admit that people in a big way of business will welcome this, as they have welcomed many other measures the Government have brought in. The Government, during the time they have been in power, have created more monopolies and combines than any other Government.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear! (Government laughter.)

The SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. member address himself to the Bill before the House?

Mr. MORGAN: The other day we had a statement from the Secretary for Public Lands—the ex-Home Secretary—to the effect that, owing to certain privileges which have been given to dentists, they are now charging exorbitant prices, and that measures would have to be taken to protect the public. The same thing applies in many other cases. If we are going to have trust accounts, we should have some provision that the moneys shall exceed a certain amount. I quite admit that where large sums of money are handled it will give the public confidence, but we are going to put the same restrictions on the smaller man and put him to greater expense although he may have a turnover of only £500 a year. You are bringing in people who are provided for, and are going to double-bank those people. A great number of the small men will find it much harder to exist. This Bill wants watching very carefully, and it should be gone into clause by clause in Committee before being allowed to pass. We country members want to know what effect it is going to have on those in the country who are carrying on business in a small way and not handling thousands of pounds of trust money.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): I would not have risen but that the honour of the profession to which I have the honour to belong is involved. I would like to say that any legislation that is brought in for the purpose of preventing fraud and cheating should be supported.

The Attorney-General, in introducing the Bill, seemed to lay special stress on the fact that solicitors were largely involved in matters connected with the Bill. I do not suppose anybody has more opportunity of defrauding or cheating than a solicitor has if he is built that way; but I am thankful to say that, so far as Queensland is concerned, experience proves that, taking the legal profession a'l round, we have as straight, honourable, and honest a body of men as can be found in any part of the world. (Hear, hear!) The occasions on which solicitors have gone wrong have been few and far between.

Mr. PEASE: The same can be said of union secretaries.

Mr. KING: I am not saying a word against union secretaries. I am responsible for the remarks I make myself, and I hope I shall not be held responsible for remarks made by other persons. "Barrister" is included in the Bill under the interpretation of "trustee." How a barrister can come into the Bill I do not understand. I do not suppose there is a man engaged in any profession who handles less trust money than a barrister.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Are you aware that some barristers are acting as solicitors?

Mr. KING: They are legal practitioners; they are not barristers. I only recognise as barristers those who are practising as barristers. Barristers who are practising as solicitors should be struck off the roll of barristers and admitted as solicitors.

Mr. FERRICKS: Are they not entitled to become members of the barristers' union?

Mr. KING: I do not know of any barristers' union—(Government laughter)—and I do not know of any solicitors' union. but I do know of a Solicitors' Board and of a Barristers' Board that do their very utmost to keep their professions pure and unsullied; and nobody is more concerned about the honour of the professions than the barristers and solicitors who compose those boards. I quite understand, with the hon. member for Murilla, that this Bill may work a hardship in connection with a small man. Everybody must recognise that any person who holds money for another is trustee for that person to that extent.

Mr. MORGAN: If it is only 5s.

Mr. KING: If it is only 6d., he is trustee for that person.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You must give us credit for common sense in administration.

Mr. KING: It is quite possible to bring the treasurer of every football club and every cricket club under the operations of this Bill, and it is quite possible, as has been said already, that the fidelity bond will come very hard on the poor man. We all know that a man who has an unsullied reputation will not have the slightest difficulty in getting a fidelity bond, but it is a very different thing when the insured has to find the premium to pay. I do not wish to speak at any length. I rose particularly to defend the profession to which I have the honour to belong, and I say unhesitatingly that the legal profession in Queensland, both solicitors and barristers, compares most favourably with any body of professional men in Australia or in the world.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): Like the last speaker, I belong to the profession referred to this afternoon, and it is in defence of that profession that I propose to make a few remarks.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No attack has been made on the profession.

Mr. VOWLES: No; but instances were given, and the hon. gentleman should have gone to other classes of persons. If he had only looked at to-day's "Standard," he would find on page 6 that a politician has been charged with stealing Australian Workers' Union tickets.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Politicians are not included.

Mr. VOWLES: There is power under the Bill to include any other person that the Governor in Council thinks fit. No profession should be held up as the only profession with black sheep in it. There may be black sheep in any profession—even among union secretaries—but because of that fact you should not judge them as being all alike. We are asked once more to pay fees to support a certain Government institution. We are going to compel those who, in their business, are compelled to handle other people's money, to disgorge certain fees for the purpose of building up a certain insurance company.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: What other method would you suggest for overcoming the difficulty in connection with trust funds?

Mr. VOWLES: I know the history of some of the cases referred to to-day, and I know that the man—particularly the professional man—who sets out to commit fraud will do it in such a way that the method proposed by the hon. gentleman will not be much of an indemnity. The lady in the case referred to in Dalby asked for security, which was handed to her in the form of a deed, and which she was told was worth about £5,000, but, when she went to examine her security, she found it to be worth about £5. How would the Bill prevent a fraud of that kind? In that case there was security on the documents. If you are going to compel all men who, for the purpose of their business, are compelled to handle trust moneys, to pay these premiums, you are going to create a combine so far as a certain class of business is concerned. You are going to put the small man out in the interests of big institutions. Take the country districts. Men in a small way who handle stock in competition with big firms in the city are to be asked to pay these premiums for one little business, and they are to be put on practically the same basis as those firms whose business extends probably over the whole of Australia, and certainly over the whole of Queensland. Is that putting them in a fair position? To the man who is out to work a quick and speedy fraud by getting in a large sum of money by persuasion, the auditing of his books is not going to do very much, as his fidelity bond of £500 will be no good when, possibly, he will collect as many thousands.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Many of the cases I referred to would never have taken place if the books had been subject to audit.

Mr. VOWLES: In such cases the insurance companies would suffer, and people who were victimised in the past would get something out of the wreck which they did not get previously, and, whenever there are shortages, these companies will insist on prosecutions, which, in the past, have been allowed to go by the board. The Bill is an innovation; it is hitting the small man in business by compelling him to pay fees for something which is already carried out. If you examine the books of reputable solicitors, conveyancers, commission agents, and other persons referred to under the definition of "Trustee," you will find that they keep accounts with proper books, and that their clients have the privilege of inspecting them, and there is no necessity for an audit. It is quite sufficient to compel a person to keep these books, and let him be under a penalty of £100 if he does not carry out the provisions of the Act; but to allow an auditor to mess about his books and get an insight into private business which, in many cases, should not be disclosed, is not the correct thing. Why should a solicitor or the other persons mentioned in the definition of "trustee" be compelled to pay a fee and be subject to interference with his private business? That is not playing the game. The class of business we have to deal with is of a very private nature in many cases, and clients do not want other people prying into it. The Bill itself is introduced to prevent fraud and should have our support. We are prepared to accept the principle of the Bill, but we object to the details, and, when we get into Committee, the Minister will be wise if he will take into consideration some of the matters to which I have referred. I see that the Bill gives the Governor in Council power to make regulations. These regulations may be sufficient to cover what I have referred to, but in these matters I like to see in black and white just what your liabilities are.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): I think no one can take any exception to a Bill which has for its object the prevention of fraud. No member of the House, on which-
[7 p.m.] ever side he sits, has a right to advocate anything which goes in the direction of protecting dishonest men. After all, I take it that Parliament should set an example in that particular regard, both as individuals and as members seeking to legislate for the good of the State. We have all felt the same when we have read of widows and children being robbed of what they believed was their permanent income through the action of some dishonest person. Some exception was taken to the fact that some men who had done dishonest things were solicitors. I am quite sure that it was never in the mind of anyone in discussing the Bill to single out any particular individual or any class of persons as being dishonest. Unfortunately, you will find black sheep in every walk of life. The hon. member for Logan and the hon. member for Dalby were quite right when they said that solicitors, as a whole, are gentlemen who carry out their duties in a way which is entirely satisfactory to those who have to do with them. We know that they are very jealous of the honour of their profession. I think, therefore, that hon. members representing that particular profession who spoke to-night entirely misunderstood the feeling of the House in that regard. There is no one, I am sure, who would single out any individual, and say that, because he belongs to some particular profession, he is more likely to be dishonest than anybody else. The fact remains that the experience of the past, not only in Queensland but elsewhere, has gone in the direction of saying that there have been dishonest transactions, and there are dishonest transactions to-day. The Min-

ister is seeking to get over these things by bringing in this Bill. I gathered by the silence of the Minister—I do not wish to misquote him—that in connection with the matter of the guarantee the parties will probably have to go to the State Insurance Department, which would have a monopoly of the business. The Minister did not say so definitely, but he was silent when challenged by myself on that subject. I hope that such will not be the case, and that the State Insurance Department will be placed exactly on the same footing as other insurance companies.

I see very great difficulty in carrying out the measure in some directions.

I understood the hon. member for Murilla to have an idea that this measure probably might seriously hit the small man, whilst the man who is in a bigger way of business will not be affected. I think that it will affect both the small man and the man who is in a bigger way of business, and I shall proceed to show why I think so. I am sorry that the Minister in Charge of State Enterprises is not in his place, because I propose to use the State Produce Agency as an illustration—not in any antagonistic spirit. The Produce Agency receives consignments, and I presume will come under this Bill the same as any other agency; and I stand on my feet here and say from my experience in my own business that, if the State Produce Agency had to wait till the purchaser paid for those goods, it would never be able to carry on and pay promptly. It will be found that the general account of such a business feeds the trust account. Hon. members may ask why. Anybody who has to do with the agency business knows that that is a fact, and that perhaps one's best customers are not always people to whom you can say, "Look here, you must pay up." As a matter of fact, they get extended credit, and, if the accounts had to be balanced separately, the trust payments against the trust receipts, the trust account would be in debit hundreds of pounds, so that the general account always feeds the trust account. I am sure that that is the experience of the State Produce Agency, and I ask the Minister to make inquiries from Mr. Parker—a very excellent gentleman—whether my statements are not correct, and whether the goods sold to purchasers have not to go out very much more quickly than the money comes in: so that the effect of the Bill in that particular regard will be exceedingly difficult. You will need to have a man on the floor all the time. I know of cases where the entries have reached 600, 700, or 800 in a day, ranging, perhaps, from 1s. 6d. to pounds in size. Think of all the entries that that entails, and the consequent cost. In a previous Bill the Minister included auctioneers, who had to get cover from the State Insurance Office for their protection. Now, there are many cases where the auctioneer never handles a brass farthing. He keeps his book; everything is entered up as he sells; his book goes into the office; the account is made up, and the purchaser pays the money and gets his receipt. I am not arguing that there are not dishonest trustees, but I am trying to show the serious difficulty of framing any law which will cover every business without doing grave injustice to somebody.

I take it that the Minister does not want to lay further heavy burdens upon the community.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There is no intention to harass anyone in any way.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: I hope that the Minister, judging from my remarks, will realise that I am not speaking in a captious way. The position in many businesses to-day is that there is extreme difficulty in keeping them going because of the quietness in trade that exists in the city of Brisbane. Probably that applies all round. What happens on account of the different legislation that is introduced and the extra expense that is imposed? Further and further efforts are made to cut down expenses, and more people are thrown on the unemployed market. No hon. member, no matter on what side of the House he may be, should seek to do anything to add to the unemployed, because, after all, unemployed men are not the best assets in any country. My conviction is that a man wants work and prefers to have it; and it is therefore my duty, in dealing with this Bill, to point out that some of the provisions are not going to work on the lines suggested by the Minister. Let me repeat that, where there is a dishonest man whom you can get at, it is the duty of the Government to get at him. I am not here to shelter any man who robs widows and orphans or anybody else under any guise or any other name. When we are legislating we must be careful that we do not do anything that is going to act as a boomerang and hurt other people who have no right to be hurt.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I desire to discuss this Bill and to follow largely on the lines of the hon. member for Wynnum. I can speak somewhat differently from the hon. member, because my firm is not a firm of commission agents, and has not carried on as such for a great many years. We handle no goods of any kind on behalf of anyone but ourselves. We buy our goods straight-out, and sell them for the best price we can get. Still, I know that what the hon. member for Wynnum says is quite true. I do not think I am overstating the case when I say that 75 per cent. of the business in farm produce is carried on on a credit basis of from thirty, forty, fifty, to sixty days. When a man buys produce the first week in February, as a rule it is not paid for until the last week in March. In every case the commission agents have to return their account sales and cheques for those goods promptly. If they do not, the goods simply go to some other firm, and hence, as the hon. member for Wynnum pointed out, the trust accounts of those firms have to be fed from the general accounts in order that payments may be made for the whole of those goods. I am not indulging in any fiction. I am speaking of what I know is the actual practice in businesses so far as commission agents are concerned.

Let me now deal with the question of auditing—I am speaking now with regard to fruit and vegetables. If the Minister will go into the matter of the consignments received by the State Produce Agency, he will find that many consignments range in value from 1s. 6d. to £1, and perhaps to £5 or £10. A man brings in ten cases of tomatoes. Perhaps they are sold to ten different individuals, and may be sold at ten different prices. It would be quite impossible to carry out the provisions of this measure unless the money is paid by the buyer as soon as he purchases the goods, and that is impracticable. How many persons carry on on an absolutely cash basis? One man might do

it, and make a success of it, just the same as in Brisbane to-day there are some firms who carry on on an absolutely strictly cash basis. If every firm in Brisbane to-morrow tried to carry on on an absolutely cash basis, half of them would have to shut up. It is the credit system by which the business is carried on and by which it is maintained, and by which the primary producer gets the full value of his goods. If cash means anything at all, in so far as farm produce is concerned, it means that the man who has the cash will pay cash and buy cheaply; but the system of credit given to men of repute—honest and decent traders—allows a man who has not a great deal of capital to carry on his business successfully, though probably he may have to pay a little more than the man who is able to put up the cash for what he purchases. I do think that farm and produce agents should be exempt from the operations of this Bill. That is not a matter which affects me personally, as I am not an agent, but I know just exactly the way the business is conducted and carried on.

With regard to the other persons mentioned in the Bill, there are persons engaged in handling hundreds of thousands of pounds as trustees, and I do think every precaution should be taken against those people who attempt dishonest practices. I believe with the Minister that, if a man lays himself out to indulge in these dishonest practices and he uses money which does not legitimately belong to him, though he may to a certain extent succeed, this Bill may prevent it. We know—and the Minister does not expect it—that this Bill will not entirely eliminate the misuse of trust moneys, but it will go a long way towards eliminating it, and making trust funds reasonably safe when they are placed in certain individuals' hands.

I do not see how it is possible, under the enlarged definition of "trustee," to have an audit of certain trust accounts for any given period. As the hon. member for Wynnum said, it means not an audit for one specified period but for one continuous period. It is thus going to add to the expense and cost the producer has to pay for the sale of his goods. It is quite impossible for him on a given day to dissect and trace the sales.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We are only dealing under the Bill with big transactions, and not the small accounts of commission agents.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Bill contemplates bringing certain individuals under its scope.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We will never adopt such harassing methods, I can assure you. I realise the danger of doing so.

Mr. TAYLOR: It is certainly permissible under the Bill we are discussing here to-night. Everyone on this side and in this Chamber desires to protect those people who have money in trust; but to apply the Bill in the manner that has been indicated would cause a tremendous amount of hardship and trouble, and, not only that, but additional charges incurred under this particular measure would add to the charges to be paid by the primary producer. It does not worry the State or private individual. There are certain costs incurred in the sale of goods, and but for the system of credit the whole fabric would crumble to pieces. It is a system of credit, as the Government and everyone in business know, that enables us to carry on. I do not think the Minister can say he has had many complaints with regard to the men engaged in this particular industry, even when you come to consider the hundreds of thousands of pounds involved. I do not know of any for quite a number of years who have defaulted in any shape or form. There is sufficient protection against that in the provision for a trust account, and, as the hon. member for Wynnum has pointed out, the trust account has to be maintained generally from the general account of any firm. I do not think there is a single firm operating in general produce to-day that has not had that experience, although they have to make prompt payments to the producer. That has not been brought into being by this Bill, because it was in operation long before this Bill was brought in. Prompt payments have to be made by merchants, otherwise they know they would not receive goods for sale. They are competing for the business of the primary producer, and they have to endeavour to render as prompt and satisfactory a return as possible at all times. I would like to see those particular matters eliminated from the Bill.

Mr. KELSO (*Yundah*): Whatever good intentions there are on the part of the Government in bringing in this Bill, it seems to me that they are attempting the impossible. I propose to confine my remarks principally to the accountancy point of view, because I know that this Bill will add tremendous expense to the community. I take it that the expense of the audit is to be paid by the trustees, and, of course, that expense is to be passed on to the client. As one who knows a little about the accountancy profession, I say that every professional accountant starts out with the theory that you cannot audit things that are not there. The principle of the Bill is that all trust accounts must be audited, and, if you are going to do this, you must do it properly. It is no good saying, as the Attorney-General has said, that only large accounts will be dealt with.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I was only dealing with produce agents' businesses.

Mr. KELSO: The Attorney-General must consider that the greatest hardship will be with the large accounts.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Surely you don't think there will be any difficulty in dealing with accounts where large amounts are involved?

Mr. KELSO: I will give a case in point. I believe that 95 per cent. of the people of the world dealing with trust accounts are honest—probably because it pays to be honest. Their honour is at stake; if they commit a mistake they are done in business. The 5 per cent. who might be dishonest lay themselves out—they are generally smart fellows—to evade detection, and the money which should go into the trust account will never go into the trust account; and, when the auditor comes to audit, he can only audit what he finds in the trust account. I will defy the Minister, under this Bill, to give absolute protection to the public by way of an audit.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: If we can't give absolute protection, I think we will give some protection.

Mr. KELSO: I will merely go so far as to say that it will be nearly useless, because the class of man who is going to commit a breach of trust will hide his tracks.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: If your argument were carried to its logical conclusion, we would have no audits at all.

Mr. KELSO: I do not say that. Up to a certain point the audit is all right; but, when it comes to a trust account, the individuals concerned are acting by themselves with no check. In large public companies you find the employees checking one another.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: When a man knows that he is liable to a heavy penalty if he does not open a trust account, that surely will be some deterrent.

Mr. KELSO: Up to that point the Bill is good.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is the foundation of the Bill.

Mr. KELSO: The principle of opening a trust account for trust moneys is a good one, and in practice it is very largely followed. I am criticising the very elaborate precautions that are taken in regard to audits, and the hon. gentleman knows perfectly well that, if an auditor does his duty properly when auditing accounts, he has to start at the beginning and go right through; and, when it comes to a large business, as some hon. members have said, it will nearly mean that you would have to have a staff of accountants in the place from day to day to keep a check.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It is the number of transactions more than the amount of money.

Mr. KELSO: If you are going to do it at all, you will have to do it properly. If you are going to make a farce of the thing, you are only adding extra expense to the public for something which is of no actual benefit. I am afraid the Minister will find it is impossible. It certainly will be a very profitable thing for the accountant, and from a personal point of view I should not condemn it. However, I am speaking for the sake of the public, and I say there will be a tremendous expense in appointing auditors to check these accounts. The Bill also provides for the auditor having authority to go through the accounts at the bank. In order to arrive at the state of the trust account, he must go to the bank, and he must go through the whole of the trust accounts. He cannot take the books away with him. He takes copious notes, and then goes to the business he has to audit, and there he has to go through all the figures dissected from the bank account and check them with the trust accounts, whether it happens to be a solicitor, auctioneer, or anyone else. Personally, I think the Minister should reconsider this matter in so far as the elaborate precautions for audit are concerned. So far as trust accounts are concerned, the Bill is a very good measure.

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

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

WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): This is the fifth occasion on which a Workers' Compensation Bill has been introduced since this Government came into power. In 1915, the 1905-9 Act was repealed, and an up-to-date Act was placed on the statute-book, providing for an increase of compensation from £400 to £600 in the case of death, and from £400 to £750 in the case of total disablement. In 1916 we went further, and provided for payment of compensation for industrial diseases, such as miners' phthisis. In 1918 a further Bill was introduced, providing for lump sum payments for the victims of accidents, and we wiped out the limitation imposed in regard to miners' phthisis by the Legislative Council in the 1916 Act. In 1921 a further stage of progress was reached in the development of workers' compensation benefits by including within the scope of the Act farmers, gougers, prospectors, ambulance and hospital employees; and a minimum payment of £2 was provided for married workers and a maximum payment of £3 10s. We also provided that those who were suffering from miners' phthisis, and who had had mining experience prior to 1916, should come within the scope of that measure. When the original Workers' Compensation Act was [7.30 p.m.] passed by this Government, calamity howlers predicted all sorts of disaster from the measure. They predicted that there would be increased rates, and that the scheme must fail; but for the first two years in which the Act operated rates were 10 per cent. lower than ever they were. They are to-day 5 per cent. lower than ever they were, in spite of the increased benefits, and notwithstanding that the effective rate of premium to-day in Queensland is 20 per cent. lower than in Victoria, and 10 per cent. lower than in New South Wales. Since this Government came into power and made State Workers' Compensation a monopoly, we have paid 60,000 claims, amounting to £1,225,000. Another remarkable thing is that, although before our Government took office the worker was only getting 6s. 8d. out of every £1 contributed in premiums, to-day the worker is getting 14s. 4½d. out of every £1 contributed. If we compare our Workers' Compensation Act with that of other States, we find that it costs the employers for every £1 paid to the worker as follows:—In Queensland £1 7s. 10d., in New South Wales £1 17s. 10d., in Victoria £2 4s. 1d., and in New Zealand £2 0s. 4d., showing how much superior our Act is in every way to those in other States.

Mr. CORSER: Do you propose to amend it?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Yes; good as it is, we hope to make it better. I want to remind the House that ours is the only Act in the world which provides payment for accidents which occur in going to and coming from employment. When people are maligning—as I heard some hon. members attempt to do recently in this House—the Workers' Compensation Act of Queensland, I hope they will take that fact into consideration. I hold in my hand a comparative schedule of the rates in every State, and I find that our measure is very superior to any other measure of its kind in any other State.

Mr. TAYLOR: Put that schedule into "Hansard."

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I shall be very pleased if the House will permit me to put it into "Hansard," because it will be very valuable to hon. members and save them a good deal of research work. (Hear,

hear!) With the consent of the House, I ask that this comparative statement of the benefits under the Workers' Compensation Acts of the Australian States and New Zealand be put in "Hansard."

The SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the hon. gentleman be allowed to put the statement into "Hansard"?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF BENEFITS UNDER WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACTS IN AUSTRALIAN STATES AND NEW ZEALAND.

State.	COMPENSATION BENEFITS. *Maximum Amount Payable.*				Waiting Time
	Maximum weekly compensation payable during temporary disablement.	Permanent Disablement.	Death.		
			Dependants.	No Dependants.	
		£	£		
Queensland ..	50 per cent. of average weekly earnings. Maximum £3 10s. (£2 per worker and 5s. for each child under 14.) Total compensation not to exceed 30s. per week in respect of children	750	600	Medical and funeral expenses not exceeding £50	*3 days
New South Wales	66⅔ of average weekly earnings. Maximum £3	750	500	Expenses for burial not exceeding £20	1 week
Victoria	50 per cent. of average weekly earnings. Maximum £1 10s.	500	500	Medical and burial expenses not exceeding £75	1 week
South Australia	50 per cent of average weekly earnings. Single man maximum £1 10s. 0d. Married man maximum £2	500	400	Medical and burial expenses not exceeding £20	1 week
West Australia..	50 per cent of average weekly earnings. Maximum £2 10s.	500	500	Medical and burial expenses not exceeding £100	3 days
Tasmania ..	50 per cent. of average weekly earnings. Maximum £2	500	400	Medical and burial expenses not exceeding £30 in event of estate being insufficient to meet same	3 days
New Zealand ..	55 per cent. of average weekly earnings. Maximum £3 15s.	750 Medical, surgical, and funeral expenses £50.	750 Medical, surgical, and funeral expenses £50.	Medical and burial expenses not exceeding £50	3 days

* If injured worker is incapacitated for more than three days, compensation is paid as from time of accident.

The only State in which a maximum of £100 is allowed for medical and funeral expenses where there are no dependants is Western Australia, but that State's maximum compensation on account of death when there are dependants is £500, and for total incapacity £500, as against this State's maximum compensation of £600 for death with dependency and £750 for total incapacity.

Then again employees in receipt of wages in excess of £400 per annum are excluded under the Western Australian and New Zealand Acts, whilst only those in excess of £520 per annum are excluded under the Queensland Act.

The Queensland Workers' Compensation Act provides for a maximum weekly payment of £3 10s., whereas the maximum under the Western Australian Act is £2 10s.

The SPEAKER: I would remind hon. members that it will not be in order to discuss the subject of workers' compensation generally, but only the particulars in which it is desired to amend the principal Act.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I have no intention, except for the purpose of making a few preliminary observations, to discuss the general Act. Although it is an excellent measure, and superior to any other of the kind, there is still room for amendment.

There are three amendments which we propose to make. The Bill is a very small one, but the amendments are very important to the men concerned. One amendment deals with workers engaged on ships trading within Queensland. To-day, if a man is working on a ship in Queensland, and the company which owns the vessel has its headquarters at Adelaide, he is excluded from the operations of the Workers' Compensation Act, for the reason that under our Act the office must be registered in Queensland. He does not come under the provisions of the Federal Seamen's Compensation Act, because the ship is not engaged in interstate trade. We propose to amend the definition dealing with Queensland ships so that the ship, wherever the headquarters of the company may be, whether in Queensland or elsewhere, will come under the operation of the Queensland law, and the worker engaged in Queensland on a ship which is confined to the trade of Queensland will be entitled in future to workers' compensation.

Mr. TAYLOR: What about international ships?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They will not be affected at all—only ships trading, say, between Townsville and Cairns.

Mr. TAYLOR: I mean by international ships, ships belonging perhaps to France or America.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Of course that is an extreme case.

Mr. TAYLOR: Great Britain, then.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There is no case of a ship with its headquarters in London trading between Townsville and Cairns. The mere matter of a ship coming from Melbourne, trading along the coast to Brisbane and going to Townsville, and so on, does not constitute State trading. The Bill will only apply to small coastal boats trading in Queensland waters.

Mr. TAYLOR: It only applies, then, to interstate shipping companies?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is so—interstate shipping companies whose ships are engaged in Queensland State trade only. As a matter of fact, there is a ship called the "Caroo," belonging to the Adelaide Steamship Company, the headquarters of which are in Adelaide. That boat is engaged in trading between Townsville and Northern ports. Of course, the worker on that boat is excluded from compensation, because under our definition of a ship the "Caroo" is not included, and she is not engaged in interstate trade and, therefore, is excluded from the operation of the Federal Seamen's Compensation Act. Under this simple amendment the difficulty will be overcome.

The second amendment deals with contractors—that is, contractors who are substantially workers. It has been found in administering the Act that, owing to the restrictions imposed in connection with contractors, a man who is substantially a worker, merely because he is a contractor and carrying on the business of a contractor, is excluded. I do not think it was the intention of the Legislature to do that. In the timber trade particularly we have had these difficulties; for instance, a man is engaged to supply timber to another man, and simply because he is supplying the timber the company take the point that he is not performing services for the company. He is substantially a worker working for the company, and under this Bill he will be entitled to compensation.

The last amendment deals with the miners' phthisis provisions of the Act, under which a man must have had a mining experience of 300 days in Queensland since 1st January, 1916, and have been three years in the State, or he must have been mining five years out of seven since 1916, and have worked 500 days. We have found by experience that very often, when you come to calculate the number of days worked, a man does not come under the provisions of the existing Act, because he has not worked the required number of days since 1916, although he may have been engaged in mining in Queensland for twenty years. By this measure, we propose to enable him to go back beyond 1916 to an earlier date to make up the required number of days. That is a very reasonable amendment, and it has been found necessary in the administration of the measure.

Those are the only three amendments involved in the Bill, and I am quite sure that the House will take them practically as formal, because they are absolutely necessary in the administration of the Act. I beg to move—

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

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

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

INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*): I desire to move the second reading of this Bill, the object of which is the extension of the operations of the principal Act in many directions in which it has been found necessary during the last six or seven years of administration they should extend. It can be readily understood that, since the Industrial Arbitration Act has been in operation, we have obtained abundant evidence from which we can be satisfied that the measure—although at its inception it met with much criticism from various sections in the community—has served a good purpose, has achieved much of what it was intended to effect, and has proved itself the best method of dealing with industrial operations that exist in any State in the Commonwealth. The principle of arbitration has been well defined by Dr. Jethro Brown, of South Australia, as "the substitution of reason and justice for appeals to unregulated force," and I think that phrase sums up the principle of compulsory arbitration and conciliation admirably,—

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Because we must remember that prior to the introduction of measures of this kind industrial relationships were governed by methods which are now known as direct action; but under this method—with an impartial tribunal administering the law—industrial peace is achieved, the standard of industrial conditions in the community is improved, and the standard of living is promoted in other ways. Since the Act has been in operation it has been of considerable benefit, to the workers particularly. I may be pardoned for dealing with that phase of the matter at some length, because to-day we realise that there is a great deal of difference of opinion as to how these industrial relationships should be regulated. It is stated by various schools of thought that compulsory arbitration by a legally constituted tribunal is a failure, and in certain quarters its abolition is advocated. You have one school of thought, represented by a section of the workers, claiming that this method has been of no advantage to them and advocating what they call direct action. Then you have the employing class, represented by certain members of the Employers' Federation, who do not approve of the regulation of industry in this way and would like to go back to the old conditions. But I think that Queensland experience has been such as to justify our continuing it and improving it, even endeavouring to perfect it. Here I just wish to quote some figures giving the wages in various industries in 1914 prior to the passage of this Act, the

wages in 1922, the percentage increase in the cost of living between those dates, and the effective increase in the economic wage of the worker in the industry concerned—

Award.	1914.	1922.	Increased Cost of Living.	Increase in Wages.	Effective Increase in Wages.
Carpentry and joinery	£2 18s. 8d. to £3 4s. 2d.	£5 10s.	Per cent. 43·5	Per cent. 87·5	Per cent. 44
Meat industry (other than export)	£2 2s. 6d. to £3 10s.	£4 5s. to £5 15s.	,,	100	56·5
Shop assistants (males)	£1 15s. to £2 15s.	£4 to £4 11s. 6d.	,,	128·5	85
Carters (general)	£2 to £2 15s.	£4 to £4 15s.	,,	100	56·5
Railway construction labourers..	1s. per hour	1s. 10¾d. to 2s. 3½d. per hour	,,	89·5	46

In addition to that, the conditions of female employees in the various industries have been improved enormously. Every member of this Chamber must realise that the old conditions of female workers particularly were very bad indeed, and that in certain industries women and girls were called upon to work very long hours for very low wages, with little or no regulation of their conditions of labour whatsoever. That class in the community has benefited very considerably from the passage of the principal Act in 1916. And by the improvement of the standard of living of these large masses of the people, so has an improvement in the conditions of the community generally taken place, because it must be realised that the conditions of any large section of the community affect the interests of the whole community. If, therefore, by a measure of this kind you can improve the standard of living of the wage-earners in the community so that by the increase in their spending power they are enabled to live in better houses, consume better food, and enjoy more of the decent things of life than was the case before, you create more employment and bring about a general raising of the standard right throughout the community.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Those are facts which cannot be in any way combated. I came across the other day a very interesting document—a Bill prepared in 1890 by the late Sir Samuel Griffith, who was an advanced thinker in his time, and whose mental powers were very great indeed. Clauses 21 and 28 of his Bill, introduced into this House in 1890, read—

"MEASURE OF WAGES.

"21. The natural and proper measure of wages is such a sum as is a fair and 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.

"DUTY OF STATE.

"28. It is the duty of the State to make provision by positive law for securing the proper distribution of the net products of labour in accordance with the principles hereby declared."

Sir Samuel Griffith, in 1890, laid down as a definite principle that method which we have adopted both in the principal Act and in this Bill, when he said—

"It is the duty of the State to make provision by positive law for securing the proper distribution of the net products of labour in accordance with the principles hereby declared."

It is following this idea that we are introducing the present Bill. The Bill is one of thirty clauses. It contains two important principles, the first being the extension of the operations of the court to all people who work for wages. The second principle is the establishing of machinery whereby proper control of apprenticeship can be brought about. The various other clauses are very largely of a machinery character, which can be dealt with more fully when we come to the Committee stage. They have been found necessary and desirable as a result of several years of administration.

When the principal Act was before Parliament, in 1916, Parliament was at that time constituted with two Chambers. The Legislative Council of that day cut into the Act introduced and passed by the Legislative Assembly, and limited the operations of the Act to a very large extent; and the object of this Bill is to make good that which was deleted by the representatives of vested interests in another Chamber at that time. The chief employees who were withdrawn from the operations of the Act at that time were those engaged in rural industries with the exception of those engaged in the sugar industry, and there were also withdrawn those engaged in domestic service and the other classes of employees set out in the excepting clause. It has been argued by various people that the inclusion of those classes of employees within the ambit of the Act will bring disaster in its train. That is a view I do not hold, because I feel sure that none of those gloomy forebodings will be realised, and the argument is only on a par with the arguments that were used against the measure in 1916. All these arguments were used against the principle itself: now they are being used against the extension of the principle. Any impartial observer of industrial conditions to-day who realises what took place prior to the passage of compulsory Arbitration and Conciliation Acts cannot but realise and admit that the establishment of the tribunals administering those principles has been in the interests of the whole community. That is a fact which must be admitted by any impartial observer who is honest and looks the facts fairly in the face. It is reasonable to assume that, when no disaster has followed, and only benefit has been brought about by the inclusion of 90 per cent. of the workers within the ambit of the Act, the

extension of the same principle will be followed by the same benefits with the inclusion of other industries. Those engaged in those industries will get a benefit, and the community will get a benefit also. The chief point raised by our opponents to including rural workers is that they claim it will mean the imposition of conditions which will be prejudicial to the carrying on of certain rural industries. Some men very learnedly point out that in certain rural occupations work has to be done every day in the week and every day in the year. That is realised by us full well, and we are making an important proviso, which is an amendment of the section in the principal Act, stating that in regard to certain industries, and with regard to services in certain industries, the court will lay down conditions under which they can be carried out. That is to say, they are excepted from the general hard and fast provisions that prevail in industries which can be subjected to more regulated conditions. The assumption is that general mixed farming industries and the dairying industry can only be carried out by the underpayment and the sweating of the employees in that industry. That is the only logical assumption to be drawn from the arguments I have heard against the extension of this principle. Our opponents say, "If you bring the rural workers within the ambit of the Arbitration Court, that court will impose such wages and conditions that the industry cannot be carried on, and it will be swept away." That is assuming that those industries can only be carried on under bad conditions. Inferentially, our opponents stand for those bad conditions. It is my feeling that such is not the case with those industries. We know at the present time that many employers in the industries that will be brought within the scope of this Act are to-day paying decent wages, and giving fairly reasonable conditions. This Bill therefore will only affect those who have deliberately sought to impose conditions subversive of the principles that I quoted, as laid down by the late Sir Samuel Griffith as far back as 1890. Mention has been made of those industries not being in a prosperous condition. It is well known that under the principal Act, which is not in any way affected in that respect by this Bill, the court has power to take into consideration the prosperity or otherwise of any industry that it may be dealing with with respect to an award. It is quite true that the men engaged in those industries which are to be covered by this Bill are working under conditions which I do not believe to be good for them or good for the community. That is to say, that we, as a self-reliant community in Queensland, should not stand for the maintenance of conditions in our midst that call for the sweating or underpayment of any section engaged in that industry. By that I mean that, if the farming industry is in such a parlous condition as some of our critics claim it is, then it is the duty of the Government, and it is the duty of society, to improve those conditions by raising the standard throughout, and thus bring them to a set of conditions suitable for the maintenance of a decent standard of living. That is necessary, because we cannot continue to ask men to engage in primary production, we cannot advise men to go upon the land and engage in rural pursuits, unless we, as a community, give them in common with other classes engaged in useful service that degree of security which will enable them to have a decent livelihood if they are reasonably industrious in carrying out their services to the community.

Mr. VOWLES: That is the starting point.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I read a very interesting quotation which appeared in an article reproduced in the "Producers' Review" on 10th June last. It is headed "Working Together." It states—

> "The goal of the farmer is to secure prices which will pay him cost of production plus a reasonable profit. The goal of the city worker and every other worker off the farm is to secure a wage which will enable him to maintain his family on an efficient standard of living and still save something for old age. Each wing of the army of producers realises that it is more difficult for him and his class to secure their goal when they have to pay enormous tribute to land speculators, to controllers of credit, etc."

That appears to me to set out the position admirably. While the critics of the Government deal with this Bill and say conditions which farmers may not be able to afford may be imposed, they have nothing to say about the exactions of the controllers of credit and various other charges which the farmer has to meet. There is no doubt that in the working out of a system whereby the man on the land will be given a decent chance of paying his employees who are covered under this measure proper safeguards will have to be made to prevent undue exactions being made in the direction I have mentioned. If the land is over-capitalised, or carries mortgages bearing too high a rate of interest, or credit is costing too high a rate, definite relief in that direction will have to be sought rather than attempt to attack the worker, who only secures a bare existence under the conditions I have indicated.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I am satisfied that, when the Act has been in operation for some time, and awards setting out the conditions of these industries have been set out by the court, many of those who now oppose the extension of the principle will wonder why they have done so. In a few years they will deny ever having opposed it, and in six years they will claim the credit of having initiated the reform. That is the history of all industrial reform in Queensland and in every other country. There is a particular type of mind in the community that does not so much hate progress as fear change. Immediately any industrial reform is proposed they come along with all forms of gloomy forebodings, and predict that disaster will follow in the train of such reform. But, if those people had been listened to in the past, the reforms we are now enjoying would never have been brought about. Every step in industrial reform that has been taken has been made in the teeth of the most bitter and relentless opposition that the pages of history can reveal. All those steps that have been taken, when put into operation and when given a fair trial, have resulted in benefit to the community. That is why I say that the opponents of this measure to-day in a few years' time will be claiming the credit of having initiated the reform.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: They will all be in favour of it afterwards.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: An important provision in the measure is in the direction of giving increased powers to industrial magistrates. At the present time industrial magistrates have power to deal with breaches of an award brought before them. Then they have power to deal with certain matters remitted to them specially by the Arbitration Court. Under this Bill we intend to increase the powers of industrial magistrates, and so do away with the necessity of going to the court on many minor matters, as they have to do at the present time. In addition to that, at the present time when a breach of an award takes place an industrial magistrate merely imposes a penalty. When the employer has been convicted and fined—and provision is also made to prosecute the employee, because they are also parties generally to such a breach—it sometimes requires a civil action to secure the payment of the amount that has been underpaid. It is proposed under this scheme that, where a breach of an award has taken place, it will be competent for the magistrate to make an order covering the arrears of wages that are owing to the worker who was so underpaid. That is what some magistrates do now. They have not the statutory power to do it, but it is the general practice of the industrial magistrate to make an order for the payment in full of any amounts that may be owing to the employee or employees concerned.

Mr. COSTELLO: How far is that retrospective?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The period is defined under the principal Act as ninety days, but such time can be extended by the court or industrial magistrate to a period of six months, inclusive of the ninety days. It is not proposed under this amending Bill to alter that provision in any way.

The next provision in the Bill is that relating to apprenticeship. I think that this is a subject which might well concern every hon. member, and it is of vast importance to Queensland if we are going to carry on our industries under that standard of efficiency which should be our objective. Various attacks have been made from time to time relating to the apprenticeship question. The court has been condemned, the unions have been condemned, and the Apprenticeship Committee have been condemned from various sources. I do not think much benefit can accrue from laying the blame on the shoulders of any one individual or class of individuals, but rather let us apply ourselves to laying down the machinery which will give sufficient elasticity in the future to enable us to train our own skilled artisans in Queensland. One would imagine, reading the criticism, that Queensland was the only State in the Commonwealth or the only country in the world so affected. As a matter of fact, every country to-day has the apprenticeship problem, both in the older countries of Europe and in the various British dominions. I read a report in the Canadian "Labour Bulletin" a month ago dealing with the difficulties in regard to skilled artisans and other problems, and I found that their difficulties are similar to ours. South Africa has also been called upon to pass a special Act dealing with this problem; South Australia has done so; and Victoria made inquiries quite recently as to the basis of an apprenticeship scheme which would be satisfactory.

The history of apprenticeship is in itself very interesting. Apprenticeship at first, as we understand it, was established in England when boys were apprenticed to certain merchants under very stringent indentures. It was really commenced to make provision for boys who were orphans, or, who, for some reason or other, were bereft of their natural guardians. That was extended to the principle of parents indenturing their boys to merchants and craftsmen for training in a particular craft or business; and under the old system of Craft Guilds apprenticeship played a very important part. It can be readily understood that it was very important in those days when the work to be carried out was dependent very largely on the personal skill of the individual employed.

However, with the introduction of machinery and the machine age, it is in many cases no longer necessary to have that high degree of skill which it was necessary to insist upon some years ago. Consequently, from time to time, it is necessary to revise the conditions of apprenticeship and the methods of training these apprentices. In Queensland since 1920 we have been operating under regulations of the Education Act and also under the powers, I think, of section 4 of the principal Industrial Arbitration Act of 1916. Under that scheme a Central Apprenticeship Committee was appointed, with group committees also operating. It was the duty of the Central Apprenticeship Committee to deal with a general scheme of apprenticeship and make recommendations to the Secretary for Public Instruction, or place certain proposals before the Arbitration Court when they were proposing to make awards for given trades or callings. After boys had been admitted as prospective apprentices to the various trades they were handed over to the group Apprenticeship Committees, which were comprised of representatives of employers and the unions functioning in the particular industry. To a certain extent that scheme up to the present time has met with success, but the time has come when greater elasticity must be given to the scheme to encourage more boys to be trained in the necessary skilled trades. At the present time in Queensland, in Australia generally, and in most countries of the world, there is a great scarcity of skilled artisans in certain branches of the building trades. We find the greatest difficulty in Queensland with regard to bricklayers and plasterers, and later on it will be found, sanitary plumbers. The tendency has been, very largely owing to the great strides that have been made in electrical appliances during the last twenty years, that the natural desire of most boys has been to seek to enter trades such as engineering, electrical trades, and as motor mechanics. Far more boys are offering for these particular trades than there are openings for at the present time; whereas other trades which do not appear to be so attractive—but yet in my opinion just as remunerative—have not been so eagerly sought after. It must also be remembered in dealing with this question that during the last few years there have been naturally fewer apprentices put on because of the dull times in industry. During the war period in Australia men did not incur large costs in building if they could possibly help it. They postponed their building programme, and only went on with work considered absolutely essential. As a consequence, during that dull period, employers were loath to put on any more apprentices.

More will have to be done than has been the case in the past to train our own artisans. I referred a few moments ago to the problem that is confronting Canada. The Minister for Labour there, when investigating the position of the skilled trades in Canada, found that very few people were being trained for these trades. They were depending to a very large extent on immigration for skilled artisans, and this is being experienced in many other countries.

I feel it is the duty of the State and of every man having the future of Queensland industry at heart to see to it that such conditions are laid down and such machinery is set up as will give opportunities for boys in Queensland learning all trades necessary for the future of industry in this State.

It has been argued that there has been an undue limitation of the number of apprentices. This is not a fact. There are very, very few firms operating in Queensland to-day with as large a number of apprentices as the regulations will permit them to have. Many employers have no apprentices at all, and it may be necessary under the scheme to which I allude to lay down a minimum number of apprentices as well as a maximum, as has been the case in the past. I feel it to be the duty of anyone carrying on any particular trade or calling to train boys so that the future generation will have an opportunity of carrying on that industry. The ratio of apprentices to journeymen has been defined as that ratio which will place one boy in the trade to replace one who dies or retires from the business. That ratio may be all right in countries that have been fully developed, but in Queensland, a State with vast economic resources, with an increasing population, the ratio must be greater than that, for the needs of the future will be greater than the need of the day. Consequently, it is desirable to bring about conditions that will be conducive to training more boys in the skilled trades than has been the case in the past. It has been said by some people that it would be better to introduce a specific Act dealing with apprenticeship rather than to take the powers by regulation, as is proposed under this Bill. Much can be said for that viewpoint. I have given the fullest consideration to it. I can speak as one having a good deal of experience of apprentices, having been one myself and having assisted in the training of a good number. I felt that it was difficult to lay down hard-and-fast conditions in an Act of Parliament that would give power to deal with all the various phases of the question that may arise. I thought it better to make the Bill sufficiently elastic, so that, when required, regulations can be amended, substituted, or initiated to meet any particular contingency that may arise. You will see, therefore, that in the Bill ample provision is made with regard to that. The Bill places the control of any apprenticeship scheme under the Secretary for Public Works. He may appoint committees to assist him with regard to the education of apprentices in certain skilled trades. That is also a very important factor that must not be lost sight of, because, while it is true that no man can be taught a trade unless he actually operates and works in that trade, yet it is necessary for the technical college to supplement the knowledge which he gets during the day from his employer. In many of the building trades there are certain things that can be taught properly only in the technical colleges. This training, however, must not take the place of actual practical work, but must be supplementary to the training that he gets during the day.

In many cases and in some countries it is the practice to make the training of an apprentice in a technical school a charge on the employer. As a matter of fact, that is the position under the British Act. An apprentice in any skilled trade or calling must be allowed by the employer a certain period off each week to attend certain compulsory classes in the technical colleges. That is desirable, perhaps, in certain callings, and may be followed under our scheme.

Then, with regard to the period of apprenticeship. That also is a very important matter. The period of apprenticeship as largely followed was laid down at a time when individual craftsmanship was more important than it is to-day. That is to say, when work was done by hand it involved a higher degree of skill than is necessary in the same occupations to-day; so it is worth considering whether it is necessary to lay down a five-year or a six-year period, such as is the general practice at the present time. Then there is power to lay down a condition whereby a boy may be indentured. That is very important, and it has given rise to much trouble under the present scheme. I look upon the indenturing of an apprentice as being of the utmost importance. It places an obligation on the employer, and it secures to that employer an apprentice for a given period under certain conditions. The tendency has been for certain employers to exploit boys to a certain extent. I have known of cases where jobs have been carried on with one journeyman and three or four apprentices. That merely results in the exploitation of those boys. It means that the boys are put to the class of work they are quickest and best at, and little or no regard is given to the training of those boys in the all-round practices of the particular trade or calling. However, under a scheme of indenture properly controlled, the obligation on the employer is much wider than if complete freedom was given, and every effort will be made to see to it that those things are carried out properly. In the building trades difficulties have arisen as a result of men being reluctant to sign indentures for boys for given periods. Take for example the Treasury Building which is under construction at the present time. There is a good deal of work for stonemasons in that building, and the work will last approximately three years. If a contractor was doing that job, he might feel that he did not know whether he would have another job to start on when that was completed. A period of six months or a year might elapse between one freestone job and another, and incidentally he would be reluctant to bind himself to any boy for a period of five years. But I think sufficient elasticity can be given in cases of that kind to provide for indentures whereby a boy will be indentured merely to the trade, and transferred to another employer when his employer ceases to have sufficient work to enable the boy's training to be carried on continuously and without interruption. I also believe that some of the circumlocution that is gone to at the present time could be omitted. In many trades it is not necessary in Queensland to have an examination. Our system of compulsory

education up to the age of fourteen years should, for the most part, be taken as sufficient educational qualification for a boy to enter any trade. If specific training in mathematics, geometry, and so on, is necessary in the trade or calling, that can be made a part of the curriculum laid down in the training in the technical college.

I think I have said enough to outline the general scheme that the Government have in mind. We are prepared to utilise to the fullest extent all existing organisation. We desire to secure the hearty co-operation in the apprenticeship scheme of the employers and of the unions functioning in the industries who have an opportunity of training apprentices, and it is hoped that a scheme will be evolved that will give reasonable satisfaction to the parties concerned; but, most important of all, will give young Queenslanders an opportunity to learn a trade, and learn it properly in their own country. (Hear, hear!) I think, with that brief outline of the main provisions of the Bill, nothing further need be said. The Bill is an extension of a principle which, in practice, has been found beneficial to the community, and I predict that the extensions laid down in it will be of further advantage to the State in promoting industrial welfare and in promoting amity in industrial relations in Queensland. I have very much pleasure in moving—

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

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): Mr. Speaker——

The SPEAKER: Order! Do I understand that the hon. member has the permission of the leader of the Opposition to reply on behalf of the Opposition?

Mr. TAYLOR: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. CORSER: I must congratulate the Minister—and in doing so return good for evil—on his explanation of the Bill, so far as we have had experience of it up to the present time. He has dealt with its operations from an industrial point of view in so far as the operations of the principal Act permit him to have an experience, and from his industrial associations no doubt he is in a position to speak on their behalf; but he must admit, and Government members generally must recognise, that country interests are best represented by country people.

Mr. COLLINS: We represent the country districts of Queensland.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. member who has made that interjection represents those who initiated this amending Bill. The Minister has expounded the advantages of arbitration. There is no individual on this side who does not stand for arbitration. There is no section of the Opposition which does not say that the Arbitration Court shall be obeyed, and that the awards shall be obeyed by both sides, which has not always been said by hon. members opposite, or by those who control them, when the decision goes against the majority.

Mr. HYNES: What did you say about the Dickson award?

Mr. CORSER: I did not say anything about the Dickson award that is contrary to the sentiments I have just expressed. The Secretary for Public Works put in the greater part of his time in expounding the principles of arbitration. Believing in arbitration, we on this side do not want to extend ourselves too much in that direction, and I think the Minister would have saved a lot of time if he had promptly dealt with the main features of the Bill, and left out any reference to that which we stand for probably more than he does himself.

The hon. gentleman concluded by saying that he thought nothing further need be said. I cannot accept that, and I wish to make some observations in respect of the Bill from the point of view of the country dweller. It is claimed that arbitration has been a success up to the present time. It has been a success because of this one great essential point—that it has been possible for all awards to be passed on by those on whom awards have been made by the court.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Do you object to that?

Mr. CORSER: I am not grumbling at the present time. I am stating why the Arbitration Court has been the great success that the Minister claims it is. He says we are going to claim the credit of everything that is good, yet he stated that Sir Samuel Griffith, in 1890, was the first member of this Assembly who suggested an Arbitration Court. It has been successful [8.30 p.m.] because we have been able to pass it on. If we want the Bill to be successful in the future, we have to remember that that point is essential, and that we can only extend the principle to those industries which can pass on the cost to somebody else.

Mr. BULCOCK: Whom have they passed it on to?

Mr. CORSER: The general public have to pay for all awards at the present time, and hon. members opposite cannot deny it.

Mr. BULCOCK: That is the worker.

Mr. CORSER: I am glad you admit it. Goods have increased in price owing to increased wages, and the general public has to make good the increased award. There is no dispute in that regard. Surely hon. members opposite do not think that contractors and big firms are going to lose and become bankrupt through an award which has fixed a higher wage! No, they pass it on.

Mr. BULCOCK: How do they pass it on on the stations?

Mr. CORSER: If the hon. member knew anything about cattle stations at the present time, he would not make that interjection. The old conditions which existed previous to the old Liberal legislation in the interests of better conditions for working men were bad, and they have gone for ever. The legislation to better those conditions has not been passed entirely by Labour, because it was initiated before Labour occupied the Treasury benches.

Mr. COLLINS: They were paid very low wages then.

Mr. CORSER: The "Standard" and "Railway Advocate" said that the wages under the old Tory regime were of greater value to the worker than the wages in 1922. Why do hon. members opposite not growl at their papers, and not at me? If hon. members opposite insist on their own way, and if we cannot impress upon them the impossibility of performing the conditions they wish to impose.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: They live on corned beef and damper.

Mr. CORSER: Many selectors are living on corned beef and damper to-day without

the new conditions. (Government interruption.'

The SPEAKER: I would ask hon. members on my right to refrain from interjecting, and I would ask the hon. member for Burnett to deal with the principles contained in the Bill. The Minister has pointed out that the Bill contains two important principles, and I hope the hon. member will speak on the amendments proposed by the Bill, and not on the general question of industrial arbitration.

Mr. CORSER: The great feature of the Bill is the extension of the operations of the Industrial Arbitration Court in two essentials, and I contend that, if there are not some modifications imposed, one of our great industries will be jeopardised by the imposition of conditions which it is impossible for it to carry.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member will be in order in proceeding on those lines.

Mr. CORSER: That is the section of the community which cannot pass on any increased cost. If the Government were first of all to show how they are going to increase the possibilities of that section, it would be possible for them then to pay the increased award.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CORSER: If the Government were first of all to improve their conditions so as to make it possible for them to come under the Act—not only merely to exist but to prosper—there would be no objection from myself or any other hon. member on this side to the inclusion of this section; but until that is done, it is not right to force these conditions upon a section of the people who have no means of increasing their returns to enable them to meet the increased obligations. If the primary producer is brought under the Arbitration Court as proposed in this Bill, he is only being included so as to make it possible for those who work for him to receive an increased wage. Labour would not thank anyone for this measure if that was not provided. If you are not going to improve the conditions of the primary producers, how is it possible for them to pay these wages? This will apply, not only to the man who is established, but to the man who is asked to come to the Upper Burnett —those 5,000 men who are asked to come there.

Mr. COLLINS: Stinking fish!

Mr. CORSER: It is not stinking fish. We have a duty to perform. Those men will take up selections there—not farms, because there is nothing to make a living on yet—and they must make their living on those selections, and at the same time work under an Arbitration Court award. We know where this business was propagated.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Emu Creek. (Laughter.)

Mr. CORSER: No, not as good as Emu Creek—Emu Park. Mr. Dunstan, the secretary of the Australian Workers' Union, stated at the Emu Park Convention in March last that they had a right to ask that farm workers should be included under the Arbitration Act, because the Government had spent a lot of money during the last twelve months in order that those engaged in the agricultural industry in its various phases should get a full return for their labour.

Mr. COLLINS: Who said that?

Mr. CORSER: Mr. Dunstan.

Mr. COLLINS: A good man.

Mr. CORSER: We do not say anything against Mr. Dunstan, but this shows that he is misinformed. That is where the idea got birth; that is where this Bill was first thought of, and where it was first determined to bring it forward. Mr. Dunstan, in supporting the resolution—and no doubt a lot of members on the opposite benches in supporting him—were misinformed, if they say that the primary producers are receiving the benefit of the Primary Producers' Organisation to-day. Up to the present time they have not benefited by it, because they have not received the increased prices for their products which Mr. Dunstan stated at that convention they would get.

Mr. PEASE: Who has got the increase?

Mr. CORSER: There is no increase. The hon. member must watch market conditions. It is not so long ago that a member of the Council of Agriculture, Mr. Purcell, said that the Council of Agriculture was the only body that the Government would recognise for suggestions with regard to future legislation. Surely that council should have been consulted in regard to the introduction of such an amendment of our Industrial Arbitration Act as is now being proposed. Had the suggested amendment come through them and not through the Australian Workers' Union, then it might have been all right. Then we would have been vesting in the Council of Agriculture those important functions which the Government claim that the Council possesses.

Mr. HYNES: Is not the Australian Workers' Union, with its 40,000 members in the State, worthy of consideration?

Mr. CORSER: They are provided for under the Industrial Arbitration Act now, but our agricultural workers are not. Labour members have said all along that the farmer is a worker. I claim that he is a worker, and works long hours; yet, if he wants any assistance in working his farm, he may have to pay wages which he will not be able to pay. You will hear hon. members trying to infer from that statement that we want men to work long hours for a small wage. We do not.

Mr. HYNES: What are you squealing about?

Mr. CORSER: I would say to the hon. member that my protest—if you can call it a squeal—is that the Government do not provide a court which will do a fair thing for the farmers themselves.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CORSER: They are not brought within the Arbitration Act themselves so that they may receive a living wage. They have only the Commissioner of Prices—he is the whole court, the whole union, to decide upon the prices of the farmers' commodity, without any representation from the farmers at all. The Industrial Arbitration Court will fix a minimum wage for the man who works for the primary producer, but the Commissioner of Prices, if he fixes a price at all, fixes a maximum price above which the primary producer must not charge, above which he cannot receive remuneration for the work he has put in. It is not fair or logical to the man who is struggling under

long hours on the selection to have a maximum return fixed instead of a minimum. When the Government provide a means by which he may get that minimum wage for his day's work, a fair price for his commodity according to the cost of production, it will be possible for him to pay a fair thing to everybody who works for him—which every farmer wants to do. Why start at the wrong end and cripple the agricultural industry?

Mr. PEASE: What about the sugar industry?

Mr. CORSER: The sugar industry is a different thing. There was an established price for the commodity, and it was possible to pay the wage; but what about the maize farmer, or the man who is growing hay, or the man who is raising cattle, or producing cream? How is it possible for them to comply with stringent conditions when they are going to get only a minimum result for their work and for the wage they pay?

Mr. BULCOCK: Are you not agitating for a maize pool?

Mr. CORSER: At the present time I am agitating for a fair thing for the farmers.

The SPEAKER: Order! I will ask the hon. member to address the Chair, and not take so much notice of interjections; and I also ask hon. members on my right to allow the hon. member to proceed without interruption.

Mr. CORSER: With my usual respect to the Chair, I shall certainly try to obey you to the letter, Mr. Speaker. (Laughter.) The Minister showed how the court had awarded increases in wages in one calling equal to 67 per cent., and in the meatworks industry of 100 per cent. What about the man who is growing the meat? What has he got? (Government interjections.)

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CORSER: The hon. member showed that the shop assistants had had their wages increased by 126 per cent. I am not growling about that; but are not those increases passed on? Are hon. members opposite innocent enough to imagine—they do not look so simple-minded—that the big firms are losing so much money? And if the Arbitration Court has provided an increase of 123 per cent. in one calling, what will happen to the farmer if it does the same thing for the worker in the agricultural industry?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Can't he pass it on?

Mr. CORSER: Give him power to pass it on, and then you are on the right track.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CORSER: The agricultural industry is up against impossible conditions. Take the Inkerman Irrigation Works. I would not say a word against them, but they have cost the Government, for those farmers, such a price that there has to be a readjustment of values if the farmers are going to proceed. If the farmer had found that he had to carry on the work on his farm under such an increase in labour costs as was experienced on those works, how could he adjust matters and meet the extra expenditure? He could not do it, and, until the Government make it possible for him to adjust the price of his product, he cannot pay exorbitant wages. We would welcome any amendment or any elasticity in the Bill to enable a fair thing to be done to the worker for the farmer, provided it is also made possible for the farmer to make, not merely an existence, but a fair living by passing on the cost to somebody else.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): So far as the operations of the Act apply to ordinary industries, I have no cause for complaint; but I wish to enter my emphatic protest against an amendment to bring the agricultural industry under the Arbitration Court; and I do so knowing full well that a good deal of injury will be done by it, not only to the farmers, but also to the whole of the State. The Minister gave us some very interesting figures showing that certain industries had been benefited by the application of the Industrial Arbitration Act. I quite agree with the Minister that in many callings—in fact almost every calling to which an award applies—an improvement has been made; but those industries in which it has been granted are protected against the cheap labour, both black and white, in other parts of the world. The Minister cannot mention one industry covered by an award in Queensland which is not what we might call a protected industry, because duties are placed on the sale of similar articles manufactured in other parts of the world. If you put a duty of 30 per cent., 40 per cent., or 50 per cent. on articles manufactured in other parts of the world, the Arbitration Court is enabled so to increase the wages of the workers here that for local consumption the industries are able to pay the extra reward for their services. Artificial prices are created owing to the fact that we in Australia are protected in that way. By artificial means we enable the worker to gain a reward, but we also enable the person who pays the wage to pass on the extra cost to the consumer. I remember that a short time before Mr. Justice Higgins retired from the Industrial Arbitration Court he was dealing with a wharf labourer's case. He asked counsel who appeared for the shipping companies, "What can your industry stand?" and counsel replied, "Your Honour, we can stand whatever you like to award, because we are in a position to pass on any increase to the consumer." The people who use the ships are the consumers.

Mr. PEASE: They pass it on with ten times the increase.

Mr. MORGAN: Persons in that position do not mind what award is given, because they can pass it on. No matter whether the rate is fixed at £4 5s., £4 10s., £6, or £7 a week, which might mean an increase in the cost of the article produced of 10 per cent., 15 per cent., or 20 per cent., the cost can be passed on by the price of the article being increased 25 per cent. or 30 per cent. Every hon. member opposite knows that what I am saying is correct. When that can be done no injury is done to the industry itself, because the industry is able to pass it on to the consumer, who must buy the article, as he cannot get it cheaper elsewhere.

Let me now deal with the sugar industry. Some hon. members opposite have stated that we have been able to apply awards to the sugar industry, and that it is a flourishing industry at the present time. We must recognise that the sugar industry is in the

same position as any other protected industry in Australia to-day. In the sugar industry we do not produce sufficient for our own requirements, with the result that, with the high protective duty, we are able to prevent sugar grown in other parts of the world coming in and competing with our sugar, and thus we are able to increase the wages of workers engaged in that industry.

Mr. HYNES: The hon. member opposed the inclusion of the sugar industry under the operations of the principal Act.

Mr. MORGAN: I did nothing of the sort.

Mr. COLLINS: You said it was a pampered industry.

Mr. MORGAN: Yes; any industry that must have a protective duty is a pampered industry. If you give a bonus to the cattle industry, that industry for the time being is a pampered industry. The same argument applies with regard to the sugar industry or any other industry in Australia to-day which has a protective tariff. When we apply artificial means to create a fictitious value in order that an industry may pay a certain wage, it becomes a pampered industry.

Mr. HYNES: What about the meat subsidy?

Mr. MORGAN: I am not objecting to the meat subsidy. If hon. members opposite can show me that in the fruit, dairying, and wheat industries they can keep wheat in Queensland at 5s. per bushel, or butter at 2s. 6d. per lb., or fruit at a payable price, in the same way as a price has been guaranteed for sugar in the sugar industry, then I will withdraw my objections to the Arbitration Court awards being applied to the industries mentioned in the Bill. I will take the wheat industry. Although we do not produce more than is necessary for our own requirements, still we get all that we require. The moment anything happens overseas reducing the price of wheat there by 2d., 4d., or 6d. per bushel, down comes the price for wheat in Queensland. If it does not come down in Queensland, because of the fact that we have a board or a pool in existence, then in comes the Victorian, South Australian, or New South Wales wheat, with the result that, in order that we may grist our own wheat into flour, the board is compelled to bring down the price to the level operating in other States. With respect to wheat, we in Australia are dependent for the price to be secured wholly and solely on what happens in other parts of the world. Every wheatgrower in Australia has to compete against the cheap black labour of India and the cheap white labour of Russia. Although during the last two or three seasons wheatgrowing has been a favourable proposition, because of the price that was paid and not because of the yield, still there is every prospect that during the coming harvest wheat will be sold in Australia at 3s. 6d. per bushel.

Mr. DASH: What has that to do with the cattle industry?

Mr. MORGAN: If we apply the conditions operating with regard to sugar-field workers to the workers engaged in the wheat fields, what is going to be the result? At the present time there are three sugar-field workers' awards, applying to Nos. 1, 2, and 3 districts. The wage for a ploughman for the southern portion of Queensland is £4 6s. per week. The ploughmen engaged in the sugar industry drive two or three horses and a one-furrow plough.

Mr. COLLINS: They have modern machinery; they have tractors.

Mr. MORGAN: The man engaged in driving a tractor has to get the award rates, and perhaps a little more than the man engaged with horses. There are certain good reasons why the sugar industry should be protected, if only for defence purposes. If the wheatgrowers have to pay the wages applicable to the sugar industry, which industry is assisted by the whole of the people of Australia, are the people of Australia prepared to pay a bounty on wheat so that those engaged in the industry will be able to charge 5s. per bushel for the wheat to the consumers, irrespective of what the price may be in England? If that can be brought about, then my objection to the application of Arbitration Court awards to this industry ceases. If the wheatgrower can be guaranteed a remunerative price, as is the case with the sugar industry, which enables the sugar-grower to pay the wages existing in that industry, then we do not object. The cost of the wages will be passed on to the consumer, who will have to pay. It is the consumers of Australia who subsidise the sugar industry, and, if they are prepared to subsidise the wheat industry, the fruit industry, and the dairying industry, I shall certainly raise no objection to the Arbitration Court awards being applied to the workers in those industries. Unfortunately, that is not being done, and cannot be done. When an award is being framed, can any judge say that a man engaged in driving six horses in a three or four furrow plough is to work for less than a man engaged in the Central portion or Southern portion of Queensland driving two or three horses in a one-furrow plough? According to the Dickson award, the man who drove two horses got less pay than the man who drove three or four horses.

Mr. PEASE: The sugar farmers never complained about that.

Mr. MORGAN: According to the Dickson award, if a sugar field worker ploughing in the fields is worth £4 6s. a week driving two horses in a single furrow plough, then the man engaged in the wheat industry driving six horses in a three-furrow plough will be entitled to a great deal more. The prices of primary products are more or less regulated by the markets in other parts of the world. If wheat could be sold at a fixed price, no great injury would be done to the industry. There are three parties interested in an award being applied to the rural industries of Queensland. First of all, there is the producer who owns and works the farm; then the employee, and the consumer. From the very moment an award is made the cost of production is going to be increased. No one will be foolish enough to deny that the making of an award will largely increase the cost of production. Who is going to carry that burden? Is the burden going to be placed on the farmer?

[9 p.m.]

Mr. COLLINS: If the farmer uses more modern machinery, he will reduce his working cost.

Mr. MORGAN: Or is the burden going to be placed on the consumer? One of the two parties must carry it. At the present moment it will be agreed that the producer

cannot afford to carry that extra cost. On reference to the statistics for 1921-22, the latest statistics available, we find the following interesting figures:—

TABLE A.

INDIVIDUALS—TAXABLE INCOME DERIVED FROM PERSONAL EXERTION ONLY DURING THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE, 1921.

Assessments made during 1921-22, Classified according to Occupations and Grades of Taxable Income (Super Tax included with Tax).

Occupations.	TAXABLE INCOME.														
	£1—£500.			£501—£1,000.			£1,001—£1,500.			£1,501—£2,000.			£2,001—£2,500.		
	No. of Tax-payers.	Taxable Income.	Tax.	No of Tax-payers.	Taxable Income.	Tax.	No. of Tax-payers	Taxable Income.	Tax.	No. of Tax-payers.	Taxable Income	Tax.	No. of Tax-payers.	Taxable Income.	Tax
Farmers, Cane ..	204	38,183	1,338	70	49,062	2,515	30	37,795	2,470	13	23,648	2,054	3	6,677	624
Farmers, Dairy ..	172	31,286	1,086	18	11,162	531	6	7,242	461	1	1,938	172	..	..	..
Farmers, Fruit ..	10	2,102	70	1	596	28	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Farmers, Mixed ..	109	16,479	542	16	11,026	555	5	6,064	512	..	..	..	1	2,500	263

Occupations.	£2,501—£3,000.			£3,001—£4,500.			£4,501—£6,000.			OVER £6,000.			TOTALS.		
	No of Tax-payers.	Taxable Income.	Tax.	No. of Tax-payers.	Taxable Income.	Tax.	No. of Tax-payers.	Taxable Income.	Tax.	No. of Tax-payers.	Taxable Income.	Tax	No of Tax-payers.	Taxable Income.	Tax.
Farmers, Cane ..	3	8,681	966	1	3,377	200	4	20,350	2,215	1	6,108	979	329	193,881	13,361
Farmers, Dairy ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	197	51,628	2,250
Farmers, Fruit ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	11	2,698	104
Farmers, Mixed ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	131	36,069	1,872

When we exclude the canegrower—who, according to these figures, is the most prosperous agriculturist we possess—we find that only 1¼ per cent. of the farmers who are engaged in agricultural pursuits in Queensland pay income tax. Just imagine 1¼ per cent.!

Mr. COLLINS: You are defeating the argument of the hon. member for Warwick—that the Government compel the dairy farmer to pay the tax.

Mr. MORGAN: The following return also shows the size of the farms and the number of owners in 1921:—

Under 5 Acres.	5 Acres and under 20 Acres.	20 Acres and under 50 Acres.	50 Acres and over.	Total Owners.
Owners. 3,153	Owners. 7,755	Owners. 6,935	Owners 6,715	24,558

Those figures show that of a total of 24,558 there are only 1.25 per cent. who paid income tax in 1921.

Mr. COLLINS: Yet we are told we are taxing the poor farmer off the land.

Mr. MORGAN: We never accused the present Government of taxing the farmer off his land, so far as the income tax is concerned. What I accuse the present Government of is of making the conditions of the farmer so harsh and so severe that the poor unfortunate man has not been able to pay income tax. What a beautiful advertisement for Queensland! We hear about the thousands and thousands of acres that are going to be opened for settlement in the Burnett and other districts of the State for dairying and mixed farming. What a beautiful advertisement it is to go to the other States of Australia—that if these people come to Queensland in order to engage in agricultural pursuits not more than 1¼ out of each 100 will earn sufficient by their work on the land to pay income tax.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must connect his remarks with the subject matter before the House.

Mr. MORGAN: I am using these figures to show that the producer cannot bear the extra burden that will be placed on him by the extension of the operations of the Arbitration Court to his industry. I have explained that the extra burden has either to be borne by the producer or the consumer, and that unless you give the producer a fixed price for what he is producing, then he, and not the consumer, must bear the burden. I also want to point out that, from the figures we have, the farmer is in such a precarious condition that he cannot stand another straw. I would be ever so much more pleased if I were able to state that the farmers of Queensland were able to pay £20 or even £40 or £50 a year in income tax.

Mr. BRUCE: You would still growl about it.

Mr. MORGAN: Every one of us likes to pay income tax, as it is an indication of our prosperity. Unfortunately, the producer is not in that position; yet hon. members on the opposite side are going to place the last straw on the back of the camel, thereby contributing to the stream that is flowing weekly and monthly into the large centres of population. They are going to denude the country of population. Why are the Government introducing this measure? It is only done to satisfy a certain number of extremists on the Government side.

Mr. COLLINS: There are no extremists here; we are all moderates.

Mr. MORGAN: I know a great number of Government members do not believe in the scope of the Arbitration Act being extended to the rural industries. The Bill is introduced only to appease a certain number of extremists who contend that the Government have enabled the farmers to organise and create pools—and they evidently think to protect himself—and, as a set-off against that, they have demanded from the Government that the scope of the Arbitration Act must be enlarged to be made applicable to the rural workers of this State.

Mr. COLLINS: In 1916 this principle went through this Chamber. It is long overdue. You know that.

Mr. MORGAN: As I have already indicated, so far as the rural industries are concerned, every industry that has been pointed out as having had the Arbitration Court applied to it is protected in such a way that it can afford to pay the increase. What does this increase really mean?

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Prosperity all round.

Mr. MORGAN: It does not. It means an increase in the cost of production, therefore increased cost of foodstuffs to the people, and, if you are going to increase this cost, you are going to do them an injury. It also means that a certain class of man now on a farm will not have work to do. On the stations there were a great number of men employed as hands; when the award became high they were put off. They were enabled to go into the farming areas and work, receiving £1 10s. or £2 a week and keep, and with which they were quite satisfied.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Do you think £1 10s. a week is a fair wage for a worker?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MORGAN: It may not be a fair wage, but it is as much as the industry can stand. If the industry cannot stand a greater wage, and if it is going to mean that there will be no work at all, it is my contention that it is better for the men to work for those wages than to walk about the cities. Those men know it is better to be employed. Unfortunately the members on the other side of the House would rather see them congregate in the city and go daily to the Unemployment Bureau and draw their doles.

Mr. PEASE: That is why such large prices are being paid for stations to-day.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MORGAN: The hon. member knows perfectly well that stations are under an award, and that this Bill will not alter that. We are not asking that the award should be withdrawn from those particular industries, but we say this is a different proposition altogether. In any industry where we consume more than we produce we are dependent upon the world's markets, and, unless you bring legislation to bear to give us a fair price for our products, you are going to do us an injury.

I also wish to refer to the effect this Bill is going to have on the destruction of prickly-pear. At the present moment those engaged in the destruction of that pest on small areas are not subject to an award, and men may be got who are willing to work at less than the award wage. They are content and happy with the work they are performing and with the wages received. If this Bill is brought into effect, no Arbitration Court judge can say that the man clearing pear on a farm should get less than the man on the grazing selection adjoining the farm. He must simply fix the award on the same basis in each case.

Mr. COLLINS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MORGAN: My hon. friend says "Hear, hear!" What does he care if the whole country becomes infested with prickly-pear?

Mr. COLLINS: I represent more farmers than you do.

Mr. MORGAN: Yes, but they are not prickly-pear farmers. My hon. friend represents a district on which he has succeeded in getting the Government to spend an enormous amount on water conservation, and now he is asking for more money in order that they may be able to carry on. He is asking the Consolidated Revenue Fund to stand one-half of the cost of that work, and is thus placing half the cost on the people of Queensland.

I trust that the Minister will give serious consideration to the Bill and withdraw those particular amendments from the Bill. I do not like continually to point out the fearful conditions obtaining in the country districts, but I think it only a fair thing that the public should know. If the Minister has an opportunity of looking over the applications that are coming in now from the farmers in different parts of Queensland asking for relief, he will know from those numerous applications that the conditions are serious, and that the people in the bush are suffering untold hardships. To increase those hardships and to place further burdens upon the farmers by the application of this particular award is not doing justice to those men and to Queensland generally. The Government are interfering when they have no right to interfere, and at a time when the agriculturist can least afford any interference, particularly from the Arbitration Court. Why do not the Government wait until conditions similar to those in Victoria and the other Southern States operate in Queensland? Why should we be compelled to pay £4 5s. a week, when Victoria and the rest of Australia may be paying £1 10s. to £2 a week for growing similar foodstuffs to ours—foodstuffs that will compete with us in our markets? We can compete now because we are on a similar footing to them; but, when the expenditure is increased by 20 per cent. or 30 per cent., how can we compete, and how are you going to induce farmers to come to Queensland from other parts of Australia?

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: The fruitgrower in Victoria has been protected for the last ten years.

Mr. MORGAN: The fruitgrower is only protected for the purpose of allowing him to compete with the outside markets. There is no objection to that; but there is a decided objection when this award is applied to men engaged in industries competing with cheap white labour in other parts of the world, and I am going to do my best to oppose it.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*): First of all, I wish to congratulate the Secretary for Public Works on the very fine exposition of the amendment that he gave to the House. His remarks, compared with the speakers on the other side, created a favourable contrast. We want to deal with this matter in a fair and broad-minded manner. Let us look at what the amendment really is. It is simply giving a right that was withheld from the workers on farms in the fruit industry and in the agricultural industry to approach the Arbitration Court and apply for an award as to their conditions and rates of pay. That is all that is asked for. The speeches made by the hon. member for Burnett and the hon. member for Murilla are speeches that might have been very well made in the Arbitration Court; they were simply arguing a case against the farmer and against the farmer's son receiving a fair rate of wage for the work that they do. Who are the men who are employed in rural industry? It is the farmers and farmers' sons; and those are the men who hon. members opposite are saying should not get a fair wage. Let us see what they propose. The hon. member for Murilla said these men were satisfied, and he thought it was a fair thing that they should get 30s. a week and their keep. Their keep was equal to 25s. a week, so that 55s. a week, he says, is a fair thing for the working man in Queensland to get to keep himself, his wife, and his family.

Mr. COSTELLO: That is wrong. He did not say that.

Mr. GLEDSON: He did say it. Every member of the House knows what he said, and he repeated it so that there should be no mistake about it. We have no right, as a Government, to prevent any of those men approaching the Arbitration Court and getting a fair deal so far as their wages are concerned. Every Arbitration Court has adopted a principle laid down by Sir Samuel Griffith in 1890. He laid it down that the wages that a man should get should be sufficient to provide himself, his wife, and family with a decent standard of comfort, and that is all any Arbitration Court will award to any man. Do members of the Opposition object to those working on farms getting a decent standard of living? Do members of the Opposition say that these men should not have decent wages? Do they say they should be the same as chattel slaves, and not have proper food, not have proper clothes, not have proper recreation, and not have a shilling in their pockets to go to the Exhibition or anywhere else; that they should be ground down and kept on miserable wages all their lives? Hon. members opposite gave us figures which should make this House rush the measure through in order to give the rural workers the right to approach the Arbitration Court. The figures quoted show that the industries already protected by Arbitration Court awards are the industries that are prosperous and are doing something for Queensland, and are the industries that enable those engaged in them to pay income tax; while the men working in industries that are not under an Arbitration Court award are not getting sufficient to enable them to pay income tax. If that is true, then the conditions in those industries need altering.

Every member on the Government side of the House is desirous of seeing every worker in Queensland, whether he is a farmer or a farm worker, receiving a fair rate of wage so that he will be enabled to keep himself and family in comfort.

Hon. members opposite say nothing has been done to see that those engaged in the primary industries get a fair price for their produce. Let us see what has been done. First of all, we will take the cotton industry, which is going to play a great part in the progress of Queensland. The present Government have taken action to guarantee a price for cotton, and enable those engaged in the industry to have their cotton gins, while nothing has been done to protect the workers who pick the cotton.

Mr. COSTELLO: The industry is not established yet.

Mr. GLEDSON: The Government not only guaranteed the price for cotton, but they guaranteed the sale of it, and practically took every pound of cotton produced. Now let us take the wheat industry. We find that the Government also guaranteed a price for wheat, and also assisted the growers to market their wheat. The same thing was done in regard to butter. While the price of butter in London was considerably less than the price charged in Queensland, the producers in Queensland were protected, and received a big price for their butter. Then, again, a cheese pool has been established and a good price secured for their cheese. Now we come down to eggs. An egg pool is now being established to enable the poultry farmers to market their eggs at a fair price. The same thing applies to maize, sugar, and wool. The Government have assisted all those engaged in rural industries to market their produce and to get a good price; yet hon. members opposite object to the men employed in those industries getting a fair wage for their work. I do not want to pursue this subject any further, because I think the good sense of the House will see that these men are entitled to go to the court in order to secure decent wages and decent conditions. I wish to commend the Minister for some of the other amendments he proposes. It is proposed to give power to the court of industrial magistrates not only to impose a fine for a breach of an award, but also to provide for the payment of award wages where a lower wage than the award has been paid. In the past we have been able to go to the court, and, if we established that a breach of an award had been committed, we could get a penalty imposed for the breach; but the worker did not get his back wages, and in many cases we had again to approach the court or go to a Petty Debts Court and sue for the back wages. There is a limitation provided in the Act, and I trust that the Minister will take out that limitation altogether, and allow the worker to go to the court and make application for the whole of the wages due.

The apprenticeship scheme that is laid down under this Bill is a very wise provision. I do not wish to discuss that matter to-night. It is only fair that the rural workers should have a right to approach the court. Any discussion as to whether the industry is able to pay or not is a matter for the court, and not for this House. We are prepared, as representatives of the workers, to go to the court and fight their case, and let the representatives of the other side go to the court and put the position fairly before the judge, and let him decide what is a fair thing. If that is done, we are satisfied we shall get a fair wage for the workers, a fair wage for the industry, and a fair thing for the State.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*) I regret that the Government and members on the Government benches do not realise the great danger of putting this Bill on the statute-book. I have been farming all my life. I have been a working man; I have been working my own farm and working with the men, and I can fairly claim to have had some experience of farming, both from the farmer's standpoint and from the worker's standpoint. The worker in the rural industry has not said a word, and has not asked for improved conditions. He has not struck, and has never attempted to make a claim. He has never asked the Government to bring in a Bill to give him the opportunity to go to the Arbitration Court, and he has been very well satisfied with his treatment up to date. I do not say for one moment that [9.30 p.m.] he is not entitled to a fair wage. I quite agree that every man in any industry should be able to make a living wage out of it, and the farmers have always been quite willing to give it.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Why oppose this?

Mr. DEACON: I am going to do my best to show hon. members opposite that it is no good either to the farmers or to the men employed by them; but it is very hard to make hon. members opposite see it, because a more obstinate lot I have never seen in my natural life. (Laughter.) Hon. members opposite have referred to the sugar industry, and say that there is no reason why the Industrial Arbitration Act should not apply to all other industries. Let me mention the difference in the treatment accorded to the sugar industry in Queensland, as compared with the agricultural industry. When the sugar industry was first started, it was given the advantage by the Government of the day of the cheapest labour they could get in the world. When it wanted money, the Government money was behind it in millions. It had the advantage of a high duty and of Government assistance in providing tramways. At a later date, when cheap labour was done away with and it had to face foreign competition, it got the advantage of a fixed price, which it is getting to-day. It is only the fixed price which is enabling the sugar industry to pay the wages necessary under the Arbitration Court award. If the sugar industry had the same conditions as the wheat and dairying industries have to-day, it would not be able to pay those wages for a week.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: They were getting less than the world's prices a little while ago.

Mr. DEACON. Hon. members opposite say that the matter should be left to an Arbitration Court judge, who will decide everything. I would not say that the Government would appoint a man whom they did not think capable, but he is going to be a leading lawyer. In making past appointments the Government took lawyers who were "temperamentally fitted" and put them on the bench. The judges do their best, and can only decide on the evidence given, and there will be two sides. No judge can of his own

knowledge say what the effect of any award on an industry is going to be. No witness going before the Court can tell what profit is going to be made from mixed farming six months hence. It is quite possible for two crops to be sown and none reaped; that is happening to-day.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: You could strike an average.

Mr. DEACON: You cannot strike an average; it is impossible. No man can say what the price of corn is going to be next year. It is only in pampered industries like sugar (and it is a pampered industry—I do not mind saying so—compared with other industries) that you can tell what the price will be. Then take the cotton industry, which is also given a guaranteed price. If the Government would do that all round it would be all right. If you are going to insist on artificial wages in an industry, you have to create artificial conditions to meet them. The farmer is now having a gun put at each side of his head. The Price Fixing Commissioner fixes the price he must receive for his products, and the Government now say he must pay a certain rate of wage. The farmer is willing to give his men the best wage he can pay, but what can he do when he has not got the money? One hon. member opposite said that so far as wheat was concerned the farmer was given a great deal of encouragement; but it must be borne in mind that there is an enormous difference in the cost of wheat production now compared with ten years ago. For instance, prices are fully 100 per cent. more for everything he has to buy. Fencing and machinery are dearer; he is paying higher wages to blacksmiths and wheelwrights and to his employees. He pays full award rates, and pays higher freights and higher prices for the keep of his men. He pays a land tax, if he has over a certain quantity of land. He pays higher shire rates, as the industrial awards apply to local authorities. He pays a higher price for everything he needs for his own family. The cost of all the awards is falling on the primary producer. It does not fall on the men in the cities; it does not fall on the drapery merchants or the tradesmen, but comes right back on the primary producer. There is no award made for the primary producer under which he will be enabled to pay an additional cost to what he is paying now. If we are to have artificial conditions in other industries, why should the farmer not have them too? Are the Government game to say that, while the wheat farmer and the labourer are entitled to higher wages, the consumer will have to pay the difference? Why should the principle not apply all round, if it is good? If it is not to apply all round, then it is a rotten thing. The butter industry is in the same position. If we have to sell butter this year in London at 1s. a lb., and have to pay everybody engaged in the industry an increased wage, are the Government game to increase the price locally and to require consumers to pay 3s. a lb.?

Mr. MORGAN: No; they will want it for less than the London charges.

Mr. DEACON: The prices of bacon and butter are fixed by the Price Fixing Commissioner. I think the Commissioner will give what he thinks a reasonable thing for the producer, but he is there in the interests of the consumer. If the Government had any courage they would say to the working man, "We have given you a lot of things, and they are worth a price, which you must pay for them." But the Government will need a microscope to see the advantage that they create by this Bill for the working man in the farming industry and for other workers, too. I just want to forecast some of the actual results which will follow this measure. I have not the slightest doubt that the farming industry can meet it. The farmers have met everything and beaten it. They have met droughts, bad times, bad Governments, and beaten them all; and they will hold their own against any Arbitration Court. They will fight their way out. If it does not pay to keep a man, the man will have to go. If the judge of the Arbitration Court fixes a basic wage for the agricultural industry at the same level as for any other industry—and what can he do other than that, because he must ask himself, "Should not the agricultural labourer receive the same wage and work the same hours as any other labourer?"—it he does that, what will it mean to the average farm worker? It will mean that the good man who is worth his wage, and gets it now, will continue to get it.

Mr. PEASE: Then there is nothing to be afraid of.

Mr. DEACON: The good man only! To-day the good man—the first-class man—gets the ordinary living standard of any other industry. What will happen to the others? Are hon. members opposite prepared to pay their share to feed them? You cannot expect the farmer to be any different from what he is. If hon. members opposite are not prepared to take their share of the new burden, why should the farmer do it by keeping men who do not pay him? Hon. members do not realise that these things have got to be passed on.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: They say you cannot pass them on.

Mr. DEACON: If we cannot pass them on, some men can. It will come to this—that the farming industry will be reduced to family labour only, and in that case the cost of these wages will be passed on. It may mean absolute unemployment for some people. I notice that in the sugar industries, where the conditions of labour are governed by Arbitration Court awards, there are more unemployed than you can find in any farming district where there is no award. There is more absolute starvation, more Government doles, where there is an award than where there is not.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. DEACON: There is practically very little difficulty in living on the Downs, where there is no award; but in the sugar districts there is tremendous difficulty. I suppose we are merely talking without hope of result, because it seems impossible to talk the Government out of it. There is no hope of getting reasonable conditions from them. There is no hope even of getting a reasonable working Bill. I am quite sure that we have no hope of getting any reasonable amendment into the measure.

Before I sit down I want to reply to what the Minister had to say about what the Government have done for rural industries. He said they guaranteed a price for wheat. They guaranteed it for one year, and never kept their guarantee for that year on all the wheat. So far as the Cheese Pool, the Butter Pool, and the Wheat Pool are concerned, they

certainly are an assistance to our industries, but they only enable the industry to make the best of its market. That is all any pool can do; it cannot create an artificial market. The maize-growers and all others have practically had to look after themselves.

I hope that this matter will receive very serious consideration from the Government before they insist on passing the Bill. I do not begrudge a man engaged in any industry the full fruits of his labour—no reasonably minded farmer does—but at the same time we have to look at his ability to pay it and the probable results of the measure, and I am afraid that the results of this Bill, when it does become law, will be as much a failure as a similar attempt was in New Zealand.

Mr. W. COOPER (*Rosewood*): I should like to reply to some of the statements made by members opposite on this Bill. They have claimed that, if the Arbitration Court has power to deal with the wages and hours of rural workers, it will be disastrous to the primary producers in every agricultural industry but the sugar industry. I claim that every man, regardless of the industry in which he may be employed, is entitled to the full reward of his labour, and that applies also to the man who is farming his own farm. In the legislation which has been passed by this House, for the last two or three years at all events, the farmer has had given to him a reasonable opportunity of practically fixing the price of his own product.

There is only one principle that I believe in, and that is, where a man has embarked in any industry and is in the unfortunate position that he cannot dictate what his hours of work or rate of wages shall be, he shall at all events receive protection at the hands of the Government. There is no law to compel a man to hire another, but there is an unwritten law—the law of necessity—which compels a man to work whether he likes it or not. Many hon. members opposite think that the primary producing industries are not payable propositions. If a man thinks that an industry upon which he has embarked will not pay the wages fixed by the Arbitration Court, there is no necessity for him to hire any man. A man who is working for wages may have a house that he desires to paint, and, if he is not in a position to paint it under conditions existing, does he do it? Of course he does not.

Mr. NOTT: He can probably whitewash it.

Mr. W. COOPER: If the hon. member was whitewashed he would be a better looking man than he is now. The conditions existing in the farming industry to-day in some cases are not in the best interests of the employer or of the employees.

Mr. MOORE: Would they be better unemployed?

Mr. W. COOPER: They would be better unemployed than employed at the rate of wages the hon. member would be inclined to give them. I have listened for at least five years to hon. members opposite in this House, and the contention of most of them is that there should be no Arbitration Court and no conditions fixed for the man who is in the unfortunate position that he is compelled to work for an existence without any redress before any tribunal in order to keep his wife and family. We have only to look at the conditions that existed prior to the introduction of Arbitration and Conciliation Courts. We find that men were compelled to go and labour for very little remuneration.

Mr. MORGAN: We had Wages Boards long before there was any Labour Government.

Mr. W. COOPER: Were they a success? If the hon. member would be honest, he would admit that they were a failure.

Mr. MORGAN: They were a great success.

Mr. W. COOPER: Since the introduction of the Arbitration and Conciliation Acts we have had fewer industrial disputes, and Queensland has gone ahead by leaps and bounds. We have been able, in the sugar industry and in other industries that were in a state of chaos before the passing of the Act, to bring about improved conditions. There were many industrial disputes, and, if many of the Acts passed by our opponents had not been repealed by a Government of this kind, sooner or later there would have been a revolution in Queensland. No one expects or desires such a thing to occur. The farmer goes out and takes up land, and endeavours to eke out an existence for himself and his wife and family.

Mr. MORGAN: It is a good job you call it an existence, because that is all it is.

Mr. W. COOPER: The hon. member for Murilla has evidently battened and fattened on the industry which he embarked upon. He was compelled to leave the conservative State of Victoria to come up to Queensland to eke out an existence which he deplores at present. There is nothing to prevent him going back to Victoria and taking up land under the same conditions that existed before he came here.

Mr. MOORE: He cannot get away.

Mr. W. COOPER: There is no law to stop the hon. gentleman from going. He knows perfectly well that the conditions are better in Queensland than in any other State, or otherwise he would go back. I know the hon. gentleman well enough for that. Who fixes the price of foodstuffs to-day? We know that the storekeeper fixes the price. During last session the Government introduced a Bill which enabled the farmer to organise and conduct his own business so as to get the full reward of his industry. Hon. members opposite practically refused to adopt that measure, and it was only under pressure that they voted for it.

Mr. MORGAN: What Bill was that?

Mr. W. COOPER: The Primary Producers' Organisation Bill.

Mr. MORGAN: We all voted with the Government.

Mr. W. COOPER: You voted under pressure.

Mr. COSTELLO: What about the farmers in Rosewood?

Mr. W. COOPER: I represent a farming constituency, which is more than the hon. member does. He represents the squatters. The farmers of Queensland are prepared to pay a fair and reasonable living wage to those men whom they employ, and, unless they do so, they cannot expect the workers to give them a fair and reasonable price for their products. That applies to any man who has embarked on any industry, whether it

be in the city or in the country. Hon. members on this side are prepared to give a fairer deal to the farmer, particularly the small farmer, than hon. members opposite. (Opposition dissent.) I am quite satisfied about that. I take the personnel of the men sitting opposite, and we find that the majority are men who have been living upon the men who produce on the land, and that they are not workers. The workers are prepared at all times to pay the farmer a fair and reasonable price for his butter, cheese, and everything else, but they want him, in return, to pay a fair and living wage to enable them and their wives and families to live.

Mr. NOTT (*Stanley*): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed.

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

The House adjourned at 10 p.m.