

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 25 JULY 1923

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

furnished by the Queensland Wheat Board—

1. Number of bushels of wheat delivered to the 1920-1921 pool—

Classification.	Bushels lb.	Paid to grower
MILLING WHEAT.		<i>s. d.</i>
F.A.Q.	2,851,822 19	8 0
No. 2 Milling . . .	143,918 40	5 0
No. 3 Milling . . .	198,966 40	4 6
	3,194,707-39	
FEED WHEAT.		
No. 1 Feed	392,865 43	4 0
No. 2 Feed	123,007 56	3 0
No. 3 Red Wheat	5,590 12	3 6
Scented	21,621 47	3 9
Gradings	16,533 26	2 6
	559,619-04	
	3,754,326-43	

2. As shown opposite the various classifications in (1).

3. The board has been unable to obtain returns from the Australian Wheat Board, Melbourne, for wheat exported during the 1920-1921 season. Every effort has been made by the board to obtain these returns, but so far without results. The last telegram from the Australian Wheat Board merely stated that they had not received the returns from the Australian Wheat Committee, London. The board holds a small credit balance at the present time, but this cannot be allocated to the respective classifications until such time as the returns referred to are received.

4. Thanks to the assistance of the Queensland Government, the board has finalised matters with the holders of the F.A.Q. certificates. However, final payments cannot be made on inferior classifications until such time as the returns are received from the Australian Wheat Board."

WEDNESDAY, 25 JULY, 1923.

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

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORTS.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt from the Auditor-General of his report on the transactions in connection with the Public Debt Reduction Fund for the financial year ended 30th June, 1923.

Ordered to be printed.

QUESTIONS.

QUALITY AND PRICE OF WHEAT RECEIVED BY WHEAT BOARD, 1920-1921.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warrick*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

"1. What number of bushels of wheat—season 1920-1921—of the respective undermentioned grades was received by the Wheat Board, viz.:—No. 2 Milling, No. 3 Milling, No. 1 Feed, No. 2 Feed, No. 2 Red Gradings, Unclassified, and Scented?"

"2. What sum per bushel has been paid to date to growers for such respective grades of wheat?"

"3. Is any balance held by Wheat Board for distribution to the owners of the foregoing grades of wheat; and, if so, what amount will be paid to the said owners?"

"4. When will the final payment be made?"

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

"The following information has been [Mr. W. Cooper.

SUGGESTED AMENDMENT OF PRIMARY PRODUCERS' ORGANISATION ACT.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

"1. Will the Government consider the advisableness of consulting with the Council of Agriculture in regard to the amending of the Primary Producers' Organisation Act to make better provision for growers to be organised to conform to the Primary Products Pools Act?"

"2. If not, will the Government meet the expenditure incurred by primary producers who have been compelled to organise apart from the Primary Producers' Organisation Act?"

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK replied—

"1 and 2. I have now under consideration several suggestions by the Council of Agriculture to improve existing legislation."

STATE ADVANCE ON SECURITY OF GEMS ON
SAPPHIRE FIELDS.

Mr. KERR asked the Secretary for Mines—

"As to the 30th June, 1922, £1,520 of Trust Funds were advanced on the security of gems in connection with the sapphire fields, what action, if any, has been taken to realise upon the security, and what is the position of the finances in this connection as a result of the transaction or transactions?"

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*), in the absence of the Secretary for Mines (Hon. A. J. Jones, *Paddington*), replied—

"The stones on which advances have been made were sent to Paris for disposal. So far no sales have eventuated."

LIQUOR ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*): I beg to move—

"That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirability of introducing a Bill to amend the Liquor Acts, 1912-1920, in certain particulars."

Question put and passed.

INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT
AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. NOTT (*Sturt*): I had much pleasure in listening to the Minister when introducing the Bill, and his speech was very interesting to me, because I was anxious to know exactly in what particulars he thought it was possible the Act could be made a workable measure under the amended conditions which will make it applicable to all industries in the State. It is only fitting that the Minister introducing the Bill should have every faith in the measure, and there is no doubt in the minds of all who heard the hon. gentleman that he considers all will be well when the Bill comes into force. It is my opinion that the wages of agricultural labourers, and also the emoluments of all those engaged in agriculture in the country generally, should be at least equal to the wages paid in industrial centres. In fact, I think that the wages of country workers ought to be higher than the wages paid in the cities, where the workers have all the advantages of city life over and above the disadvantages to which the country workers are subject. I also believe that, in the present state of civilisation, Arbitration Courts and awards are necessary. Further than that, if the primary producers, or the producers of any commodity, expect to get a high price for their products, they must necessarily agree that the industrialist must get a high rate of wage; otherwise it would be quite impossible for the industrialist to pay a high price for primary products.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. NOTT: But for the Arbitration Court awards to be successful, they must be applic-

able to practically all industries, and it will have to be decided whether Arbitration Court awards are applicable to various industries. Of course, as I said a few moments ago, the Minister responsible for the introduction of the Bill is quite sure that all will be well. An interesting feature is the fact that in 1916 and prior to that a similar Bill to this was introduced and passed through this Chamber; and, from the speeches delivered, I believe that when it was submitted to the Upper House the part which practically corresponded to the present amendments was clipped out. I believe the Upper House delayed the passage of that Bill, when it had the power to do so, on no less than three occasions. After some considerable time had elapsed, there was a referendum taken on the question of the abolition of the Upper House, when the people decided by a large majority that the Upper House should not be abolished, thereby showing that the people of Queensland were quite behind the Legislative Council in delaying the passage of the measure which was then introduced. Now that the Upper House is abolished, this is one of the first measures which is being put through at the instigation of the Emu Park Convention. It is evidently the intention, now that there is no Upper House to veto it, to put the Bill through in a form very similar to that which was discarded by the Legislative Council in 1916. On the introduction of this measure we had the spectacle of a member of the Country party being banished from the precincts of this august Chamber and your serene presence, Mr. Speaker—(laughter)—because of certain references which he made, which is a peculiar coincidence when we have it on record that the Legislative Council was abolished because it dared to differ from a similar proposal which the Labour Government brought forward in a previous Parliament.

There is another feature of this proposal which calls for attention—that is, that we have no evidence of the hall-mark of the Council of Agriculture upon the proposal in any way.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Do you suggest that every Bill should be submitted to the Council of Agriculture?

Mr. NOTT: When the Council of Agriculture was brought into being its province was to make inquiries into all matters which might improve the conditions of the people in the country districts.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Do you not know that it would be highly improper for any outside organisation to see a Bill before it was presented to Parliament?

Mr. NOTT: The Council of Agriculture was to be supreme in all matters pertaining to agriculture, and was to advise the Cabinet in regard to legislation proposed to be introduced affecting the agricultural industry, so that it is peculiar that so far we have not heard that the application of the principle of industrial arbitration to primary industries has been discussed by the Council.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is not their business.

Mr. NOTT: Another matter which calls for remark is the fact that the various Local Producers' Associations, of which there is a great number throughout the country, do not

Mr. Nott.]

appear to have been consulted in any way about the matter. So far as I can gather, when any proposed legislation affects industrial unions, the unions appear to be consulted; but, so far as I know, there has been absolutely no reference of this matter to the members of the Local Producers' Associations, nor any report of what the men engaged in the agricultural pursuits of the State think of the application of Industrial Arbitration Court awards to their calling. They have been particularly silent on the matter.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I think they are satisfied to leave the matter in our hands.

Mr. NOTT: They have never had a voice in the matter, although one of the reasons for the establishment of the Council of Agriculture and subsidiary organisations was the desirableness of consulting those connected with the agricultural industry upon such matters. Although the Local Producers' Associations have never said anything on this matter, I am quite certain, and other hon. members will agree, that the Australian Labour Party has had a deuce of a lot to say on all occasions.

I am prepared to admit that arbitration has been responsible for increasing wages in certain industries to a very great extent, but the increase under the awards in those various industries has made it necessary for those engaged in production to look for some means for obtaining a higher price for what they produce. That is finding expression at the present time in the establishment of the various pools. I look at Arbitration Court awards as something to improve the wages of wage-earners, and I view the establishment of pools for primary products as a means of improving the price that farmers are likely to receive for the commodity that they produce. The pools and the Arbitration Court award are endeavouring to work out the same ends for two different classes of people. Notwithstanding the increase in wages in certain industries, I am satisfied from my observations that it has had the result in a good many industries of sapping the efficiency of many of the workers. When an award is granted the wages are fixed on the basis of what will maintain a man, his wife, and three children in an ordinary degree of comfort. When you find that young, inexperienced single men receive the same amount of wages as a married man, then it is very easy for the single man to work three days out of the week and receive sufficient money to carry him along comfortably over the seven days.

Mr. BRUCE: Have you tried it?

Mr. NOTT: The single man in a great many cases considers there is no necessity to consider what standard of efficiency he can attain in an industry so long as he can hold his job and obtain high wages. Many of them in their young days have had no training with regard to the necessity for saving and putting by some of the wages they are earning. They learn with very great ease to spend practically everything they earn, consequently thrift and saving are unknown to them to a very large extent.

Mr. COLLINS: That is not true. The Savings Bank returns contradict your statement.

Mr. NOTT: An industry must be prosperous, otherwise it is absolutely impossible

[*Mr. Nott.*

for it to pay any increase on the wages that are now being paid.

Mr. HYNES: The producing public must be prosperous before the primary producers can be prosperous.

Mr. CLAYTON: It is the other way about.

Mr. NOTT: If wages are increased, in many cases there will be more unemployment, and in other cases farms will be neglected all over the country. If the operations of the principal Act are extended to domestic servants, to the fruit industry, and to those engaged in agricultural pursuits, there will be an increase in the cost of production. Many of the farmers will endeavour to improve their position so as to avoid the increased cost of production by going in for an increased expenditure on machinery.

Mr. COLLINS: Hear, hear!

Mr. NOTT: They may go in for motor tractors. As far as I can see at the present time, one of the greatest deterrents to people making a start on the farms is the cost of commencing operations. A man cannot go on a farm at the present time unless he has a capital approaching £2,000. If awards are made by the Arbitration Court affecting him and they compel him to go in for higher class machinery—and it is only natural to think a man will go in for a 6-furrow plough instead of a 1 or 2-furrow plough, which will mean that he will be compelled to go in for tractor power to work it—he will have to spend approximately £1,000 additional on machinery in order to work that farm. When you come to consider that he will have to spend this £1,000 over and above what he has to spend to-day to work his farm, very few people will be attracted to the land, especially when they see the very slight chances they have in the face of adverse circumstances, pests, etc., of making a comfortable living at farming. Under this Bill it is proposed to allow organisers to go on the farm. If they do not interfere wilfully with the employees, I presume that they can go on at any time.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. NOTT: If these conditions obtain, we all know how easily the term "wilfully" can be manipulated, so it will be free for them to go on to the farm and interfere with the working of the employees at any time they wish.

Mr. HYNES: The organiser has the privilege of going on to the farm now.

Mr. BRUCE: But he must not carry a gun.

Mr. NOTT: I presume that the Government, in deciding to extend the scope of the Arbitration Act so as to embrace rural workers, came to the conclusion that prices for farm produce will be standardised, or that it will be necessary to standardise them in some way. I think that the basis of awards made under the Industrial Arbitration Act is wrong in deciding what wage is sufficient to permit of a man, his wife, and three children to live comfortably. In every instance so far where an award has been made it has been in relation to a domestic industry, whereas the chief object of the proposed amendment is to enable awards to be made governing the employees in primary industries, the products of which are com

peting in the world's market, and the prices realised will have to be the basis of those awards. For instance, if the price of butter is going to be fixed at a standard price of 2s. a lb.—and I think dairying and butter production ought to offer better chances for the development of Queensland than any other industry—and in the overseas market it is fetching 140s. a cwt., and that we take a parcel of 10 lb. of butter. Say 60 per cent. of this amount is exported. We will find that those 6 lb. will bring 1s. 4d. per lb., therefore the other 4 lb. will have to bring 5s. a lb., which will be the price that the Queensland or Australian consumer will have to pay in order to realise that standard price of 2s. per lb. If the price of butter is to be standardised at 3s. a lb., then these figures will obtain: if 6 lb. will be sold overseas at 1s. 4d. per lb., the other 4 lb. will have to be sold in Australia or Queensland to our local consumers at 5s. 6d. per lb. to bring the price of the 10 lb. of butter up to 3s. a lb. I am quoting these figures to let everybody judge whether it is likely that we can possibly bring about what may be called a decent standard price for that very common and necessary commodity, butter.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Why not lower the price and improve the cattle?

Mr. NOTT: When the Labour party came into power I think the initial mistake was in placing an embargo on the export of meat and foodstuffs.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: How does that connect with this Bill?

Mr. NOTT: Just a little patience! Had all that produce been exported and the money for it received in Queensland, we would have had at the present time a fair market and a lot of extra money in the country that could have been used by the producers in paying increased [4 p.m.] wages to develop industries and produce primary products that are necessary and are clamoured for in Queensland. Instead of that, we find the market for a good many of our foodstuffs absolutely glutted.

There was a possibility then of making our producers so much more prosperous, and they would have had the money to pay the Arbitration Court awards that are proposed to be brought in. Since there would have been a ready sale for whatever production they had, there would have been a chance of increased income tax being levied. I consider that in every industry great care must be taken that nothing is done to jeopardise that industry or to bring about its downfall.

When the hon. member for Cunningham was speaking last night, he mentioned that Arbitration Court awards were only possible in domestic industries, and somebody quoted wool. Well, wool competes in the world's markets.

Mr. BULCOCK: The Arbitration Court is successfully in operation in the wool industry.

Mr. NOTT: Yes, but in the case of the wool industry we have practically a monopoly of the fine wools of the world, and that monopoly protects the industry as well as, or a good deal better than, any embargoes or artificial Acts. It makes those engaged in the industry able to afford the extra high

prices that are being paid to the workers in the wool industry. If we did not possess that monopoly, we should not be able to command the price that we do for wool at the present time.

There are several other matters that will be greatly affected. Quite a number of men who may be termed "cheque book" farmers, many of whom have been making very little out of their farms, will probably continue in the industry if this Bill comes into effect, for two particular reasons. One reason is that the price of foodstuffs must certainly go up because there will be so many less producers. Another reason why they must continue to work their farms, and are continuing, although losing money, is to stop a slump or downward trend in land values in Queensland—a very important factor. When these Arbitration Court awards do come in, there is one phase that I hope will not be lost sight of. That is, that they will have to be obeyed on both sides. Means will have to be found whereby it will be possible to make the workers abide by an adverse decision just as effectively as the employers are made to abide by adverse decisions.

Mr. HYNES: I hope that you don't take up the same attitude that you did when the Dickson award was made in the sugar industry.

Mr. NOTT: At that time I was in the sugar industry and went out of it just before the award came out. I notice that the Dickson award, in the two years after it came into force, caused a great shortage in the sugar production of Queensland, and a great portion of the area under sugar cultivation was relinquished. When you consider that 30,000 acres of sugar land went out of cultivation—that at £7 10s. or £8, which was then about the cost per acre of harvesting—there was practically a quarter of a million pounds lost in wages during those two years—

Mr. FOLEY: Your statistics are very unreliable. There was a record harvest the first year after the Dickson award.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. NOTT: I heard some interjections thrown across the Chamber during the earlier part of the debate in regard to the slavery of the capitalistic system and so on. It seems to me that these various artificial conditions which are being imposed on all industries in Queensland are, perhaps, imposed in the endeavour to get away from the capitalistic system. We shall find ourselves under a bureaucratic system which will be far more soulless than the capitalistic system which has built up civilisation to its present position. It seems to me that the Labour party are likely to establish a condition whereby they will out-martinet the most autocratic czar. It is a well-known fact that necessity knows no law, and the industries that we have established in Queensland have been built up as a result of the law of supply and demand, and, if anything is done to alter the conditions through Arbitration Court awards, it will be disastrous to those industries, and the cost may be so increased that the high price will absolutely destroy the demand. The Secretary for Agriculture has stated on several occasions that production should be for use and not for profit. That is a very disastrous tenet

Mr. Nott.]

to hold, because, if you do away with profit, it means efficiency and safety will be thrown overboard. Profit is the absolute guarantee of efficiency and safety.

Before resuming my seat, I would like to make a few remarks in regard to apprentices. In the first place, I am particularly glad that the Secretary for Public Works in introducing the Bill admitted that the present system of apprenticeship is not satisfactory and has not been effective. Any alteration in the apprenticeship system whereby we can be assured of getting trained artisans in the various trades should be welcomed. If boys are trained under Queensland conditions, we are likely to get the best artisans for the industries concerned. I am glad to know that under the proposal a larger number of apprentices will be trained than have been trained during the past few years. I am also particularly pleased to know that the Minister considers it necessary to train a greater number of apprentices than the number likely to go out of the various callings, so that there will be an adequate number of trained employees available for the development of the State. I do not agree with the remarks of the Minister that greater skill was necessary in certain callings some years ago than is the case to-day. At the present time it is necessary to have higher efficiency so far as skilled workers are concerned than was the case in the past.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You misunderstand my point. What I sought to convey was that a large amount of work is now done by machinery which formerly was done by hand, and, consequently, it may not be necessary to have so long a period of apprenticeship.

MR. NOTT: I quite agree that a good deal of work that was previously done by hand is now done by machinery, but the men controlling that machinery should possess greater skill than was necessary before. I have had some experience in connection with the sugar mills, and I would like to mention one little incident that came under my notice. We had three shifts at the sugar mill and the engineer in charge of one shift, with the same machinery, and the same class of cane going through the mill, could put through during his eight-hours shift up to one and a-half tons more cane than either of the other two engineers during their shifts. The conditions were the same in every way, and it was because of his superior skill and attention that that man was able to put more cane through the rollers. Anyone who has had charge of men working machinery will have noticed the same thing. Even in driving a steam pump you will often find that one man can pump considerably more water in a given time than another man with the same consumption of fuel. Therefore, efficiency is even more necessary now, and skill is required to a greater extent than ever before in the history of the world.

I admit that the party in power have a mandate to put this legislation in force, and I would be surprised if they did not obey that mandate. When they went to the country, the country knew positively that, if they were returned to power, this class of legislation would be passed, and I admit that I expected this class of legislation to be placed on the statute-book.

[*Mr. Nott.*]

MR. HYNES (Townsville): I desire to make a few observations in connection with this most important amendment of this most important Act. It is rather significant that the leader of the Opposition should delegate his pride of place to the deputy leader of the Country party in connection with the criticisms which have been launched at the Bill in this Chamber.

MR. BRAND: Why is it significant?

MR. HYNES: It is very significant. The leader of the Opposition, as a matter of practice, always replies to the Minister introducing a Bill, and it is an indication that hon. members opposite have not a sound case when they put up the deputy leader of the Country party to reply to the Minister.

MR. FOWLES: What nonsense!

MR. HYNES: In the whole of the arguments which have been adduced against the Bill, we find the voice of the sweater appealing for the right to sweat the people who are functioning in the rural industries of this State. I am rather astounded in the twentieth century, in the most democratic State in the Commonwealth, to find an Opposition in Queensland who are prepared to voice the opinion that the rural industries should be left under sweated conditions. A great deal has been said about the fact that the rural industries up to the present have not been covered by an award of the Arbitration Court.

The Minister, when speaking last night, made reference to the fact that Sir Samuel Griffith as far back as 1890 attempted to bring in an Arbitration Bill for the purpose of regulating the hours and conditions of industrialists in this State. Going further back, I find that Diocletian, an Emperor of Rome sixteen centuries ago, issued an edict fixing the wages paid in rural industries in the Roman Empire. I may state, for the edification of the hon. member for Logan and the hon. member for Dalby, that he also found it necessary to fix lawyers' fees. (Laughter.) I have had considerable experience of the operation of the Industrial Arbitration Act since it was initiated in 1916, through my association with the Australian Workers' Union as an advocate of the workers in the Industrial Arbitration Court. The speeches of hon. members opposite remind me of the arguments which have always been adduced before the Court when we have been endeavouring to secure a fair share of the wealth which the workers are producing in the industries of Queensland. I know from my own experience that the conditions of the workers have been considerably improved through the operation of the Arbitration Act, and this amendment of the Act is very necessary in order to bring in a large number of industrialists who are really deserving of the same conditions and treatment which are being meted out to other workers in Queensland. Hon. members opposite think that I knew nothing about the rural industries in South Queensland; but I have worked in the dairying and wheat industries in the southern portions of the State, and I know that there is no reason why those industries should not be covered by an Arbitration Court award.

MR. MORGAN: That was in the dark ages.

MR. HYNES: I do not look upon the Arbitration Act, or anything likely to come

from it, as the be-all or end-all of the aspirations of the working classes. I realise that we cannot expect an amendment of the Industrial Arbitration Act or of any Act in this Chamber to do anything in connection with abolishing the wage system; but, for all that, I know that through the instrumentality of the Arbitration Act we have been able to secure an amelioration of the conditions of the workers, and to improve the conditions of the men and women in Queensland who have to toil for their living. We have been able to prevent sweating and bring about a reduction of hours, and we have been able to do this without condemning our wives and dependents to the strife and misery which a strike or direct action invariably means. There are two alternatives to arbitration. There is the round-table conference, which my experience shows is worthless as a means of obtaining redress for our industrial grievances or improvement of our conditions. The other alternative is direct action. This party stand for arbitration. We are opposed to direct action; but we know that hon. members opposite favour direct action. I have in my mind's eye an incident which occurred when the Dickson award was made law in the State. After a long fight in the Arbitration Court, when the whole of the evidence was placed before the judge, he made an award which gave certain hours and conditions to the employees engaged in that particular industry. We found hon. members opposite, particularly the hon. member for Mirani, going round agitating the minds of the "cockies" in the Mackay and Mirani districts and getting them to strike against the award of the Court; and yet they tell us that the industrial organisers of the State are always stirring up industrial strife. I say, without fear of contradiction, that the hon. member for Mirani deliberately went out and agitated, and brought about a strike in the Mackay district against the Dickson award.

Mr. SWAYNE: I was not there.

Mr. HYNES: We are only asking for the same provisions to be placed in the Queensland Act as are already incorporated in the Commonwealth Arbitration Act, 1904-1911. The definition of "industry" in that Act makes it possible for the industrial unions in the Commonwealth to secure an award covering rural industries in this and any other State. For the information of hon. members opposite, I will read that definition. "Industry" includes—

"(a) Any business, trade, manufacture, undertaking, or calling of employers, on land or water;

"(b) Any calling, service, employment, handicraft, or industrial occupation or avocation of employees on land or water; and

"(c) A branch of an industry or a group of industries."

We are asking that the same provision be placed in the Queensland Act. I have not heard them squealing in the other parts of the Commonwealth about the provisions in the Commonwealth Arbitration Act, under which the unions concerned can secure awards covering the rural industries. We know that, as far back as 1910, in the fruitgrowing industry in South Australia and Victoria, an award was secured from the Federal Arbitration Court. Under that award, notwithstand-

ing the dismal prognostications which were indulged in at the time, the fruitgrowing industry in those States has made phenomenal progress during the time the award has operated. We find that the same thing has obtained in the sugar industry. Hon. members opposite are opposed to the principle of arbitration.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: We are not.

Mr. HYNES: We find that the hon. member for Oxley, the deputy leader of the United party, is reported in the Brisbane "Daily Mail" of 22nd August, 1921, as follows—

"I contend that the Arbitration Court has been one of the main causes of the stagnation which exists here to-day. The edifice of the Arbitration Court must be pulled down."

During the time I was contesting the Federal election, I received an extraordinary communication from the secretary of the Single Purpose League. This league is a kind of employers' Ku Klux Klan which has been formed for the purpose of abolishing arbitration. Hon. members opposite will probably dissociate themselves from it. I find in that communication that practically the whole of the political anti-Labour organisations of the Commonwealth have pledged themselves to support the objects of this association. This is how the communication reads—

"Melbourne, 22nd November, 1922.

"M. P. Hynes, Esq.,

"Townsville, Queensland.

"Dear Sir,—

"I am instructed by my Executive to ascertain your attitude in regard to the abolition of compulsory arbitration and the substitution of voluntary conciliation.

"For your information and guidance I desire to inform you that—

(1) The Federal Country party are pledged to advocate the abolition of compulsory arbitration.

(2) The Liberal Union platform provides for the abolition of compulsory arbitration and the substitution of councils of conciliation and wages boards.

(3) The Tasmanian National candidates will be pledged to advocate the abolition of Commonwealth Arbitration Court.

(4) South Australian Liberal candidates will be pledged to vote for the abolition of compulsory arbitration.

(5) The South Australian Industrial Disputes Bill, which aims at the abolition of compulsory arbitration, has passed the second reading.

(6) The New South Wales Industrial Arbitration (Amendment) Bill has been passed by Legislative Assembly of that State.

(7) The Associated Chambers of Manufacturers, who represent the manufacturing interests of Australia, at their 15th Annual Meeting held in Sydney in October, 1922, carried the following resolution:—

That this meeting of Associated Chambers of Manufacturers is of the

Mr. Hynes.]

opinion that compulsory arbitration and conciliation has failed to accomplish the purposes for which it was instituted, and should therefore be abolished.

That the conference favours voluntary conciliation and wages boards in which the chairman has no casting vote.

That Federal jurisdiction should be confined to industries of only Federal character—such as shipping—and legislation to effect this should definitely define the ambit of such.

“It must be quite clear from the foregoing, that the movement for the abolition of compulsory arbitration is rapidly developing throughout Australia, and I would therefore be pleased to receive your answers to the following questions:—

- (1) Are you in favour of the abolition of compulsory arbitration?
- (2) Are you in favour of wages boards in which the chairman has no casting vote?”

I am prepared to say that, if this letter was submitted to any hon. member on the other side, his answer to both questions would be “Yes.”

Mr. MAXWELL: Have you ever read our platform?

Mr. HYNES: I have not. Some reference has been made to the apprenticeship problem which we know confronts legislators of this State. The ex-deputy leader of the United party, the late member [4.30 p.m.] for Townsville, Mr. Green, although he says that he is in favour of arbitration, took exception in his own business to a ruling under an Arbitration Court award, and adopted certain action which was instrumental in defeating it. I have a copy of his letter here, sent to the managers of the shops of W. H. Green, Limited, in which he asked them to dismiss various junior employees because they had qualified for the wage prescribed by the award. The thing speaks for itself—

“Townsville, 6th December, 1921.

“Messrs. W. H. Green, Limited,

“Chemists, Broadway.

“Dear Sirs,—A ruling has been obtained from the Shops and Factories Inspector and from the Arbitration Court which declares that all messengers come under the provisions in the Shop and Factories Act laid down for assistants of the first, second, and third years' experience, and so on.

“This means that the salary which they obtain will be greatly increased, and in reality, as far as our business is concerned, is an absurdity.”

There is always an absurdity in increasing the salaries of the employees, in the eyes of the employer—

“The first year's experience in your district for males is 19s. 6d., females 16s.; second year, males 23s., females 19s. 6d.; third year, males 30s. 6d., females 27s.

“You will realise that this will make it impossible for us to retain any messengers beyond a period of two years, and

[Mr. Hynes.

it will be necessary to dispense with the services of any who exceed this period. This is the practice that is being adopted by the various storekeepers here owing to this absurd ruling.

“We would therefore be pleased if you will give this matter your attention.

“Kind regards,

“Yours faithfully,

“W. H. GREEN.”

And yet these people tell us that they are sympathetic with the objects of the Arbitration Act!

Mr. KIRWAN: They said during the election that they wanted to extend the Act.

Mr. HYNES: Something has been said in connection with the sugar industry. We find that the sugar industry is in a much more prosperous condition to-day than it was in 1912, when it was first covered by an award of the Arbitration Court, which has prescribed a pretty high rate of wages when compared with the wages paid on the Darling Downs, for instance. In 1912 the number of growers of sugar-cane in Queensland was 4,258; the sugar produced was 130,060 tons; the average price of cane was £1 2s. per ton; and the value of the crop was £1,453,764. In 1922, after an award had been operating in the industry for ten years, the number of growers had increased to 4,700; the sugar produced was 238,928 tons; the average price was £2 11s. 4d. per ton of cane; and the value of the crop £3,363,815. That means that the growers had become prosperous by reason of the fact that they had been brought under an Arbitration Court award, and that their industry had been legislated for by the Labour party. I interjected last night, when the deputy leader of the Country party was speaking, and he replied that the sugar industry enjoyed abnormal conditions, that it had a protective tariff, and that it had been specially legislated for, and therefore could not be cited as an instance where the application of awards to rural industries had been a success. I wish, however, to point out that since the sugar agreement came into existence the world's parity has always been in excess of the amount paid for sugar in Australia. So where does the protection come in? We find that granulated sugar in Queensland to-day is costing the consumer 4½d. to 5d. per lb., and that the same sugar in London is costing the consumer 8d. per lb. We find that the reverse obtains in the butter industry. According to this morning's “Courier,” the world's parity is 140s. per cwt., which runs out at 1s. 3d. per lb.; whereas locally butter is bringing 22s. or 2s. per lb. to the consumer. Is not that protection? The butter producer has a higher protection than the sugar-grower, and he can well afford to be brought within the scope of the Arbitration Act. The speeches of hon. members opposite are all baldordash, designed to appeal to the prejudices of conservative-minded electors in their districts.

Hon. members opposite know that it is high time all industries were brought within the scope of the Industrial Arbitration Act. There is nothing to be said against it. I have already said that the alternative is direct action or a round-table conference. I have had some experience of the latter, and I know that the workers get no protection from a round-table conference at all. The

hon. member for Mirani knows something about round-table conferences, and I am going to expose a little scheme which the hon. member had in hand back in 1906, which was the first time we attempted to regulate conditions in the sugar industry.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do you remember the time he "scabbed"?

Mr. HYNES: Yes. This is an extract from the report in the Mackay "Pioneer" of 14th April, 1906, of a conference held on the 9th of that month between representatives of the Pioneer River Farmers and Graziers' Association and the Sugar Workers' Union—

"The Pioneer River Farmers and Graziers' Association were represented by Messrs. Adams, Swayne, Beldin, and Johnson, and the Sugar Workers' Union by Messrs. Harrington, Dunn, Madigan, and Swan. The following maximum rates were agreed upon:—

(1) On flat scrub or forest land where the crop exceeds 18 tons to the acre, the rate for cutting and loading into drays or wagons shall be 3s. per ton.

(2) On the same description of land when portable tramline is used the rates shall be 3s. 5d. per ton, to include the laying and lifting of rails and hauling of trucks, for which purpose the growers shall provide horses.

(3) On similar land where the tonnage is from 12 to 18 tons inclusive the rate for dray or wagon to be 3s. 6d. and for tramline 4s. per ton."

Mr. SWAYNE: Tell us what the price of cane was then.

Mr. HYNES:

"(4) In cases where the portable tramline is used the association requests the grower to assist in preparing the track to the field on which to lay the rails—with scarifier or other horse implements.

(5) Where the crop does not reach 12 tons per acre or is grown on hill scrub the contract rate to be left to the grower and contractor to mutually agree upon.

(6) That the association cause to be drawn up by a member of the legal profession a form of agreement containing amongst its conditions (a) That when the cane is burned a deduction of 1s. per ton be made in the contract price."

That meant that the cutter would get 2s. a ton for cutting burnt cane under this generous agreement—

"(b) That 20 per cent. of the money due be retained by the grower or his agent until the completion of the contract to be forfeited in case of its non-fulfilment.

(c) Also a clause providing the penalty for absence of cutters from work through avoidable cause, such penalty to be calculated upon the length of absence from work, by forfeiture of earnings according to average for the crushing season. (d) On the other hand, should the employer wilfully hinder the cane-cutters in the performance of their contract he shall find them work at the same rate."

This is the important part—

"In the case of wages men for cane-cutting, the rates to be 5s. per day and found; or, in the event of the worker

finding himself, to be allowed ration-money. The rate of wages for horse-drivers during the crushing season to be 25s. per week up to three horses and found; and over three horses the rate to be 30s. per week and found. For hoeing and general work, during the whole year round a rate of 3s. 4d. per day and found."

Mr. SWAYNE: The price for cane then was only 10s. per ton.

Mr. HYNES: I want to direct attention to the despicable tactics that were adopted by the hon. member for Mirani and his associates in connection with this conference. This goes down as a classic in the industrial history of Queensland. We find that at that particular conference the three men who were taken from the fields to represent the workers knew nothing about the terms used in framing industrial agreements. The hon. member for Mirani and his associates had inserted in the agreement the words, "The maximum rate shall be." They deliberately used the word "maximum" in the place of "minimum," and the legal position was that, if the farmers paid in excess of 3s. per ton for cutting cane, or 3s. 4d. a day for wages, they would be breaking the agreement; but they had the liberty to pay as little as they liked under the rates set out in that agreement. That was a round-table conference. That is what they want to go back to. They always had the privilege of being able to swing the big hammer on the workers who met them in conference. That is why we want the protection of the court. We want the protection of the court for all workers in Queensland. I have proved that where the court has fixed an award covering rural industrialists not only the worker has benefited, but the farmer has benefited to a phenomenal extent. That is the case in the sugar industry in Queensland, and in the fruit industry in South Australia and Victoria. We find that the application of awards to manufacturing industries has had the same effect, and has led to an increase in the output per head of the operatives who are functioning in the particular industries covered by those awards.

Mr. MORGAN: That is because of the use of up-to-date machinery.

Mr. HYNES: I find on looking at the Commonwealth "Year Book" for 1922 that the value of the output from the Queensland factories in 1916 was £25,541,024, and in 1921, when practically the whole of those industries had been covered by Arbitration Court awards, the value was £39,783,678, or an increase during the operation of the Act of £14,242,654. The output per employee for 1916 is valued at £631, and in 1921, after the industries had been covered by awards, the value had increased to £921, showing an increase of £292.

Mr. DEACON: Tell us something about the cost of living.

Mr. HYNES: We have done something with respect to the cost of living by introducing price-fixing legislation. We have increased the effective wage of the workers, and the farmers have also benefited as a result of that.

Mr. MORGAN: The hon. member is speaking with a good deal of latitude. He is talking all over the place.

Mr. KIRWAN: If he gives you enough rope, you will hang yourself.

Mr. Hynes.]

Mr. HYNES: I desire to point out the fallacy of the argument adduced by hon. members opposite, who state that, if we keep down the wages in the rural industries, the consumer will benefit. The reverse is the position. The consumer will not benefit, and the producers then will be at a distinct advantage when compared with industries that are covered by awards. By bringing them under the operation of the awards and increasing the wages, you are increasing the purchasing power of the major portion of the consumers of the State. That is an economic fact that we cannot get away from. The workers form the major portion of the consumers in the State, and, if you reduce their wages, you reduce their purchasing power, and consequently there is no demand for the products produced within the State. I maintain that there is no reason why the workers in the rural industries of Queensland should not be covered by an Arbitration Court award.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dally*): The hon. member for Townsville commenced his remarks by saying that the amendments to be proposed by the Opposition disclosed the hand of the sweater. He went back into the dark ages that we heard something about a few days ago in this Chamber. He referred to the Emperor Diocletian fixing the rate of wages in rural industries and also fixing lawyers' fees. I would remind him also that it was customary for the senators in those days to wear the toga as the insignia of office, like the Speaker's gown. Only last night the Minister in charge of the Bill said that, if we looked to the utterances of the late Sir Samuel Griffith, we would find that in 1890 he advocated that a man should receive a fair reward for his labour, which would be sufficient to keep him and his dependents in reasonable comfort. If you look further back, you will find that the first State in Australian history to recognise the principle of a basic wage was Victoria, when Sir Alexander Peacock, the then Premier, introduced his Shops and Factories Act, regulating the hours of work and the lowest rate of wages to be paid. There is nothing new in that principle. If you even look into the history of previous Governments in Queensland you will find that a good many of the principles which are contained in the principal Act and in the humanitarian legislation which we hear so much about to be found on our statute-book were placed there long before the advent of this Labour Government; yet they refuse to give credit to the Governments which passed that legislation. The Government are every day amending in the direction that was suggested by members of the Opposition during recent Parliaments. Every principle that is brought forward now to be placed on the statute-book was brought forward by hon. members on this side during the last three or four years, and they were wrongfully refused by the Government when they were so brought forward. The hon. member for Townsville spoke about the deputy leader of the Country party being deputed to reply to a measure which is almost essentially a country one. As the ex-leader of the Country party, I appreciate what the leader of the Opposition has done in deputing to the Country party the opening of the discussion on a Bill that is essentially a country one. It is not a new practice in this Chamber, because the hon. member has got to realise that we are two distinct parties—one to look after country interests

[*Mr. Hynes.*

and the other to look after industrial and metropolitan interests. It is therefore only a fair thing that the line of demarcation should be defined, and where it is essential in such matters as we are interested in we should be given the opportunity of leading on it and giving our views.

Mr. PEASE: That is not what William Morris Hughes said.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. member for Townsville, too, was rather inconsistent in some of his remarks. Reference was made by him to a circular letter which Mr. Green, the ex-member for Townsville, evidently sent round to some of his branch departments or in some other direction, and it was claimed that, as deputy leader of the United party, he was opposed to giving a fair wage. Yet is it not on record that Mr. T. L. Jones, who was once a supporter of this Government, and who contested a seat in the recent election in the interests of this Government, went into the Arbitration Court and fought a claim for wages by his employees?

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. VOWLES: Let us go a little bit further in their inconsistencies. Were we not told by no less an authority than the "Daily Standard," the official organ of the Labour party, that even during the last election non-union men printed the placards "Vote for Labour" in Brisbane? (Laughter.)

Mr. KIRWAN: What is that you said?

Mr. VOWLES: The "Standard" is responsible for this statement—that non-union men were responsible for printing the placards "Vote for Labour" at the recent election. (Revised laughter.)

Mr. KIRWAN: You withdraw that so far as I am concerned.

Mr. VOWLES: It is only natural that legislation, such as industrial legislation, should be amended from time to time. We have to keep abreast of the times, and we have to keep abreast of the inaccuracies and shortcomings of our legislation, which are only obvious when they have been put into operation. We were told by the Secretary for Public Works that, so far as the question of apprentices was concerned, the position had arisen that there was a shortage of skilled labour and a preponderance of unskilled labour in many places. Such a position is to be regretted, and the Secretary for Public Works tried to show that the fault does not lie with his department and the legislation. That statement is rather remarkable to me. I certainly am not very much in touch with the inside running of the apprenticeship question, but I have read the newspapers from time to time, and I have seen, especially in the past year, complaints of the injustice which is being done to the youth of the State by the fact that they do not have the privilege of learning a trade as they should have. I noticed at the time that there was a very marked silence on the part of the Minister, and the Minister who was in charge of the department at that time.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Which department do you mean?

Mr. VOWLES: The department in charge of the matter.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The Department of Public Works has never had control of apprentices, and will not have until after the passage of this Bill.

Mr. VOWLES: Whoever it may have been remained silent. The Secretary for Public Works in those days was a private member, and I never heard him get up in his place in this House and point out the shortcomings and ask that they be rectified.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I will quote some of my own speeches now if you like. (Laughter.)

Mr. VOWLES: It has been my misfortune on many occasions to have sat in this Chamber and listened to them, and I do not wish to sit here now and have them inflicted on me again.

It is generally recognised that the law relating to apprentices should be altered in the direction of giving to the youthful members of the community of this State the advantages and privileges of learning trades. We were told last night that an innovation is to be introduced so that apprentices in the future need not be apprenticed to one particular individual, but may be passed from job to job.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That was rendered necessary by the conditions existing in certain callings.

Mr. VOWLES: One of the largest employers of labour is the Department of Public Works, and I wish to know if the youths of the city are to have the privilege of becoming apprenticed to the department?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Yes. As a matter of fact, the department at the present time has fifty apprentices.

Mr. VOWLES: That provision is all right, provided the youths are to get the advantages; but, if those advantages are to be extended in one direction, they should be extended in other directions, more particularly in connection with the electrical trade and similar callings, where there is going to be, in the future, a big demand for skilled labour.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is the trouble now; 40 per cent. of the boys wish to be apprenticed to the electrical trade.

Mr. VOWLES: Exactly, because they see in the future great opportunities and big wages. I say they should have those opportunities. I notice, too, that there is going to be introduced into this legislation the following paragraph:—

"In every case where five or more persons, being or alleging themselves to be partners, are working in association in any calling or industry, each of such persons shall be classed as and be deemed to be an employee; and the partnership firm constituted by them, or alleged so to be, shall be deemed to be the employer of each such person."

I am just wondering whether that is intended to affect that class of individual in whom the hon. member for Herbert said quite recently he was so interested. That is the Italians, who in North Queensland by their co-operative methods have established farms and worked them to their mutual benefit and profit.

Mr. PRASE: Yes, and they are all under the Arbitration Court awards.

Mr. VOWLES: My point is, that in hitting at this individual you are showing your objection to employees banding them-

selves together in a partnership for co-operative effort, and to their thrift and advantage. That is my interpretation of that provision, and I shall ask the Secretary for Public Works at another stage a question in order that we may know exactly whom this provision is being aimed at, and what will be its effect.

To my mind, the most important alteration to the existing law is this simple little provision on the face of it, which reads—

"In proviso (i.) of section 5 of the principal Act, all words from and including 'or to persons engaged', to the end of proviso (i.) are repealed."

The words do not seem very much, but the effect, in my opinion, is going to be very drastic. It means that all classes of persons—workers who hitherto have been excluded from the operations of the Industrial Arbitration Act—are now to be included. It includes the farmer in every direction in which the farmers work. As I said in the early stage of this measure, until such time as the Government are able to show that the man primarily engaged in the agricultural industry—that is, the boss or the employer—is able to get out of the industry sufficient remuneration for himself and members of his family actively engaged in the industry to pay them a basic wage, it would be criminal to impose conditions on him so far as labour is concerned, as it will mean that his employees will get more out of the industry than he will himself. I lay it down as a general principle that artificial wages should not be created in any industry unless you create artificial prices in order that the cost shall be passed on to somebody else, thereby justifying the increase in wages by the increased cost of the commodity.

This amending Bill shows the necessity of giving due consideration to the legislation going through the House. It exemplifies the fact that frequent amendments are necessary in existing legislation and that, as a result of the hurry-scurry that went on previously, we now have to deal with two

[5 p.m.] Acts. That would not have been necessary had time been given when the Supreme Court and the Magistrates Courts Acts were under consideration, because those matters would have been pointed out at the time. Another matter deals with section 8 of the principal Act, which reads—

"Without limiting the generality of the powers of the court, the court may make an award with reference to a calling or callings—

"(b) The court shall be entitled to consider the prosperity of the calling."

But when we get down to subsection (viii.) of that section, which refers to

"Modifying or altering the early-closing provisions of the Acts relating to factories and shops to any extent deemed proper or convenient, and in particular so that any shop, business, or person to which or to whom such provisions are applicable may be wholly or partly relieved of the incidence of such provisions"—

it is proposed to add this new subclause—

"Ordering that where an award has fixed a starting time and a ceasing time for employees engaged in any calling it shall not be lawful for any person to work at such calling outside of such fixed

Mr. Vowles.]

hours, subject, however, to such exemption as the court in such award may determine."

I do not know what the intent of that is, but I would like the Minister at a later stage to let us know exactly the reason for that alteration. It appears to me that a man will not be entitled to go inside his own premises after certain working hours even to clean up, or to attend to his books, or do the hundred and one things that an employer should be entitled to do as a matter of right in his own premises at whatever time he likes. If such restrictions are to be imposed, you are unnecessarily interfering with the liberties of the individual.

I see provision is to be made concerning domestic servants. I am not quite clear whether it is the intention to regulate the wages of domestic servants. The Bill simply says that the court shall have power to determine the maximum number of working days and hours in any week in which domestic servants are to work. There is nothing wrong with that, and in any decent household such a practice has been in vogue for a considerable time. Domestic servants are not the slaves of the people on public platforms would lead the general public to believe they are. Their hours are regulated.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: They regulate them themselves as a rule.

Mr. VOWLES: They have plenty of spare time. The only thing is that there is a limitation so far as the week is concerned. If you are going to create such a rate of wages as will correspond with the basic wage or anything in proportion to it, you are going to inflict an injustice on the employer and to increase unemployment.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: What is the female basic wage now? Take the value of board from that basic wage.

Mr. VOWLES: The point is that, where people have not a superabundance of cash it will mean that any time when the mother of such a family requires assistance it will be beyond her power to get it, and so you are going to do an injustice to her.

I have had experience in connection with industrial troubles in the country in a small way. I notice that now a person who performs a certain class of work, whether requested to do so or not, and whether with the knowledge of his employer or not, is entitled as a matter of right to receive the highest rate of wages under any award for the class of work that he does. I have seen many cases of imposition upon employers. Men who were employed as general labourers have done something outside of that employment, and so made the employer responsible for paying him at the rate fixed for that outside work. Supposing a man on a farm, doing ordinary farm work, is asked to start an engine—it may take him only five minutes—and he spends the remainder of the day at his ordinary agricultural work, he would be entitled to the highest rate of wages applicable to the work he had performed during those five minutes. I say that is out of all reason. If the principle is to apply, it should be in this form—that, unless the employer can be shown to have acquiesced in the employee doing that work, he should not be held responsible.

Mr. WEIR: A good case in the court, but not here.

[Mr. Vowles.

Mr. VOWLES: The Bill will compel the employer to pay the higher wages whether he knows or not.

Mr. WEIR: The court will decide it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I will explain all that later.

Mr. VOWLES: I want the hon. gentleman to explain it clearly when we get into Committee. I notice that the Government have introduced the principle of retrospectivity. Whether a person has any knowledge or not of certain awards, an order may be made retrospective.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The Court has always had power to make retrospective awards. It is often done now with the consent of the two parties.

Mr. VOWLES: It is done when a person has a knowledge of what is going on. Sub-clause (3) of clause 10 reads—

"Failure to give notice to any person of all or any of the proceedings leading up to any award binding upon him shall not invalidate or be deemed to have invalidated any award, but such person, if he considers himself prejudiced by such award, may apply to the Court to vary the same, and the Court may vary the same accordingly in such manner and to such extent as it thinks proper, and may give retrospective operation to any such variance of such award."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: What is wrong with that?

Mr. VOWLES: It is the principle of retrospectivity that I object to. It is a wrong principle, and people who enter into a business contract are prejudiced to some extent. You will find in big contracts let to-day that there is a clause which makes provision for an alteration of price if there is an alteration of the award and an alteration in the rates of pay.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I will explain all that in Committee.

Mr. VOWLES: That is what I am asking the hon. gentleman to do.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: What about the employers' organisations?

Mr. VOWLES: The Bill simply gives them power to register themselves as industrial organisations. The following provision is added to the definition of "employer":—

"A person carrying on a calling in which employees are usually employed is an employer, notwithstanding that for the time being he does not employ any employee therein."

I would like to ask the Minister whether it is the intention to give a person who under ordinary circumstances would employ labour but at the time is not employing labour the benefit of this provision.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It gives them the benefits of that clause. It also applies in other directions.

Mr. VOWLES: I know it applies in other directions. I would like to know if that is the intention, because that may be a very laudable object, but it applies in another direction which may be harmful. It is a machinery Bill, and we shall be able to get more information in Committee than on the second reading. The principles are there: Certain persons who previously were exempted as

the result of the action of the Legislative Council are now to be brought under the Act. I remember when the Wheat Pool Bill was going through reading the remarks of the Hon. Mr. Dunstan, who said he would never rest until all employees were brought under the Arbitration Act.

Mr. DASH: You used it against him in the Maranoa.

Mr. VOWLES: I used it against him in the Maranoa, and used it very effectively, with the result that he was defeated. I quite agree with what was said this afternoon—that, when the Legislative Council on two or three occasions resisted successfully these impositions so far as the rural workers were concerned, the Government were in duty bound, after submitting to the people the question of the abolition of the Upper House on account of the acts that they had done, to respect the opinion of the majority of the people. They should have recognised that the people, more particularly the country people, who voted in such large numbers for the retention of the Upper House, did so because the members of the Council had been loyal to those people and had resisted the imposition of the principles of arbitration to their industries. If you are going to regard the will of the people and refer matters to the people at all, then the Government should take notice even at this stage of the opinions of the people of Queensland, and not be influenced by a compact made with the industrial organisations who at the Emu Park Conference recently traded away some of their rights and their principles, and the Government did the same, for political support, and made a compact with that organisation that one of the first pieces of legislation to be put on the statute-book would be an extension of the Industrial Arbitration Act to all classes of industries and to all persons engaged in those industries. That is well known to be so, and why should any Government, in order to fulfil the desires of industrial organisations, ignore the claims and rights of the people who are primarily affected by this legislation, and those are the people who have their fortunes sunk in these particular industries and are responsible for carrying them on? It is all very well for hon. members on the other side to say that the workers in country districts are entitled to the same rates of pay or even higher rates of pay than those who work in the cities receive. That is perfectly true. A man who lives in a remote part and who suffers disabilities and has not the pleasures enjoyed by these living in cities should certainly receive a higher rate of pay. With our public servants we recognise that principle, because we give a higher rate of pay to the people who live in places remote from civilisation. But why not get right back to the beginning of things? If we are going to try to keep these industries going and make them possible; if we are going to try and develop Queensland and bring people here—

Mr. KIRWAN: Good conditions—that is all we want.

Mr. VOWLES: If we are going to bring people here to help to develop Queensland; if we are going to encourage immigrants to come from the other side of the world, surely we should not impose conditions in connection with their industries that we know well those industries are unable to

bear! One hon. member quoted the sugar-workers and the sugar-growers.

Mr. HYNES: And the fruit industry in Victoria and South Australia.

Mr. VOWLES: I am talking about Queensland to-day. The hon. member for Townsville quoted the Dickson award, and he said that we on that occasion howled out against the injustice that was being done. Members on both sides of the House at the time realised how impossible it would be to carry on the industry under those labour conditions. What was the result? The Dickson award remained in operation for about two years, and there was a decreased acreage put under cane as a result. I have heard one hon. member quote figures to show that there was an increased yield. There might have been a more prolific year, but the fact remains that there was a decreased acreage under cane, which means decreased wages for the men engaged in that industry; and it was owing to the Government of the day having to make a new agreement which increased the price of sugar that enabled the worker to get the benefit of the award and the grower to get a corresponding price which would justify him paying the increased price for wages.

Mr. HYNES: Do you think the price of sugar is too high?

Mr. VOWLES: I am not talking about the price of sugar. Sugar only comes in as a side line. But sugar is an Australian industry, and is protected by an artificial price; and, when you have that artificial price, you can give everyone engaged in the industry a square go. But until you are able to create an artificial price for our ordinary farm produce—unless it can be shown that the grower is first of all getting the basic wage out of it—it would be an injustice to ask him to pay the worker a higher price for his work than the man who employs him is getting.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I do not think there is any objection at all to the principle of arbitration so far as the Opposition are concerned. It is quite wrong of the Government to infer that we object to the principle of arbitration. We are quite decided in our attitude on that question. There was no word in the Premier's policy speech in regard to this particular legislation; but, as against that, we are quite aware that at the Emu Park Convention the delegates from the different unions passed a resolution to bring all persons, including rural workers, under the Industrial Arbitration Act. I would like to know whether the intention is to bring all persons under the Act?

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Yes.

Mr. KERR: Hon. members say "Yes." If that is so, under what conditions do they exclude public servants with over £300 a year? It does not suit the Government to bring that section of workers under this legislation.

Mr. LOGAN: Members of Parliament, too.

Mr. KERR: Yes. This side of the House is out to give the farmer the full reward for his work, and to give the man who is working on a farm a fair wage. But, if the farmer is not getting a fair return for his products, how can he pay award rates to his employees? If we follow the matter out

Mr. Kerr.]

to its logical conclusion, we find that the farmer has only one alternative—that is, to get rid of his employees, which will cause more unemployment. That is not in the interests of the rural workers of Queensland. If we turn to the daily papers, we find advertisements by people asking to be taken on a farm to gain experience. That method has been effective in enabling people to learn farming before going on to the land on their own account, but it will be done away with under this Bill. There is no provision in the Bill to permit a man with capital first going on the land to gain the necessary experience. He cannot gain that experience in a technical college.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It is already possible to make arrangements for agricultural apprentices.

Mr. KERR: We are looking for something more than agricultural apprentices; we are looking for full-grown people, over twenty-one years of age, who want to make a living on the land. There is nothing in the Bill to provide for that, and I hope that the Minister will consider amendments to enable people to gain the necessary knowledge of the land before taking it up for themselves.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Have you read the principal Act? If you had any knowledge of the Act you would not be making such statements.

Mr. KERR: I have a knowledge of the principal Act, and also of this amending measure. There is no gainsaying what the amendment in this Bill is. I am satisfied that when the Minister brings in a measure he means to abide by it. In August last year there was a Trades and Labour Council meeting in Brisbane, called for the purpose of dealing with the immigration question, which has a good deal to do with farm hands. A resolution was passed, reading—

“That the council is opposed to any Government policy of immigration and markets, and is of opinion that the Australian Workers' Union should concentrate on the organisation of rural workers in view of the increased immigration.”

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

Mr. KERR: If we want an indication of the Government's policy we shall find it in that. Immigrants cannot come to this country and hope to gain experience on a farm, because the farmer cannot pay the wages laid down by the Arbitration Court, irrespective of the fact that a man may be prepared to take a lower rate of pay in order to gain the necessary experience to enable him subsequently to start for himself. I am not talking about men with nothing in the world, but men who are willing to go on a farm to learn the business, and subsequently use their capital in primary production. This is just a turn of the wheel which is going to solidify the immigration policy of the Trades Hall. It is unnecessary for me to say very much about that.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KERR: The Minister dealt with the arbitration question. I do not think that any sane person will to-day say that arbitration has not been detrimental to industrial workers. If there is one way in which it

has been detrimental, it has been in reducing the margin of skill between the skilled man and the ordinary labourer. In this measure there is no provision for the skilled man. The question of the margin of skill has been fought in the Arbitration Court week after week, and there is nothing dealing with that in the Bill.

There is also the apprenticeship question to be dealt with. When the Bill was being introduced I took up the attitude that it would not meet the situation to deal with the question of apprenticeship in the Industrial Arbitration Act and make the Act an elastic measure, as the Minister said. It is time that we passed a comprehensive measure to deal with apprenticeship. We could model it on the Victorian statute passed in 1915.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The Victorian Act has been admitted by the Victorian Government to be unsatisfactory.

Mr. KERR: We have progressed during the last seven or eight years, I hope, and there are many things in the Victorian Act which could be improved on to-day; but I defy the Minister to say that the small amendments proposed in this Bill are going to meet the situation in regard to apprentices. The Government have been in power for a considerable time. The first Act passed in regard to the apprenticeship question in Australia was assented to in 1823; and in 1859, when Queensland was separated from New South Wales, we followed on that Act. There was another Act passed in 1884, and the Government have been satisfied to work under that obsolete measure. When it is necessary, and the time is opportune, to bring in a comprehensive measure to deal with apprenticeship, they side-track the whole question, and desire to make the present Industrial Arbitration Act elastic so as to deal with the matter. The apprenticeship question has been handled in Queensland under miscellaneous regulations and notices during the last eight years. For three or four years I have persistently pointed out that the apprenticeship question is a difficult one. The Government have acknowledged that it is so, but the difficulty is not going to be overcome by this measure. We had a proclamation of ten clauses issued recently with regard to apprenticeship, more particularly dealing with the appointment of an Apprenticeship Committee and sub-committees. That proclamation was issued under the Technical Instruction Act of 1903, which deals solely with technical colleges, and has nothing to do with apprenticeship.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Have you read the regulations under the Industrial Arbitration Act, and section 4 of the Act?

Mr. KERR: There is no reference in the proclamation to the Industrial Arbitration Act. The proclamation was issued under an Act which does not authorise it, but which deals solely with technical colleges. I am very sorry indeed that the Minister has not seen fit to bring in a very comprehensive measure dealing with apprenticeship at this stage.

In this Bill the Government are wiping out the age limit for apprentices. I do not know what the object is—I hope the Minister will give an explanation in Committee [5.30 p.m.]—but I trust that provision will be made whereby a man over twenty years of age may receive at his own expense, if necessary, or in some other way the necessary experience which will make

[Mr. Kerr.

him a skilled tradesman. It is deplorable to see men drifting about from loan work to loan work, depending on the Government for employment, purely because they have not had an opportunity of learning a trade.

Something should be done also to give a lad freedom in selecting a trade. We know that lately they have been selecting apprentices for the electrical trade, because electrical work is going ahead. We should also give freedom of action to an employer so that he would be able to say, "I want to engage this particular boy." We want no restriction on the employer of the boy.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Do you not think that any restriction should be placed on employers or boys in regard to apprenticeship?

Mr. KERR: Most decidedly we should protect the boy and also the employer. That is one of the reasons why we should have a comprehensive measure to lay down the procedure in case of disagreement, death, or any other eventuality. Last session I asked a question, and found that out of 500 or 600 boys a considerable number failed in a simple sum in arithmetic merely because they had been away from school since they were fourteen or sixteen years of age. Something should be done in regard to this education question. It is of outstanding importance, and a boy should not be debarred for the remainder of his life from entering a trade simply because he is unable to do a simple sum in arithmetic because he has been away from school for a couple of years.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Quite right.

Mr. KERR: Very often we should allow a boy to join a firm on probation for three months without any trouble at all; and at the end of that time the employer could say whether he wanted to retain him or not; but, if he did not wish to keep him, he should be bound to give sound reasons. I agree with the Minister that there should be some provision for a minimum number of apprentices in view of the fact that some employers are not doing their duty in the training of lads. I want to stress the fact that, through the bad administration of this Government, some 1,200 boys are looking for avenues of employment which were open to them in 1914.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Where did you get those figures?

Mr. KERR: I took them out of certain official papers. During the last two years the Railway Department has put on only fifty apprentices, whereas in 1913 it put on 600 boys. This, no doubt, is due to the fact that the department has been so overstaffed that we now have porters doing the work of lad porters, apprentices doing the work of clerks, and artisans doing the work of apprentices.

I think that the provisions in the Bill dealing with partners take us further from the co-operative principle than ever. In future, where there are two partners, one is to be regarded as the employee of the other, and it is provided that, if an award lays down a certain number of hours to be worked by employees, only one member of the partnership can go back and work at night. It is easily conceivable that three or four men

might get together to start a new industry, but under the Bill they are to be handicapped. I can see the object of the Government. They think that, if those men are going to work sixteen hours a day, they are going to do somebody out of a job.

Mr. DASH: They are injuring their health.

Mr. KERR: That is their "pigeon," not the Government's. Why should they be debarred from doing extra work? If I wanted to start an industry with just a little capital and wished to work up a big business, any restriction upon me so that I could work only schedule hours under an award would deprive me of my chance in life. I think that would be wrong.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It would take you fourteen hours to do what the other fellow would do in eight hours.

Mr. KERR: I work harder than the hon. gentleman, and longer hours, too. What applies to the factory and other industrial concerns is going to apply to the man on the land, by virtue of the award which will be made by the court. The other day I mentioned the case of a man in my electorate who was working on a farm with his two sons, the three of whom have been getting £6 a week between them for the last three years. Is that man to send his sons, when they are twenty-one years of age, out into the world to look for work or to become unemployed? Is he to run the farm himself and reduce its production, or is it not better for the boys to work with him in the hope of increasing production and subsequently becoming owners themselves? I hope that in Committee the Minister, who is noted for his long speeches, will deal with the points raised by the Opposition, and not get on to the general aspect of the question.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): I think the Minister is to be complimented upon the thoroughness of his speech when introducing this measure. Honour to whom honour is due! On some occasions we have found that measures have been practically tumbled down before us, and we have had to strive pretty hard to understand just what they meant. Certainly the manner in which the Minister covered the big question at issue indicated his sincerity and his desire to be thorough in giving the House and the country to understand that no class of worker would be excluded from the operations of the Industrial Arbitration Act. That is all very well, but, if I gauge the hon. gentleman's utterances aright, I claim that not only did they deal with a question which was exceedingly debatable but one whose purpose was of exceedingly doubtful wisdom, and it is to deal more especially with that doubtful question that I rise to my feet. The Minister displayed a good deal of knowledge regarding the application of Arbitration Court awards and a keen desire that they might become general, but I defy anyone in this House to prove that the Minister, or indeed anyone who has spoken on the question on the other side, has shown any real expert knowledge of the conditions which obtain amongst those persons who carry on the rural work of our land. If you, Sir, had made a speech on the same lines as the Minister, I would have said that you were insincere. You have experienced country life, you have lived amidst its surroundings, you know its troubles, its perplexities, its hazardous conditions of life and the difficulties generally that surround men

Mr. G. P. Barnes.]

in connection with rural life. You have witnessed it, you have felt it and sympathised with it, but the Minister in charge of the Bill and those who attempted to support him, clearly indicated that they were altogether at sea and in perfect ignorance of the conditions that obtain in the dairying and agricultural industries.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The first work I ever did was on a dairy farm, and I worked long hours and was underpaid.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I am not quite sure whether that had to do with this country. The conditions which exist here are very different to conditions which exist in the land of the Scots, where the seasons are regular and where you can be pretty sure that rain will fall on certain days of the year, and that you will be able to carry on your work in a regular and thorough way without being interfered with by climatic visitations. In a land like ours we have a time of plenty for several months of the year, and almost immediately there follows a time of dearth and drought. I have known of two sets of conditions to obtain in one year. I have known floods to destroy crops during one portion of the year, and then during the other portion of the year they have failed to reach maturity for the want of rain. The experience of the hon. gentleman of long ago bears no analogy to the conditions which we have here to-day. If the Minister knew the conditions prevailing in Queensland or in Australia in the dairying and agricultural industries, he would hesitate before coming down to the House with a Bill of this kind. I will put myself right in this direction.

Mr. COLLINS: It is about time that you did.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The hon. member knows as well as I do that ever since I entered this House I have always advocated arbitration. There must be some court or some one to whom industrial disputes can be referred for settlement. There must be some court that will decide the differences between men. I can see no other tribunal for that purpose than an Arbitration Court. What I have urged again and again is that the court should only be a court of appeal. What we really want is a board of conciliation, where the representatives of the employers and the representatives of the employees can meet, say three from each side, with a chairman nominated by the Government of the day. They could meet at a round table conference and endeavour to arrive at a settlement of their disputes. I believe that in the great majority of cases sanity would prevail, and there would be no difficulties in connection with a final appeal to the judge of the Arbitration Court. It we could only get back to the good old wages board system, with an appeal to the Arbitration Court, we would have a system that would be pretty well perfect.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That can be done under the principal Act now. There is provision for conciliation boards to be appointed. One board was constituted, and the employers appealed to the court.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: It is a great misfortune that that privilege has not been availed of more frequently in bringing about an understanding between men, urging them first and foremost to try the easier means of the settlement of disputes; and that would certainly have the support of every

ardent lover of peace in the land. The reason for opposing the application of arbitration to the men on the land does not arise through want of sympathy for those men, nor indeed because of any hesitancy to give the men the full reward of their labour; but, so far as my judgment goes, I have never yet been able to discern any competency in any judge who may have occupied a position on the bench to deal with these questions. The judge has no idea of the general conditions of life in connection with the agricultural industry. He does not know the economical side of farm life. Let me take rent. What rent will a farm labourer have to pay? He is almost relieved of that. Then he has other privileges. The city worker has to pay for means of transit, but the farm labourer knows nothing about that. He will have the privilege of running his own horse, and running it in the paddock of the employer. He receives consideration in many other respects.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The court will naturally take all those points into consideration.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I hope it will. There is also economy in connection with dress and in connection with living, generally. If the basic wage is applied to those industries, it will be excessive and unfair from a comparative point of view. The main point is that the agricultural industries cannot stand the wages if the basic wage is going to prevail. I say that because I know the industry, and I have lived amidst its surroundings all my life. The industry will be so burdened that, instead of this Bill being designed in a way to make it helpful—as I imagine the Government have attempted to design it—it is calculated to become irksome. Instead of people going on to the land, they will leave it as fast as they possibly can. There is evidence that that is already being done, and the Bill is going to impose conditions which are going to be irksome and will prevent production.

Mention was made of the sugar industry. That is a protected industry; and, if you are going to protect every other industry in the same way as you protect the sugar industry, well and good. But, if you attempt to do that, what will you find? In the old days the great trials and troubles of the worker resulted from combines of every conceivable kind and description. They are now going to combine all labour. That is the first big combine. Now you have the sugar combine, the meat combine—practically by the Government themselves—and you have a combine pretty well for every product that you can imagine. What is going to happen by and by? What will happen will certainly require the services of the Arbitration Court. You will find that the big combine of labour will resent the impositions put upon them by some other combine, and will say, "Your article shall sell at this price or that price." Then the big fight will come. Then the revolution will come.

Mr. COLLINS: Did you say "revolution"?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I say that kind of thing will help to produce revolution.

Mr. HYNES: Keeping the employees from the court will bring that about.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: You have the first indications in that direction in the House-

[Mr. G. P. Barnes.]

wives' Association in the South. Look at the trouble our legislators have gone to in their appeal to the people in the South to get a fair thing for sugar, and yet you cannot get the Housewives' Association to believe that is the case. They are up against the present price of sugar. As in connection with the sugar industry, so it will be in connection with every industry if you try and regulate industries as against the idea of the people as to what they should be.

There is one aspect of the amending Bill before the House that I am not sure has received any attention at all at the hands of the Secretary for Public Works. That is in connection with the definition of the word "employee." I think it requires explaining. The hon. member who has just sat down made reference to the definition of "employee." The Minister certainly said nothing at all.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I will give you a full explanation of the meaning in Committee. The Speaker would call me to order if I attempted to give it now.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I believe there is a tremendous difficulty in connection with the definition of "employee." It is going to interfere in every case where five individuals are engaged on a farm. They may be working a farm on the share system, or a man may work the farm with the help of his family. Immediately there is a family of five working on the farm "being or alleging themselves to be partners" they come under the influence of this Act. Can you imagine anything that is going to be more derogatory to the wellbeing of the farming industry than to have a condition like that imposed on our people? Our people throughout the land want to wake up, and, where families are engaged in working the farm, there are but few instances where there are not at least five of its members engaged. The wife goes into the dairy every morning, and every child lends some assistance.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: That is a scandal.

Mr. HYNES: You do not want to perpetuate that state of affairs?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: It is so. The hon. member for Townsville would like to impose on me the idea that I refer to children under ten years of age and of very minor ages. I say that boys and girls until they leave their homes are children, and they are regarded as such in farm life. According to this Bill, they will come under the heading of "employee." That is going to strike a serious blow, particularly at the dairying industry. The work in dairying is not arduous. Everyone must admit that sometimes children too young are engaged in it, but it is a case of children of fair ages who may be still going to school, who, in many instances, give a hand in connection with the dairy farm. They do no injury to themselves. Why, the best men in our land, the best people we know, have gone through that gruelling and enjoyed it, and, because a number of men are out against labour and quarrelling with service, it does not follow that every farmer in the land and his children too quarrel with service. What I find in my life is that these people love work, and they are on the land simply because they do love the work, and they are carrying it out with the fullest intention of getting the greatest measure of joy out of it.

Mr. COLLINS: Do you want to convince us that a man works simply because of his love of work?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I believe that in the olden days the hon. member for Bowen was very much in sympathy with work.

In connection with the apprenticeship question, it is high time the Government woke up. They have wrapped a wet blanket about the question of apprenticeship for many years. Whilst their real hand may not have at all times been seen, I am sure that they have insinuated into the organisation with which they have had to do directly or indirectly their ideas, and those ideas are largely attributable to the fact that the apprenticeship system to-day has not worked out as it should have done. Anyone can see in a growing land like ours that it will not overtake the calls that will be made in some particular trade or another for skilled artisans unless we train our young men for the purpose. We have not been doing that. In every path of life you look upon apprenticeship has been a thing of the past. The result is that to-day we have to amend our legislation in order to correct the mistakes of the past, and the outcome of those mistakes has been the vast number of our fellows who are going about to-day as unemployed and who can find no employment, whilst on the other hand there is craft work waiting for them. If they had only been educated and trained to that particular work, they would not have been unemployed. It is a downright crime and a serious reflection on the legislation of the past seven or eight years to know that we have the unemployed in our midst to the extent we have—men who might have been suitable and been made suitable by having a trade at their hand, and who would to-day, instead of receiving doles from the Government, have found employment as bricklayers, carpenters, stone-masons, or in some other department of labour.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Miran*): I think this measure affords an interesting illustration as to the extent to which the present Government are dominated by outside sectional influences. In 1916 the Upper House amended

the Bill then introduced by the Government by omitting the provision including agricultural labourers; and I do not think anyone was better pleased than the Government. At any rate, it is most significant that, although they have been quite free for some time to bring in such a measure, they evidently thought it undesirable to do so. I suppose it was brought home to them that it would not benefit them to include the general farm labourer within the ambit of such a measure. However, we know that the command was issued only the other day at the Emu Park Convention, and it bears out the contention that the Government are not their own masters. They have to abide by the decisions arrived at by these conventions. As showing that this is only the beginning of what their masters propose in this connection, I want to refer to to-day's "Standard"—

Mr. HYNES: At whose dictation did you advise the farmers to strike against the Dickson award?

Mr. SWAYNE: The "Standard" says—
"At a general meeting of Australian Workers' Union members, held at the Maryborough Trades Hall last Friday, the following resolution was adopted—

Mr. Swayne.]

'That this meeting of members of the Australian Workers' Union views with regret the absence of the proposed enactment of the forty-four-hours Bill as agreed to at Emu Park Conference; and, further, that we bring this matter immediately before the branch executive for action to be taken through our representation on Queensland Central Executive; further, that the resolution be published in the Labour Press.'

The farmers have to look forward not only to what is embodied in the present Bill, but very shortly they will have added difficulties to contend with. The experienced man in every branch of agriculture knows that by shortening the working hours an additional burden is placed on the employer. When there are live stock to look after they have to be looked after by the producer himself. However, it quite bears out what I contended during my recent campaign, when I pointed out that any concession that was given to the farmers by the Government would have to be paid for twice over. I told the farmers that the only party they could look to for permanent fair dealing is the Country party, as the members of that party are all engaged in farming.

I have stated on previous occasions that the farmers would have to pay dearly for any benefits they received from the present Government. What is now happening is a sufficient indication that I was quite right. It was urged at Emu Park that this was in return for something that was given; and in future anything that is given will, as I have already said, be paid for twice over. I may say that I believe in the principle of the employee and the employer coming together. There should be some method—arbitration or wages boards—by which the two parties interested could come to a mutual understanding as to what is a fair thing between man and man. I do not consider that the present Arbitration Court is the best method of dealing with such matters. While dealing with the court let me say that in the person of the present president of the court we have a man who is most conscientious, most painstaking, and most courteous to all who come before him. I think it only right that I should say that. He is a man who is held in very high esteem, and, whatever blame may be attached to the court, certainly does not rest with him. One feature in connection with the court that strikes me is that the employees, or the organisations representing the employees, are often represented by extremists who do not wish for a peaceful solution of the difficulty, and who have declared that they believe in nothing short of Sovietism. It was said at Emu Park that nothing short of the entire abolition of the present capitalistic system would meet the case. You have only to look at the claims that are put forward by the unions—I suppose by the officials, in good faith—to realise that, if they got their way, the present system would be abolished. I suppose this is one of the methods by which they propose to abolish the present system. No doubt they think they are right, but at the same time those who do not believe in Sovietism must realise that it is against their interests to support bodies who use every opportunity of bringing us nearer to extreme communism. This Bill, in common with many other measures that we have had before us, is a step towards Sovietism. The claims put before the court

[Mr. Swayne.

show that it is not a peaceful solution they wish for, but that they desire the position of the employer to be made so difficult that it will be impossible to employ labour. The chief question that we have to bear in mind now is whether this measure is going to be conducive to what, after all, is the chief requirement of Queensland to-day—land settlement and immigration—and also its effect upon the cost of food. It is generally admitted that one of the greatest needs of Queensland to-day is more people for the protection of the State. Only the other day one of the most prominent men in the Labour movement in England, Ben Tillet, pointed out that the world was on the edge of a great war, and, when we talk of war, we must remember that what is called the problem of the Pacific is being forced on us. We know that within the last few months statements have been made by representatives of populous countries bordering on the Pacific declaring their right of entry into any country on the Pacific. We must realise that our only chance of maintaining our control of this country is by getting more help from the people of our own race. It has been remarked, and quite rightly, that we do not want to add to unemployment. The only way to bring people here without adding to that trouble is to bring those with money, who will go on the land and engage in primary production. I ask if such a measure as this is likely to bring them here. Is it not likely to cause them to go to other States? Again, is the agricultural industry in Queensland in such a state of prosperity at the present time that we can afford to increase the load on those engaged in it? Anyone who looks around must see that it is not in such a position. Furthermore, many branches of agriculture, such as the wheat and butter industries, are dependent on the world's market for the sale of a considerable amount of their production, and it is recognised that it is only safe to extend the Arbitration Court awards to industries the prices for products of which are ruled by local conditions. If our primary industries are brought under this measure, the conditions under which the farmer carries on will be so stringent that he must have a certain price for his butter. The buyer in England will say, "That has nothing to do with me. I can get my butter from Denmark and other parts of Europe, and I am not going to pay any more for it." The same thing applies to the sale of wheat. This is not the proper time to add to the difficulties of our agriculturists by legislation of this kind. I believe that the members of the Government quite realise this; but, as I have pointed out, they are being driven and cannot help themselves. The hon. member for Townsville had something to say about myself when he was speaking. It is not the first time he has mentioned me; in fact, I do not think he has made a speech in this House without personal references to myself. I can treat them as they deserve, seeing that on the two occasions on which the hon. member has opposed me I have beaten him. (Opposition laughter.) The hon. member largely conducted his campaign on the lines of the speeches he makes in the House. I was able to leave the matter to the electors to decide, and the decision was not adverse to me. I can leave the hon. member in the hands of the House, just the same as I left him in the hands of the electors of Mirani on the two occasions I have referred to.

Mr. HYNES: You are singing your swan song. You will go next time.

Mr. SWAYNE: The hon. member made a mistake when he told us that the sugar industry had been benefited by the award of the Arbitration Court—I think he even mentioned the Dickson award. He talked about a strike. He mentioned me in that connection, but I was not in the district at the time. The Dickson award cost Australia millions of pounds. We know that, when sugar was very dear outside, our production in Australia fell off, and large quantities of sugar had to be brought into Australia at almost double the cost we should have had to pay if we had been able to produce the whole of the sugar required here. The difference in price amounted to several million pounds. Had it not been for the Dickson award, a considerable quantity of that sugar would have been produced here, instead of being brought in from outside. As showing the effect of that award, I would like to quote from the "Australian Sugar Journal" a report of what a Queenslander told the Southern Press in an interview regarding the position which arose—

"The Queensland Government is convinced that unless something is done to solve the problems existing, fully half the mills now in commission in Queensland will cease operations, and will not again open for business. This would probably mean this season a failure to realise the estimate production by at least 60,000 tons of sugar, which represents half of what should be produced. The effect would be ruinous to the sugar districts. The closing of the mills would ruin those who have invested in them, and ruination would follow to the farmers who rely on these mills to crush their cane. If the difficulty is not solved there will be also next year a further large falling off in the production. Probably the crops will then be not more than 100,000 tons, instead of 200,000 tons."

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What was his name?

Mr. SWAYNE: I will give it to you—Mr. Theodore. (Opposition laughter.) I will read the heading—

"State Treasurer's view of the situation."

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: When was that?

Mr. SWAYNE: 10th October, 1916, just after the award was made. I think it was published in September, 1915.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Do you tell this Chamber that Mr. Theodore said that?

Mr. SWAYNE: Mr. Theodore said exactly what I have read, and I will quote the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill at the same time. On 21st September, 1916, Mr. Adamson, in the Legislative Assembly, informed the present Secretary for Public Works that—

"In view of the large number of unemployed in the Mackay district, he would endeavour to find work for them on railway construction."

That was in September, right at the end of the crushing season!

Mr. HYNES: That is when you got the farmers to go on strike—locked them out!

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. SWAYNE: We are discussing an important principle of the Bill, and I think that discussion should be free and uninterrupted. I have given you what hon. members occupying responsible positions on the Government side of the House said on that occasion.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member should lay that paper on the table of the House.

The SPEAKER: If the hon. member mentions the authorities he has quoted, it is quite sufficient.

Mr. SWAYNE: I mentioned the name and date of each paper. What more do hon. members want? I was reminded of the Dickson award by the hon. member for Townsville, otherwise I would not have mentioned it. I am illustrating what may happen if these industries are placed at the mercy of one man—the judge. After all, judges are human, and mistakes made by a court may be very costly indeed to the community. I wish now to quote from the "Australian Sugar Journal" of 6th July, 1916, a report of the Arbitration Court proceedings dealing with the framing of new awards for the sugar industry when Mr. Kerr appeared on behalf of the corporation of the Treasurer. Mr. Kerr was quoting some figures showing the great value of the industry to the State in order that His Honour might take into consideration the ability of the industry to pay the wages asked when the award was being framed, and this was said—

"His HONOUR: What is your contention?"

"Mr. KERR: We admit the claim to the extent of a 5 per cent. increase.

"His HONOUR: Do you admit that the industry cannot afford that amount?"

"Mr. KERR: On the returns from the central mills, it cannot, but the corporation of the Treasurer has admitted the claim to that extent.

"His HONOUR: If I pay any attention to your argument, I must not award any increase?"

The judge looked upon the admission of a 5 per cent. increase as virtually meaning nothing. It was nothing compared with the increase that was made in the award. The report continues—

"Mr. KERR: If the increase is given, the grower will have to make it up in some way.

"His HONOUR: There is the alternative that the price of sugar will have to go up?"

"Mr. KERR: If the mills were to be kept in their present condition without an advance in the rate of raw sugar, the price of cane will have to be reduced."

That was the plea that was put up by the Government representative.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman has, for the last ten or twelve minutes, been dealing with the Dickson award. He will be in order in making reference to that award, but he is not in order in proceeding on the lines that he is now doing. When the hon. member for Townsville was speaking I allowed him some latitude, as is customary with new members, but I have also allowed the hon. member for Mirani a good deal of latitude to reply. I am quite sure that he will see that he is not dealing

Mr. Swayne.]

with the Bill before the House in proceeding in the way in which he is now doing.

Mr. SWAYNE: I am sorry if I transgressed. I was simply pointing out that very great power of doing injury is to be placed in the hands of those who preside over the court. I think it is just as well, when we embark on new legislation on this subject, to realise the risks we are running. Speaking with a knowledge of the working of awards in regard to the sugar industry, I think that, with one exception, the wages that were granted were not extortionate when the conditions in the industry are taken into consideration. I am not attacking the question of the wages so much. I am more concerned about the hours and other conditions. When the first award was made, it stipulated that the day's work should commence at 7 a.m. and should terminate at 5 p.m.

I have had some experience of agriculture all round. Long before ever I saw sugarcane growing I engaged in wheat harvesting. I also lived in a district which was considered to be one of the finest lucerne districts in Australia, and I know something about the conditions in connection with the harvesting of cereal and hay crops. Fancy a farmer engaged in harvesting on a day with every appearance of rain and anxious to get as much under cover as he could, either in the stacks or sheds, having to knock off work at 5 o'clock with two or three hours of daylight to go! It might be said that he could overcome the difficulty by paying overtime, but farmers are not always in the position to do that. It is hard enough for the farmer to meet the ordinary wages bill without paying overtime. I notice that power is given the court under the Bill to prohibit the employees coming under an award from working before or after the times of starting or ceasing as laid down in the award. In the sugar industry I have known of a contract cane-cutter who was fined for working after or before hours. In our case it is not a case of working the eight hours, but of the times he may work during a heat wave. Sometimes for three or four weeks it is quite impossible to work in the middle of the day. I have been on the implement at 4 o'clock in the morning, knocked off work at 8 o'clock, and started again at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. That was during a heat wave. That is the only way the horses can be got to stand up to their work. Under this Bill I question very much whether even an employer can work those hours under such circumstances, but it is quite clear the employees can be forbidden. Pieceworkers sometimes transgress the provisions of the award and are fined. It seems rather hard that they cannot work during the cool of the day when Nature is more favourable. It is rather interesting to study the findings of the court to see how they conflict with the opinions of experts. In Townsville we had an expert in tropical diseases, Dr. Breinl, who was in control of the Institute of Tropical Medicine on behalf of the Commonwealth. He was asked to report as to the ability of our race to live and work in the tropics. His opinion was that there was nothing to prevent them working, only he said they would have to work in accordance with Nature at certain times of the year, taking advantage of the cool of the evening and morning. Yet the judge comes along and says, "You must

not work before 6 o'clock in the morning." For two or three weeks in the harvesting, if you want to work with comfort and advantage, you must work before or after those hours. Those are conditions that are felt to be sometimes unduly stringent. Then, again, a proviso is very often inserted by the court in its awards designed to protect the employee from any hardship, and we sometimes find that the intention of the court is stretched and strained in such a way that what was designed to save one section from hardship has been the means of imposing a distinct hardship on another. After the 1918 cyclone the cane was in a very bad state and very difficult to handle. In the next award a proviso was made to meet the case of cyclone cane. On a farm in my neighbourhood, in a year when there was no cyclone, one of the cutters raised the question of the payment of the extra rate for cyclone cane with respect to the cane that he was engaged on, alleging it to have been damaged by cyclone. The employer refused to comply with the demand, and said it was nothing of the kind and that it was only in its ordinary condition. The award said that, in the event of a dispute arising, it was to be remitted to, and decided by, the industrial magistrate, and that work in the meantime was to proceed as usual. The cutters said they would not work [7.30 p.m.] as usual, but would cut the straight cane and leave the other on the ground pending a decision. In the meantime that cane would be spoiled, and, if the decision went against them, they would throw up the job, and it would be impossible to obtain others to finish it. The farmer said, "Unless you go on cutting in accordance with the award, you can leave the cane."

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Whose farm was that?

Mr. SWAYNE: I am not going to give the name of the farmer. We know very well what happens in those cases. It is all very well for the hon. members opposite who do not grow cane and who have produced nothing themselves to ask for the name.

Mr. KIRWAN: If you were paid by what you produce, you would not get award rates.

Mr. SWAYNE: I am giving instances of how awards are sometimes abused. Pending the decision of the industrial magistrate, those cutters refused to go on, and when the decision was not given in their favour, and the magistrate decided that it was not cyclone cane, and that no extra rate should be given, that farmer was called upon to pay £9 for lost time. He naturally objected strongly, and on arguing the matter was told by the court magistrate that peace had to be kept, and, whether rightly or wrongly, the employees had to get something. It is stated that the Act has made for industrial peace.

Mr. KIRWAN: Hear, hear!

Mr. SWAYNE: I will give official figures to show to what extent it has worked in the interests of peace. I am quoting now from "Votes and Proceedings"—

"Mr. Swayne asked the Secretary for Public Works—

How often since the coming into force of the Industrial Arbitration Act of 1916 have the results of ballots, held in connection with the strikes that have since occurred, been communicated to

[Mr. Swayne.

the registrar as required by section 65 of the Act?

"Answer was—
Twenty-nine instances."

There are twenty-nine instances officially reported, and we know that for every one reported half a dozen are never reported. I think it would be found on investigation that the claim that this legislation has made for peace is not founded on fact.

I find again that in September, 1919, the "Cairns Post" correspondent stated—

"Owing to the strike, hundreds of bales of sacks were held up at the Southern ports, and these could not be delivered at the raw sugar-mill, with the result that many of the mills were delayed for some time from starting crushing operations, and many of them had been compelled to crush their sugar and pile it up in store in heaps, and it will have to be bagged before it can be shipped."

Generally we find that, if anything, there have been more industrial strikes since the passing of the Act than before. I will give the Premier's opinion regarding the matter. I quote from the "Courier" of 5th December, 1917—

"Speaking at Babinda last night, the Premier (Mr. Theodore) said there was a tendency among certain men to make things impossible for a Labour Government to carry on. There was a danger that the Australian Workers' Union and other unions, unless they enforced discipline, would do more harm than good to the Labour movement. It was easy to see that the Australian Workers' Union had become disintegrated. It would be a thousand pities if this organisation, which had 30,000 members in Queensland, allowed sabotage"—

and so on. We find that these bodies, which so largely control the position, are in turn coming under the control of elements of that kind. I am very much against increasing the farmer's difficulties at the present time, more particularly in view of the agricultural position and the difficulties of those engaged in mixed farming, and the impossibility of those engaged in export branches being able to pass it on to buyers. I do not think it right to do anything to increase these difficulties, to increase the cost of living, or to hamper production in any other way, more particularly in view of the desire to encourage farmers to come to Queensland from overseas and so increase the population and in turn give employment to others.

So far as the apprenticeship provision goes, I think there is a good deal to be said in favour of it. I notice that the age limit has been done away with. In the course of a conversation with the president of the Arbitration Court some time ago on the question of apprenticeship, he said that it would be a very good thing if Parliament dealt with it, and I think so, too. While not voting against that part of the Bill, I will do my very utmost to prevent the inclusion of the reference to the agricultural industry. As my time is now limited, I will reserve my reasons until the Bill reaches the Committee stage.

Mr. BULLOCK (*Barcoo*): There is an old maxim that traditions and prejudices die hard, and we see it exemplified in the

attitude of the Opposition towards the amendment of the Industrial Arbitration Act. We know that in 1916 there were gentlemen occupying the Opposition benches who rejoiced in different names to those they hold to-day so far as the designation of their political thoughts are concerned. To-day they come forward and say they are a new party, with a new aim, and with new political principles. The one particular principle that they enunciate to-night and which they have been enunciating throughout the whole of this debate, is precisely the particular principle that the old Liberal and National parties have enunciated ever since there has been representation in Queensland. It is regrettable that the hon. members opposite who have risen to address themselves to this question in antagonism to the attitude of the Government and the desire of the Government have not put forward anything in the way of concrete arguments and concrete facts. If they convince hon. members on this side of the House with their arguments that a grievous injury would be done the agricultural industries of the State by the passage of this Bill, then hon. members on this side of the House would not be prepared to inflict that injury on those industries. But the arguments of hon. members opposite have been general. They have been specious; they have not confined themselves to a discussion of the question; but, like the hon. member who has just resumed his seat, they discussed the attitude of the workers to sugar and sugar to the workers—a question that is not involved, generally speaking, in the Bill that is before us. The time has come when you must analyse the principles underlying the Bill, and see just what the tendency is so far as the application of this Bill to industry is concerned. We have to consider the economic position of the farm worker, and the economic position of the farmer, too. Hon. members opposite who have spoken in opposition to the principles of this Bill are, in the main, exemplifying the Marxian doctrine that they are guarding their economic interests. It may be interesting to the people outside to know that, with the exception probably of the hon. member for Enoggera, Mr. Kerr, hon. members who have spoken in opposition to this Bill have spoken as employers of agricultural labour. The arguments they have been adducing are arguments that might readily be used in the Arbitration Court in response to an application for an award, but they certainly have not at any time discussed the principles underlying the measure that we propose to pass.

I realise that, when we come to tackle this question of industrial organisation in the field of primary production, we are faced with one of the biggest questions of our lives. I know that a healthy, virile agricultural population is the foundation of the social fabric of our State, and, realising that, I realise that those people who are laying the social foundation of our State are worthy of decent conditions and decent wages. There has been some talk about our attitude towards unionism. I think the ex-leader of the Opposition had something to say about this party having engaged non-union labour to produce our election signs. I can see no confirmation of that complaint, but there is a saying which might be distorted just a little and might be made to read "People who live in glass houses should

Mr. Bulcock.]

not cast reflections." The hon. gentleman who made that charge probably was not aware of this information which is in my possession. It reads—

"The following is a little matter that may be useful to you for propaganda purposes, and incidentally you may be able to remedy the injustice under which one of our members is suffering. The facts are, 'G. Spence, a drayman, owning his own turnout and in the employ of the City Council, was given orders by the General Storekeeper at 8 a.m. on the 11th May, 1923, to go to Raymond and Hossack's sawmill and get a supply of timber which was to be brought back to the council yard. It was there unloaded and cut into lengths and placed back on his dray again, together with two tables and a tarpaulin. He was then instructed to deliver the goods to Brook street polling-booth for Vowles's committee of the Country party. The whole of this job lasted two hours, and he was rather surprised on the next pay day when he was deducted 5s. 6d. from his weekly wage. He made claim to the City Council clerk, Mr. Williams, for the amount short paid. Mr. Williams stated that he could not be paid for that work as it was not allowed. He then approached Mr. Vowles's committee and asked for payment for the two hours. His request was refused."

I suppose that is the hon. gentleman's conception of political and commercial morality.

Having been drawn off the argument by the attack made by the hon. member for Dalby concerning our attitude towards the unions generally, I want now to pursue the legitimate trend of my argument. It is clear that the economic position of the farm worker is dependent upon the financial result of the industry. An improvement in the farmer's position is not followed by an improvement in the farm worker's position save and except in the quantity of work he will be required to perform. That is to say, that under our present system of regulation or want of regulation of the wages that shall be paid to the farm worker, it is abundantly clear that the only way that the farm worker is liable to share in any extra prosperity in the farming industry is, undoubtedly, by the fact that he will be required to perform more work. Most of us are of the opinion that all classes in the community—I am speaking of members on this side of the House—are desirous of giving all classes in the community a fair deal. It is obvious that this question of agricultural organisation has agitated the minds of the people for a very considerable period. In the early annals of our industrial history—in the very dawn, if one might term it such, of industrial organisation or of the union movement—we find this question of the organisation of the agricultural workers occupying a very prominent place in the forefront of the politics of those days. Going back nearly a century—to 1834—we find an attempt was made in that year to organise the agricultural workers in England under the auspices of the then Federated Labour Council in England, and the farmers employing labour, becoming alarmed at the growth of this organisation, appealed to the magistrates to issue a warning to agricultural labourers that, if they so much as dared to have aspirations to

join the organisation, they would be punished, and, if they actually did join this organisation, which proposed to increase wages from 6s. to 7s. a week, they stood a very grave risk of being transported for a period of seven years. Three days after this, a warrant was issued for the arrest of six labourers in the village of Tolpuddle, in the South of England, who, when arrested, were treated as if they had committed a most grievous crime, and they were sentenced to seven years' transportation to Australia. So we see the dawn of the opposition of hon. members opposite, and they have not evolved from the position that was taken up by their predecessors in 1834 when they arrested six Tolpuddle labourers and sentenced them to seven years' transportation and eventually sent them to Australia.

Mr. COSTELLO: They became wealthy men.

Mr. BULCOCK: It is obvious, if they became wealthy men, that the hon. member is not one of them. As a matter of fact, the sentences were commuted and they returned to England some little time after they were transported. After those six labourers were transported for attempting to increase their salaries by 1s. per week, petitions were sent to Parliament practically from every centre in England asking that Parliament should regulate the wages of farm employees. Parliament did not do so, and I suppose, if we could take up the debates as reported in "Hansard" for 1834 and 1835, we would find that the minds and the opinions of gentlemen in the Commons on that occasion were absolutely synonymous with the minds and opinions of gentlemen sitting on the Opposition benches to-day. Hon. members opposite are fond of telling us that they believe in evolution. They believe in evolution for the other people, but they believe in liberty, as employers, to sweat the farm labourer who has to accept employment from them. The economic position of the farm labourer has not been a very happy one. Time and again I have risen in my place here and defended the right of the farmer to a fair, decent, and equitable system of livelihood. If I do that for the farmer, I have the right to claim that the same treatment shall be extended to the farm labourer. Hon. members opposite who expound the platform of the Country party put in the forefront of their platform "Equality to all." They desire to exemplify that equality by giving the farmers the best organisation of their industry which can be brought about, without allowing the farm labourer to enjoy the benefits which accrue from the action of the State in looking after the agriculturists and taking an intelligent interest in the welfare of the producers. Hon. members opposite have pointed out during this debate that we have to sell the majority of our products in England and overseas, and have consequently to compete with the overseas parity. There is one point which is apparently deliberately overlooked by hon. members opposite in that regard, and that is this—that the capital value of land in the older settled countries of the world is far greater than the capital value of land in Queensland, and the capital that is necessary for the raising of a crop in England is far greater than the capital necessary for the raising of a crop in our own State. That has to be taken into consideration in computing the actual out-of-pocket expenses incurred in the production of any given article. I believe

[Mr. Bulcock.

there has been concerted obstruction to the rural workers gaining access to the Arbitration Court. Not only do we see it in the proposed passage of this measure—and the history of our desire to place this measure on the statute-book dates back to 1916—but we had a definite practical example of the desire of hon. members opposite to exclude rural workers from the Arbitration Court when the Australian Workers' Union desired to cite a case with regard to station hands in the Federal Arbitration Court. I have had some definite experience along those lines, and know that for years and years we were delayed in regard to the presentation of our case to the Federal Arbitration Court. We were told that the court had no jurisdiction. But, when we used the entire weight of our organisation in the Federal Court—when we said, in effect, "That, if we had no jurisdiction over the station hands, we did not desire an award for the shed, shearing, or scouring hands," then the Court said, "You shall have jurisdiction over the station hands." With that established, we got our case through, and we went from £1 or £1 5s. a week in our initial award to £2 8s. a week, and the "Glugs of gloom" predicted that the pastoral industry would be ruined. But the position to-day, so far as the sheepmen are concerned, at least, is that they are passing through a period of unexampled prosperity and are well able to pay the wages, and even much higher wages than they are required to pay at the present time.

Mr. VOWLES: What about the cattlemen?

Mr. BULCOCK: At the time the award for the cattlemen went through, it was obvious that the cattlemen could pay it; but I want to draw the attention of the ex-leader of the Country party to the fact that, so soon as that industry became less prosperous and appeared to have fallen on evil days, the Arbitration Court reduced the wages in accordance with the decreased prosperity of the industry. So that the incidence of an arbitration award for the cattlemen was a variable quantity which could be extended or diminished, and was governed by the prosperity of the industry; and the same practice applies in the application of any award made by the State Arbitration Court. It is obvious that this system of farm regulation is necessary if we are going to produce a sturdy, virile country population. It does not require very much political foresight to see that the main reason why we are suffering from a dearth of skilled agricultural labourers is due to the fact that the wages and inducements which are being offered to the agricultural labourer in the farming districts to-day are absolutely inadequate, and prevent him from ever becoming a farmer himself or extending in any other given direction. It is obvious that a man on £1 a week is never going to establish an economic independence, nor is he going to be able, under our present conditions, to establish himself on a farm of his own. I maintain that the farm labourer of to-day is the potential farmer of to-morrow. We want the young men of Queensland who are going to be trained in the principles and practice of farming to be able to start for themselves. It is quite apparent that the majority of the old farm hands, who have been exploited for the best part of their lives, stand a very good chance of spending their days in Dunwich, unfortunately, under the present system, which hon. members opposite seek to perpetu-

ate by refusing to allow this amendment to go into the Industrial Arbitration Act. In times of depression and grave national crisis we find the farm labourers applauded to the skies. We find men like Lloyd George saying, "Never again shall the farm labourer be allowed to subsist in the abject poverty to which he has been accustomed. We will raise him up, and give him a proper place in our community." During the period of the war in England the farm labourer was getting decent conditions—conditions which he had never dreamed of before—and agriculture boomed in Great Britain. But with the passing of the war the promises made in the heat and passion of battle were forgotten, until we find to-day that the agricultural labourer is being thrown back on to his own economic resources, which in effect means that he is subsisting partly on the wages he is receiving from the employer, and partly on the doles he is getting from the various boards of guardians. This principle of conciliation is no new principle. The Coalition Government in Great Britain in 1921 repealed the Agricultural Production Act, and broke the solemn promises they had given to the farmers, repudiating every promise they had made to the agricultural producers of England. They did these things, and no protest was made and no voice raised against repudiation in that respect; and yet it was one of the greatest examples of repudiation one can find. When they repealed that Act in 1921 the Conciliation Committee was appointed by the House of Commons to consider the regulation of the wages and conditions of farm workers. It is obvious that the employers have up to the present taken advantage of the scattered nature of the industry. The men engaged in primary production—the employees—cannot get together to discuss their grievances and formulate logs. That has always been taken advantage of, and the workers most difficult to organise are those who cannot get together and discuss their grievances.

Mr. LOGAN: The same thing applies to the farmers.

Mr. BULCOCK: We gave the farmers a system of organisation whereby they became masters of the destiny of their own products.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Nonsense.

Mr. BULCOCK: I do not desire to enter into the technical details of what we did last session and in previous sessions in that direction, but the outcome of our whole system of legislation was the creation of an organisation whereby the farmers should be enabled to control the destiny of what they were producing. And it is doing that to some considerable extent at the present [8 p.m.] time; but the point is that we gave them that organisation with a Government bounty or subsidy. We not only created the machinery, but we also financed the machinery to put them in a better position than they had occupied in the past, and in spite of what hon. members may have to say to the contrary it is obvious that the justification for the legislation which we placed on the statute-book to benefit the farmer is the fact that it has met with a very ready and a very hearty acceptance and response amongst the farming communities of Queensland.

Mr. EDWARDS: What have you done in a practical way?

Mr. Bulcock.]

Mr. BULCOCK: I would not be inclined to suggest that the hon. member for Nauaugo was capable of evolving anything practical for the wellbeing of the country which he is supposed to represent. I believe that amongst other things the passage of this Bill is going to bring about one thing which is very necessary to the agricultural prosperity of our State. I refer, of course, to the extension of the system of individual homes. There are any number of men who are sick and tired of working for wages. Give the employees in agricultural pursuits an opportunity to earn good wages, and it will not be long before they are endeavouring to select land of their own, and, with the opportunities which we are offering in Queensland to-day, that aspiration will be easy of realisation. Those individuals are not likely to employ labour. When all is said and done, the volume of employment in the rural industries not already covered by awards is relatively small, and, as a matter of fact, the majority of the labour employed is of a casual nature. The organisation which dominates these industries from an industrial point of view—that is, the Australian Workers' Union—rightly and legitimately claim the right to protect its members during the whole period of their employment, and not during broken periods. That is to say, if a man takes a ticket in the Australian Workers' Union for twelve months and pursues rural work, the Australian Workers' Union believes that he should be protected for the whole twelve months and not for any period of it, and there is therefore very grave reason why the worker should be brought within the ambit of the Arbitration Court in this particular direction. In France, there are no fewer than 6,000,000 agricultural producers engaged in individual farming. The number is just double in the United States of America, and the time will come when we in Queensland will be able to count the number of persons engaged in agricultural industries, first by hundreds of thousands, and finally by the million. That is the destiny of Queensland, from which she cannot escape, and, that being so, we must endeavour to formulate a basis on which we can work. It is obvious that all the legislation we have been passing has had the effect of standardising agricultural pursuits; and would you standardise cheese and butter and create pools and let the biggest question of the whole lot—that is, the standardisation of wages—go unsolved? There are many ways of looking at this question. Did you notice that one of the morning papers reported the other day that a body of unfortunate Russian doreticks had landed in Queensland? And did you see two or three days later that those unfortunate individuals, who were supposed to have come from agricultural districts, had been employed at 15s. a week? Is that what hon. members opposite desire to perpetuate? Do they desire that able-bodied men should be employed for 15s. a week; and do they expect that, having been engaged at that figure, they will be able to exhibit the degree of citizenship that is desirable in a State with a democratic Constitution such as ours?

Mr. CORSER: Fancy them wanting to come here for 15s. a week! It shows what Russia must be like.

Mr. BULCOCK: It has been suggested that the volume of wages in the United Kingdom in agricultural pursuits is such as

to allow the producer to compete successfully with us, or to put his produce on the market at a lower rate. An analysis of the latest figures I have been able to get shows that, relatively speaking and actually speaking, workers in agricultural pursuits in England are receiving more than workers engaged in similar tasks in Queensland. To be explicit, the actual wages that are being paid in Scotland are from £1 14s. to £2 4s. a week, and in England from £1 9s. to £1 19s. a week.

Mr. MOORE: And keep themselves.

Mr. BULCOCK: That is not so. Opposition members have repeatedly said that the cost involved by an award is passed on. The costs of awards are passed on sometimes, unfortunately, but at other times they are not. The woolgrowing industry was not an industry which was able to pass it on, and yet it provides an example of an award which has met with conspicuous success.

Mr. MOORE: There was a keen demand for wool.

Mr. BULCOCK: And there will be a keen demand for other products. There is not too much being produced in the world to-day, but, owing to industrial depression, many people who really require what is being produced are unable to purchase it. Whenever you get industrial depression the farm labourer, because he is unorganised—and the farmer is unorganised too in the main—is the first to suffer, and, because we desire to do away with that suffering, we are told that we are introducing red ruin, when, as a matter of fact, the passage of this Bill is going to be one of the landmarks in the industrial progress of Queensland.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BULCOCK: Hon. members opposite, such as the hon. member for Burnett, I think, said that they would raise no opposition to the Bill if we could show them the way whereby the cost could be passed on.

Mr. CORSER: That is not what I said.

Mr. BULCOCK: If the hon. member did not say it, he meant it. But I do not want to be unfair to him, if he did not say it. Certainly one member of the Opposition did say it. I hear it suggested that it was the hon. member for Murilla.

Mr. CORSER: He is not here; put it on him. (Laughter.)

Mr. BULCOCK: I shall be fair, and say, therefore, that one member on the Opposition benches said that, if we could show how the extra cost could be passed on, they would not object to the Bill.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: They all thought it. (Laughter.)

Mr. BULCOCK: That is an additional reason why the country is swinging to Labour and is divorcing those who are associated with the exploiters represented by hon. members sitting opposite. In this month's "Agricultural Journal"—I am afraid hon. members of the Country party particularly do not read it, but if they will condescend to do so they will get some very interesting information—are to be found some very striking figures showing the farmer's proportion of the total value of his product. It works out like this: Of the price paid for bread the farmer gets 35 per cent; of the

[Mr. Bulcock.]

price of meat he gets 40 per cent.; of the price of milk 47 per cent. There is a big margin there that the farmer has till to get. Let us see what the middleman gets. Of the bread price the miller, baker, and transporter get 65 per cent.; of the meat price the butcher and his allies get 60 per cent.; of the milk price the milk combine and transporter get 53 per cent. Let the farmers organise on a scientific basis, so that they can overcome this discrepancy and get the 30 per cent., the 40 per cent., the 50 per cent., and the 60 per cent., and employ it in the conduct of their own business. Then we shall hear no protest about decent wages being paid, but rather we shall hear the farmer say that he likes to pay good wages because it attracts a better class of individuals to farming pursuits. One hon. gentleman, who has since left this Chamber under compulsion, said in 1920, during the passage of the Wheat Pool Bill, that it was almost impossible to get a stack builder on the Downs.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: He was compelled to leave this Chamber because of the redistribution of seats.

Mr. BULCOCK: The late hon. member for Drayton suggested that the farmers were willing to pay £1 5s. a day for stack builders. If that indicates anything, it indicates that the farmers in the past have not considered it worth their while to allow young fellows to learn to become stack builders. The same difficulty concerns us to-day, and practically every farmer has a difficulty in getting skilled labour to conduct farming operations, in getting skilled labour to take off his crop, and in other directions. By increasing wages and attracting a virile, steadfast, and good type of worker to farming pursuits, instead of attracting the casual worker, who will only remain in farming pursuits so long as he requires to raise money to take him into some other sphere where he can be engaged in some other industry at a decent and adequate wage, the farmer will have a good, well-trained body of men who will considerably augment the income of the farmer by the application of skill during the farming work.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Has the payment of high wages produced more skilled labour in Queensland?

Mr. BULCOCK: There is no dearth of skilled labour in Queensland in certain directions. If you look at to-night's "Telegraph" you will see that the Canadian Government are going to pay £5 per week, and pay £12 for fares from England to Canada, and guarantee three months' employment to English farm labourers to migrate to Canada for three months to help take off their wheat crop, because they have not trained the men that they should have trained in the Dominion of Canada. We cannot solve our problem in that direction, because we are 10,000 miles away from that source of labour.

Quite a lot has been said about the effect the award is going to have on rural industries. In the first place, one effect it is going to have is that it is going to stabilise the industry by allowing the farmer and the farm labourer to know precisely where they stand without the possibility of any industrial disputes. At the same time, it will create a feeling of confidence, because exploitation will not then be possible. It will force the

farmer into a proper system of organisation. That is one of the best results that I know of. The farmer only rises to an occasion when he is forced to it. I believe that the native genius of our Queensland farmer is equal to the genius of the farming community in any other part of the world; but the farming community in Queensland, in common with farming communities in other parts of the world, are not capable of rising to an occasion until an occasion rises up and bites them, and they then find themselves in the position that they are in to-day.

We are embarking on one of the biggest industries that Queensland will know. I refer to the cotton industry. Are we not justified at the outset in saying that decent conditions shall prevail in that industry? I want to remind hon. members that less than 100 years ago the cotton industry was a slave industry, and a very bitter war was fought to perpetuate the system of growing cotton by slaves. We do not desire the cotton industry to be a white-slave industry in that sense in Queensland. We desire the application of the best industrial conditions to that industry, and we on this side are determined to see that those conditions are applied. The cotton industry is going to be an industry of unparalleled importance to Queensland. It is going to provide wealth to the farmer, and that is what hon. members opposite want. We not only want to see it provide wealth for the farmer, but a competence to the men who will have to produce that wealth—that is, the farm labourers engaged in the operations. I want to revert to the debate that took place in this Chamber in 1920 on the introduction of a Bill to bring workers in the wheat industry under the operation of the Arbitration Court. We subsequently discovered that we had power to bring them under that court without introducing that Bill. Some very significant things were said by hon. members opposite during the progress of that debate. I think it was the hon. member for Dalby, who was then the leader of the Opposition, who cried blue ruin. He said the industry would be ruined, and that wheatgrowing would cease to exist as a commercial enterprise in Queensland.

Mr. VOWLES: I never said that.

Mr. BULCOCK: If the hon. member looks up "Hansard" for 1920 he will see that that is what he said in effect.

Mr. VOWLES: No. Was the award put into operation?

Mr. BULCOCK: The hon. member for Aubigny said that he believed in arbitration for some industries, but he did not believe in arbitration for the rural industries. The hon. member for Cunningham said that it would be a more manly thing to bring the workers in the wheat industry under the Arbitration Court by an amendment of the Industrial Arbitration Act of 1916 by making it applicable generally to the rural industries, but he claimed that it was a wrong thing to do that. Hon. members opposite contended that the Bill at that time was going to ruin the industry. The then leader of the Opposition said, "You are trying to ruin this industry and create trouble." In effect, hon. members opposite said that, if the farmers who asked for the Wheat Pool knew that the Government were going to tack on an amendment of the Industrial Arbitration Act in order to bring in the workers in the wheat

Mr. Bulcock.]

industry under that Act, they would have had nothing to do with the Bill. The hon. member, who is now the leader of the Country party, suggested that they did not want the Bill if that amendment was going to be tacked on to it. Yet we find that there was no industrial trouble at that time, nor has there been any industrial trouble since in spite of what the Jeremiahs on the Opposition side said. Furthermore, after the principle had been law for twelve months, in spite of what hon. members opposite said, the farmers, by an overwhelming ballot, decided in favour of the continuance of the Wheat Pool.

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

Mr. BULCOCK: That proves that the arguments that were advanced in 1920, and which are similar to the arguments that are being advanced to-day against the passage of this measure, were without foundation.

Mr. VOWLES interjected.

Mr. BULCOCK: The hon. member for Dalby said that the industry would be ruined if that was done. Since then the wheat industry has been more prosperous. The hon. member for Oxley time and again has preached the gospel or doctrine or conviction of payment by results.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Hear, hear!

Mr. BULCOCK: There are four ways whereby payment may be determined for the agricultural worker. The first is the present system that we seek to amend, that is the unrestricted law of supply and demand—the supplying of a man who will do the work at the cheapest rate. That is the privilege hon. members opposite desire to retain.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: No.

Mr. BULCOCK: The second system is regulation by direct action. We do not desire that. The third system is regulation by conciliation and arbitration, which we do desire; and the fourth system is regulation by payment by results. An analysis of these four systems must dispose of three, and leave only arbitration and conciliation as the possible solution of the question we are addressing ourselves to to-night.

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

HON. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): The Secretary for Public Works, who is in charge of the measure now before the House, has given us a most lucid explanation demonstrating the policy of the Government on the question we are now discussing. I have listened with a very great amount of interest to the speeches of hon. members on the Government benches and hon. members on the Opposition benches, and although there has been a very large amount to be learned from what has fallen from either side, I think it is to be regretted that there has been too great an introduction of the personal element into the debate. What the individual member does or what he does not do, what wages he pays, or what wages he does not pay, to my mind, has nothing to do with the great policy which affects a large section of the community. (Hear, hear!)

So far as the amending measure is concerned there are portions of it which naturally must appeal to every section of the community whatever their political opinions may be. I had the honour to launch the first wages board into operation.

[*Mr. Bulcock.*]

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. J. G. APPEL: I have always been one who believed, long before there was any method by which the employee and employer could come together and when no tribunal existed which could fix the wages to be paid, that it was absolutely necessary and essential that some such method should be provided by the Legislature. In the Wages Boards Act we have the first measure by which the two parties met and a minimum wage could be fixed and adopted to be paid to those engaged in the different industries. The Arbitration Acts which followed, and the awards under them are considered an improvement on the old wages board system. That may or may not be. However, I may say that, so far as the old wages boards were concerned, they certainly were very effective at the time of their establishment.

Mr. HARTLEY: Why did you throw them overboard?

HON. J. G. APPEL: They enabled those who controlled industries and those who were engaged in them to come together at a round table conference for a purpose of discussing what adequate payment should be paid in the particular industry.

Adverting to the measure which we are discussing, the provisions dealing with apprenticeship are ones which the Minister must be commended upon. At the same time I am very glad that the party of which he is a member has apparently repented of the attitude it has held heretofore in connection with apprentices, because we must all recognise that, if we are to have skilled workers, it is necessary that apprentices should be trained for that skilled work. Any policy that insists that each youth shall simply be an unskilled worker is one which is economically unsound, and one which has an effect which is not beneficial upon our youth. Surely we do not propose that the whole of our youth shall either be clerks or unskilled workers? In skilled work we have something which appeals to the imagination of a large percentage of our youth, who, hitherto, owing to the fact that there was a restriction, have been unable to become such workers and carry out that work which requires the element of skill we unfortunately lack to-day. I think, without saying very much further on this particular question, that we realise to-day that, owing to the fact that we have not trained our youths to these skilled trades, there are many men who have to be employed, and who have never had an apprenticeship, but have simply picked up the trade they are carrying out. They do their best, but we must realise that their best is not equal to the efficiency they would have possessed had they had the training which is absolutely necessary if they are to become masters of their trade. So far as that portion of the measure is concerned there should be absolute unanimity on the part of every member of this House.

The next question is the extension of the operations of the Act to those engaged in domestic service. To my mind this provision is quite justifiable. If the employees of those engaged in an industry, such as keeping lodging-houses, are compelled to come under awards, why should not all those who are engaged similarly be brought under an award? It must be remembered, however, that domestic service is not an industry for making a profit. However, why should not those who are wealthy and able to employ

domestic servants pay? I have no brief, no sympathy, for the wealthy. It is not the function of any member of the Legislature to endeavour to obtain conditions for them which will enable them to pay a less amount than has to be paid by others for similar work.

The inclusion of the men engaged in our coasting trade on boats is likewise a step about which there cannot be any dispute. There are one or two matters that in Committee I shall probably ask the Minister to amplify or explain.

To a great extent, and to my mind the only debatable matter under the Bill, is the one which affects the rural worker. I am with those members who practically ask whether the Council of Agriculture has expressed any opinion upon this particular phase, or upon this particular policy. To my mind it was quite a justifiable query, because from the explanation which was given to this Chamber, the Council was established to advise the Administration on the best course to pursue in connection with our primary industries, and those engaged in them. The Minister has indicated that, when this measure becomes law, with the application of the Arbitration Act to the rural worker, it will mean prosperity to our primary producers. If that is so, and if it can be demonstrated that is so, then there can be no dispute upon the whole question. The only matter, to my mind, is: Will it add to their prosperity? In discussing the matter we have to realise that those who are engaged in our primary industries had full and fair warning that, if the Labour Administration came into power and administered the affairs of State, these workers would be brought under the Arbitration Act.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. J. G. APPEL: There is no question about that. As far back as the general election of 1907, the late Hon. David Bowman, of respected memory, speaking at Charleville, stated distinctly that the Labour party, if it had the opportunity, would insist on bringing the farmers under the provisions of the Wages Boards Act. The primary producers must have realised, or should have realised, the fact that they would be included under the provisions of the Arbitration Act if the Labour party again obtained possession of the Treasury benches.

[8.30 p.m.] The only point is this: I followed the course of the Premier during his recent election campaign throughout the farming and dairying districts of the State, and I know that he would not definitely state that this action would be taken.

MR. EDWARDS: He side-tracked.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member is wrong.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Then the Premier was either not reported or was incorrectly reported.

THE PREMIER: I was correctly reported in the "Daily Mail."

HON. J. G. APPEL: It did not appear in any of the papers which I saw. I was going to remark that the only thing that I am sorry about is that the Premier was not more candid.

MR. HARTLEY: You ought to be more careful what you say.

HON. J. G. APPEL: What nonsense! (Laughter.) There is no doubt that he did set out to woo the primary producers, and he was very successful in many instances. An old friend of mine came along to me and

said, "There is no doubt that the Premier must be a man who has the keenest regard for those who settled on the land. Do you know he has written me a letter himself?"

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear! and laughter.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I will read that letter—

"Brisbane, 21st April, 1923.

"Dear Sir,—

"As it is improbable that I shall have an opportunity of addressing a meeting in your centre, I hope you will not mind me writing to you personally.

"I ask you to reflect that despite the economic depression which has affected Queensland as well as every other country since the war, and, notwithstanding the London money boycott which was engineered against us for political purposes, the Queensland Government has succeeded in carrying out a vigorous policy of development and reform since the last elections.

"I want particularly to call your attention to the following undeniable facts.

"There is more activity in Queensland than in any other State in developing the resources of the country and in opening land for settlement.

"There has been a more genuine attempt to organise agriculture and save the farmers from exploitations.

"There is a much more humanitarian attitude in dealing with all social problems."

HON. J. G. APPEL: My friend said, "I wish they would consent to build our school. We have been trying to get a school for two years."—

"There is much greater confidence and stability and industry. (Commercially, Queensland was never more prosperous than now.)

"Conditions of labour and standards of life are more favourable to the workers in this State than they are in any other State. These advantages are not the result of accident, but are the logical outcome of Labour's policy. (Government Members: Hear, hear!)

"Reactionaries who assert so frequently that Queensland has suffered under Labour rule know that the statement is false.

"I urge you to take no notice of calamity howlers, but assist the Government to make Queensland the best and most prosperous State in the Commonwealth.

"You can do this by voting Labour.

"I am, very sincerely yours,

"EDWARD G. THEODORE,

"Premier."

The wife of my friend said—and she was such a dear old lady, Mr. Speaker—"Mr. Appel, how can we vote for you when the Premier has taken the trouble to sit down and write such a beautiful letter specially to my husband, and with his own hand, too?" (Laughter.)

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: What did you say in reply to that?

HON. J. G. APPEL: I asked her, "Do you really mean to say that he personally wrote that letter in manuscript to your husband?" She said, "He must have written

Hon. J. G. Appel.]

it." I said, "He sent thousands of them out. They are stereotyped." She asked me, "Do you mean to say that the Premier did not write it himself—that he had that stereotyped?" I said that he had written the original, and then had it stereotyped in thousands and sent all over the farming districts. I will not repeat the remarks which followed.

Where the Premier lacked candour was that, while contemplating these fine things, he did not say in that communication, "And I propose to bring the rural workers under the Arbitration Act. This more than anything else will give you prosperity, good rainfall, good seasons, and will keep up the price of your produce." I again say—and I accept the Premier's assertion when he says that he indicated to the farmers in the different districts that he visited that he intended to take this action—that it is a pity that he did not put the same thing in this beautiful letter which my old lady friend thought the Premier sat down and wrote to her husband.

MR. POLLOCK: How could the lady say she was not going to vote for you? You were not opposed. (Laughter.)

HON. J. G. APPEL: I did not wait until the election; neither did the Premier—he wrote this letter before the election. I admit that a lot of the Premier's opponents did not realise what an astute politician he is. In this very stereotyped letter, which so many of the primary producers and farmers of Queensland thought he had actually written with his own hand—

THE PREMIER: I assure the hon. member it was not stereotyped.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: He only wrote to his personal friends.

HON. J. G. APPEL: It is not a question of whether you pay big wages or not. That does not affect the issue, but by means of the Arbitration Court a standard is set, and every man has to pay it, and, if he does not pay it, he ought to be fined for not obeying the law.

MR. HARTLEY: No wonder you were returned unopposed.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The point, to my mind, is that it has been alleged by the different speakers that the whole intention is that the primary producers who have settled upon our land are to be benefited by this inclusion. Now, what I want to know is whether those who are employed by the primary producers or the primary producers themselves are to be benefited? We have got to realise that. Take a district like the South Coast district. We have been suffering for the last two years from a drought that is almost unprecedented. Men in some instances have lost 60 per cent. and 70 per cent. of their dairy cattle; they have practically exhausted all their savings in buying food for the cattle, and when their savings have become exhausted the cattle have died. Their cream cheques in some instances have reached the vanishing point, and I want to know if these are the men who are referred to and whom it is proposed to make prosperous, or is it those who receive a wage from those men whether there is a drought, whether it is wet, or whether it is fine? Personally I want to see both benefited, and, if it can be shown that the primary producers can be benefited to the extent that both the farmers and the workers receive a

decent living wage such as they should, when one considers the disabilities they suffer and the work that they perform, if it can be shown by what means they can obtain that living wage, then there is no question that the principles of the Arbitration Court should be extended to them likewise. That is all I wish to have demonstrated. We realise that it is necessary for the primary producer, if he is to live comfortably, and if he is to pay a living wage, to receive a certain minimum rate for the produce which he sells; and the general community must pay for that produce at that rate, so that those who are settled upon the land and are enduring disabilities and inconveniences which the dwellers in the towns have not to face shall, at least so far as remuneration is concerned, receive a living wage which we are only too glad to afford to those who are engaged in our secondary industries in the centres of population. That is all we ask. To say that the majority, or a large percentage of the primary producers of the State of Queensland, are opposed to paying a decent wage is a libel or a slander upon them. These men are only too willing to pay those who are assisting them in their industry as decent a wage as is paid by the employer of labour in our city, and all we ask is that the Administration shall assist us to obtain a sufficient rate for the produce. Mind you, the farmer who sows does not always reap. Unfortunately during the last few years farmers have sown and they have not reaped. They have had to go to the expense of ploughing and of planting, and they have had no return. They have had to go through the same process again, and again have had no return. All we ask is that, if we are to be included under the Arbitration Act, the Administration will go further and make such provision that they may have the necessary wherewithal to pay these wages, and likewise that they will have, what they are entitled to, a decent wage for themselves to enable them to bring up their families at least decently. They are quite willing to forgo all the comforts of town life. All they ask is for a decent return for the work which they are carrying out, not alone for themselves, but for the benefit of the whole community and for the advancement of the State. Again I say it is a libel and a slander for any man—I do not care what his political creed or beliefs may be—to say that the primary producers of the State of Queensland are not prepared to pay a decent wage to the men who are engaged in that industry.

HON. F. T. BRENNAN: Who said that?

HON. J. G. APPEL: To me it was a matter of deep regret that members on the Government benches should cast that reflection upon the primary producers of the State. Give them the means to obtain a fair price for their produce, and I say compel them, if necessary—but they do not require any compulsion—to pay a decent wage to those who are employed in the industry.

MR. HYNES: That is the stock argument against arbitration being applied to any industry.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I am not arguing against the application of arbitration to any industry. The hon. member for Townsville misunderstands the whole tenor and nature of my remarks. In the few words I have had to say on this question I have endeavoured to show that hon. members on

[Hon. J. G. Appel.]

this side support arbitration. I had the honour to initiate the wages board system when I was Secretary for Public Works, and I launched those boards most successfully. They were a success, and I have continually advocated the same principle, and I desire to see an extension of the principle to every phase of life.

Mr. HARTLEY: Why did you pass the Industrial Peace Act?

HON. J. G. APPEL: Let those hon. members who are most loud-mouthed in their interjections introduce a means whereby the primary producers may receive a decent price for their produce in place of the miserable pittance at present obtained, and we are prepared to support them. We know hon. members opposite have been objecting to pay a decent price for the produce which is sent in by the farmers.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Who objects?

HON. J. G. APPEL: The consumers in many instances. Pay the producers a decent price; and, again, I call upon hon. members opposite to withdraw the libel and slander against the primary producers in the State of Queensland.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I would like to say a few words on this question, because it is a matter of very vital importance to the farming industry in Queensland. The hon. member for Barcoo inferred by his remarks that the employee on the farm should have an opportunity of securing a farm for himself. I would like to point out to that hon. member that practically 80 per cent. of the farms on many parts of the Downs to-day are occupied by men who had worked on farms. They selected land because they had a chance to secure farms under conditions that gave them an opportunity to make a success of it. They were allowed to take up land at 2s. 6d. an acre, hold it for five years, and then they obtained the freehold, when they could borrow money and improve it. If those conditions obtained to-day, the farm workers would be in exactly the same position that those men were in. The most successful farmers on the Darling Downs to-day are the men who took up farms under those conditions and who were previously farm labourers.

Mr. BULCOCK: It costs £1,000 to settle on the land to-day.

Mr. MOORE: It does not cost £1,000 to settle at all. We want to encourage men to take up land. The whole of the legislation that we are getting at the present time tends towards keeping men down to the one level, and as long as we do that we are not going to have prosperity.

We all agree with the provisions of this Bill in regard to apprenticeship. We all recognise that the condition we are getting into to-day is a bad one, and we all recognise that it is absolutely essential that we should have some looser conditions, especially as we are bringing in a Bill to bring farmers under the Arbitration Act, and a large number of their sons will have to go to the cities and be apprenticed to the various trades. I would like hon. members to understand that, though they talk about passing on the cost in the various industries, it cannot be passed on in the farming industry. The Minister said that we have an award in the butter and cheese industry, and so we have, and that award is passed on. It is not passed on to the consumer, however, but

is passed on to the farmer by taking it off the price he receives for his milk; but awards in other callings are passed on to the farmer by making him pay more for what he buys. Take the case of the cheese factories on the Downs, of which I have some experience. The average rate of income of the suppliers is often less than that of the employees who are working under awards in the factories. I can give an instance of a factory with twenty-two suppliers not far from Toowoomba.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: There are too many cheese factories.

Mr. MOORE: The object of a cheese factory is to enable a number of suppliers within a reasonable distance of the factory to supply the necessary quantity of milk required. You cannot cart milk more than 2 or 3 miles away from the factories, and that is the reason why they are small. The average income of the twenty-two suppliers in the factory I refer to last year was £154 16s. 8d., and the average income the year before £186 17s. 9d. I am taking the sole income of a large number of them.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Do you say that they get their sole income from milk?

Mr. MOORE: Their sole income. They are dairy farmers, pure and simple.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: No pigs or anything else?

Mr. MOORE: There are not many pigs kept in connection with a cheese factory. It is not like a butter factory, where there is skimmed milk. I am taking this instance to show that the income is not there to enable those farmers to pay the wages which will be fixed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Were they regularly employed for fifty-two weeks in the year?

Mr. MOORE: Regularly employed for fifty-two weeks in the year, and the average amount which those suppliers received was not equal to what the manager of the factory got.

Mr. BRAND: Is that their gross income?

Mr. MOORE: Their gross income in many cases, and they have to pay rates and taxes out of it.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: I would like to meet them.

Mr. MOORE: I will take the hon. gentleman up there at the week end and introduce him to them, when he will see whether they are in a condition to bear the rate of wages which will be imposed upon them by the Arbitration Court. He will, perhaps, not be so anxious then to impose a burden on one section of the community that they are not able to bear.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: They do not employ any labour at all, do they?

Mr. MOORE: The Minister does not know anything about the matter. He makes a statement which is absolutely untrue.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Tell us how many they employ.

Mr. MOORE: Before the hon. gentleman makes such a statement as that, it is up to him to find out whether it is true or not, and not make a bald assertion. I know what I am talking about. I know of three cases where the farmers employed their own men all the year round, and last year they did not make £200.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Why did you not tell us that when we asked you first?

Mr. MOORE: I have some figures here showing the income tax percentage for ten years of farmers and fruitgrowers, namely—

Year.	Number of taxpayers.	Percentage of total tax.
1913	2,040	3.17
1914	3,377	6.56
1915	4,097	5.84
1916	3,167	3.49
1917	3,833	5.29
1918	7,043	10.39
1919	4,313	4.99
1920	1,285	2.29
1921	1,975	2.82
1922	1,164	1.75

The last two years are the years in which the Government say we have had conditions favourable to our industry, and which enable us to pay a high rate of wage. They say that we have had pools, and that the Council of Agriculture has been established—that we have had legislation to enable the primary producer to get the full value for his products, and that he should therefore be able to pay a wage commensurate with the dictates of the Arbitration Court. In the last two years quoted the smallest number of farmers paid income tax, and it was the lowest percentages of tax. Does that look as if this is an opportune time to bring in such a measure as this?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You can use all these arguments before the judge.

Mr. MOORE: This is the place to use the arguments, so that we may have an opportunity to amend the measure before it is too late. It is better than waiting to go before the judge, who is tied up completely.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He can use his own discretion.

Mr. MOORE: It is all very well for the hon. gentleman to say that he can use his own discretion with regard to the matter. *

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is true.

Mr. MOORE: Upwards, but not downwards.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: What about the station hands' award?

Mr. MOORE: The judge is completely tied up by the Act. He has a definite principle to work on. He can go up, according to the prosperity of the industry, but he cannot go down beyond a certain stage.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: What did the court do in the case of the station hands' award?

Mr. MOORE: That was by consent.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: You are throwing dust in the eyes of the people.

Mr. MOORE: It is not a case of throwing dust in the eyes of the people. I am showing the condition of the people who are engaged in farming, and that it will be a menace to the country if a rate of wages is imposed which they are unable to pay. If the Minister can show me that during the last two years the agricultural industries have enjoyed such a state of prosperity as to be able to pay the rate of wages which must be prescribed by the court, I have nothing further to say; but I refer him to the income tax returns to show that it is an absolute

impossibility for the farmers to bear the burden which will be imposed. Only 1,164 paid tax out of over 37,000 farmers. If the hon. gentleman is prepared to wait and see whether the legislation brought in during the past two years is going to have the effect the Premier said it would have, it is a different thing; but to bring these conditions in at a time when we have the least production we have ever had, and expect the farmers to comply with them, is impracticable.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: What is the average wage paid now?

Mr. MOORE: The average wage in my district for ploughing is about 35s., and in other cases about 30s., and these men are employed all the year round. The idea is not to have too many men employed in seasonal industries. My idea of the best class of employment is for a man to be kept in employment all the year round at a steady job. It is better for him to get a little less and to be kept on all the year, although the work on the farm may not warrant it, rather than to have seasonal work, as in the sugar industry, for a few weeks only, and then be put off. That is what it is going to amount to if we bring these industries under the Arbitration Act.

I think that the hon. member must know from experience in going round the country the conditions that obtain. It is all very well to say that it has been done in the sugar

industry, in which artificial conditions exist, and that it can be done in other industries. We

know that the sugar industry would have been prosperous under the conditions attached to it by the agreement even if there had been no award; but in other industries we have no agreement with respect to the prices of our commodities. We have a Commissioner of Prices who fixes a maximum. Two years ago the Butter Commission, in its annual report, pointed out that, owing to our not being allowed to get the prices which prevailed elsewhere in Australia, Queensland farmers lost £242,000. That was signed by Mr. Purcell, one of the members of the Council of Agriculture to-day. If you are going to bring about a condition of affairs in which you do not give people the opportunity to secure for their products the necessary money to enable them to pay good wages—and everybody wants to see good wages paid if it is possible to do so, but no Government has ever yet been able to compel a man to pay out more than he gets in—Queensland will go back into the aggregation of large holdings. The small one-man farmer will merely struggle—because it will be a struggle. The only really effective way of farming, except on small scrub areas, is to farm large areas with efficient machinery. Farming on small areas is not a success in nine cases out of ten, except perhaps in matzegraving and on rich scrub land, where not much machinery is required. In wheat-growing and other branches of farming on the Downs you must have machinery, and you must employ men to keep that machinery fully engaged; and to do that the rate for your produce must be such as to enable you to pay those men their wages. A Commission in New South Wales, which went into the cost of growing an acre of wheat, pointed out that the industry is unable to bear a greater burden than it is carrying at present;

[Mr. Moore.]

and New South Wales is a great deal more favourably situated than Queensland, where the climatic conditions are very variable and it is almost impossible to know when you are putting in your crop what you are going to take off. It is not a business in many cases—it is a speculation—and, when you are carrying on a business in which you have one set of people fixing the prices of the things you buy and another set of people fixing the prices of your labour, and, when the only man who has not a voice in fixing the price of either is the man who has to buy one and pay the other, I do not see how it is possible to carry on successfully.

I do not wish to take up the time of the House any longer. I just wish to point out that, in my opinion, this is a retrograde step. I want to see full consideration given by the Minister to amendments which will be proposed from this side of the House. I do not suppose that it is the ambition of hon. members opposite to see the agricultural and dairying and fruit-growing industries go back. I believe that their idea is to encourage them, and see that the prices for their products are improved, and that individuals who go on the land have a better opportunity of making a living than they have now. The Government have a huge land settlement scheme, and I suppose their idea is to have successful settlement on a small scale. It can only be made possible, as one member on this side said, if the land to which they are going is good land and the conditions are made attractive. If on top of the present market conditions we are going to have an Arbitration Court award, it is impossible to have land settlement on a small scale successfully. It cannot be done. I am not speaking at random, because I have had a lifetime of experience on the land, and I know the difficulties with which we have to contend. I know that fourteen years ago I grew the best crops I have ever had on 400 acres of land. They averaged 16 bags of oats to the acre, 9 bags of wheat, and 12 bags of barley. It was all cut with a binder, stacked, and threshed, and by the time I had sold it I had 3s. 6d. over the harvesting expenses, without allowing for the seed and putting it in. And the conditions are not very much better to-day. The cost of labour, the time occupied, and the market conditions, make it almost impossible to carry on that sort of wheat harvesting by stacking and threshing; so much so that practically every farmer has gone out of it. The cost is too great, and a large amount is lost because we cannot afford to save the straw. The Minister might take a week or two and go into the agricultural districts, merely to see the returns of the farmers for himself. Nobody will want to hide anything. I myself will take him to places where he will have the opportunity of seeing whether the people of whom I speak are able to bear the burden.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I will take a trip during the recess.

Mr. MOORE: It is no good taking it when it is too late. Take it before the Bill is through. If the hon. gentleman finds that they are able to carry on, I will withdraw my opposition; but until that is done I will oppose the measure in every way, that is, after the second reading, which I do not intend to oppose.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Can you give me any adequate reason why a

large number of employees should be deprived of the right to the protection of our industrial laws?

Mr. MOORE: I do not know why they should, but I do not want to see them deprived of employment, and that is what it means. I would rather see them employed at less than the wages given by the court or employed for three-quarters of the year than not employed at all.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*): Most hon. members on the other side who have spoken on this Bill have been at some pains to show that members on this side are opposed to the principle of arbitration. They should know by now that that is not a fact. A study of the policy of either party clearly shows that we stand absolutely by that principle. Where we differ I shall proceed to show. We contend that the principle of arbitration is distinctly preferable to the principle of direct action—every sane man must admit that that is sound policy. But the point on which we differ is the present application of the principle; and it is its application that many of us criticise. On more than one occasion in this House I have taken advantage of the opportunities which have presented themselves of giving reasons why the Arbitration Court, as at present controlled, fails. I do not propose to go into those details to-night, because it would only mean reiteration, but, briefly, my opinion is that it divides employers and employees into two camps and creates an element of pointing, and, because they do not understand one another's points of view, interferes with that better feeling which is necessary to assist the cause of production in the way we would like. It fixes an arbitrary wage quite regardless of the results which the man produces, which in my opinion is economically unsound; and, so long as we adhere to that practice and deprive the employer of labour of the right and privilege of paying his employee in accordance with the amount of his production, based on a minimum wage so as to prevent his exploitation, we shall not be able to progress.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: How can that be done?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: It can be done by boards quite easily. Until that principle is adopted we shall not proceed on the even tenor of production in the way that many of us would like to see.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Who is going to be the judge of the value?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: It is arrived at in many industries in Australia to-day. With piecework rates you can pay a man a minimum rate of wages for a minimum task. Those who are prepared and willing to apply themselves more diligently to that undertaking should enjoy the award that their diligence entitles them to. This is an argument that we have frequently had here, but I never expect hon. gentlemen opposite to agree with me, because, as I have frequently pointed out, their very solidarity is based on the determination to keep all employees down to the common level, so that they cannot think for themselves, and so that they will allow hon. members opposite to do all their thinking for them.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: That is an insult to the workers.

Mr. Elphinstone.]

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The hon. gentleman may take it as an insult, because he has not got the apprehension to discern the difference. Most hon. members opposite have been agitators or organisers during their lives, and they look to the keeping of the workers down to the one level for their solidarity. They live upon that very solidarity.

Mr. WEBB: So do you.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I am not saying this in an offensive sense about the workers. I am only saying what is obvious, and what hon. gentlemen opposite do not like. Look at the position we find the party opposite in. We know that it consists of two elements. They look solid, and they look to be gentlemen who think, yet we know perfectly well, Sir, and probably you know better than I do, that they are divided into two distinct sections—extremists and moderates. They are divided against one another, but when they come before the public they are one united force.

Mr. PEASE: Like your party?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: These two elements go into their caucus room and discuss matters to which both seem to attach some importance, and they arrive at some common ground for the welfare of the party and of the movement with which they are connected. That is what I suggest should be the case in regard to the two elements of production.

Mr. RIORDAN: We make a better success than the hon. member will ever make.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The Bill is really divided into three sections. The main features are: Bringing rural workers under the operation of the Arbitration Court; bringing domestic servants under the operations of the Arbitration Court; and removing many restrictions so far as apprentices are concerned. The hon. member for Burnett, in his speech last night, made several very excellent points. One of the most outstanding ones was: Why is it, in a movement of this description, which is of so great importance to the welfare of the primary producers, that the Council of Agriculture, behind which the Secretary for Agriculture and the Government generally shelter themselves in all matters appertaining to agriculture, has not been consulted in relation to this particular measure?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I have given the reason to the House several times. It is highly improper for anybody outside Parliament to see a Bill before it is presented to Parliament.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I agree with the hon. gentleman, but we have seen innumerable instances of where that policy has not been carried out.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Give a case in point.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I make that assertion definitely. Why is this Council not consulted on a matter of such vital importance to an industry which it is established to protect? The answer is, as the Premier told us the other night, that Labour speaks with one voice. So it does. What is that voice?

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Democracy.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The voice of the Emu Park Convention. That is the one voice of Labour. It does not matter a rap what the Council of Agriculture thinks. It

{Mr. Elphinstone.

is a matter which affects the occupation of hon. gentlemen opposite. The Convention at Emu Park was the one voice, and it says what has to be done. The Government did not consult the Council of Agriculture because they thought that the opinion of the Emu Park Convention might be thwarted, and, so as not to risk that, they speak with one voice, as the Premier pointed out, and that is the voice of Emu Park.

To be quite frank, I can quite understand the present attitude with regard to rural workers, because it must be difficult for the Government to reconcile their rank and file in the country as to why it is the industrialists in the town can be protected by awards while workers on the farms should not be protected. I am not taking any exception to the Government's action in that regard, but why has it taken them six years to find it out and put it into operation? They cannot say that the Legislative Council has been a stumbling block all through, because it has been out of the way for some time. Still, we have never heard anything about this matter for six years. It is the one voice of Labour at the Emu Park Convention that determines this question is to be finally settled.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: No.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: It was really because of the bargain that was entered into at that Convention that many hon. members opposite are here. We, from our experience in the House for some years, know that the decisions which are arrived at by a Labour Convention are brought forward in Parliament a few months later. The question of the inclusion of rural workers under the Arbitration Court was in the forefront at the Emu Park Convention. I cannot understand—I want hon. members of the Country party to listen carefully to this—how farmers were gulled by the personal letters of the Premier and all such rubbish at election time into supporting hon. members opposite when they should have known that this menace would be threatening the rural industries. The lesson that the primary producers have to learn is the lesson which the introduction of this Bill is going to teach them. I hope they will take it to heart and appreciate that the action of the Premier in trotting from one end of Queensland to the other and sending out personal letters by hundreds and thousands, trying to gull them at the eleventh hour, and succeeding in gulling them, was a matter of election tactics. The stage management was excellent. I would impress upon the representatives of the country electorates to let the farmers understand the significance of this move, and that the Government are no sooner enthroned for a further three years than they introduce the most unpleasant dose of medicine that could be given to the farmers; and they do it now because they hope that at the end of the three years the farmer will have forgotten all about it.

Mr. RIORDAN: The farmer took your medicine for fifty years, and he was dying on it.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I was amused to hear the hon. member for Albert reading that love letter of the Premier to his new-found friends, and I was very pleased to hear his remarks to the old lady in the Albert electorate. I would suggest that the Premier accompany the hon. member for Albert to

the electorate and come in contact with this dear old lady who was so grossly deceived by the Premier in that regard. Whether that is the first time the Premier has been guilty of that I do not know.

The PREMIER: I did not send any letters to anybody in the Albert electorate.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Several of them found their way into the Albert electorate. The whole point in regard to this question is the unsound principle that is being applied to the primary producers. How hon. members opposite could listen to the leader of the Country party in his earnest appeal to them as to the effect this measure is going to have on the primary producers—giving his life-long experience and giving the actual facts as to the income which the primary producers have been enjoying—if you can use the word in that way—without being impressed, I do not know. He has given illustrations which should make hon. members think deeply. I can quite understand that the gentlemen opposite think that by the creation of the Council of Agriculture they have given the producer the opportunity to make good. We all sincerely hope that will be so. The Council of Agriculture, though, has a very long way to go before it is going to improve the lot of the primary producer.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: They have not got to the bottom of it yet.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: No; the primary producer has not come to the time when he will have to pay his proportion of the expenses of that council. That time will come on 1st July next, when the first contributions become due. I can quite appreciate the point made by the hon. member for Albert—that, until such time as you can guarantee in some form or other to the primary producer some fixed return for his produce, you cannot impose on him a guarantee or a fixed rate of payment, which he has to accord to those who work for him. I have argued, and I intend to argue, that the man who works on a farm is entitled to the full reward of his labour. I do not want to see any single farm employee work for low wages. I have six farm employees, and I do not think that the charge can be put at our door that we pay them low wages. The more contented and the more happy we make the condition of those men the better it is for all concerned.

Mr. DASH: Do you pay by results?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Yes; we do pay by results. We give our employees a share in the profits that the farm makes every year. I believe in practising what I advocate.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I am talking about a fruit farm on a pretty extensive scale, and it bears out the argument of the hon. member for Aubigny when he says that the only chance one has to-day is by adopting scientific methods of farming on a big scale, in which you can use all kinds of big machinery for the purpose of saving labour. That is only possible, though, in the case of the man who is fortunately placed.

Another point touched on in this Bill is the bringing of domestic servants within the operation of the Arbitration Act. In this regard I have to differ from my colleague,

the hon. member for Albert, when he says that it is only rich people who indulge in the luxury of employing domestic servants. That is not so. I know numbers of cases, and I am sure hon. members opposite know likewise, where womenfolk, who are doing their duty to the nation by bringing up children and families which we are so anxious to encourage for the welfare of this State, in order to make their lot even worth living have to engage some kind of domestic help to get them through their everyday duties. It seems to me that this provision is going to impose a hardship on these people. In the first place, I do not know that there is any great demand from domestic servants to be brought under an award. I can quite understand that there is a demand from some gentleman who would like to act as organiser to the domestic servants in order to collect £1 5s. a year from them and find that particular gentleman a job. I have no doubt, if that position was advertised, there would be a rush from those gentlemen to look after the welfare of those domestic servants. The point I want to stress is this: You see a desire on every hand—a most commendable desire—to alleviate the lot of the mother in the bringing up of her family. There are people not in very affluent circumstances who have to get some amount of assistance to carry out their domestic duties who are now to be brought under the Arbitration Court and compelled to pay these assistants fixed rates of wages and conform to uniform hours. In the average family where there is a number of children it is nearly impossible properly to conduct the household on fixed hours. It also follows that those mothers who have to engage domestic servants will have to form themselves into a union, and they will have to be represented in the Arbitration Court. They will also have to contribute 3d. per week towards the Unemployment Insurance Fund. That naturally follows as soon as they are brought under the operations of the Arbitration Act.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: That won't break them.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: No; but it is imposing regulations upon their already fully burdened life.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Ah!

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: It is all very well for the Assistant Home Secretary to laugh; he does not know anything about it yet; he has just started. I am talking about those men and women who undertook their responsibilities before they got bald-headed. (Laughter.) If the Assistant Home Secretary will think for a minute, he must recognise that what I say is correct. You have only to read the letters in the newspapers to see how these women are beginning to find out that they must get some relief if they are to lead the life which is expected of them. I am going to ask the Minister in charge of this Bill: Why not make provision for a mothers' union? The mothers of Queensland are a class of women in the community who deserve all the protection this House can give. (Hear, hear!) The hon. members opposite—I applaud them for it—have done what they could to uplift the position of the women of Queensland, and they have made very great use of it. Here is a method by which they can show their sincere sympathy for the mothers of Queensland, by making such a provision as I suggest.

Mr. Elphinstone.]

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: You can move an amendment.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I will move an amendment, and, as the father of quite a substantial family, I shall be quite equal to doing it, too.

In regard to the apprenticeship question, I am delighted to see this matter taken up seriously. It is a pleasure to see both sides of the House thinking alike in this regard. I do not intend to amplify my remarks at this stage, as I hope at a later date to deal with this matter fully. The position that has arisen is a menace in Queensland to-day. That menace is that our young men have not been given the opportunity, which we think they are entitled to, to learn a trade or a profession. I welcome that phase of the measure which seems to show that the Minister is fully alive to the importance of that position. There is one admission of the Minister which is an endorsement of what we have been arguing, and that is where he states that industry has been passing through a dull time. That is what we have been contending—that industry in Queensland has been stagnant, and therefore an alteration in regard to apprentices should help in regard to that matter in no small measure.

The hon. member for Townsville thought he was called upon to make some disparaging comments upon his predecessor. All I hope is that that hon. member will be as useful a member in this House, and contribute as much wisdom to its deliberations, as the late member for Townsville did.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: If the hon. member for Townsville is going to maintain the reputation of the late member for Townsville, he will not engage in the practice he indulged in this afternoon.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: He went to considerable pains to call our attention to some so-called delinquencies of the late member for Townsville in writing to his managers in regard to some of his employees. I want to tell that hon. member what he should know now, if he has not learnt it. The late member for Townsville was simply calling attention to the fact that, so long as you are going to control wages on the basis of persons' ages, that kind of thing must follow. If the employer only had to pay wages according to qualification and production that would never happen; but, so long as wages are not based according to qualification and ability, there are times when employers have to discharge employees who by age qualify for wages that their ability does not justify. If the hon. gentleman had inquired into some of the actions [9.30 p.m.] of his own friends, he would have known that the gentleman who was standing as an opponent to the hon. member for Logan was taken great exception to by union leaders because he was brought forward as a spokesman for the great Labour policy, and at the same time his works were employing non-union men.

Mr. PEASE: That is not true.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I do not like reading from the "Daily Standard" to the House, but I will do so to-night. This is what it said on 16th March last—

"The Trades and Labour Council

[Mr. Elphinstone.

endorsed the objection of the Australian Meat Industry Employees' Union against the candidature of T. L. Jones of Oxley. The council requests the Queensland Central Executive to withdraw T. L. Jones as candidate for Oxley because he will make a united front against capitalism impossible."

And this is what Mr. Miles said.

Mr. PEASE: That is not the "Daily Standard." It is only a report.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The effect of it was, anyway, that Mr. Jones was not returned.

Mr. PEASE: Say it to his face outside.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I am never afraid to say anywhere what I say in this Chamber. (Uproar.)

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I am sorry to have to be the means of conveying these home truths to the hon. members opposite. Mr. Miles said—

"The delegates of the union on the council had been instructed to voice the union's protest on this matter at the council. The Southern district members and council had opposed the endorsement of Mr. T. L. Jones. The issue involved was one of unionism. A strike had occurred, and was endorsed by the union, but the union's protest had proved ineffective. The Eou Park Convention had endorsed the action of the Queensland Central Executive on this matter by fifty-four votes to eighteen. Since the strike the Oxley works had been thrown open to non-unionists, and non-unionists were still employed there. They all earnestly desired to see a united front of the workers, and were urged to show a united front, and yet were expected to support an employer of non-union labour."

Mr. PEASE: Are you aware that Jones was exonerated by the tribunal?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The point I want to make is this: Hon. members opposite tried to show where we had been delinquent in respect of their conception of the spirit of arbitration, yet here is a case where a man who was actually a Labour candidate was also an employer of non-union labour.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You are not fit to clean his boots.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I wish now to make one or two corrections in regard to remarks made by the hon. member for Barcoo. He said, concerning the Wheat Pool Bill, that we protested on this side of the House because it was provided in the Bill that workers in wheatfields should be brought under the Arbitration Court. He did not point out that those workers had never yet been brought under the Arbitration Court. Why did he not make that statement? We would then have shown that his argument had no foundation whatever. He also tried to make this point—that, if we would only introduce skilled labour into farming, it would make for the prosperity of the industry. I would point out that, if we only introduced skilled labour into the industries of Queensland generally, they would all go ahead. The operations of the hon. members opposite have prevented that skilled

labour being introduced. When we discuss later the means of overcoming this, I hope that the hon. member for Barcoo will be in its favour.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): I welcome the introduction of this amending measure. I want to point out to the hon. member for Oxley that, when he set out to criticise a gentleman by the name of T. L. Jones, who ran in the Labour interests for Logan, and who has always been an advocate of arbitration, he did so by quoting the "Standard." The hon. member for Oxley, perhaps, has forgotten the time when the "Courier" set out to criticise him, and I am going to quote what it said of him on one or two occasions. (Government laughter.)

"A gentleman who indulges in the habit of flirting with different political affections."

"Playing the political weathercock."

"A political showman with an appetite for political casuistry."

"Who attempted to throw dust in the eyes of thinking men and women."

Throughout the whole of the twenty-five minutes he was speaking he attempted to throw dust in the eyes of hon. members present. There is no man perfect, but if I had as much training as the hon. member and was as full of imperfections I would be ashamed of myself.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. COLLINS: At any rate, the point I want to make is that he was trying to throw dust in the eyes of the people of Queensland. I look upon the hon. member for Oxley as one of the most dangerous men in this House. (Opposition laughter). In Grote's "History of Greece" I found that it was men of his stamp who brought about the downfall of the ancient Greek civilisation. (Laughter.)

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Surely you are not calling me a Dago! (Renewed laughter.)

Mr. COLLINS: We have heard this afternoon, and ever since the debate commenced, that we are doing the wrong thing by bringing these rural industries under the Arbitration Act. What do we mean by the rural parts of Queensland? Does it not mean the country parts of Queensland? And who represent those parts? Do hon. members on the other side of the House represent the country parts of Queensland?

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Yes.

Mr. COLLINS: Well, I am going to give them a few figures. Queensland has an area of about 666,000 square miles, and of that area it may be news to hon. members opposite to learn that this party represents 550,000 square miles. How can hon. members opposite claim that they represent the rural industry? Why, the hon. member for Gregory represents a larger area than the whole lot of them put together! Are we going to bring about the ruination of the people we represent? Nothing of the kind! Yet the hon. member for Cunningham gets up from time to time and says that he is speaking on behalf of the rural industries and the farming industry, although he represents only 119 square miles altogether. He puts me in mind of the lamentations of Jeremiah. Considering that we are supposed to be living in the most enlightened age the world

has ever seen, it is strange to find hon. members on the other side trying to prevent a portion of the men and women of this great community taking advantage of one of the laws that was placed upon our statute-book in 1916; and, if we had had our way as a Labour party, these proposals would have been embodied in the Act of 1916. It passed through this Chamber, and was rejected by the Legislative Council which represented vested interests.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: And sustained afterwards by a majority of 65,000 of the electors of Queensland.

At 3.40 p.m.,

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

Mr. COLLINS: Oh, where, oh, where, are the members of the Legislative Council now? Disappeared! (Uproar.) Why did they disappear? Because they were a block on the wheels of human progress. Everyone knows, as time rolls on, with the growing intelligence amongst the masses of the people, especially amongst the people who do farming in Queensland, that they will wake up, and, as the "Courier" said in reference to the hon. member for Oxley, who throws dust in the eyes of thinking men and women, hon. gentlemen opposite will not be able much longer to throw dust in the eyes of the men and women who go to make up the constituencies that they represent. In years gone by, when I was younger, I used to read the history of Great Britain and the history of other countries, and the same old arguments that were used this afternoon were used in the British House of Commons against the passing of the Ten Hours Act. They are the very same arguments. There would be no progress at all if it was left to hon. members opposite. They are the lineal descendants of the same old Tory party that opposed every reform that was ever introduced in any country in the world. They do not believe in reform. They said it was going to bring about ruination because we passed this measure and because we passed that measure; but that ruination has not been brought about. Just the same as parsons used to get up in the pulpit and try to prove from the Scriptures that slavery was justified, so hon. gentlemen sitting on the other side of the House, if they had been living at that time and living in the United States of America, would have supported slavery. We were told when the first Arbitration Act was passed by the Commonwealth Parliament that it meant the ruination of the pastoral and other industries. Has that ruination been brought about?

Mr. EDWARDS: Yes.

Mr. COLLINS: We ought to give the hon. member for Nanango a subsidy and send him back to the State from which he came—that is, the State of Victoria. I spent some twelve months of my life in that State, and it is the most miserable, downtrodden State in the whole of the Commonwealth. (Uproar.) What I want to make clear is that no matter what reform we introduced in this Chamber we were told that ruination was going to follow that reform. Well, ruination has not followed those reforms, because Queensland to-day is the most progressive State in the Commonwealth. I remember being on the Burdekin in 1903 when Mr. Chapman, who was then Minister for Trade and Customs, issued his famous proclamation that the wages

Mr. Collins.]

of the workers in the sugar-fields were to be 8s. a day of eight hours, or 25s. a week and their food, and it was supposed at that time that that would bring about the ruination of the sugar industry. As a matter of fact, it was from that time on that progress was really made, as the hon. member for Townsville told us this afternoon, and told us truly. What will really happen in connection with these rural industries will be this: When they have to pay men a decent wage we shall then see the application of machinery to production; and, if we only had the same amount of machinery applied to production that was applied to destruction during the past ten years, no one can tell what progress this world would have made. Hon. members opposite are always in favour of the use of machinery for destruction. They cry "War!" on every possible occasion. What we stand for as a Labour party is to apply machinery and the inventive faculty of man to production, and that will be the remedy for what they are crying out about now. We see that in the canefields now. Already, owing to the fact that good wages are now paid to the workers employed in the canefields, the canegrower is using intelligence, and using the most up-to-date machinery known to man in connection with the cultivation of the canefields. Even on the Inkerman Estate to-day—which is a new place so far as sugar-growing is concerned—you will see forty tractors in operation, and what is being done there will be done elsewhere by the forcing up of wages and the bringing about of better conditions, not only for the wage-earner, but also for the man who is cultivating the soil. I am not alarmed about this ruination cry. One hon. member said that, if we applied this measure to the rural industries, certain people who possessed capital would get rid of their farms; but that hon. member must realise that, if you are going to sell a farm, there must always be some other person who is willing to buy the farm and take the risk attaching to the farm. That kind of parrot-cry is not going to frighten a man like myself, or to frighten men sitting on this side of the House. We know that the industries will still go on; that men will still cultivate the soil; and we are here as a Labour party to assist in making their conditions better.

The hon. member for Murilla said that the man who cultivates the soil should be paid for his labour. That is what we have been saying all our lives. We say he should be paid for his labour; but, considering hon. members opposite were in possession of the Government benches for a period of over fifty years, will they argue that the cultivator of the soil was in a better position when they occupied the Treasury benches than he has been in since we have occupied them? He was not in nearly as good a position in those days, because we on this side of the House represent the principal agricultural industry in Queensland—that is, the sugar industry, which employs more workers than any other agricultural industry in this State. Has arbitration brought about ruination in that industry? We all remember what was said when the Dickson award was given. If I had my way, I would contribute my mite many times over towards erecting a monument for that gentleman, because he was the first man who lifted up, not only the sugar-workers of Queensland, but the whole of the workers of Queensland, to a

higher plane by giving the award that was known as the Dickson award. One hon. member said during the course of his remarks that arbitration would be all right if both sides were compelled to obey the award. When the Dickson award was made a strike took place amongst the farmers at Proserpine, in my electorate, which was inspired to a large extent by the hon. member for Mirani.

Mr. SWAYNE: You are wrong.

Mr. COLLINS: I say it was inspired to a large extent by the hon. member for Mirani. The farmers on the Proserpine never thanked the hon. member for Mirani for the advice he sent along to them to hold out against the Dickson award. He is like the hon. member for Cunningham, who said it would throw men out of work. I would like to know how many men these Darling Downs farmers really employ altogether. I take it that they employ very few indeed, except in harvest time, to take off their wheat crops. What are they crying out about? What we argue is, that the men who work for them should be paid a decent wage, have decent conditions, and work decent hours. If, when working for themselves on their own farms, they like to work sixteen hours a day, I am not going to stop them, because I take it they have sufficient intelligence to know when to start and sufficient intelligence to know when to knock off when they are working for themselves. If they have not got the intelligence, there is something wrong. Then again, following the line of argument used by the hon. member for Murilla that they should be paid for their labour, I take it that the Government, if the farmers are not in a position to buy the modern machinery mentioned by me, will introduce legislation to enable them to get that machinery. If they have been so kept down by past Governments—of which the hon. member for Burnett was a prominent supporter—that they are not in a position to avail themselves of modern machinery and have to work with obsolete machinery, it is up to the Government to introduce legislation to enable them to get hold of the most modern machinery known to man, and so do away with the parrot cry that we are going to bring ruination upon the State.

Mr. CORSER: Hear, hear!

At 9.51 p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. COLLINS: The hon. member for Burnett is dark and gloomy all the time. He sees nothing but darkness; he sees nothing bright in connection with the development of this State. I believe there are immense possibilities in this State. We know full well what the progress of the union movement has been. Since we have had arbitration we have had wonderful progress. I believe in the principle of arbitration. If we cannot get the mass of the people to believe in industrial arbitration, what hope have we of abolishing war? We look forward to the time—representing the intelligent workers of the community as a Labour party, and in conjunction with other Labour parties in the Commonwealth and in the different countries of the world—when we shall so deeply influence public opinion as not only to settle industrial disputes by Courts of Arbitration, but also to settle international disputes by the same Courts of Arbitration.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

[Mr. Collins.]

Mr. COLLINS: But no one can expect hon. members opposite, who, as I said on one occasion, are right away back in the dark ages, to grasp the ideas of industrial arbitration.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. COLLINS: If we do not have arbitration, there is only one course left for us, and that is direct action to settle industrial disputes. If you want real direct action, then you want to realise that war is the most complete system of direct action known on this earth. You may ask what this has to do with industrial arbitration.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must confine his remarks to the Bill. (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. COLLINS: I thought I had confined my remarks to the Bill, because the last words I said were "industrial arbitration." (Opposition laughter.) This is "a Bill to further amend the Industrial Arbitration Act of 1916 in certain particulars."

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. COLLINS: I am arguing that this Bill is not going to bring about ruination because rural workers are being included in it, nor yet bring about ruination, as predicted by the hon. member for Oxley, by the inclusion of domestic servants. The hon. member for Oxley was very much concerned about the mothers. Does he not realise that these domestic servants may later on also become mothers? They are going to be the future mothers of the race, and we are concerned that they should not work excessive hours, nor receive the low wages they used to receive in Brisbane in years gone by, when many of them had to resort to the streets to enable them to live.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Shame!

Mr. COLLINS: We want to improve the conditions of the workers, and under this legislation we shall improve the conditions more and more for the future mothers of Queensland.

Mr. EDWARDS (Vanango): I wish to endorse the remarks which have fallen from hon. members on this side of the House. I think that we should discuss this question from a common-sense point of view, and not rave over the question, as the hon. member who has just resumed his seat has done. If the speech he has made were made in the country districts he would frighten the farmers off the land. The Government have been in office for seven years, and they have at last got strict orders to bring in this measure at once. Although the Premier to-night denied it, when the hon. member for Albert charged him with not saying a word about this question when in the rural districts, I say that he was asked the question on several occasions and absolutely refused to answer it. In my own electorate he simply sidestepped the question, and abused the man who asked it. He told the House the other night that Labour does not speak with two voices. He went out during the election to get the primary producers' votes. In my district they took a tumble to what he would be likely to do with the extreme section of the Labour party behind him, and therefore turned him down with a thud. I only wish that, in the interests of Queensland, I had had to contest my seat against him instead of my late opponent.

In the rural districts of Queensland, apart from the sugar industry, things are in a most deplorable condition. The men who are struggling on the land went through a drought in 1918 and 1919. In 1920 and 1921 they had fairly decent seasons, and the Government stepped in then and took their butter. The rural industries are at present going through one of the worst and most general droughts which they have ever faced.

If the wages are going to be increased—and I am satisfied that every man who is able to pay it will be only too pleased to do so—and if primary producers are going to be forced out of production [10 p.m.] and production therefore is going to be reduced, it is not going to be good for the employees or for the State itself. The Government have not shown discretion in bringing forward this legislation at such a time.

Mr. CARTER: You are a Jeremiah.

Mr. EDWARDS: The hon. member is the greatest Jeremiah who has ever been in the House, bar the hon. member for Bowen. (Laughter.) In my district—and I know it applies on the Downs and through the Western districts of Queensland—the producers have made practically nothing during the whole of this year. We have had instances where they have put in 50 or 100 acres of maize and taken no crop off. If men are to be employed at a very high wage and under the conditions that are likely to be imposed by the Arbitration Court, how much worse off will they be?

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: What do you consider a fair wage?

Mr. EDWARDS: What is being paid now—£2 to £3 a week and found.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is a wide margin.

Mr. EDWARDS: For the different work and the different men on a farm, you have to have a wide margin. If the Secretary for Public Lands had worked on the land of which I am speaking as an employee, as I have done, he would know something of the conditions.

Mr. W. COOPER: Were you satisfied with the wages you got?

Mr. EDWARDS: Whether I was or not, I was able to save sufficient money to make a start on my own, and I have struggled through and reared a big family.

Mr. W. COOPER: You were not satisfied with the wage you were getting or you would not have left it.

Mr. EDWARDS: I am very pleased with that interjection, because it just shows the capabilities of the man it came from. I believe in grit, and the man who is not anxious to own a home of his own is not the best class of citizen.

Mr. HYNES: You believe in perpetuating the sweating evil.

Mr. EDWARDS: I am satisfied that, if that hon. member had some experience in real work, he would know something about it. I am sure he has done none for a long time.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Your farm is the worst in the district.

Mr. EDWARDS: The hon. member for Townsville this afternoon said that the increased output per head of population in

Mr. Edwards.]

Queensland has been enormous. If he followed up the question, he would discover that the primary producers are practically paying that increase. A binder which could be bought for £43 in 1914 costs about £100 to-day. Exactly the same increase applies to farming machinery all round and in respect of everything a man needs on his farm. I am more concerned about the increase in primary production than about the output of factories or anything else, because, if we can increase our primary production and that of our secondary industries, we are going to make conditions better, not only for the employees, but also for everyone living within the State. The hon. member for Mirani asked a question, in reply to which he was told that during the last few years no fewer than 800 or 900 blocks of land—over 1,000 blocks in one case—had been forfeited each year. It shows that the primary producing industries are not in any way as prosperous as the Minister would lead us to believe. The Government initiated a scheme for the constitution of the Council of Agriculture for one purpose, and that was to let themselves down lightly in bringing about the very legislation that they are proposing to bring about to-night. Hon. members opposite have time and again said that that Council has done something in the interests of the primary producers. I will admit that it has done its best, but the difficulties are tremendous, and no one knows it better than the Secretary for Agriculture. I am satisfied that, if he was making a living off the land instead of being a Minister, he would be fighting this measure tooth and nail, because he knows that it is a measure not in the best interests of the people in the country districts.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There is one thing that they can say, and that is that, while I was farming, I always paid good wages.

MR. EDWARDS: If the hon. gentleman was farming under conditions that farmers labour under to-day, he could not pay a decent wage however much he wished to do so. The primary producers will be placed in an unfortunate position if an award is granted fixing the hours of labour. There are many days on a farm when men have got practically nothing to do. There are so many jobs to be done, particularly in drought time, that it would be impossible to fix the number of working hours. There are many farmers at the present time driving their cattle 3 and 4 miles to water, or carting water that distance to the cattle. There are some carting dry corn stalks to feed their cattle. Those who have reared valuable herds of cows for many years are now losing every one of them. I am speaking now as a practical farmer.

MR. WEIR: You have been a failure on practically every farm you have been on.

MR. EDWARDS: If I was as great a failure as a farmer as the hon. gentleman has been in his line of business, I would be ashamed of myself.

MR. PEASE: You do not know his record. He never failed in his life yet.

MR. EDWARDS: If high wages and better conditions can be applied to the primary producing industries, then by all means apply them; but I consider that this Bill is going to be injurious to the producing population

[Mr. Edwards.

of this State. If the Government, through the Council of Agriculture, first stabilised these industries, then they could apply the conditions that they are suggesting should be applied through this legislation. The Secretary for Agriculture knows full well that at the present time the dairy farmers in this State have to accept pre-war prices for their butter. They are getting a lower rate now than they have been obtaining for years, even in the face of droughts and in the face of increased cost of production.

MR. PEASE: Butter is 2s. 3d. a lb. to-day.

MR. EDWARDS: The dairymen of this State are getting 1s. and 1s. 3d. per lb. for butter-fat. I think, if the hon. members opposite first considered the advisability of passing this measure on to the Council of Agriculture, and allowed them to discuss it and to bring out all the points, we would have a different measure to that now before us.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: What about sending it to the Trades Hall as well?

MR. BRAND: You got it from there.

MR. EDWARDS: The hon. gentleman knows it came from the Trades Hall. The Council of Agriculture, if allowed to discuss it in the interests of the primary producers, would prove to the Government that it was impossible to apply it to the agricultural and dairying industries at the present time in Queensland.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Is that how parliamentary business should be conducted?

MR. EDWARDS: The effect of this measure upon the unfortunate farmer will be that he will have to take greater responsibility than he has at the present time. Even in times of difficulty and trouble he will not be able to employ labour, and consequently he, together with his wife and family, will have to carry greater burdens than he has done in the past. I heard an hon. member opposite say that if a farm was for sale someone would take on the obligation. I know of thousands of farms that are for sale, and no one will take on the obligation.

MR. KIRWAN: That is nonsense.

MR. EDWARDS: It is true.

MR. KIRWAN: It is not true.

MR. EDWARDS: If the hon. member for Brisbane has any money to spare, and cares to come up into my district, or many other districts in Queensland, he will get suited.

MR. CARTER: Look at the company he will be in.

MR. EDWARDS: Yes; he is with the right company when he is with you. The children and the women on the farms, no doubt, will suffer through this legislation.

MR. DASH: Rot!

MR. EDWARDS: If the hon. member for Mundingburra knew anything about it, he certainly would not say that. I notice that the hon. member for Rosewood has got very quiet. He knows something about the difficulties and the struggles of the farmer and his wife and family. Let the Government stabilise prices, and they will get all the assistance possible from the Country party in doing so. Then they can bring along this

legislation when they have proved to the producer that they will give him a fair deal and fair marketable conditions for what he produces.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: The Government want to sweat the man who produces the produce.

MR. EDWARDS: There is no such thing as sweating a man in Queensland at the present time. (Government dissent.) If you tie up a primary producer with the responsibilities, then, if there is a man who, with his wife and children, will be sweated, it will be the primary producer. If hon. members opposite will take a trip out into the country—

MR. HYNES: We have been there, and have worked there.

MR. EDWARDS: And see the real difficulties that beset the primary producer at the present time, they will come back very much more enlightened than they are, and will be able to give more serious attention to this measure than they appear to be doing at the present time.

MR. BRUCE: What about the wife and children of the employec?

MR. EDWARDS: If they saw the difficulties which the man on the land had to contend with, they would not treat this measure in the jocular manner they are treating it to-night.

MR. HYNES: You are putting up a plea for sweated conditions.

MR. EDWARDS: I am convinced that, if the hon member was sweated, it would do him good. (Laughter.) There is another question which, no doubt, will have a bad effect. It is that the country children are not getting the educational facilities that they should get.

MR. HYNES: How can they, if you are only paying the workers £1 10s. a week?

MR. EDWARDS: I think it is deplorable to think that these conditions are going to be applied—conditions which will make it harder for those boys and girls.

In conclusion, I want to say that everything proves that the conditions are such on the land at the present time, in comparison with other industries—

MR. HARTLEY: Crying again.

MR. EDWARDS: That the people are gradually going from the land into the large centres of population. That has been proved by statistics, and it has been proved that it is impossible to impose any harder conditions on those people at the present time.

MR. PEASE: Fifteen shillings a week will not induce them to remain on the land.

MR. EDWARDS: There is no such wage as 15s. a week paid to-day. I am paying a man 12s 6d. a day to plough—

MR. HARTLEY: One day a week.

MR. EDWARDS: And then he asks my boys to attend to the horses. I am not saying for one moment that that applies to all the men. There are good men in the country as well as anywhere else. The hon. members opposite would do well to leave the country districts alone until the Council of Agriculture, with their assistance and the assistance of the Country Party, stabilise the different industries in which the primary producer is

at present struggling. When the Primary Producers' Organisation Bill was before the House last session nineteen amendments were put into it by the Country Party, and the Secretary for Agriculture knows that two were rejected which he has seen fit since to try and get in, one of them by regulation.

MR. PEASE: The hon. member for Cunningham was the only man who knew anything about the Bill.

MR. EDWARDS: How the hon. members on the other side can force this class of legislation, from a business point of view, when they know that many hundreds of the farmers are applying to the Government, not only for fodder, but actually for relief to feed their families, I do not know. Everyone must realise that this is deplorable in a State like Queensland. If the advice of practical men had been taken years ago, these conditions would not apply to-day. We offered suggestions regarding the conservation of water and fodder years ago.

MR. HARTLEY: Why did you not give effect to your suggestions?

MR. EDWARDS: We could not get the opportunity. I hope that hon. members opposite will see fit to withdraw this Bill—

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: There is no chance of that.

MR. EDWARDS: In the interests of the agricultural industries of this State and give the Council of Agriculture an opportunity to discuss it. The Secretary for Agriculture sits in the chair of that Council of Agriculture, and they could discuss this measure, and if they decided that it is advisable to bring the rural workers under the Arbitration Court—

MR. HYNES: By the same rule, why not approach the unions concerned?

MR. EDWARDS: The hon. member knows that the orders came from the unions to bring in the Bill.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You have a poor idea of the principles of government.

MR. EDWARDS: The hon. gentleman knows full well who gave the orders to introduce this measure.

THE SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must address the Chair.

MR. EDWARDS: The hon. gentleman knows full well, according to a question which he answered himself only yesterday, that the State Produce Agency has handled no less than 100 tons of African maize. Surely that is evidence enough of the state Queensland is in owing to drought!

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: How much was handled by private merchants?

MR. EDWARDS: That is sufficient to prove beyond question of doubt that greater burdens should not be placed on the primary producers of this State at the present time.

MR. CLAYTON (*Wide Bay*): 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 10.21 p.m.

Mr. Edwards.]