

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 26 JULY 1923

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

THURSDAY, 26 JULY, 1923.

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

QUESTIONS.

BOARDS FOR REVALUATION OF SOLDIER SETTLEMENTS.

Mr. COSTELLO (*Carnarvon*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"1. Have any boards yet been constituted for the purpose of revaluation of soldier settlements?"

"2. If so, what persons have been appointed, what are their qualifications, and what interests do they represent, respectively?"

"3. If no boards are yet constituted, what qualifications and representations is it intended to include in such boards?"

"4. Will such boards deal with revaluation of land as well as improvements?"

"5. Will such boards be asked to make suitable recommendations in cases where it is found that it is impossible for soldier settlers to make a living on their holdings?"

"6. When will such boards be likely to commence revaluation operations?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*) replied—

"1 to 3. The personnel of the board has not yet been finalised. It will consist of departmental officers from Lands Department, Works Department, and State Advances Corporation.

"4. No. Its functions will be to revalue all improvements affected by loan money.

"5. No. This matter is already receiving attention and will require an entirely different investigation.

"6. Immediately."

DIAMANTINA HOSPITAL AND COMMONWEALTH BENEVOLENT ALLOWANCE.

Mr. KING (*Logan*) asked the Home Secretary—

"1. Has he recently received a petition from the inmates of Diamantina Hospital asking that such hospital be declared an institution whereby the inmates will be entitled to receive the benevolent allowance of 2s. a week allowed by the Commonwealth Government to such institutions?"

"2. If so, will he say if the Government intend to grant the prayer of such petition?"

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*) replied—

"1. Yes.

"2. The Government has no power to grant the prayer of the petition. Representations have, from time to time, been made to the Commonwealth Government to grant the allowance, but, so far, without result. Representations have again been made to that Government."

CATTLE AND SHEEP RAILWAY TRUCKS IN USE IN 1914 AND 1923.

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

"1. What is the number of cattle wagons available for use in the Southern, Central, and Northern railway systems, respectively?"

"2. What is the number of sheep trucks available for use in the Southern, Central, and Northern railway systems, respectively?"

"3. How many sheep and cattle trucks, respectively, were available for use in the abovenamed system in the year 1914?"

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

"1 to 3.

	1914.	1923.	Old Wagons Rebuilt or Replaced.
CATTLE TRUCKS.			
Southern and Central Divisions	435	584	39
Great Northern Railway	189	310	9
Cairns Railway	31	42	..
Cooktown Railway	1	1	..
Normanton Railway	2	2	..
Total	658	939	48
SHEEP VANS.			
Southern and Central Divisions	409	412	33
Great Northern Railway	54	54	..
Cairns Railway	2	4	..
Total	465	470	33

It is impossible to give separate figures for the Southern and Central Divisions, as the rolling-stock runs in both divisions."

INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL AND COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURE.

Mr. CLAYTON (*Wide Bay*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

"In the event of clause 3 of the Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment Bill being carried, will he, as Chairman of the Council of Agriculture, representing the District Councils and Local Producers' Associations of the Primary Producers' Organisation, undertake to oppose personally or by his representative any claim made on behalf of persons employed on dairy farms, fruit farms, or agricultural farms for an award altering their present wages, hours of work, or conditions of employment, until the Council of Agriculture has been able to materially improve the state of prosperity of the average farmer engaged in such industries in Queensland to an extent sufficient to warrant any such award being made?"

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

"The policy of this Government to improve the conditions of everyone engaged in rural industries, no matter

in what capacity, is well known and appreciated by all fair-minded people, as is also their adherence to the principle of arbitration in preference to direct action. The hon. gentleman's lack of knowledge of economic laws is responsible for his fear of arbitration in this regard."

JONAS NEILSEN MILK PASTEURISER AND STERILISER.

Mr. KIRWAN (*Brisbane*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

"1. In view of the necessity of making a success of the scheme for the distribution of pure milk to consumers generally, has his attention been called to the Jonas Neilsen Milk Pasteuriser and Steriliser now in use in portions of Great Britain, also Canada, South Africa, and the United States?"

"2. As the Coastal Farmers' Society of Sydney are reported by cable in the Melbourne 'Age' recently as having secured the sole rights for the use of this invention in New South Wales, will he cause inquiries to be made as to whether the claims advanced for this method of treatment of milk, which enables it to be kept pure and wholesome for several months, and, if necessary, sent any distance without losing its freshness or nutritive properties, are correct?"

"3. Will he refer the matter to the Council of Agriculture for full inquiry and investigation?"

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK replied—

"1. Yes.

"2. Yes.

"3. Yes, but as the inquiry is of a scientific nature, investigations are being carried out by officers of the Department of Agriculture and Stock."

NEGOTIATIONS WITH COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT IN RE ADVANCES TO SOLDIER SETTLERS.

Mr. KERR (*Bnoggera*) asked the Premier—

"1. Have any recent negotiations taken place or has any agreement been arrived at with the Commonwealth in connection with financial concessions relating to the loan money advanced or to be advanced to soldier settlers?"

"2. If so, what are the concessions, and how will they affect the settlers?"

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

"1 and 2. The financial arrangements connected with soldier land settlement were discussed at the recent Premiers' Conference. The printed report of the Conference proceedings will I hope be available at an early date, and copies will be distributed amongst hon. members."

INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL AND COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURE.

Mr. COSTELLO, without notice, asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

"Was the Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment Bill, now before this House, brought forward for discussion at the last meeting of the Council of Agriculture?"

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK replied—

"It was not brought forward for discussion, nor put on the business paper."

Mr. COSTELLO: It was not allowed.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

HON. F. T. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): 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 Local Authorities Acts, 1902-1922, in certain particulars, and to repeal the Undue Subdivision of Land Prevention Act of 1835, and for other consequential purposes."

Question put and passed.

FIRE BRIGADES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

HON. F. T. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): 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 Fire Brigades Act of 1920 in certain particulars."

Question put and passed.

ESTABLISHMENT OF CO-OPERATIVE PRODUCE AGENCIES BY PRIMARY PRODUCERS.

Mr. CORSER (*Burcott*): I beg to move—

"That, in order to assure to primary producers the possibility of controlling the marketing of their produce, legislative provision be made and loan moneys be made available for the establishment of co-operative produce agencies, to be controlled by the primary producers themselves through a properly constituted directorate elected by subscribing shareholders."

This is a most important motion, and deals with a most important factor in our agricultural life. The keys to success in the agricultural industry are profit and reward for the people engaged therein. We must bring that about by the stabilisation of our markets, which can only be done by the people engaged and interested in agricultural pursuits. We must have direct communication between the producer and the consumer; we must do something by co-operative means which will bring the arm of the producer's distribution nearer to the table of the consumer; and, when we have shortened the distance between them, we shall have a far better opportunity of giving to the primary producers the full reward for the commodities which we expect them to grow. Nothing would arouse more interest on the part of the producer than a system of true co-operative markets, because they would give him the opportunity to take and to hold something in his own interests, and help him to realise that part of his desire which he expected would be gratified when he first heard the Premier's promise

Mr. Corser.]

at Laidley in outlining his new Primary Producers' Organisation scheme.

Mr. PEASE: What do you think about the sugar agreement?

Mr. CORSER: The hon. member is not going to draw me off the track.

Mr. PEASE: That is a form of co-operative marketing.

Mr. CORSER: I am going to deal with this question in a broad way. I am not going to take one agricultural industry, but agricultural industries as a whole, and the hon. member's reference to sugar, wheat, butter, or anything else does not touch what is in my mind, inasmuch as I have in view a big co-operative movement embracing more than merely one product. Rural life must be satisfying to the people who are engaged therein, and, unless we make it satisfying, we cannot expect a continuation of production which must bring about a system of distribution. We cannot expect any nation to endure, let alone build up, if we have not got that satisfaction in our rural community. If we have not got that, we are not going to develop our dormant lands and our dormant wealth. There are three factors in bringing about that satisfaction—three essentials which might be termed the tripod—being the foundation of the future of the rural industry in a State like Queensland. Two of these essentials are production and distribution. I think it will be admitted that the third leg of that tripod is the most important, and that is a reward for thrift. If we do not get rewarded for the work that is put in on the farm, then we are not going to have further development. If we are not going to give the farmer some profit, we are not going to give him anything that will make it possible for him to make his home life comfortable. That must be the basis of successful agriculture in the future. If we cannot have a successful, happy, and comfortable home with successful, happy, and comfortable surroundings for the farmer, then we are not going to develop our agricultural industry against the comforts of the city, because the young sons and daughters of the farmer will look for something more congenial than the home life that has not been comfortable. In order to establish a basis of success we must enable home life to be made comfortable and enable the farmer to secure some profit for his labour. To bring about that reward and that profit, the most advanced agricultural countries have gone in for co-operative enterprises, and have given to the primary producer the control of his products and the control in the marketing of his products, in order to bring nearer to the producer's market the table of the consumer, so that he will receive the full reward of his industry.

Mr. PEASE: Your Federal Government say, "No interference."

Mr. CORSER: The hon. gentleman would interfere in all cases where he thought one was making an appeal for the man on the land.

I have endeavoured to point out that the essence of the future success of the agricultural industry is comfortable home life. There is no man in politics, whether it be the Premier or any Minister or any leader of political thought, particularly of rural thought, who will deny that, if we do not make that home life comfortable, we are not going to do the best for the industry in the future. If the home is not comfortable, our young people

will pass on. If the calling is not satisfying, our farmer to-day will pass off the land. If the calling is not remunerative, he will not advise others in our community to settle on the land. If we do not make the conditions in the industry satisfying to our own farmers, then we should not call others from the other side of the globe to come over and settle on the land. To make this production of value to the man who produces, we must have occasion, as other countries have done and for which my motion provides, to adopt the co-operative system, which will give to the producer a full return for his labour.

Mr. COLLINS: Explain your scheme.

Mr. CORSER: I will certainly explain my scheme. I thank the hon. member for Bowen for the interest he is displaying; but, before I explain my scheme, I might be forgiven if I explain my reason for bringing the scheme forward—(Hear, hear!)—and my right to bring it forward. I received a letter addressed to me by a gentleman who the majority of hon. members in this House claim is right in all that he says. This is the letter, addressed to me by no less a person than the Premier of this State—not the letter read out by the hon. member for Albert last night—

"With effective organisation you farmers now have in your own hands the means to solve your own agricultural problems. You will initiate your own proposals for co-operative handling, marketing, and manufacture."

Mr. CORSER: I have done that to-day.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CORSER: But he says something more.

Mr. DASH: Will you swear to his handwriting?

Mr. CORSER: It might be a "fake." He also says to me—

"You have the driving force to insure the carrying through of all such proposals."

Mr. BRUCE: He made a mistake.

Mr. CORSER: He is your leader and your Premier.

Mr. BRUCE: It is the first mistake he has made.

Mr. CORSER: The letter further says—

"The Queensland Government has given an assurance to the Council of Agriculture that it will finance all sound undertakings put forward in the interests of agriculture in this State."

I ask that the money be provided for the establishment of co-operative enterprise in the marketing of the farmers' produce; and by the letter addressed to me by the Premier I have the right to initiate, and I am initiating, this scheme on behalf of the farmer—a proposal which I am sorry has not been initiated by the Premier himself or his Government, as they have initiated most of the suggestions that have come forward through the Council of Agriculture. Up to the present time that Council has not brought about a pennyworth of difference in the cost of marketing or control of primary produce. Until it does that, how is it possible for us to reap a reward, or receive any benefit from the Council, which the Australian Workers' Union has told us has cost thousands of pounds to build up?

Mr. PEASE: Who is responsible for that?

[Mr. Corser.

Mr. CORSER: The chairman is responsible, and, in answer to the hon. member for Herbert, let me say that till very recently the Council of Agriculture was absolutely controlled by a Council which was nominated by the Government. Then they blame some of us because nothing of any great material value has come from that Council. I am proposing a means by which the primary producer will get some direct benefit—something which we trust will be possible, and which we know will be beneficial to every man and woman who struggles in the bush. As the representative of the great Burnett district, where there is so much Crown land—5,000 farms are to be opened by the Government within a couple of years or so—I want to say that, if we are to open those lands, there must be, as a natural result, further production. What are we going to do with the production from the farms in existence to-day, and from those 5,000 farms also, if we cannot evolve any better scheme of marketing and distributing their products? I think hon. members will agree that it is a matter requiring serious consideration; and that they should not call upon people to go in for further production unless they provide means of distribution and handling of their products, and an assurance against glutted markets, and more comforts in the home life, which, I think, will accrue from such a scheme as I propose.

I am asked just what proposals I have to make to create co-operative markets for our industries? When the State Produce Agency Bill was being passed in 1917, the then Secretary for Agriculture expatiated upon the benefits which would result from organisation. He said it was going to bring the producer and consumer closer to each other. It has not done so. He said it was going to wipe out all the middleman's profits, and he drew an ugly picture regarding them. What has it done? The State Produce Agency has acted more as a middleman than any private concern. It has failed in all these accomplishments which the Minister claimed would follow in its wake. It has not won the confidence of producers. Further, the Minister, in introducing the scheme, stated that the Government would establish a cannery and pulping works to deal with pineapples; yet we find in the Press to-day, and during the last two or three weeks, what trouble our pinegrowers have experienced. The works have not fulfilled what was expected of them. Why? Because the whole system has been under the control of the State instead of the producers. The control of the industry should be in the hands of the producers, who will operate in the best interests of the man who has to produce. Those best interests are not to try to secure exorbitant profits, but to bring about a readjustment of markets. Let me mention the benefit derived by other countries through co-operative markets. The results of the co-operative marketing of products are known throughout all the educated countries of the world; they are controlled absolutely by the producer, with no political interference or control. These organisations have provided for the stabilisation of markets by uniform methods, which secure uniform distribution through the whole country, part of which might be in a state of drought and part enjoying a season of plenty. The co-operation of growers brings about a co-operation covering a very wide area of the State, and is not a little local

concern, but covers the different seasonal conditions that may exist, adjusting markets, supplies, and demands, through one organised channel. The scheme has created satisfaction and has accomplished confidence in agriculture in the countries where it exists. It has also provided an education to the young people, not only in learning itself, but in making them conversant with the conditions, in learning the points of trade, and in making them acquainted with the factors governing the sale of products throughout the world. It makes that information available to all interested, thereby making agricultural life more interesting, and giving a greater competence to those expecting something from it. By organisation against glutted markets co-operation has made possible the wiping away of depressions owing to local conditions, and has prevented excessive cost of production, with the result that in all countries of the world where co-operative marketing on the part of the farmers has been established the farmer has received more for his product, and the consumer has paid less for his food. Co-operation has enabled the farmer to sell his product to the consumer at a cheaper price, and to take to himself the whole of the profit. Co-operation enables better organisation to insure against loss, and leads to an improvement in transport conditions, which in itself is an insurance possible to the farmer under no other system. Hon. members on the other side must agree with the advantages of co-operation. Let me appeal to Government members not to allow rigid party politics to prevent Queensland from securing the advantages of co-operation, which has built up not only the United States but also Denmark and other countries that have gone in for co-operation.

Mr. COLLINS: I will hand you a copy of our platform.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. member's platform is the socialisation of industry, whilst ours is the control of industry by the primary producer under a co-operative system of the marketing and distribution of his products in the interests of the producer and in the interests of the consumer, who will receive his food at a fair price.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You are a disciple of Tom Mann.

Mr. CORSER: That is more than I can say of the hon. gentleman.

Mr. KIRWAN: That is what your friend Bebbington advocated in Rosewood.

Mr. CORSER: If hon. members opposite agree with these principles, they have only to vote for the motion. If I have got so close to their ideals as they wish to make out, let them support this motion, and let them by their votes give the farmers the capital to initiate this co-operative system.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Let it go to a vote and see.

Mr. CORSER: We are prepared to let it go to a vote, and I hope it will go to a vote; but hon. members opposite are not going to "gag" members on this side by that kind of talk. The producer should control the business end of his calling. Australia is too far behind in co-operative enterprise. Of the countries that have gone so far ahead in co-operative enterprise, probably the most up to date is America; but let us see what has been done in England and

Mr. Corser.

Scotland. Half the populations of those two countries buy their food through co-operative markets, while we here have not got one co-operative market. I do not ask for a monopoly. I ask for the establishment of a co-operative selling agency, so that we can show the people of Queensland and of Australia what is possible; and we are prepared to depend for the future expansion of co-operative marketing on the results that we can show once we get a foundation. Once we can show the people the fairness resulting from co-operative marketing, we shall win through.

In America years ago, when co-operative handling was first established, failure after failure took place. They first of all handled the product of each individual under his particular brand. After finding [4 p.m.] markets and getting experience—which is all available for the Governments of Australia to-day—they found it essential not only to combine the co-operative concerns in a co-operative association, but also to combine the co-operative organisations then in existence, so that, instead of having eight or ten co-operative associations operating in one area, there should be one management in the interests of all those engaged in the industry.

Mr. PEASE: Does the leader of the Opposition agree with those ideas?

Mr. CORSER: He does.

Mr. PEASE: He does not.

Mr. CORSER: Denmark may be called the home of co-operative production, distribution, financing, and education. The people of Denmark may be particularly suitable for the system of co-operation, but we have there the home of co-operation, and the results are available to anyone who will study the rural conditions of Denmark. Years ago in France the co-operative system made possible the payment by France of the £200,000,000 indemnity to Germany. The co-operative system was then established amongst the farmers, who raised the money and wiped the indemnity off the slate. Before the late war Germany was one of the foremost co-operative countries in Europe. Their agricultural system was controlled by co-operative societies. There were thousands of co-operative societies in Germany, and the enemies of Germany had to admit that their work was astounding and much to their credit. We have done nothing up to the present time. New Zealand has established co-operative markets, co-operative export, and co-operative handling on the other side. If we in Queensland are given a co-operative market, we shall before long go ahead by the experience which the farmers will get. No State of the Commonwealth is further advanced than Queensland in the co-operative manufacture of cream and butter. We are further ahead than any other State of the Commonwealth, and most of our butter is co-operatively handled. I hold that by the establishment of this system in Queensland we would soon combine the whole of our co-operative interests under one management, handling not only all our products here and feeding the people of Queensland, but controlling production in Australia, as well as controlling our own markets in Australia, and also in Britain and elsewhere.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Why did you not do it during the last thirty years?

[Mr. Corser.

Mr. CORSER: I am not responsible for what happened in what are called the dark ages. I am giving something concrete to the House in the shape of a definite motion, which I challenge hon. members opposite to support. In America they have not only the co-operative handling of ordinary agricultural products, but a great part of their cotton crop has been co-operatively handled in regard to growing and marketing. That has taken place in North and South Carolina, Texas, and other States. I might mention that last week we got into communication with the members of the Federal Government and the Federal member for Wide Bay and secured the withdrawal from Australia of New Zealand butter which did not come up to the proper standard. After years of work, we find that in America there are no less than from 12,000 to 25,000 co-operative distributing companies, which are managed by salaried full-time managers, who are specialists in their business. They first started on the smallest lines, as individual businesses co-operatively controlled in each little district, but they have so advanced that they are now combined in one organisation, which controls the whole of the crops in a certain area. Taking the Canterbury Co-operative Distribution Society alone, that organisation in 1920 handled 2,900,000 barrels and received 2,900 dollars per 1,000 barrels, as against 340,000 barrels for which they received 1,300 dollars per 1,000 barrels in a glutted period in 1914. I want to show by that that they have not only kept up the tremendous amount of production, but they have shown the producer the advisability of growing only the best crop, which received a bigger price on the market because it was very good and well handled and distributed. They have educated the people by spending thousands of pounds yearly on advertising. They do not, like us, spend a few pounds in advertising a few surplus pineapples; but thousands of pounds are spent every year in advertising the best possible ways of distributing the fruits, with the result that, if a big glut occurred to-day, like there was in 1914, when it was so disastrous, the conditions are such that a market would be found for any surplus crop. That crop would not be of inferior quality, but of superior quality. When we consider the advantages which result from co-operation in connection with agricultural industries, I think, if we want to keep our young people on the land, we shall have to go in further for improving the quality. Industrial unions consider the conditions which their members want to work under, and Parliament makes those conditions possible by passing industrial legislation which will bring about what is desired and, no doubt, required. The farmers will have the means of getting better conditions once there is given to them the possibility of handling and marketing the products which they grow.

Hon. members on the other side have asked me what action I have taken in the past to secure the co-operative market for which I am moving to-day. At my instigation resolutions were passed in this House in 1916, 1917, and 1918, asking the Government for assistance in that direction. Now for something more concrete—something which I proposed before the Premier's agricultural scheme was propounded in 1921. On the 12th July, 1921, I wrote to the president of the Queensland Farmers' Union—the only industrial organisation of farmers at that time, now absorbed

in the organisation of the Council of Agriculture—and made certain proposals. Let us put party politics on one side, and I ask hon. members to say whether they think this letter was dictated by political spleen or was broad and constructive. I said—

“We are sorely in need of a powerful central body to advance the co-operative aspirations of all primary producers. The Queensland Farmers' Union, as constituted, is powerless to act in that capacity. If a particular district urges the establishment of a certain co-operative concern, be it for maize or milk products, etc., the Queensland Farmers' Union is in no position to advise or foster the desire of those producers—cannot assist by finance, direct, or nurse to a successful conclusion their proposal. Certainly in certain areas, where business knowledge and capital are available, small concerns are started sometimes, but there are great possibilities ahead, and progress to-day is hampered, no doubt, by obstacles such as were met by the Murarrie Co-operative Bacon Company through the early stages of their brave struggle, and is being met to-day by the Co-operative Canning Association of Stanthorpe fruit-growers and others.

“These difficulties should be alleviated, and can be alleviated by the establishment of one great organisation, able to finance, direct, and control. This could eventually mean the unity of all great co-operative aspirations, their own overseas transport and outside markets for products, raw and manufactured. It is a direct and special business, and should not be hampered by any political opinions. The organisation would include well-wishers of co-operation—those prepared to back their opinion. My suggestion then would be to entrust to co-operationists the industrial movement. To me, Sir, this presents great possibilities. The whole State presents a field for organisation. Assistance by Crown advances to such industrial co-operation is essential. This will be forthcoming, because ‘if you interest the producer industrially you enlighten him politically.’ I therefore respectfully submit for your consideration the suggestion:—

“That the Queensland Farmers' Union constitution could be amended, dissociating it from all political bodies—becoming non-political; that it register as a Queensland Farmers' Co-operative Union, and seek to amalgamate all genuine industrial co-operative aspirations and available capital. I further suggest: That such organisation could educate all primary producers to the advantage of co-operation, could advise and guide their co-operative ambitions, and the establishment of such institutions as are determined by their directorate, composed of men covering a wide area of the State, assisted by such advisory district council as could be decided upon, and elected by the individual members, who would be permanent members, being shareholders in the great co-operative institution.”

That letter was written before the Premier's scheme was published. It provided for more than his scheme. His scheme provides for an excellent organisation. My scheme pro-

vided for an industrial organisation on the co-operative lines essential to the success of agriculture in Queensland. One final sentence I will read—

“What is said of the Queensland Farmers' Union is just as applicable to the United Graziers' Association.”

How true that statement is to-day—

“The latter in particular must realise the want of co-operative handling, direction, and control, for in this lie their future hopes and present need. Then they, too, must separate their industrial organisation from politics and the People's Political Union.”

That was my suggestion in 1921, advocating the very principles wrapped up in the motion I have the pleasure of moving to-day, and I hope that confidence will be given to our primary producers by the adoption of a co-operative system which will give them control of their own destinies. How much depends on confidence, on happiness, and a better life! Nor would it cost the State anything, since we are only asking for a loan of a small amount to enable these things to be successfully started. We do not want a monopoly. We want to secure a place for co-operative enterprise in the markets of the State, so that we may be able to show the primary producers the advantages of it. We can educate them to the necessity for it and the benefits of a system which is not known in Queensland to-day; we can also educate the people of the city. A knowledge of that system, put into practice and controlled by the farmers themselves, will mean its adoption throughout Australia and the extension of such aspirations to the markets of the world, amongst fellow farmers and producers everywhere, not to the disadvantage of the consumer but to the advantage of the man who must live and prosper if we are going to make our State progress, if we are going to build up an Empire, and make use of that greatness which we trust is ours; with which nature undoubtedly has endowed us, and which we alone can develop. I sincerely hope that the Government will support the motion and make a fund for this purpose available, and so promote the desires of the producers, and assist the only business method of carrying on the future agricultural development of Queensland.

Mr. NOTT (*Stanley*): I formally second the motion moved by the hon. member for Burnett, and I compliment him upon proposing one of such importance and upon the manner in which he has handled it. I hope—from observations which I heard on the Government side while the hon. member was speaking—that we shall have sympathetic support for its passage.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: We will vote for it, all right.

Mr. NOTT: I regret that it is necessary to ask for Government aid in the establishment of co-operative concerns. I am sincerely sorry—especially since we know how hard pressed they are for markets—that the primary producers have not been sufficiently solid, or perhaps have not been brought into the channel, where they could provide by their own means for the establishment of these co-operative associations for marketing purposes. Seeing that the co-operative butter factories and cheese factories which have been established in Queensland with the assistance obtained through the Government

Mr. Nott.]

have been so very successful in developing those industries, I think it would be very wise if something could be done to extend co-operation to greater spheres than has been accomplished up to the present time. There was an Act passed some time ago making provision for advances to settlers, which, I thought, would have as great effect in the development of Queensland as the Co-operative Agricultural Production Act. Unfortunately, that Act does not seem to have had the same value in developing Queensland as the Co-operative Agricultural Production Act. A number of advocates of co-operation seem to advocate co-operation with the idea of scotching or killing the middlemen, or proprietary concerns, as though they were a number of scorpions or adders; but it would be disastrous to wipe the middlemen or proprietary concerns out of existence. They are absolutely necessary to keep up the efficiency of the co-operative companies, because, if the proprietary interests were wiped out and the co-operative companies had no opposition, it would not be very long before they would fall to unfathomable depths of inefficiency. Various marketing methods have been tried to prevent what are considered excessive profits being made by the middleman or the distributor, but up to the present they have not been very successful. There have been many pools formed and many bodies constituted in an endeavour to deal with the marketing of products, but most of them have failed. On that point I would like to quote an opinion expressed with regard to the United States of America—

“THE PASSING OF THE MARKETING EXPERTS.

“The United States are beginning to wonder where they are drifting with fancy theories of teaching the farmer to sell his produce. One scheme after another is noisily proclaimed, only to be abandoned after a short trial. Two years were spent in organising the Bureau of Markets; this has cost the country many millions and has reached no marked degree of success. Marketing experts sprang up like mushrooms, and after a brief existence passed from sight. Canada is in the initial stage of just such a combination. Already more is being expended than the necessity demands, and it is suggested that a lesson should be learned from the error that the United States has fallen into of taking up many fanciful ideas of marketing, and let business continue along the old proven channels that have been successful in the past, both for the farmer and the buyer.—Montreal ‘Trade Bulletin,’ 2nd February.”

It seems to me that the only system that is going to be at all successful in adequately marketing our products is the proprietary system and the co-operative system working together. The Tooley-street merchants have admitted on more than one occasion that the giving of information demanded by a number of co-operative companies controlling products in London is a feature that has appeared on the horizon of late and which they must take cognisance of. They have admitted that they must give this information, and must show further consideration to the co-operative companies which are watching and controlling the sale of their own produce. I wish to show the effect of a co-operative company dealing with the sale

of its own produce at a time when prices were very low. This co-operative company put its own produce on the London market, and, if it had been dependent on the Tooley-street merchants or other merchants, no doubt that produce would have remained there for a long time. The company wanted the money very badly at the time and that spurred it on to see if it could improve things. This shows exactly what was done—

“The position at the present time was that the whole output of New Zealand was practically concentrated in one market, namely, London. The company thought the time had come to develop alternative markets, so as to ease London when that market was over-supplied. If alternative markets could be developed to ease the strain upon London in the peak months of production, a very beneficial effect would result. Early in December the company, after consultation with London, sold approximately 120,000 boxes of butter to New York, and within ten days of the time the price of butter in London increased by 2d. per lb., this being largely due to the knowledge secured by the London merchants that this huge total of butter had been diverted from the London market. ‘We are not satisfied with the disposal of butter to America,’ said Mr. Goodfellow. It was largely sold to speculative buyers, but a beginning had been made. The cultivation of this market would undoubtedly result in an increased demand.”

Since then the company has sold a considerable amount of butter in that particular market. There is one pleasing feature with regard to the Press reports. That butter was sent all the way from New Zealand to America and sold in competition with the butter produced in America. A number of the American journals stated that America should appoint an expert to go over to New Zealand and ascertain how butter was manufactured in that Dominion. This butter, notwithstanding its long storage and the long journey it was sent, was superior to butter that was made in America and sold in New York. When small consignments of this butter were sent, the New Zealand people were told by the merchants in America, “You have no chance of getting on this market. We have our own supplies to draw from.” That butter was of such excellent quality that they were able to sell 120 boxes, and probably up to now they have been able to sell 300,000 boxes in the same market. I consider that the present co-operative companies in Queensland have not done all they should have done in regard to research work. They lag sadly behind in that respect. I suppose one reason they lag behind in research work is simply because they have had money advanced by the Government. Consequently, when they wanted information on any subject, they used to [4.30 p.m.] approach the Government and ask for it. I suppose, since the Government supplied them with the money and exports, they expected that they should also be able to supply them with all the necessary information that they subsequently required. In consequence, I think they have neglected the work of research, and at the same time have come to the conclusion that their business lies in the direction of establishing a co-operative factory in a certain

locality, manufacture the butter, put it on the market, and leave all subsequent action to other people. I hope that, if this motion is passed, it will not be long before these co-operative companies will become *bonâ fide* co-operative concerns and take control of the marketing of the produce. Instead of depending on the Government, it would be preferable if these companies engaged their own highly paid experts, who would be able to deal with every phase of the industry and make recommendations for the establishment of the necessary branches connected with it. If that was done, the people of Queensland would know more about milk powders, casein, and various other products manufactured from the primary products in other States and countries at the present time. In regard to that phase of the question it would not be out of place, as it might be information to some people, to mention that parts of motor cars, cigarette holders, and umbrella handles are manufactured from casein, which, in turn, is manufactured from the milk. Billiard balls are also manufactured from casein, and great use is made of this product in the manufacture of paints. There is a very good demand at the present time in New Zealand for casein for the manufacture of those beautiful cretonne dresses which you see the ladies wearing in Brisbane at the present time. I do not think it is necessary for me to take up any great amount of time in the discussion of this matter, because every member of the House must recognise that it is particularly desirable that something should be done to assist the primary producer in every way possible; and one of those ways is certainly in the direction of giving him the opportunity of controlling some of those products that already go through other channels in finding their way from the producer to the consumer. I would like to quote a little table from the "Agricultural Journal" to show what the producer gets for the articles he produces, and what it costs to place them in the hands of the consumer. The figures relate to the United Kingdom. In the case of bread the farmer gets 25 per cent. of its cost, whereas the miller, the baker, and the transporter get 65 per cent. Again, in connection with meat, the grower receives 40 per cent. of the total cost—if you take the meats grown in Queensland I do not think this percentage would represent his quota—and the various distributors get 60 per cent. With regard to the price paid for milk, the producer gets 47 per cent. and the distributors get 53 per cent. Every one must admit that the same big margins must prevail in Queensland, otherwise we would not have the proprietary concerns. Why not let co-operative companies participate in those margins? I should be very sorry to think that the establishment of co-operative companies would mean the extinction of proprietary concerns, because in their management they must have the proprietary concerns in competition with them to attain that efficiency which they should possess. This factor must also operate as far as production is concerned, as in both cases efficiency must prevail in order that the farmer may reap the full reward of his labours.

Mr. CLAYTON (*Wide Bay*): I would like to congratulate the hon. member for Burnett upon having brought forward this motion. It tends to show the keen interest that hon. member has in the interests of the primary

producer whom he represents so ably in this House.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CLAYTON: The Country party has placed co-operation in the forefront of their programmes, in striking contrast to the socialisation of industry advocated by Government members. What we aim at is that the farmer should control his own industry, and that he should be the master of that industry. That control must be through co-operation. I would impress on the Government the necessity of financing the man on the land, and putting him in such a position as will enable him to embark on co-operative enterprise, and thus reap the full reward for his labour. (Hear, hear!) It is useless the Government giving that support unless the farmers realise the necessity of co-operating. A certain amount of responsibility must be placed on the producer, so that he can be educated as to the necessity of co-operating in every channel that is possible in order to place his produce not only on the market but in the hands of the consumer. That is what we aim at. We have instances where that has been carried into effect in our butter and bacon factories. Our dairy factories are not altogether controlled and managed by the primary producers or suppliers, as in some instances we have "dry" shareholders as members of those companies. I am sure, though, that the "dry" shareholder will be pleased to get out if he is paid a fair thing for his interests, and thus hand the concern over to the primary producer or those contributing to that factory. (Hear, hear!) That will enable the supplier to control that factory. The Murarrie Co-operative Bacon Factory is a concern which is purely co-operative. It is a factory which the farmers are proud of, and the Government can take a lesson from that factory as an example of what true co-operation means. There is no doubt that that factory has done a great deal to bring about co-operation amongst the farmers, because it has supplied them with the proof that they are getting everything they produce in connection with what they supply to that factory. We consider that the primary producer wants more information concerning markets, and we should endeavour to give him more information. Many of the farmers in outside blocks receive information regarding rainfall, which is of assistance, but we should look after the selling end of the business. Unfortunately many farmers at the present time are at the mercy of the speculator. We want to cut out that sort of thing as much as we possibly can, and arrange for the farmer to supply his produce through co-operative channels which will be conducted by farmers themselves.

The law of supply and demand is a good one, and is applicable to farm produce; but once that produce leaves the farm the farmer has nothing to do with the control of the market for it. He is deprived of the benefit he would receive if he had more information as to the state of the market. If this information is supplied to him, he could then regulate the competing channels. I have supplied goods to agents, and have not got a fair return. I simply had to take what the agent would give me, and in a short time I found that that person was turning that produce over and making a great deal

Mr. Clayton.]

more from it than the original producer. I want to see the Government tackle this sort of thing, so that the farmer shall get a fair return for the many hours that he puts into his business.

The Department of Agriculture in the United States established what is known as a Market News Reporting Service. This was started in a small way, and has proved of great benefit to the primary producers, as it enables the man on the land to get information as to the state of the market. Our Department of Agriculture should move in a similar direction. They should have market reports sent out to the country centres—where many of the farmers do not get papers or perhaps get only one paper a week—showing the state of the market and whether there is a glut, especially in connection with perishable articles. That information would be posted up in the different country districts, and the farmer would know the right time to bring in his produce to sell to the best advantage. This matter opens up a very big question, and one requiring serious consideration by all sections in Queensland. I again congratulate the hon. member for Burnett on bringing forward the motion.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): It is a pleasure to support a motion like this, and I urge hon. members to put it through as quickly as possible. There is a strong necessity for creating big co-operative concerns to control the markets. The present situation is different from what it has been in the past, the general increase in the price of everything naturally increasing the cost of production. The farmer necessarily requires a proportionately high return for his produce, and there is only one way to bring this about—he must control the market and get an adequate price for what he sells. The present method has served its turn, and possibly has been very good all round. No doubt, produce merchants consider the interests of the seller as much as those of the consumer, but some of them have a tendency to gamble.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: What are you going to do with the produce merchant?

Mr. DEACON: He will find a different sphere altogether, probably in the retail trade. There was never yet any trade that could not find something else to do. Perhaps the introduction of this system will not be popular—nothing is popular that means making other people pay—but I am sure that hon. members are quite sympathetic. We are all willing to agree to anything until it touches our pockets, and this scheme, of course, like a lot of other things—for instance, one measure now before the House—is going to touch the pockets of many of the people in the State, and it will not be popular on that account. I suppose this scheme will not be very much more popular when it comes to a higher price having to be paid by the consumer. Naturally it goes against the grain to have to pay a high price for any goods produced locally. The consumers will never understand that it is their own actions that have made this necessary and that, for their own sake, supplies must be kept up, and they cannot expect supplies to be kept up unless the business pays. As a result of a large co-operative concern controlling the market, it may be necessary to sell goods overseas at a lower price than that charged locally. It may be necessary to charge a higher price locally to make up for losses. All these things naturally follow. Whether

[*Mr. Clayton.*

we sit on this side of the House or on the other side, we are all striving to give everybody a fair deal. Everybody must get a fair deal, and the producer generally cannot go on bearing the increased burden for everything without getting his share back; and I do not see any way in which he can get that unless he receives the loan of a large sum of money to enable him to establish co-operative marketing. I commend the motion to Government members. If their own policy is to be effective, then they must be prepared to ask their supporters to sacrifice something to meet the situation. I recommend this motion to their attention, and sincerely hope it will have their earnest support.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): Many startling things happen in Parliament from time to time, and one of the most startling happened this afternoon when the hon. member for Burnett got up and moved a motion which is practically in accord with a resolution moved at the Emu Park Convention and which was adopted by the Labour party. It shows that our propaganda is very effective so far as hon. members opposite are concerned. Let me read very slowly the motion moved by the hon. member for Burnett. It says—

“That, in order to assure to primary producers the possibility of controlling the marketing of their produce, legislative provision be made and loan moneys be made available for the establishment of co-operative produce agencies, to be controlled by the primary producers themselves through a properly constituted directorate elected by subscribing shareholders.”

Now let us read the Labour party's platform under the head of “Agriculture”—

“A rural credit scheme to finance groups of farmers for co-operative enterprises connected with production, distribution, or marketing of farm products.”

You can see there is a similarity between the motion moved by the hon. member for Burnett and one of the planks of the Labour party's platform. The hon. member for Burnett, in his motion, says—

“Provision be made and loan moneys be made available for the establishment of co-operative produce agencies.”

The Labour platform, as one realises, goes a long way further, because it says—

“A rural credit scheme to finance groups of farmers for co-operative enterprises.”

Enterprises in general, outside of produce agencies. I am surprised at hon. members opposite not knowing the Labour party's platform, and I am surprised to hear that they are in accord with what was carried at the Emu Park Convention. I do not know how that section of the Opposition which is called the United party is going to vote for the motion. Then we go further in our platform, and say—

“Organisation of primary producers for their protection against middlemen, private financial institutions, or other exploiting agencies.”

I listened very carefully to the hon. member for Stanley, and when we get “Hansard” I think we shall find that in the early part of his speech he made reference to middlemen fully half a dozen times. Then we have

the speech of the hon. member for Wide Bay, and he likewise made repeated references to middlemen. Our platform makes provision for the protection of the producers against exploitation by these middlemen, and not only by middlemen, but by "private financial institutions, or other exploiting agencies." It goes a long way further than the motion. Then, coming to the question of co-operation—the hon. member for Burnett wants a little instruction on co-operation—we go a little further and say—

"State or co-operative cold stores, flour mills, and granaries"—

A flour mill was opened at South Brisbane this morning by the hon. member for Wynnum.

Mr. KERR: What about co-operative cotton ginneries?

Mr. COLLINS: Our platform says—

"State or co-operative cold stores, flour mills and granaries, sugar-mills and refineries, agricultural implement works, fertiliser and arsenic manufactories, cotton ginning, fruit preserving, bacon curing, butter and cheese manufacture, and generally for the processing, retail and wholesale marketing, and distribution of produce."

That covers the proposal of the hon. member for Burnett. There is no need to waste the time of the House in discussing this motion, because it is practically on all fours with the Labour party's platform, and I intend, when I sit down, to hand the hon. member for Burnett a copy of the Labour party's platform so that he will be more conversant with what our platform really contains. I do not intend to delay the House. I got up to remind hon. members opposite that we have an agricultural policy which aims at the stopping of the exploitation of the farmers by middlemen and other agencies as well.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Vanango*): I have much pleasure in rising to support the motion moved by the hon. member for Burnett. Whether it be in the Labour party's platform or not is immaterial. If we can help the Labour party to bring into being a scheme of rural credits whereby co-operation will be established in the country districts of Queensland to enable the farmers to have control of the marketing of their produce under a true co-operative system without Government interference at all, then I am sure members of the Country party will give them every assistance. The point at which we shall differ with the suggestions put forward by the Emu Park Convention is in regard to Government control. I have

never yet seen one thing which [5 p.m.] the Government have established in the interests of the primary producers but what has been subject to Government control in some shape or form, which has practically ruined the true spirit of co-operation in the matter. This motion deals with one of the most important matters that can be discussed by hon. members. We have experienced a difficulty in Queensland in handling our primary products; and, while various organisations have from time to time sprung up and attempted to bring about a true spirit of co-operation in that direction, they have, to a large extent, been failures. I am in accord with hon. members opposite if they are in earnest in their desire to assist the primary pro-

ducers of the State in establishing what is known to us who have been talking about the matter for the last twenty years as the true spirit of co-operation. That is the system of co-operation at the present time working in Denmark, New Zealand, and other parts of the world, without Government interference in any shape or form. All that the hon. member for Burnett is asking the Government to do is to give financial assistance to the people through co-operative agencies, and bring about the establishment of co-operative organisations in the State. This is a Government function. If we are going to organise the producers, it will be of no avail unless we assist them financially to get their products to the consumers in the best possible way. It is not only a matter of getting the products to the consumers in our own country, but of the difficulty of sending them to people in other parts of the world. At the present time there is established in Australia what is known as the Federal Co-operative Wholesale Agency, which combines all the co-operative distributing companies of any size in Australia, and that organisation has established a floor in London. So far as I am aware, we have only one distributing agency in Queensland in which the shareholders are the primary producers. It seems to me that some means might be adopted in connection with the local organisations established in the country districts by which the greater part of our primary products could be handled on the floor in London through co-operative channels. It may be possible, after full information is obtained from other parts of the world, to establish distributing centres through which the consumer can be brought into closer contact with the primary producer than he is at the present time.

Mr. COLLINS: We provide for all that in our platform.

Mr. EDWARDS: I am pleased to hear the hon. member say that; but, unfortunately, it is not going to help the producers. Having it in the platform is one thing; but bringing it into practice is another. The Country party are here to assist in establishing a true co-operative principle, to enable the producers to get their products direct to the consumer. The consumers should also be brought into contact with the producers through co-operative organisations, without Government interference. If hon. members opposite had dealt with the different industries in which the producers are engaged to-day in a true co-operative spirit, they would be in a very much better position than they are at the present time.

We are also in great difficulty in Queensland and Australia at the present in regard to transport arrangements. We have difficulty in handling our products between the country districts and the cities, and between our cities and other parts of Australia. If the Government were to take this matter sincerely to heart, and not merely place it in their platform but put it into practice, it would enable the producers to do better than they have done in the past. If the Government are going to make money available to assist the primary producers in this direction, they will get all the assistance that we can possibly give them.

Mr. COLLINS: Do you not realise that we have sufficient numbers over here to carry out our platform?

Mr. Edwards.]

Mr. EDWARDS: I quite admit that, but, although the Government were in office for six years before the Country party came into being, they have never taken any notice of the primary producers until now.

Mr. COLLINS: It would not do for you to tell the Bowen people that. We have looked after the fruitgrowers' interests.

Mr. EDWARDS: No one knows better than the hon. member for Bowen that although 98 per cent. of our butter was turned out by co-operative factories, he, with the assistance of his Government, stepped in and seized that butter, and lowered the price to 138s. per cwt., in consequence of which there was a loss of not less than £300,000. I hope that the Government will bring in the necessary legislation this session, and that the money required will be made available so that co-operative agencies may be established, by which we can eliminate the waste which is going on as between production and consumption in this State.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillic, *Kacham*): I suppose it goes without saying that on Thursday afternoons private members should be allowed to do a little bit of propaganda; but it is passing strange that a motion of this kind should be tabled, in view of the fact that the Council of Agriculture ever since its inception has been busy upon schemes to assist co-operative companies. Last year I placed before that Council a measure which was passed in 1921 in South Africa—one of the most comprehensive co-operative Acts, I think, which graces the statute-book in any part of the world, and on that material and with the assistance of other information the Council is very busy preparing a scheme. Moreover, it is mentioned in the Governor's Speech that a Bill will be brought in to make better provision for co-operative companies. But, of course, it is not surprising that members on the other side of the House, associated with middlemen who are bitterly opposed to co-operation, should submit a motion of this kind on private members day.

The mover pointed to the great strides which he said had been made in America in co-operation, and the hon. member for Stanley, who seconded the motion, was not too keen upon absolute co-operation, because he wanted private enterprise to stand by and compete with co-operation in order to keep the latter right up to the collar. If I know anything about co-operation, whether it be compulsory or voluntary, it means that all the producers in the industry concerned shall come into line and supply the whole of their raw product to the co-operative concern. How then is it possible for true co-operation to exist in this State if private enterprise is to compete with it?

To show the inaccuracy of the statement that America is leading the way in co-operation, I want to quote from a few statements showing the actual position there. I have before me a statement made by Mr. J. H. Hay, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture for the State of Minnesota, written from the State capital, St. Paul, to the editor of our "Agricultural Journal" on the 2nd November, 1922—

"Mr. Randolph Bedford, of the Queensland Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, appeared before an agricultural committee of the United

{*Mr. Edwards.*

States Congress at Washington, D.C., U.S., on 22nd March, 1922. He presented the conditions obtaining in Australia with reference to the marketing of various agricultural commodities in your country.

"By reason of the scope of his discussion, he apparently had not time to enter into all the details of the movement and financing of your grain crops.

"I am writing you in order to receive, if possible, through your courtesy, any literature or bulletins of any kind which your Government issues relative to this subject. You have apparently eliminated from your marketing processes all grain gambling and the activities of certain individuals engaged in the grain business in the United States known as 'middlemen.'"

That gentleman points to Queensland as having cut out the middleman, so far as wheat is concerned, yet the hon. member for Burnett points to America as furnishing an example of co-operation which we should follow. I might well go further and show that true co-operation means better wages. There is no doubt in the world about that, because, if the farmers cut out middlemen like some of our friends opposite, and get all the profits of their industry, and if they come directly in contact with the consumer, they naturally can pay better wages to the men who assist them to fence their land, to build their dams, and to grow and harvest their crops. Only where true co-operation exists are high wages paid.

Now, I have another extract which I wish to read. Mr. Ben. C. Marsh, secretary of the American Farmers' National Council, wrote, as reported in the "Producers' Review" of 10th June, 1923, under the heading, "Wages Low, Farmers Poor"—

"Farmers are always poorest when they pay the lowest wages. In 1919, the Bureau of the Census reports, the value of all farm crops was £2,950,000,000, while the expenditure for labour, value of rent, and board furnished amounted to £270,000,000."

I want our low-wage advocates on the other side to take particular notice of this statement—

"In other words, the total farm expenditure for labour in 1919, when the farmers were prosperous, with the high-wage scale, was only a little over 9 per cent. of the value of farm products that year."

Mr. MORGAN: Do high wages increase the price for raw products?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They enable the farmer to get from the consumer a better price. Generally speaking, they make for prosperity. No industry ever suffered from paying high wages; if the labour was efficient, they never harmed it. If the hon. member wants to make a fortune in a low-wage country, let him go to India. I think I might be permitted to emphasise this point in view of the discussion which we have had in this Chamber for the last two or three days. Let me tell hon. members that, if the whole of the butter produced in Australia had been sold in Australia, the farmers would have got £125,000 more than they got by exporting it to a low-wage country—Great Britain—where the Government of the day broke faith with the

farmers and went back on their guarantee of a certain price for a number of years, with the result that the wages of farm labourers in Great Britain had to be reduced. There is no better argument in favour of good wages than that very fact.

Mr. MORGAN: Then your argument is in favour of decreased production.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: My argument is in favour of increased production. There is no such thing as over-production. Under-consumption is brought about by low wages. How can any intelligent man talk about over-production when millions of human beings in this world are starving? I say that under-production is brought about because the purchasing price which the people can afford will not enable them to buy the article produced. Hon. members opposite are the low-wage party. Their political economy is so deficient that they cannot conceive of any way of assisting the farmer other than by advocating low wages and dear land.

Mr. EDWARDS: You know that that is not true.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I say that the average farmer now is so intelligent that he can see that, if wages generally are low, the prices of his commodities must be reduced in consequence. Generally he has reason to complain of his own payment, but he recognises that his must not be the only industry paying low wages, and that by coming into line he is going to provide a better and a higher market, and become a more prosperous man. With regard to progress in America that we hear so much about, I think it is a very important fact, and one which should be remembered and emphasised, that in 1919, of the total value of the farm products produced in America, the value of the wages paid for labour represented only 9 per cent. I want to know where the other 91 per cent. goes. This is all an argument for co-operation. If true co-operation existed in all the States of America, as the hon. member for Burnett inferred, more than 9 per cent. would have gone to the workers, and the farmers would have received more than they got. I could give some figures from the same authority showing that the farmer receives only about 45 per cent. of the total value of most of his products—that is, of the price which the consumer has to pay. Let the workers and the farmers unite and demand the full reward of their labour.

The whole policy of the Labour party, as the hon. member for Bowen pointed out, is in its platform, and is to bring the producer and the consumer together. The highest form of flattery is imitation, and hon. members who now get up and say that they believe in the policy of the Labour party should have taken up that attitude years ago. Instead of fighting the Labour party with regard to their agricultural policy, hon. members opposite should have endeavoured to make the conditions of the man on the land much better. What was the attitude of the leader of the Country party last session when I endeavoured to place on the statute-book a piece of legislation which now is an object-lesson to the whole world? It is a piece of legislation which organises the farmers of Queensland into one solid national organisation. What did the leader of the Opposition say? He said the Bill was a first instalment of Soviet-

ism. Later on he said it was taken from the Country party platform. Later on he declared it to be a bunch of carrots held out to the farmers. Later on he said that Mr. Bebbington advocated the same policy years ago. One would have imagined that a leader of a great party, as has been pointed out by the "Producers' Review" time and again, would have forgotten his hatred of the Labour party and said, "This is a scheme that is going to benefit the whole of the farmers of Queensland. It is a statesman-like scheme brought forward by the Theodore Government, and we are going to get right in behind it and give it our undivided support." What did they do? They not only criticised it; but, like the hon. member for Nanango, they went about the country, and, while not saying it publicly, said privately that it was only a scheme to hoodwink the farmers and get their votes, and they advised the farmers, if they got into the scheme, to get into it for political purposes only, as it was only a scheme to get their votes.

Mr. EDWARDS: That is not true.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member for Nanango, who claims to speak on behalf of the farmer, and who claims to be a farmer himself, and who, I understand, is a very bad farmer—

Mr. CORSER: That is not true.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Should have asserted his manhood and said, "This is a good scheme, and I will support it, and I will ask all my farming friends to support it, because it is a good scheme for the farmer," and a good thing for Queensland.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS interjecting,

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is only when an animal is hurt that he squeals. I am hurting hon. members opposite. I rose for that purpose this afternoon. I rose for the purpose of showing their hypocrisy and want of sincerity on behalf of their so-called friends, the farmers.

Mr. CORSER: What about your insincerity in giving land to soldiers on perpetual leasehold tenure?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: All that is now suggested is in the Labour party's platform. The Government took a big step forward last year. The Council of Agriculture has been busy on the scheme for some months. The Bill is included in the Governor's Speech, and has been drafted to be placed on the statute-book, which Bill deals with the matter we are discussing this afternoon. It is only natural for hon. members opposite to take advantage of the Standing Orders and get up on Thursday afternoon and blow off hot air in this way. We know, with regard to co-operation, that the Labour Government of Queensland lead the way throughout the length and breadth of Australia, because we are the only State giving the farmer power to form a pool. The hon. member for Bulimba and the hon. member for Warwick do not believe in the pooling system; they are not concerned about the wheatgrower getting a decent price for his wheat; they are dead against the pooling system, and they cannot stand it. In Victoria a little while ago the Victorian onion-growers had a deputation to the Minister for Agriculture. The report of that deputation states—

"A deputation of Victorian onion-growers last week urged the Government to form a compulsory pool to take over

Hon. W. N. Gillies]

the unsold balance of the crop. The growers said the cost of production was £6 per ton, including labour, and many of them were receiving only £2 5s. per ton. It was suggested that the pool should fix the selling price at £7 per ton, growers to be allowed £3 at once and £4 held in hand for expenses and reserves."

Just listen to what the Minister said in reply. He is very different from the Minister in Queensland—

"A pool was out of the question, as it was against the policy of the Government ment."

Mr. EDWARDS: Did they ever seize the farmers' crops in Victoria?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The pooling system is against the policy of the Tories, whether they sit in this House or in Victoria. I say without fear of contradiction that, without the pooling system co-operation is not complete. Some farmers would not come in until they were compelled to do so. They would be like the "scab" workers who stand outside the union, and say, "I can get a job; I can get a decent wage; I am not going to tie myself up to a union." They are prepared to take all the benefit, but they are not prepared to join an organisation, whether it be a union or a co-operative organisation, and take the risk or odium of helping to make it a success. When it is a success they will take all the benefits and probably refer to it as "our co-operative company." The time has arrived when compulsion should be applied in necessary cases with proper safeguards.

Mr. CORSER: Are you going to support the motion?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It was because it was necessary that I brought in the Bill last year providing that compulsion could be applied by the co-operative organisations with regard to the various marketing schemes. I have various testimonials which I can read with regard to what we are doing. At Byron Bay a few days ago, Mr. Smith, in dealing with the question of bananas, is reported to have said—

"Mr. Smith outlined the Queensland proposals. During his address he said that, although some people may not agree with the politics of the present Government in Queensland, he thought all would admit that the Queensland Government were doing all they could to place primary producers of that State in a better position. He believed the market for bananas could be extended if organised."

That is an excellent testimonial coming from a gentleman who does believe in the Labour party. There are many other testimonials coming from various parts of the world—some from South Africa, some from Victoria, some from New Zealand, and some from America—all inquiring what the Labour Government of Queensland are doing to organise the farmers and encourage co-operation in the State. Some of these testimonials are very complimentary. There is no occasion for me to take up the time of the House getting them into "Hansard" this afternoon. It is well known that the eyes of the world to-day are on the policy of the Queensland Government in their efforts, both voluntary and

[*Hon. W. N. Gillies.*

compulsory, to bring about co-operation and to place the farmers on a better footing.

A Bill is now being drafted to make true co-operation possible. It will afford any group of producers an opportunity either to market, to manufacture, to sell, or to buy their requirements. It will be possible for them to group together and be financed so that they can be assisted in buying wholesale their fertilisers, their seed, their farming tools, etc. The position of the farmer to-day is that he has to sell wholesale and buy retail. The Government say that the position should be reversed and that the farmer shall come in direct contact with the consumer, and sell retail and buy wholesale. He will sell the produce of the farm retail to the consumer through his own organisation, and he will cut out the middleman altogether. He will be able to buy his fertiliser, farm machinery, seed, and other requirements wholesale instead of retail as at present. It is the policy of this party to bring the consumer and the producer nearer to one another, and that can only be done by co-operation. The Bill will provide that farmers may come together and form a society with or without capital. It will not be compulsory for them to raise any capital by shares for the purpose of buying, selling, or manufacturing any farm products in Queensland. When that Bill reaches this Chamber even the Opposition, who cannot see anything good in anything introduced by a Labour Government, will recognise that it is one of the most comprehensive and up-to-date co-operation Bills that has ever been introduced in any Parliament in the world. Therefore, this attempt this afternoon to make a little bit of political capital by anticipating something which the Government are about to do is all hot air.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LOGAN (*Lockyer*): I have very much pleasure in supporting this worthy motion of the hon. member for Burnett. It is rather interesting to note the exception that the Government are taking to the motion.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LOGAN: I do not intend to speak long, so that the members on the opposite side may be given an opportunity to vote on the motion. The Secretary for Agriculture has described the motion as hot air so far as the Country party is concerned. I wish to refute that, and say that it has been the aim of the Country party, as long as [5.30 p.m.] it has been in existence, to bring about a system of co-operation such as is outlined in the motion. I am sure that, if a reasonable chance is given to the Country party, they will at all times endeavour to practise what they preach. I am also pleased at the information given by the hon. member for Bowen, that the recent convention of the Labour party at Emu Park adopted a similar principle.

Mr. COLLINS: We had that principle in our platform long before that.

Mr. LOGAN: The matter has been fairly well ventilated this afternoon, and I believe that, when the hon. member for Burnett introduced this motion and outlined his scheme, he did so in all sincerity and not for political propaganda.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KIRWAN: Political kite-flying, that is all it is.

Mr. LOGAN: The sole purpose of the motion is to place the primary producer on a better footing than he is to-day.

Mr. CORSER: It is something concrete.

Mr. LOGAN: I congratulate the hon. member for Burnett on propounding a scheme with a view to bringing about a solution of the troubles of the primary producers, as their position has been very serious for some time past.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: How do you propose to finance the scheme?

Mr. LOGAN: By giving the co-operative companies a fair chance and placing them on a fairly sound financial footing, the time will come when they will be able to control, not only the marketing but the transport of their products overseas. I trust that the Government will take up this scheme in the true spirit they should and support the motion. At any rate, we hope the Government will stick to their guns and support the measure.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I listened with very much interest to the many erratic statements and flow of hot air which came from the Secretary for Agriculture in connection with this matter. When we are all unanimously of the opinion that co-operation is the best thing that could possibly happen in the interests of the producer, why all this heat? Why not get together with a view to carrying it into effect? We have been doing nothing but talking, and what is the result? The farmer during the whole of the period has been struggling, and is now down and out. The Secretary for Agriculture made some reference to Victorians who are members of this Assembly.

Mr. CARTER: You ran away from your State.

Mr. MORGAN: There are a great number of Victorians who are occupying most important positions both inside and outside this House.

Mr. CARTER: Who "left their country for their country's good."

Mr. MORGAN: They are to be congratulated on the fact that they are here for the benefit of Queensland, to try and develop Queensland with a view to making it the important State that Victoria is to-day—the most important State in Australia. The Secretary for Agriculture also referred to the farmers of Victoria, and I would like to remind him that, if he looks at the statistics, he will find that instead of $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the farmers there paying income tax, as in this State, a big proportion of them can afford and do pay income tax. My idea of the prosperity of any industry, whether it is business, farming, or otherwise, is that it is indicated by the amount of income tax paid by that industry. The Secretary for Agriculture, by claiming what he has done for Queensland, only goes to show, from an agricultural point of view, that the little "cabbage patch" in the southern portion of Australia is the home, at any rate, of the prosperous farmer. I hope and trust I shall live to see the time when the farmers of Queensland will be able to live in the same measure of comfort and under the same conditions as obtain in Victoria to-day. When that is achieved, we shall be able to claim as legislators that we have done something besides talk for the benefit of the man on the land. The Secretary for Agriculture also said that, had we disposed of our butter

in Australia, instead of oversea, we would have been better off to the extent of £125,000. That argument is only effective if we produce no more butter than is required for local consumption. The facts are that we produce more butter than is consumed locally, and our price is governed by the overseas parity. The hon. gentleman's argument is purely and simply in the direction of impressing on the farmers that they should not over-produce, and by so doing make the industry pay. Why is it that a number of our industries, such as sugar and dried fruit, are prosperous to-day? It is because they are protected. We do not produce any more than is required for local production, and protection is given to those industries against the importation of those products from cheap-labour countries overseas. Does the Secretary for Agriculture protect us in regard to butter and cheese? No; because he knows that our markets for these products are regulated by the prices prevailing in other parts of the world. That reminds me that the hon. gentleman has become famous for his remark that the farmer should produce for use and not for profit.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: He has said that scores of times.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I did not use the word "farmer."

Mr. MORGAN: He may not have used the word "farmer," but he said that producers ought to produce for use and not for profit. What was the object of the hon. gentleman in saying that they should produce for use and not for profit?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: For use, and not to look at.

Mr. MORGAN: Does he mean that the farmers should produce for the city people while they—

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! I hope the hon. member will address his remarks to the Chair.

Mr. MORGAN: I am replying to the Secretary for Agriculture. He certainly did not keep to the question before the House.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MORGAN: I am one of those who, for many years, have had the opinion that we are living in the age of co-operation. Until we are able to eliminate the excessive profits made by the handlers of produce, agriculture will never be successful. Take, for instance, the man with a barrow in the street. That barrow may cost him £5. With his labour he hawks the fruit in the street, and, although the fruit is much cheaper than it is sold in the shops, he makes more profit at the end of the week than the man who produces the fruit. With an outlay of £5 or £6 he makes more profit than the farmer who has a plant running into £1,500 to £2,000. That is the system that we are working under to-day. Is it right?

Take the cattle industry. To-day we have State butchers and private butchers paying, say, $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. for meat in carcass form landed in the shop, and they retail this meat at $4\frac{1}{2}$ d. and 5d. per lb. The butcher, who only handles the meat for twenty-four hours or so, makes 3d. and 4d. per lb. on it over the counter, while the grazier or farmer who has handled the beast for three years gets only $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. That is the system that we want to break down if the producer is to come into his own. Huge profits are being made by people who do not produce.

Mr. Morgan.]

The whole trouble to-day is that the retailer is the man who is making the profit, and some of his profits he is expending in building up the city of Brisbane. We see buildings going up all over Brisbane, and we are told that Queensland is prosperous. On the other hand, every day the Department of Agriculture is receiving sheaves of applications from poor unfortunate farmers asking for 15s. per week for themselves, and something for their children, so that they can provide the necessaries of life. I feel sure that the Secretary for Agriculture is surprised to know the large number of people from the different agricultural districts that are making applications for relief. Yet the Premier and Ministers sitting on the Treasury bench are endeavouring by talk to show us that they are doing something for the agriculturists. I would like to know what! So far we can see no sign of the prosperity that they were going to give to the man cultivating the land. Unfortunately, there has been a great deal of talk, but nothing done in the way of improving existing conditions.

I believe wholly and solely in co-operation. I believe that the man who produces and does the work should get the profit. Until we have in force a system allowing the man who grows the produce to trace and control it from the time it leaves his farm until it reaches the consumer, the producer is not going to get what he is honestly entitled to, and the consumer is not going to get what he is entitled to. The producer should get full value for his products, and the consumer should get those products as cheaply as possible. That is the policy of the Country party.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Produce for use.

MR. MORGAN: Unfortunately, while the present Government profess that that is also their policy, we find there are now more combines formed for the purpose of keeping up prices than was ever previously the case. We find that every business has its combine. To deal with these combines we have a price fixer, whose awards may be brought into force at any moment, but it seems as though it is only in regard to one industry that he ever takes action. We are being exploited by combines, and the prices we have to pay for all we require are excessive. The price fixer is kept there for the purpose of stopping a rise in the price of butter the moment it reaches a certain level; but what is he doing with regard to other trades and industries? We need protection in regard to the necessities of existence. We want to prevent the farmer being exploited in the matter of his implements, his saddlery, his harness, his furniture, and the hundred and one things that are necessities to him. The price fixer appears to be hidden away in obscurity, and we do not see him; he allows us to be exploited daily, and continually has his eyes fixed upon the price of some commodity that the poor unfortunate farmer produces.

That does not prove that the Government are doing their duty with respect to these particular matters. The producers are asking that hon. members opposite, who have the power, should protect them still further, and I do hope that the Secretary for Agriculture will see that some benefit will accrue in connection with this particular discussion, and that it will not be merely a waste of time on the part of the legislature of this State.

[*Mr. Morgan.*]

MR. F. A. COOPER (*Bremer*): I could very heartily support this motion if it were differently worded. It would be more in conformity with the co-operative ideals of certain members of this Chamber if it were worded to this effect—

“That, in order to assure to primary producers the possibility of controlling the marketing of their produce, legislative provision be made and loan moneys be made available for the establishment of co-operative produce agencies, controlled by the users of the agencies through a properly constituted directorate elected by the users.”

The motion, as submitted by the hon. member for Burnett, provides—

“For the establishment of co-operative produce agencies, to be controlled by the primary producers themselves through a properly constituted directorate elected by subscribing shareholders.”

Now, those shareholders are people who have invested money in the concern, and they would see that they received a return for the money they invested.

Unfortunately, the motion has been most loosely drawn up in a way which is an absolute endorsement of the policy of the middleman and of the produce agent.

MR. COOPER: The agencies will be controlled by the primary producers themselves, “through a properly constituted directorate elected by subscribing shareholders.”

MR. F. A. COOPER: It is all very fine to say that this co-operative society would be controlled by the primary producers themselves, but it cannot be so controlled unless they are contributing shareholders and get upon the directorate. That unfortunate everlasting desire on the part of the farmer to get control of the produce agencies has led the hon. member for Burnett into making that most ridiculous addition to his motion—that they should be controlled by a properly constituted directorate elected by subscribing shareholders. There is nothing of a co-operative nature in that whatever, and consequently the motion is of such a ridiculous nature that I cannot see how members of the Country party who profess to believe in co-operation can vote for it. I was interested in the remarks of the Secretary for Agriculture, and in some of the remarks of members of the Country party, as to how far Government should help them in the matter of this co-operative enterprise. The hon. member for Burnett pointed out that American farmers are in a particularly good situation brought about by their own co-operative efforts. As a matter of fact, no such thing is the case. The American farmer to-day and the Canadian farmer to-day owes his position to the assistance given to him by the Governments of the various States in America and in Canada. These facts are widely acknowledged. They acknowledge that they must have governmental assistance, and, so far as I have read, that assistance is granted upon the very lines of the Primary Producers' Organisation, as laid down in the Act introduced by the Secretary for Agriculture last year.

MR. VOWLES: Which came from California.

MR. F. A. COOPER: It does not matter where it came from. The hon. member for Dalby now finds that the scheme was stolen

from California. Mr. Bebbington said last year that it was stolen from his bag. It will be interesting to know how the Country party got this scheme into Mr. Bebbington's bag if it was originally stolen from California. Were they the stealers? I am surprised that the hon. member for Dalby should attempt to get another string to his bow in that matter. He said it was a bunch of carrots and various other things, but now he says it was stolen from California.

Mr. VOWLES: I said you were the donkey.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: That may be so, but I am not the particular donkey that was depicted by Harry Julius during the election. (Government laughter.) I take this opportunity of congratulating Mr. Harry Julius on his work, and I trust the hon. member for Dalby did not have to sit too long (Loud laughter.) Let us get away from these asinine jokes and get down to the business of the resolution. I hold in my hand the "Outlook" of quite a recent date, and it may be of interest to members of the Country party to know that the editor very frequently deals with the aspect of agriculture in America, though probably they do not read it. In the "Outlook" of 9th May, 1922, in an article entitled "The Rise of the Canadian Farmers to Political Power" the editor says—

"Wm. R. Motherwell, Dominion Minister of Agriculture, has been the leader in the farmers' fight for recognition. He stands behind the movement body and soul. He has been a farmer all his life. He homesteaded in Saskatchewan in 1892. He used oxen on his farm the first ten years, and for more than five years did not own a binder. His original home was a log cabin, and it served the purpose for the first fifteen years. 'One thing,' said Mr. Motherwell recently, 'stands out significantly in the story of the movement that has given the farmer a new position in the political and economic life of the nation. That is the steadfast help given continually by the Canadian Government. By just laws, direct financial aid, agricultural colleges, and campaigns of education the Government has helped the farmer to help himself."

I know of no better campaign of education conducted anywhere to help the good object than that campaign on behalf of the Primary Producers' Organisation.

Mr. CORSER: What about letting us have a division on the motion?

Mr. F. A. COOPER: There is no need to have a division. I am going to move an amendment to make it a decent motion, and then we will not need a division.

Mr. KERR: Why defeat it in that way?

Mr. F. A. COOPER: In the "Outlook" of 2nd May, 1923, there is a very interesting article entitled "The Farmer's Background" by Dr. A. C. True, who, as everybody knows, is Director of State Relations Service, United States Department of Agriculture. It is a very interesting article upon the development of schemes for the marketing of farmers' produce, and I commend the article to members of the Country party. If the hon. member for Burnett read the "Outlook," he would know he was on very

unsafe grounds in wording his motion as he has worded it. This article says—

"Last June 25,000 farming people, brought in chiefly by 7,000 automobiles, came to De Kalb, Illinois, to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the Farm Bureau in that country."

I would like members of the Opposition to note that there were "25,000 farming people brought in chiefly by 7,000 automobiles." The article continues—

"The principal speakers on this occasion were the Governor of Minnesota, the Dean of the College of Agriculture of the University of Illinois, and the president of the American Farm Bureau Federation. These men were representatives of three great forces—namely, Government (acting in United States through both State and Federal agencies), education, and organisation."

We have it borne in upon us that the most important need in connection with the betterment of the farmer's condition is education and organisation, and there has been nothing better for the farmer in any part of the world in the matter of organisation and education than the Act passed by this Government during the last Parliament—the Primary Producers' Organisation Act. The article goes on to say—

"To-day these forces are behind the American farmer in new ways, and are supporting him in increasing measure in his efforts to raise his standard of living and achieve success in his business and his home and community life."

Once more I want to draw the attention of the House to the fact that this article points out that the most important thing in American farm life to-day is the Government assistance rendered in the matter of education and organisation.

At 7 p.m., the House, in accordance with Sessional Order, proceeded with Government business.

INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. CLAYTON (*Wide Bay*): As a member of the Country party, I support the principle of arbitration, and I am sure that hon. members on this side join with me in making that statement. Arbitration has done a great deal to assist many of the industries in which awards have been made, when the industries have been able to pay the wages fixed by the awards. Many industries have been in a position to pass on the cost of the awards to the general public. I am very pleased that the Minister thought fit to give full information concerning this measure to the House, but I regret that he did not give that information to the electors of Queensland before the elections. I contend that, if the Minister had made the same speech from the different platforms on which he spoke during the election, the position of affairs would have been very different in the House to-day.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I did make speeches on several occasions during the election campaign in which I said that the principle of arbitration would be extended to the fullest extent.

Mr. CLAYTON: The Minister may have made that speech, and he may have known

Mr. Clayton.]

where to make it. (Opposition laughter.) When the Premier was speaking at Kingaroy during the elections, he was asked whether he was going to allow the rural workers to come under the Arbitration Court, and it will be found that there is a striking contrast between what the hon. gentleman said and what the Secretary for Public Works has told us. When asked at Kingaroy whether he was going to bring in legislation to allow the rural industries to come under the arbitration award, the Premier said—

“My friend is asking this question, not for the purpose of information, but is only trying to embarrass me. But I have been too long in the political game to be embarrassed by a noodle. The Labour party believes in arbitration, but it does not apply the awards to the rural or any other industries. It is the Arbitration Court that makes the awards.”

There we have an instance of the Premier sidestepping the question. He said that the Government did not apply these awards, but he did not say that they would not apply them.—After gulping the farmers by telling them that the Government did not apply the awards, on the first opportunity he has the Premier deceives the farmers by bringing in this legislation compelling them to come under the award of the Arbitration Court. If the industry in which the rural workers are engaged can meet the conditions of the award which the judges fix, it will be all right; but, if the industry cannot pay the wages laid down, there can be no prosperity in the industry. You must include dairying in the rural industries, and how on earth can a dairy farmer pay a decent wage to his employees, when it is proved by the Price Fixing Commissioner that the average cost of production of butter in Queensland is 1s. 7d. per lb., and, as a matter of fact, while we are in the midst of a serious drought, the farmers are compelled to produce butter at 1s. 3d. per lb.?

How are we going to pay decent wages to the men engaged in these industries unless the Government can bring about a stabilisation of prices, for instance, in the industry which I have quoted? I sincerely hope that the Government will bring about a stabilisation of prices so that the farmers can afford to pay the wage that may be awarded; but I venture to say that, had not the controlling Government of Queensland—not the men in this Chamber, but the men at the Emu Park Convention—insisted upon the introduction of this legislation, it would never have been brought forward. It is the extreme section of the other side who have forced the Government to bring it before the House, and it is commonly known that the Secretary for Public Works is the leader of the extreme element in that party. Had it been left to the Premier, I believe it would not have been introduced.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That was the most successful Convention I ever attended.

Mr. CLAYTON: I venture to say that, if this measure finds its way on to the statute-book—of which I have not the slightest doubt, because I do not anticipate that the Minister will accept the amendments which will come from this side—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Every reasonable amendment intended to assist the purpose of the Bill will be accepted.

[Mr. Clayton.

Mr. CLAYTON: The hon. gentleman has told us that on other occasions, but, unfortunately, he does not know what reasonable amendments are. (Opposition laughter.) I sincerely hope that, if this measure is placed on the statute-book, since we shall be at the mercy of the judge, every consideration will be given by him to the men engaged in rural industries, so that hardship will not be inflicted upon them. Before he takes his place on the bench to consider this important question, he should, in the interests of the primary producers of Queensland, go out into some of the dairying or other districts—where the truth exists—and observe their conditions.

Will the Secretary for Agriculture deny that the Council of Agriculture brought this matter up at their last meeting, and that one of the Government nominees asked them to withdraw it because they were placing the Minister in an invidious position?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Who was the spy?

Mr. CLAYTON: I have the Minister's admission that they did bring it forward and impressed on the Minister the necessity, in the interests of the agricultural districts, for its withdrawal. It has not been withdrawn, and I would like to ask the Minister whether, if so requested by the Local Producers' Associations through the District Councils and the Council of Agriculture, he will defend the farmers in the Arbitration Court when a claim is put in. I do not know whether the Minister will be agreeable to do that, but I can assure him that, if he does not, he will go a long way towards upsetting the organisation which the Government have set up. I am absolutely certain that the Local Producers' Associations will bring pressure to bear on the Council of Agriculture to fight the claim. The Council of Agriculture are there to look after the interests of the primary producers, and, therefore, it is their duty to protect them in the court. The Government have sent their representatives on previous occasions to fight claims which have been put before the court. For instance, they had a representative of the Railway Department there to prevent the railway employees from getting the wage which they claimed. If they do that, then it is the duty of the Council of Agriculture, through the Minister, who is the chairman, to defend them when a claim is made. Before the Council has had an opportunity of being of any material benefit to the primary producers, we have the extreme element of the party opposite forcing the Government to bring in a measure undoing a lot of good work that has been done. Last year £25,000 was placed on the Estimates for the initial cost of this Council. I am sorry that a measure of this kind should be introduced before the Council of Agriculture has got properly under way. When the Government are endeavouring to inflict this hardship upon the primary producers, do they realise that Queensland is now suffering from the effects of one of the worst droughts she has ever experienced? How are you going to force men to pay any wages at all in those districts where the drought has been experienced?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You do not want them to pay any wages.

Mr. CLAYTON: I want men to employ labour and pay decent wages; but many of these men have no income at all. I can

take the Minister to places in my electorate where they have only had 10 inches of rain during the last twelve months, and, instead of people deriving any income from their dairy herds, they are driving them away to relief country and attending to them there, waiting every day for it to rain. These people are not in receipt of any income at all; their sole object at the present time is to keep their herds alive. How on earth are you going to fix the hours for the men employed by the owners of those herds to keep the herds alive? The Minister knows perfectly well that many of the farmers in Queensland to-day are applying for relief.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Those persons who are applying for relief are not employing any labour.

MR. CLAYTON: The people who are applying for relief have to take their herds away in order that they may be kept alive so that at a later date they can resume their farming operations. Have the rural workers asked for this award, or is it the Australian Workers' Union organisers who are bringing them under the operations of the court? Is it not a fact that the Australian Workers' Union are anxious to get more funds, and, by bringing in these people, they will be able to compel them to join their organisation and pay 30s. for a ticket and 10s. towards the establishment of the chain of Labour dairies. I venture to say that, if this measure is placed on the statute-book, increased unemployment will be the result. If the Government are going to stabilise the dairy industry or any other industry, then those engaged in the industry will be prepared to pay a decent wage; but, if the Government are going to force these men off the farms, then more unemployment will be created. If this measure becomes law and the men have to join the Australian Workers' Union, will the farmer be compelled to go to the Labour Bureau to engage labour? That is the case with regard to all other industries to-day. It is an appalling sight to see men hanging about in the city of Maryborough waiting for employment. You can go to the Court House at about 10 o'clock in the morning and see about fifty men sitting about in the gutter waiting for an opportunity to get work, and at 10 o'clock a man comes out and puts up one job on the black-board.

They all scan that board, and after that man is selected they turn around, procure relief, and go back to where they came from. You are compelling those men to stay there in the hope of getting work from the Bureau. A farmer in my electorate recently wrote to me concerning a young man who had been employed on his farm. He said—

‘A few lines asking you to do me a favour, if at all possible. The construction works at the Gunalda Railway Station’—

At Gunalda they were doing some railway construction—

‘are just about to commence. I have a young fellow living with me. He has been with me for about seven years. He has no home, and times are bad on the farms just now on account of the dry spell. We have no work for him, and work is scarce. He was working at Gundiah sawmill, but that has gone away now. Do you think you could exert your influence and procure work for him at Gunalda? He was twenty-one years of

age last October. It would oblige us all very much. He did not register on the Labour Bureau—

I wish you to notice this—

‘as he cannot afford to stay in town and go up every day and ask for work.’

In reply to that letter I wrote—

‘Your letter of 20th instant to hand, in which you ask me to exert my influence in securing employment for Mr. — at the construction work at Gunalda. This morning I interviewed the local labour agent in connection with the matter, and was informed that if Mr. — was to be successful in securing work as desired he would have to go to Maryborough or Gympie and register at the Labour Bureau, and also visit the Bureau at the end of each fortnight so as to renew his registration. When he ascertained he was near the head of the list he would require to personally call at the Bureau each day at 10 a.m. to get his turn for employment. Mr. — would also require a union ticket, costing £2, before he could start work on the line. I regret that under the circumstances I cannot assist as I should very much like to, knowing myself, as a farmer, the effect the dry weather is having on our finances.’

There is an instance of a young man on a farm wanting to secure employment. He states that he has no money, yet he is forced to go down to Maryborough, stay out there with the others lined up every day, and forced to seek rations. If you are going to force these men off the farms into the cities, you will bring about a more serious state of affairs than exists at the present time. I sincerely hope that the Minister, before this amending Bill is placed on the statute-book, will give the matter very serious consideration. We on this side of the House feel very keenly at the present time for the farmers. If the Government can procure for the farmers a living wage—because at the present time there is hardly a farmer in Queensland, considering the hours he works, who makes the minimum wage of the awards at present in operation—then we are prepared to allow the Government to take us to the Arbitration Court.

MR. COLLINS: You will allow us?

MR. CLAYTON: The Government are starting at the wrong end. They should first put the farmer in a good financial position, and then take him to the court and ask for such a wage as he is able to pay. I also hope that the Minister will accept amendments from this side of the House when the Bill is in Committee.

MR. DUNSTAN (Gympie): Time and again it has been urged both inside and outside of this House that better relations should exist between capital and labour. That cry has been made almost a political slogan by hon. members opposite, by their party, and by their Press. But with them, as with the employing class that they seem to represent, that cry has merely been an empty political asseveration. One way that was open to achieve those better relations they have never followed, and that was to anticipate in some degree by their own free will and effort the benefits and improvements in industrial conditions that have been wrested from the employers by the workers, by sheer fighting, by industrial organisation, built up

Mr. Dunstan.]

by the painful process of hardship, struggle, and self-sacrifice, and by the force of law given its impetus by Labour legislation. Time and again it has also been shown that every move towards an improvement in industrial conditions in this State has been not only met by the opposition and hostility of the anti-Labour party, but has been accompanied in every instance by dismal forebodings of ruin and disaster that would be accomplished in this State.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: That is not a correct statement.

Mr. KIRWAN: It is perfectly correct.

Mr. DUNSTAN: Unfortunately it is a fact that in no case have these industrial improvements and benefits been given by the employers of their own free will and effort. The edifice of Labour reform in this State has been built up slowly, persistently, and painfully by the workers themselves. We have found that in every case of Labour reform those dismal forebodings have been manifest. In every case where Labour, either through its parliamentary party or through its industrial organisation, has sought to make some progress in the betterment of industrial conditions in this State, that history has been marked by the dismal wailings of ruin by political Jeremiahs and the running through the land of false prophets, who have foretold disaster to trade, to the community, and to the State. In the case of the abolition of black labour in the sugar industry, the application of better industrial conditions to that industry, the application of the eight-hour day to general trade, the early closing laws, and the establishment of a Saturday half holiday—in every case these improvements were accompanied by panicky predictions and wails of woe and disaster. But in no case were these false prophecies fulfilled. In every case, by our industrial struggles and parliamentary legislation and the organisations that the workers themselves have set up, we have not only achieved those reforms but have proved the wisdom of Labour legislation, and have shown that, by progress along true industrial lines and the betterment of the conditions of the workers, there has always been manifest a coincident increase in the prosperity of the people of this State.

If no case where there has been an award have ruin and disaster followed. On the contrary, every award that has been established in this State has been accompanied by greater prosperity, increased production, and the development of trade and commerce; and, what is more beneficial to us as a community, better and happier conditions in the lives and every-day conditions of the workers. These are things which we as a Labour party stand for to-day, and here, where we are striving for an improvement of the industrial conditions of the man on the land and farm hands, as represented in this Bill, we are met by the same old dismal prediction that ruin and disaster will follow to those on the land in this State. I do not believe that these predictions will be fulfilled; but, seeing that the State by its socialistic assistance has given immeasurable benefits to the men engaged in all the rural industries, I do contend that it is up to us to see that some measure of benefit is also given to those wage-earners who help the landed industries to reach that degree of prosperity which we all desire. During this debate hon. members opposite have been making speeches as though they were deal-

ing with an actual claim before the Arbitration Court. All those speeches would have been more appropriate if they were made by the representatives of the farmers and agriculturists when a log is placed before the Arbitration Court for consideration. The farmers to-day have a competent and well experienced body of men in the Council of Agriculture, who, I am quite sure, can adequately represent their side of the case in any application that comes before the Arbitration Court. Not only has this proposal met with the hostility of hon. members opposite, but it has been made manifest that, while professing their approval of the principle of arbitration, they are practically contending that the Arbitration Court is a one-sided, prejudiced, and incompetent body; that it is prepared to ruin an industry in order to placate the industrialists of this community. I contend that that is not true in any respect. Seeing that the Government have given very great assistance to the men on the land by all forms of socialistic assistance—in rebates of taxation, in decrease of freights, in applying to the industries on the land all the advantages and activities of the experts in the different departments, in giving to the Council of Agriculture a grant of £50,000 to enable the farmers to organise themselves—it is only a fair thing that the industrialists engaged in those landed industries should also be given a chance to go before the court and urge their case where the employers themselves will have an equal say. We have the significant fact that in regard to the organisation of agriculture under the Council of Agriculture as established in Queensland to-day, the Government have given a sum of £50,000 to enable the farmers to organise themselves, and I contend that there is no instance where the industrialists of any community or section in this State have ever received such assistance to enable them to organise in their own sphere. All industrial organisations in the State of Queensland have been built up by a painful process, and by privation often accompanied by hardship to women and children, and I say it is a fair thing, seeing that the unions have in no way complained of this assistance being given to the agriculturists of Queensland, that the farm hands and wage-earners in the landed industries generally should have an opportunity to take their case before the court and have it adjudicated upon by a competent and impartial tribunal. That is only a fair thing, and all the speeches designed to show the impoverished condition of the landed industries are beside the question. They would be more properly made before the Arbitration Court when a claim is being made. I am satisfied that, when that does take place, there will come out of the argument more benefits and more advantages in the way of stabilising industry than have been accomplished by all the arguments and speeches of hon. members in this Chamber. During the election campaign in all the country centres of my electorate I had no hesitation whatever in dealing with this matter. I found that the farmers were deeply interested in the question of bringing rural workers under the jurisdiction of the Arbitration Court, and in every case I was able to show that from the very day a Labour Government had controlled the destinies of Queensland they had given practical assistance towards the organisation of farmers, who had received financial backing from the Government and all the assistance of the experts of

[Mr. Dunstan.]

this State, and, therefore, they were justified in assuming that the Government would deal fairly with the farmers in a Bill such as this. We want a fair thing for the farmers and for the farm hands as well. We can correctly describe the farmer of this State as the backbone of the country, and we contend that, if we assist the backbone of the country, we should also assist the hands.

There is another important principle in this Bill, and that is in connection with the apprenticeship question. I can speak from experience in my own trade of printing. The time has come when some concerted and wise effort should be made to improve the conditions of apprenticeship.

It has been done in some degree [7.35 p.m.] already. The progress has been slow, but there is greater need for improvement in the future. In connection with apprentices generally, there are many factors to be considered, which altogether make the problem a very difficult one. I do not hold with the contention of some gentlemen, including the President of the Arbitration Court, that technical education can only be regarded as complementary to work-shop practice. It would be more true to say that technical education should be complementary to experience in the workshop. In the printing trade, the apprentice in my time went to work at a starting wage of 5s. per week. He worked from fifty-six to sixty hours per week, and it was nobody's concern to see that he was trained in order to become a competent journeyman at the completion of his term of apprenticeship. In fact, the form of indenture in my time was in itself a weird and wonderful document. It read something like this—

"We, the employers, hereby agree to indenture the said employee for a term of six years, and to teach him the whole art and mystery of printing; and the said employee shall in all ways comport himself as a dutiful and faithful servant; alehouses and taverns he shall not frequent; matrimony he shall not contract; at dice and tables he shall not play; all the behests and commands of his employers he shall dutifully obey; and in all respects he shall carry out the lawful commands of his employers; and be in all respects a faithful and obedient servant."

I have heard a good deal about the atmosphere of the workshop, but, as far as my experience goes, it is an atmosphere in which the apprentice is looked upon as a cheap form of labour, or as a general rouseabout, with whose training nobody has any concern. It seems to me that, in order to carry out to the full extent our desire in regard to apprentices, we must have an adequate system of technical instruction, and I contend that, with a properly equipped technical school, expertly staffed, more apprentices could be turned out in a few years more competent in every respect than can be turned out under the general form of apprenticeship operating in our workshops to-day. I also suggest that, with the increase of the school age to sixteen years, the last two years should be devoted to technical education, and students should be able voluntarily to apply themselves to a particular vocation, those last two years being counted as part of their apprenticeship term. The question arises as to whether we really want or require apprentices. Under present circumstances, many

employers do not have apprentices at all because they do not like the responsibility of carrying out the training of apprentices for a term of six years. On the other hand, the unions hold the view very largely, and rightly so, that an extra number of these apprentices are largely looked upon as cheap labour, about whose training the employers are never concerned. I contend that, to get adequate training in connection with our vocational industries in Queensland, we must have a proper and fully equipped system of technical education, so that our apprentices at the end of their term, which, I believe, may be shortened, may become competent journeymen, and be able to carry out their duties to the credit of their trade and for the benefit and welfare of the industries of this State.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LOGAN (*Lockyer*): As the representative of a purely rural district, I would be wanting in my duty if I did not enter an emphatic protest against the provisions of this Bill being extended to the primary industries. I fought the election largely on this issue. At almost every place I spoke I pointed out that the Government, owing to the resolution passed at the Emu Park Convention, intended to introduce this measure if returned to power, and I was returned by an increased majority. I gained about 500 Labour votes owing to the fact that the Government intended to introduce legislation of this kind. (Government dissent.) I am safe in saying that at least 85 per cent. of the electors in my constituency desire me to enter an emphatic protest against legislation such as this. I have not had much to do with Arbitration Courts. To hear some hon. members opposite speak of their dealings with the Arbitration Court for a number of years, you would think they knew all about the rural industries. I would like to invite a few of them to go out into a constituency like mine, and undertake the management of a farm there and see how they would get on under the proposed conditions. Some of the members of the Government have had the opportunity of visiting the drought-stricken areas in the Lockyer electorate, and it must have been quite clear to them that in many cases there is no chance whatever of the farmers in those devastated areas receiving any income at all for at least twelve months. How is it possible for farmers who are not receiving any income at all to pay the increased wage which will be fixed by the Arbitration Court? The farmers endeavour to keep their employees in work in season and out of season, and they strain a point to do that; but, under this Bill, the Government, instead of improving the conditions of the farm employees, are going considerably to increase the number of unemployed and send more men to the cities. The Government are not going to do the rural industry any good by this amending Bill. According to the Governor's Speech, it is proposed in the near future to introduce a scheme for the conservation of fodder. It seems to me that, if we go in for the conservation of fodder, we shall have to increase the area under production, which will mean that we shall require more men on the land. If the farmers are not in a position to pay the increased wage required, I fail to see how we are going to increase the area under production and to make provision for the conservation of fodder. I realise that that scheme is one of great importance, and I

Mr. Logan.]

hope that, when the matter comes before the Chamber, every hon. member will do everything possible to relieve distress in time of drought. But the point I stress is that this Bill will not do anything to assist in the conservation of fodder, as it will not increase the area under production.

I have conversed on this matter with various Labour supporters in my district, and I have found out that they did not know or even believe that this important amendment was going to be brought forward, and in some cases the farmers themselves have told me that they did not believe that the Premier would allow such a proposal to go through. We are quite positive that it is going to do injury to rural industries, and the only way in which it can be made successful, in my opinion, is by first of all increasing the price of the product of the farm. When that is done, there is a possibility of extending the benefits of the Act to the rural industries successfully. They will have to be subsidised or stabilised in some way or other before they can pay the award rate of wages. At the present time—it must be known to every hon. member opposite—many farmers are not making anything at all; and yet we are to have an Arbitration Court award for them to observe, despite the fact that in many instances they have three or four sons of their own of mature age who should be getting the basic wage before the privilege is extended to employees. Knowing the requirements of the man on the land, having been associated all my life with the various occupations on the land, I know perfectly well that this is going to impose a very great hardship on the farmer, and, as I have said, I fear that it will create more unemployment. Whilst I do not doubt that every hon. member on the other side wishes to see the working man put in a better position, I do honestly doubt the possibility of its being done under present conditions so far as dairying and general farming are concerned. I am carrying on dairying myself, and I know perfectly well that it is not paying; I would rather be out of the industry than in it. What applies to me must apply to hundreds of others also. At the top end of my electorate stock are dying of drought, butter-making is at a standstill, and the farmers have to make application for assistance from the Government. That being so, how is it possible for them to pay increased wages? It is particularly difficult in a lucerne district such as mine, because we know that with good rainfalls the prices which are obtained for your commodity do not pay for its production. Still the farmer has to pay labour and maintain his stock, and if by this amendment you are going to regulate the hours and increase the wages of the men whom those farmers have to pay, I for my part tell you that I cannot see how it is going to be done. During the election campaign I put the Government policy as fairly as possible before the electors, so that they would know what they might expect, knowing full well that the Labour candidate was not going to place anything like that before them, because he knew it would not be palatable. The result, as I have already said, was that I got increased votes.

Another phase of this question with which I would like to deal is the fact that it has struck me as rather strange that the apprenticeship question should be dealt with in the same measure. On the one side we have a

[Mr. Logan.

proposal to improve conditions so far as the employees are concerned, and on the other hand we have occasion to enter a protest against the extension of the Act for the farming industries. I am glad to think that the Government are going to make some effort to improve conditions of apprenticeship. During the election I stressed the necessity for it very much. I said that it was a pity that we had not more of our Queensland lads apprenticed to skilled trades, so that they would be qualified to take the places of our artisans as they became vacant. It is quite clear that the artisans are dying out infinitely more quickly than we are providing young ones to take their places, and I have said that I thought it a pity that we had to go overseas to fill places which our own boys should take. For that reason, I welcome the possibility of improving the conditions of apprentices. I assume that it is the intention of the Government that those conditions shall be improved, and that more boys will be trained to fill journeymen's positions in skilled trades. It is regrettable to think that in times past, owing largely to the operations of various awards, many boys and girls who have been earning good wages in their teens have been dismissed so soon as they reached maturity and younger ones have been put in their places. Had they been apprenticed to skilled trades, conditions would have been different.

I should like to say a little with reference to the different rates of pay which would obtain in farming operations. In mixed farming this is particularly the case. Most of the farmers have their gas engines and so forth for chaffcutting and similar operations. The men who work them presumably will command a higher rate of pay for a day on which they run them, although they may have been employed at that work for only a few minutes. They may have been employed for the rest of the time at carting pumpkins or something of that kind. And, speaking of pumpkins, I may say that the farmers in my electorate know how to handle pumpkins, and it is likely that, when the organisers begin to go around, they may have a very lively time.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I would not pursue that line of argument if I were you.

MR. LOGAN: I do not intend to do so; but I would not like to be the organiser all the same. This is a matter, in all seriousness, that will not be received with approbation in my constituency. I am voicing the opinion of a farming constituency, and I believe that opinion holds good with regard to all agricultural electorates. I do not want to be obstinate, but I have endeavoured to put the case from my point of view and from the point of view of my constituents. I hope that the Minister will give consideration to the amendments that will be proposed from this side.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I will accept every reasonable amendment that is designed to improve the Bill.

MR. LOGAN: If that is so, then the hon. gentleman will receive a good many reasonable amendments from this side, and I sincerely hope that he will accept them.

MR. FERRICKS (*South Brisbane*): The speeches that have been delivered by hon. members on this side in support of arbitration would, in my opinion, convince any unbiased listener of the merits of that

principle to the extent that I feel that it is not necessary—if one were able—to improve upon or supplement the arguments advanced in those speeches. Consequently, it is my intention in the brief references that I shall make to deal with some of the outstanding features of the Bill proper, and to express some opinions and sentiments which so far have not been touched upon.

First let me deal with the question of apprentices. The hon. member for Lockyer has reiterated the statement that has been made for many years past, to the effect that the Arbitration Court awards have been responsible for the lessening of the number of apprentices who are indentured to trades. He stated that when the wages of the apprentices rose to a certain amount the employers in a great many instances dispensed with their services and put on apprentices at a lower rate of pay in their places. That complaint is made, and has been made, against the system of arbitration and the operation of the Arbitration Court. I would remind those who take up that view that long before there were Arbitration Courts in any of the States, and long before there were any industrial tribunals of any character at all, that same pernicious system operated in the employment of apprentices, not only in this State but in every State throughout the Commonwealth, and particularly in the different centres of population. Hon. members must remember the days when girls were apprenticed to dressmaking. They had to serve a probationary period of six months without any payment at all, and for the second six months their wages amounted to 2s. 6d. per week, and continued to increase by 2s. 6d. per week for every six months of service. When their payment reached about 12s. 6d. or 15s. per week their services were dispensed with, and their places were filled by apprentices at nothing a week. That happened before there were any Wages Boards, Arbitration Courts, or any other industrial tribunals. It has been stated also that the restrictions imposed through the instrumentality of the Apprenticeship Committee and the Arbitration Court rulings, restricting the number of apprentices which could be employed in proportion to the number of adult employees in the trades, had a detrimental effect. That argument was blown sky-high by a pronouncement recently reported in the Press as having emanated from the president of the Arbitration Court, Mr. Justice McCawley, showing that the employers in the various trades had not only been prevented from putting on a certain number of apprentices, but that they had not employed the apprentices up to the number that they were allowed to employ, and that some had employed no apprentices at all. The president of the Employers' Federation, Mr. Campbell, rushed into print to apologise for the employers' laxity in that regard, or endeavoured in some way to explain it away. The lack of skilled tradesmen has not been caused through any fault of the Arbitration Court, or of the Apprenticeship Committee, or of any industrial restriction whatever. The employers have not been availing themselves of the number which they might have employed in their endeavour to turn out skilled tradesmen for the future.

Some years ago I brought down the wrath of a couple of hon. gentlemen opposite by a statement I made with regard to the low rate

of wages which in those days were paid to apprentices. The apprentice to whom I was referring had been employed by a firm, and when I made that statement I was forced to mention the name of Walkers Limited, in Maryborough—not that Walkers Limited were any different from any other large employing industry. They in those days did what any other employing body did. They paid a very low rate of wages to their apprentices, and I brought down upon my innocent head the wrath of the then hon. member for Maryborough—Mr. Corsor, now member of the House of Representatives for Wide Bay—and Mr. Booker, who was then the member for the State electorate of Wide Bay. I explained the situation then, and I repeat it now, because it illustrates the reason for the shortage of skilled tradesmen operating not only here but throughout Australia, and, as we learn from a sub-leader in the "Courier" this morning, throughout the world. The illustration I mentioned was this: There was an apprenticed blacksmith employed at Walkers Limited. He is a relation of mine, and I know the whole circumstances of the case. He was a very apt apprentice, so much so that at the age of about eighteen he was given a fire as a blacksmith, and he was given two strikers to assist him at the fire. The wages for strikers in Walkers Limited in those days was 8s. a day, and each of the two strikers received for his week's work £2 8s., or a sum of £4 16s. between them. The apprenticed blacksmith—my relation—for his week's work received 17s. 6d.

Mr. LOGAN: He had the benefit of learning his trade.

Mr. FERRICKS: That is a very pertinent interjection. He had the benefit of learning the trade, but he was only able to do that by the sacrifice of his parents keeping him there when his own wages were not sufficient to keep him. He thought so much about the trade that, when he got through his apprenticeship he never went back to it. He had such a grumbling at blacksmithing and the rate of wages that he received, that he took on furnacing, as he said it was easier work.

Industries are reaping the reward of their past niggardly action in the scarcity of skilled artisans at the present time. It was only children of the well-to-do who could learn engineering and the allied trades, as they could afford to keep their boys until they

reached the age of twenty-one [3 p.m.] years, when they were out of their apprenticeship. If the parents were not able to do that, they had to make sacrifices to the detriment of themselves and the other members of the family. It is not expected that such a sacrifice should be made by the parents and their families. I know it is true that Walkers Limited have turned out some of the best apprentices, who have developed into the best tradesmen that have been turned out by any engineering firm in the Commonwealth. It is a fact, too, that they also hold many important positions, but they have been able to learn their trade by virtue of the fact that they were more favourably situated through the standing or position of their parents than many others were. When we realise that employers are doing the very same thing now in regard to dispensing with the services of those youths whose wages reach

Mr. Ferricks.]

the scale of 17s. 6d. or £1 a week, then we can look forward to no improvement in that regard.

Mr. EDWARDS: That cannot be done with apprentices now.

Mr. FERRICKS: No; but in cases, if they stop at the trade, they turn them out as labourers. There are hundreds of boys in Queensland who started to learn a trade, not indentured in the strict letter of the law, and who have been turned out as labourers. I will go a bit further than the hon. member for Gympie in his statement in regard to technical education. I am not going to follow the statements in the newspapers, or of people who profess to be authorities on this subject, because I believe in technical education to the extent and on the lines on which it is operating here; but it should be capable of doing much more than operating as a complement to the practical work in the shops. In our Technical College we spend about 80 per cent. more than is spent on the Workmen's College in Melbourne, where virtually tradesmen are turned out. With the extensions of the system here, much more can be done than is claimed by many people who speak on this subject.

Another matter with which the Bill deals is the giving the right to domestic workers to approach the Arbitration Court. That is another subject upon which some years ago I met with a little criticism for referring to some people, well situated people from a worldly sense, living in fashionable suburbs and homes, who employed their domestic workers at all hours of the day and night, and who paid them as low as 5s. a week by not calling them domestic servants or domestic workers but "lady helps." They were allowed to sit at the table with the family, but their drudgery started after all the visitors left at night. They did that for the privilege of not being called a domestic worker, but a lady help.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: A jackeroo is on the same plane.

Mr. FERRICKS: Constant housework is a drudgery, but it is a greater drudgery to the domestic worker, because the housewife naturally has a home interest in her duties which could not be expected of any employed domestic worker or any lady help. We hear a great deal about the dearth of domestic workers, and about girls not entering domestic service, and that employers cannot get them. I say the people who want domestic servants and household assistants and cannot get them have no one to blame but themselves.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. FERRICKS: That is because of the manner they treated those girls when they could get them in plenty. Again, they are reaping their reward. Is it any wonder that the girls prefer to enter factories, where their wages, hours, and conditions are regulated?

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. FERRICKS: If the people who are making these complaints will readily get behind the Government in their endeavour to secure better conditions and rates of pay for domestic workers, that will solve the shortage in domestic labour, and that very quickly.

The main discussion of this Bill has surrounded the provision designed to enable

rural workers to get access to the Arbitration Court. The hon. member for Albert, when speaking last night, rather spoiled what, in my opinion, was for the hon. member a typically moderate speech, by at the end of it attacking this side of the House with the allegation that speakers from this side of the House had libelled the farming industry. If there had been any reflection cast on the farmer or the farming community, I would refer to the speeches made by the hon. members of the Country party. One following the other uttered in all seriousness the statement that the farming industry was in such a precarious condition in Queensland—

Mr. EDWARDS: That is true.

Mr. FERRICKS: That the farmers could not afford to pay a fair rate of wages to those they employed. The hon. member now interjects that that is true.

Mr. DASH: A Jeremiah.

Mr. FERRICKS: They also said that others would not employ labour, as they could not afford to pay them.

Mr. EDWARDS: Absolutely true.

Mr. FERRICKS: Is it any wonder that we have cabled reports of statements appearing in the London Press to the effect that newcomers to Australia from Great Britain are sent into desert country to undertake drudgery and slaving and undergo the misery, while the farmers are leaving their farms and flocking into the cities. The hon. members opposite one after another have been making the statement that farmers are being driven off their farms—

Mr. EDWARDS: That is true.

Mr. FERRICKS: And will be driven off their farms.

Mr. EDWARDS: While the Labour Government are there.

Mr. FERRICKS: The London papers, as a result, are seeking to obtain for emigrants a fair chance when they come here. They are passing these false statements on, and will continue to do so while such false utterances are made by the men who profess to sit in this Chamber in the interests of the farming community.

Mr. EDWARDS: It is true.

Mr. FERRICKS: If they go on saying it is true that the farmers cannot pay wages, and that they are being driven off the farms, then I hope, in the name of consistency, that not one of them will dare mention in this Chamber the question of immigration and land settlement, because they are saying that land settlement in Queensland is a failure.

Mr. EDWARDS: But you know you sold that plank.

Mr. FERRICKS: I am not going to endorse that false and rash statement, but if they persist in that utterance then they should say no more about immigration and further land settlement in Queensland. Are they going to blame the men who are engaged in rural work for the drought? They are blaming the Government for the drought, but that is no reason why they should penalise the men who work on their farms. The burden of their argument is that the farmer cannot pay Arbitration Court wages because there is a drought prevailing. It is not the question of wages

[Mr. Ferricks.

that troubles the agricultural industry; it is the question of the drought. That is the serious problem to be seriously tackled. It can be counteracted in some degree by the conservation of water and by the conservation of fodder; but the men who are on wages in the rural industries should not have to bear the brunt of the drought by being refused access to the Arbitration Court.

I do not think hon. members opposite are voicing the sentiments of the farming industry or the farmers in this State when they give utterance to the contentions they have made on this subject. I believe the farmers who employ labour are willing to pay the labour they employ a fair rate of wages.

Mr. FRY: They have got to pay.

Mr. FERRICKS: We hear a great deal, too, from speakers on the other side regarding the attitude of members of this party towards the agricultural industry. During the past three years that I have been a member of this Assembly there has been quite a lot of rural legislation put on the statute-book by this Government. In fact, most of the legislation put into effect in the last Parliament was in the interests of the farming community. I made a point of asking on two or three occasions in the last Parliament if hon. members elected to this House from country constituencies meant to continue on the lines they were then going, saying that the Government had done nothing for the farming industry.

Mr. EDWARDS: That is true.

Mr. FERRICKS: I protested against that statement being made last session by the hon. member and by the late hon. member for Drayton, Mr. Bebbington, who so often repeated that false statement. Let me tell the hon. gentleman how the reiteration of that statement is inclined to affect one—I am speaking for myself. Ever since I have been in public life I have advocated the interests of the farmer and the worker, because I realise—if hon. members opposite have not yet realised it—that the farmer is also a worker, and the sooner the farmers in the hon. member's district realise that fact, and join with the worker against their common enemy, the sooner they will be in the position that the cane farmers are in.

During the fourteen years I have been in public life there is not one word that can be dug up in any "Hansard" where I have cast a reflection upon the farming industry or upon the men employed in fighting their interests. Even in the last campaign, in a city electorate largely composed of industrial workers, in dealing with the cost of living, I made the statement that I was not an advocate of bedrock prices for primary products, because I realised that if primary products were sold at glut prices the people who were producing them were being sweated. At one time you could get milk at 4d. a quart—I know that because I used to sell it—and even as low as 3d. a quart. I knew then that the people who were engaged in dairying were being absolutely sweated, and in looking for city votes I was fair enough to place before them the proposition that it was better in the interests of the consumers to have a standardised price for products rather than famine prices at one time and glut prices at another time.

When I hear hon. members opposite mention London parity, it occurs to me that the

Secretary for Agriculture pointed out here in the last Parliament that at one time Queensland cheese and butter were bringing a lower price in London than consumers in Brisbane were paying for them. When I hear these repeated statements that the Government have done nothing after all our efforts during the past three years—and I do say that the amount of agricultural legislation during the last three years has placed the workers in the city in a secondary position—I realise that this State must be developed, and that the agricultural and farming industries must be legitimately legislated for. But when we have bricks hurled at us—and we have had three years of it—it does not tend to increase one's enthusiasm in advocating to such a degree as I have done the interests of the primary producer. However, I do not think hon. members opposite voice the sentiments of their electorates when they come into this Chamber and, after three years, start a fourth year saying that the Government have done nothing for the farming industry.

Mr. EDWARDS: Tell us what they have done.

Mr. FERRICKS: The hon. member for Cunningham, in the endeavour to draw the distinction between the general agricultural industry throughout Queensland at the present time and the sugar industry operating under the Arbitration Court award, and the prices of their respective products, attempted to buttress his argument by saying that the sugar industry had been assisted by being given cheap coloured labour, an import duty, a market for the product, and the benefit of millions of State money put into State sugar-mills. I would remind the hon. gentleman and those who think with him that in 1909 there was a duty on sugar—which has recently been increased—and there was a market for sugar. The regulation of the conditions of the workers in the sugar industry had its genesis in 1908. In 1909 they had had State money expended in the erection of State sugar-mills, but at that time people who thought with the hon. gentleman, and who think with him now, maintained that all the sugar industry could afford to pay the men working in the industry then, despite all these advantages, was the sum of 3s. 9d. a day for a ten-hour day, or 4½d. an hour. That is only a few years ago. In 1910 that was the issue at the Federal elections, and the party opposite howled that the sugar industry would be ruined if more than 4½d. an hour were paid to the men engaged in it. But the Labour party went on with their policy, and in spite of the opposition of many of the sugar representatives in this Chamber, they gave the sugar farmers the benefit of the Cane Prices Boards, and they raised the wages of the men through the instrumentality of the Arbitration Court, and it was only when the wages went up in the sugar industry that any prosperity began to accrue to the farmers who produced the cane.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. FERRICKS: The same thing will apply to the agricultural industry generally. If they pay a decent rate of wages, payable prices will be obtained, because they are obtained as a natural corollary to the increased cost of production of any commodity. Hon. members opposite say that the Government have done nothing for the

Mr. Ferricks.]

agricultural industrv. Are the pools which have been brought into existence by legislation of no advantage to the farming industry?

Mr. COSTELLO: Not so far.

Mr. FERRICKS: I know they have, because I live in Brisbane, and I know that, as soon as a pool is formed to stabilise a particular commodity, the price of that commodity goes up, and the consumer has to pay more for it. And that is why I say that, even when I went before my electors, I did not advocate bedrock prices for primary products, but at the same time I am not going to advocate sky high prices or unduly high prices for any commodity. Why do hon. members opposite talk about pools being of no advantage? I will take the electorate of the hon. member for Carnarvon as an example of the advantage which is expected to accrue from a pool. This is a very significant little thing. I remember members of the Brisbane Fruit Growers' Association going up to Stanthorpe to meet the tomato-growers and discuss the matter of the then projected tomato pool, and, as reported in the "Courier" of 27th November, 1922, Mr. Wilmington, one of the visitors, was asked—

"Whether the pool could control the supply of tomatoes to the Brisbane market from early in January to the middle of April."

He said—

"Yes; the pool would practically dominate the market during the period stated."

Which meant, of course, that the tomatoes for that period—which I presume is the period of production in the Stanthorpe district—would be sent down in regulated quantities to stabilise the price and to improve the price the grower would receive. The result has been the same following on the formation of any pool.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: It certainly was not so with the tomato.

Mr. FERRICKS: Hon. members opposite talk about round-table conferences being preferable to Arbitration Court proceedings. I was interested in the speech of the hon. member for Albert last night, when he mentioned the formation of wages boards, and proudly said that he had fathered that legislation. I remember distinctly that the hon. member for Albert did so, and I know further that in 1907 and 1903, when there were two elections following closely one on the other, the question of the extension of wages boards to rural industries was made the issue at both those elections. I know because I was in the election in 1903 contesting the seat in the agricultural district at present held by my colleague, Mr. Collins, and I know that the issue was whether the rural workers should be brought under the operations of the wages board system, and every anti-Labour candidate in Queensland, and particularly in the country districts, denounced with the utmost vehemence at their command the iniquitous proposal that the workers in the rural industries should be brought under the wages board system. There can be no getting away from that, because it is well known that they fought the proposal tooth and nail as being calculated to ruin the farming industry, and now they stand up in this Chamber and

[Mr. Ferricks.

advocate a reversion to the system of wages boards or round-table conferences. If those gentlemen are the friends of the farmers, then it will be a question of the farmers being saved from their friends, if they are going to continue for another three years to inflict upon this House the rash assertions they are continuously making about the "hard-ness" of the Queensland farmers and the hopelessness of any man going on to the land and making a living. I say they are libelling Queensland—not intentionally I know—but none the less surely they are libelling Queensland just as seriously as the notorious delegation libelled Queensland. Do these hon. gentlemen realise to the full that they hold a very responsible position as members of Parliament, and that their rash statements made in this Chamber do not end here? The worst feature of the whole defamation is that the morning Press star their wild statements about the precarious position of the agricultural industry; and it is wired South, and from South it is wired abroad and appears in the London Press—not their statements, of course, but deductions from them. If the London papers comment adversely on the position of Queensland in relation to the farming industry, the "Courier" and the "Mail" very unpatriotically copy the devilish accusations which are made against this State under flaring headlines. It is a great shame that such defamation and libel of this State should continue just because a Labour Government happen to be in power.

Mr. RYAN: They ought to be deported.

Mr. EDWARDS: The truth should be told.

Mr. FERRICKS: I would suggest that hon. members opposite should have a little bit of common sense and tell the truth.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. FERRICKS: We are told that dire results will accrue if this legislation should come into effect. I would remind hon. members that, while the Arbitration Court has done a great deal of good, it has certainly never erred on the side of leniency towards the men in any industry. The court goes to the utmost limits permitted by the Act to find out the ability of an industry to pay the wages before awarding them. That is the system of arbitration, and not only the Queensland court but all Arbitration Courts have proceeded on those lines. If there is a loophole at all, if the case against a mere existence wage is not overwhelming, then the employers as a general rule have not a great deal to fear from the operations of the Arbitration Court.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Is that not a libel on the Arbitration Court?

Mr. FERRICKS: It is just showing that the interests of hon. members opposite have been looked after pretty well by Arbitration Courts, judging by past experience. I can only say that this provision has been too long delayed, and, instead of showing opposition to it and cavilling at it, hon. members should get behind it and endeavour to raise up their industries to the level of other industries that exist in Queensland.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): I feel that it is incumbent upon any man who represents a primary producing constituency to state his views on this important measure. The

last speaker made a very impressive and, to a great extent, a very fair speech. [8.30 p.m.] I have no doubt as to his sympathy with the primary producer.

If there is one man on the Government side to-day who has consistently shown his sympathy for the primary producer, it is the hon. member for South Brisbane; but, at the same time, he did not say one word to demonstrate how this proposal can be applied to the primary producer.

Mr. FERRICKS: Give the primary industries a chance.

Mr. WARREN: The hon. member has not shown how these poor unfortunate people are going to pay this wage.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Why weep?

Mr. WARREN: It is the duty of those who are sent here to protect the interests of the primary producer to speak the truth to-night. Very little has been said which would convince any reasonable man that this measure has been brought forward in the interests of the primary producer, or that he will be able in any way to meet the obligations which will be imposed upon him under the measure. We have to go a little further back than when this Bill was introduced. We know that, when the Primary Producers' Organisation scheme was put into operation, the workers made a certain demand on those in authority, in these terms: "You put £1 in the producer's pocket, but you have to take £2 out of it." The Government are demanding something more than they put in. I want to ask hon. members opposite if they have done anything substantial for the producer. We have never seen it yet. The hon. member for Nanango asked what the Government have done for the producer.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: They stole his butter.

Mr. WARREN: They have not done much more than steal his butter. No hon. member opposite has made any definite statement as to what the Government have done for the producer. I wish to read an article from the official organ of the Labour party, the "Producers Review." That journal admits that the wheat industry has been scientifically organised by the Wheat Board. The members of the board happen to be fairly good organisers, and have organised the industry on a good basis. The "Producers Review" goes on to say--

"What of the Council of Agriculture in the betterment of agriculture? Since that Council has been functioning, where has it increased by one penny the returns received by the farmer for his produce? Can anyone give evidence of one scheme put forth by the Council to solve present-day marketing difficulties? Does the Council realise that Queensland farmers depend primarily upon the Queensland and Australian markets?"

"The 'Review' believes that the Council was instituted to lift agricultural pursuits out of the chaos into which they have fallen. Nobody realises better than Mr. Theodore the need for an economic reorganisation of agriculture. It's a pity his driving force could not be infused into the Council."

The Government are certainly responsible for the Council of Agriculture.

Mr. GLEDSON: Who elected the Council?

Mr. WARREN: I will come to that shortly. In the first place, we objected to the method of nomination. The method was absolutely wrong from beginning to end.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. WARREN: I knew that you would call me to order, Mr. Speaker, but I wanted to show that, while the Government are taking something out of the producers' pockets, they are holding out that they have done something for these men. I want to show that even that claim is not true, and that there has been nothing done for the primary producer. With the exception of the sugar industry, everything is in a chaotic condition, and we are in no way better than we were three years ago. If the industry is only paying a certain amount, how is it possible to take more out of the industry than it is producing? We know that the severe drought and the bad organisation of the producers to-day are responsible for the weakness of the Council of Agriculture. It is no use, to use a vulgarism, "pulling our own leg," and saying that the Council is doing a lot of good. The Secretary for Agriculture only takes notice of the Council of Agriculture when it suits him--when they bring something forward which he thinks is going to benefit the Government's scheme. The Government do not follow the Council of Agriculture implicitly. Is it a fair thing to put before the House a scheme which is so important to the producers and which will have such far-reaching effects, which, when brought before the Council of Agriculture, they were not allowed to discuss? If it was right to bring this measure before the House, it was also right that the Council of Agriculture should have had some voice in the matter. How are the farmers going to defend their case in the Arbitration Court when the Council of Agriculture, which has been in existence for a considerable time, is not able to do anything, and, according to the Government's organ, it has done nothing? If the Council has done nothing for the producer hitherto, how can we expect it to defend the interests of the producer in the future? I do not want to run down the Council of Agriculture, but I am sorry to say that I agree with the "Producers Review." The farmers in my electorate, who are not able to make a living, have to come and ask for assistance from the Government, although they are situated in the glorious country of the North Coast line. That being the case, I say that the Council of Agriculture is not fulfilling its functions. I want to hear some argument from the other side, so that we can go and tell our constituents. "It is quite all right; you will be on the right track, and the Government are going to see that your butter and bananas are kept at the right price."

Mr. CARTER: What has that to do with this Bill?

Mr. WARREN: We want to see where we are going to get the money from to pay the increased wages. If it is impossible to get the money, what is the use of putting these men under a scheme which will put them in a worse position than they are in at the present time? I believe that the hon. member for South Brisbane did feel the sympathy he expressed, and that he realises the disadvantages from which the man on the land suffers.

Mr. FERRICKS: Everyone on this side realises that, but you on that side are not giving us much encouragement.

Mr. Warren.]

Mr. WARREN: I believe that the hon. member felt everything he said about the people whom he termed the servant girl class. I believe that there are things in this Bill which embody necessary reforms, and the hon. member for South Brisbane showed conclusively where there were wrongs and how they could be remedied; but even his logical reason did not give us any prescription for taking blood out of a stone. The greater part of the primary producers—I do not refer to the wool and sugar growers—are living on the bread and butter line. It has been said that they do not need to employ men. I do not believe that that would be a good thing for the State. I believe that the employing farmer is doing more for the State than any other class. It is not the one-horse farm which is doing most to increase primary production. I do not say for a moment, and I hope nobody on this side has made the statement, that the farmer's employce has been getting sufficient out of his work. I do not think for a moment that he has.

Mr. FERRICKS: Do you think he has been sweated?

Mr. WARREN: I do not think he has. I think that the man who has been sweated is the farmer. I do not think any intelligent man would come into this Chamber and say, or suggest, that the farmers are a sweating class of people.

Mr. CARTER: You want them to be.

Mr. WARREN: Of all the farmers I know, none works his men as hard as he works himself.

Mr. FERRICKS: Nobody expects his man to work as hard as he works.

Mr. WARREN: I quite agree that he should not want his man to work as hard as he works himself. I do not believe that, if we buy a man's labour, we buy his blood; but I do say that by this Bill not only are the Government going to retard production, but they are also going to injure the worker in the rural districts as well as raise the price of the primary products, that is, unless they find some means of equalising matters. Unless they do that the farmers cannot make their farms pay. It is no use saying that the extra money has got to come from the farmers. They have not got it. The people who are going to pay are the workers and the consumers. Take the milk industry. At present people in Brisbane are paying more than they should pay for milk. We would like to see it sold for at least 2d. a quart less than it is to-day; but at the same time we must not forget that no dairyman in the Brisbane district is making any money out of selling milk. He may do so when there is some grass feed, but otherwise he is losing considerably on every cow he is feeding. We must agree that there must be some point at which arbitration must begin and some point at which it must end. I have never heard anybody on this side of the House say that he does not agree with arbitration. We must admit that it is a thousand times better than direct action.

Mr. PEASE: You believe in it for the other fellow, but not for your own industry.

Mr. WARREN: We want to solve the problem as much as anybody, but are we to solve it by applying arbitration to the rural worker? To my mind, not only are we

doing a wrong to the industry and to the consumer, but we are also doing a wrong to the worker. The hon. member for South Brisbane said that we should not ask people to come to this State if we say that the producer cannot make a living. We may be quite correct in making that statement. In fact, the income tax returns and everything else point to the truth of what we are saying. At the same time, we believe that the system of buying and selling which he adopts has a good deal to do with the position of the producer. We know that in some cases it is the effect of over-production. Take fruit for instance. We are over-producing in certain lines, but in no case can we say that we are on commercial lines, except in respect of wool and sugar. But I do not suppose it matters what we say—the mandate has gone forth, and this has got to come. I want, however, to enter my protest—there is no Jeremiah business about it—that the Government in this proposal are not doing the best for Queensland or for the worker.

Mr. BRUCE (*Kennedy*): While I was listening to the speeches of hon. members of the Opposition last night, it struck me that these amendments should be discussed calmly and dispassionately. The representative of the "Courier" must be susceptible of transmission of thought, because those words were used at the head of a leader this morning. Whilst I say that these amendments should be dealt with calmly and dispassionately, I do not guarantee that in replying to the members of the Opposition themselves I shall remain calm and dispassionate.

What is the issue? The amendments are designed to extend the provisions of the Industrial Arbitration Act to the workers in rural industries. That brings three classes of people within the ambit of the discussion—the workers in the rural industries, the farmers for whom they work, and some gentlemen whom the members of the Opposition have hardly mentioned—the middlemen who handle the products of the farmer. The crux of the whole position was well put forward by members opposite when they were supporting the motion of the hon. member for Burnett this afternoon during the time allotted to private members' business. They laid bare the position that the middleman was the man who was crucifying the farmer; but, whilst they have been discussing these amendments in the Industrial Arbitration Act, I have not heard one member except the last speaker refer to that phase of the question.

It is strange, if Opposition members are perfectly honest, that they should leave that phase of the position out of the argument when it is a question of extending the operations of the Arbitration Court to the rural workers. Every Opposition member has said that he believes in arbitration. We will accept that statement as being correct. If they believe in arbitration as a principle, they cannot believe in its application to one section of workers or one section of industries and not to another section of workers or another section of industries.

Mr. KERR: What about the public servants receiving more than £300 a year?

Mr. BRUCE: Where we have large bodies of men well organised in key industries, where they organise their economic force and bring a great deal of pressure to bear as to

[*Mr. Warren.*]

what shall be their rate of pay and conditions of work, the employing class and those who represent the large aggregations of capital are certainly in favour of arbitration; but, when they get workers who, through the scattered nature of the industry in which they work, are not organised, then the employing class and those who control large aggregations of capital are not in favour of arbitration. If you believe in arbitration you must believe in arbitration as a principle, and this Bill is only meant to extend arbitration to the rural workers of this State. We know perfectly well that in many cases the farmers are not doing well and are not very well off; yet in other cases they are well off. What are you desirous of protecting the farmer from? If hon. members opposite are desirous of protecting the farmer and of looking after his interests, they should try and prevent him from being driven amongst the wage-earners. That is the fear of the farmer. I know hundreds of farmers personally. We know they do not want to be driven into the ranks of the wage-earners, because, no matter how bad a farmer's conditions may be, still the conditions and rates of pay of wage-earners are such that every man who possibly can will keep away from the possibilities of being drawn into the conditions that so exist with regard to wage-earners. The Labour party, while they appreciate the position of the farmers, are here, first of all, to represent the wage-earners, who are the most oppressed body in the community to-day.

The farmer of to-day fears that he will be driven off his land into the ranks of the wage-earners, and he is quite correct in that fear. The farmer may have been a wage-earner previous to going on the land, and, knowing those conditions, he dreads being driven back there again. We, as a Labour party, believe in the extension of arbitration to the rural workers, and we believe that, per medium of the Primary Producers' Organisation Act, the primary producers will get a better reward for what they produce. I do not say that that Act will be working perfectly within a few weeks or a few months. Last night the hon. member for Murilla quoted the farmers' income tax returns in an endeavour to show the meagre income made by the farmers, but he did not quote the income tax returns of the millers. He could have obtained those figures from the hon. member for Warwick, who sits on the same side of the House, showing what income was derived from the products of the primary producers, and what income tax is paid on an income derived from that source. That is the crux of the position. We know perfectly well that huge businesses which have aggregated thousands of pounds of capital have extended their operations by exploiting the producers. Hon. members opposite say that they have no objection to the Primary Producers' Organisation Act, provided that it is wisely administered. That Act is intended to do away with that class of people who exploit the primary producers. Ninety per cent. of the people of the world, or of Queensland as a section of the world, are workers by brain or by hand. They are the consumers, the other 10 per cent. practically amount to nothing. If you pay those workers a decent and fair rate of wages, then their purchasing capacity is increased, and they are able to purchase—or at least I hope they will be able to purchase—the products of

the primary producers, and the middleman can then decide which side he will take if we can eliminate him—whether he is going to be a farmer or a wage-earner. I have been in contact with farming conditions for a great portion of my life and I have also been amongst the workers for fifteen years. I know that, while a man may not be showing a great profit on a farm, he has still got good food and clothes. He follows a healthy occupation, and, if he is successful at all, he makes a great deal more than any wage-earner can possibly hope or expect to make. We know perfectly well that it is a better place to bring up a family than perhaps to be shifting from one mine to another, or from one sugar-mill to another, earning a living as wage-earners have to do.

Mr. MORGAN: They have plenty of fresh air.

Mr. BRUCE: I believe that the hon. member for Murilla is a farmer because he gets full of that fresh air and lets it go in this Chamber. (Laughter.) During the last few years I have seen the finest type of rural workers that you could possibly desire to meet—men to whom we now desire to extend the benefits of arbitration—who wanted work and were walking about the country in search of employment.

Mr. ROBERTS: They are doing that to-day.

Mr. BRUCE: All that unemployment is due to the fact that during the war we did over-produce and filled the factories of the rest of the world with the produce of Queensland and other dominions. The rates of payment of the people in those older countries of the world are such to-day that they cannot purchase some of the commodities which Australia, America, Canada, and South Africa produce. There is no doubt that the farmer has suffered, but the workers have suffered also. Why cannot hon. members opposite see both sides of the argument? While they have clearly pointed out to this House the distress of the farmer, they have never pointed to the conditions of the wage-earner. Why can they not extend some sympathy to him, and weigh all these things in the balance, and, if they believe arbitration is good in principle, they can then support the proposition to apply arbitration to the rural workers? Last night the hon. member for Murilla said that he believed in arbitration. As a matter of fact, the only two references to direct action came from the other side.

Mr. COSTELLO: There is a lot of direct action over there.

Mr. BRUCE: The hon. member for Lockyer said that, if arbitration was applied to the rural industries, the union organiser would be dealt with when he went round.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: He did not say that.

Mr. BRUCE: The hon. member for Lockyer said that if the Arbitration Court was extended to rural workers the organisers coming around there would be dealt with.

Mr. LOGAN: I did not say that.

Mr. BRUCE: That is a threat of direct action. I have been organising in an honorary and official capacity for the past ten or twelve years, and I have never yet met a farmer or a mineowner so unreasonable as to threaten direct action. So far

Mr. Bruce.]

as the farmers are concerned in the district in which I was organising, I found them mostly open to reason and discussion on any point. I admit that you would find a few of them who would say they would resort to direct action; but, so long as a man was in fair condition, and weighed about 12 stone, he had nothing to fear from any direct action. The hon. member for

[9 p.m.] Murilla is theoretically an advocate of direct action. I have read "Hansard" for quite a number of years, and I have found that he is in the habit of throwing fistic challenges across the floor of this House. I have found, too, as I said, that he was only a theoretical direct actionist, because when anyone showed a disposition to accept any of those challenges, he did not go on with the work. The interests that the hon. members composing the Opposition represent are desirous of keeping the farmer in such a condition that they can exploit him for their benefit. You keep a cow, and you feed it and look after it well in order to get benefits from it.

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

Mr. BRUCE: Being a new member, perhaps I have transgressed, but I will recover from the setback and take up the thread of my discourse.

In referring to the question of who gets the profits from the primary producer, I would like to quote at this stage from the "Queensland Agricultural Journal"—

"Sir Charles Fielding, the late Director-General of Food Production in the United Kingdom, also shows the part of the price paid by the householder which is obtained by the farmer, who has twelve months' work with his animals, till they are fit for slaughter or to milk, and the part which finds its way into other pockets, viz. :—

Farmer gets of the price paid for bread 35 per cent.

Farmer gets of the price paid for meat 40 per cent."

Mr. COSTELLO: We do not get that here.

Mr. BRUCE: The quotation goes on—

"Farmer gets of the price paid for milk 47 per cent.

Miller, baker, and transporter get of bread price 65 per cent.

Butcher and allies get of meat price 60 per cent.

Milk combine and transporter get of milk price 53 per cent.

The foregoing, though perhaps not entirely applicable to Queensland conditions, provides ample food for thought by those who might possess a lingering doubt as to the necessity of complete organisation in our own agricultural industry."

Mr. MOORE: Does he give the percentage that each gets?

Mr. BRUCE: They are details which the hon. member might look up to-morrow—I have a much more important matter to deal with. The hon. member for Albert, in his amusing and interesting speech last night, concluded with a somewhat theatrical dis-

[Mr. Bruce.

play of assumed anger against those people who had slandered the primary producers. If we did not know the hon. member for Albert, if we had not been sitting in this House and known that no member on this side had slandered the primary producer, we would, perhaps, have been quite impressed by his eloquence. The people, however, by reference to "Hansard," can see that we have in no way slandered the primary producer. The hon. member for Albert, with his magnificent voice and fine appearance, would, if he had not taken to farming and become a prosperous farmer and a more or less successful politician, have made a magnificent actor. I could see him taking the place of Oscar Asche in "Cairo." (Laughter.) That is what struck me when I saw the finish of that magnificent speech last night.

Mr. EDWARDS: What about the hon. member for Brisbane taking that part?

Mr. BRUCE: Before closing I would like to quote a little bit of poetry that is to the point in regard to this particular matter. It is the milk in the cocoanut, or the trouble of the primary producer to-day. It is headed "Useful Employment"—

"There were two jovial farmers,
Who farmed a piece of land:
When the skylark rose
They donned their hose
And took their spade in hand.

There was a wealthy landlord,
A man of noble birth;
And fifty per cent
He took in rent
From the produce of the earth."

Mr. ROBERTS: That is what your Government do.

Mr. BRUCE:—

"Those farmers twain between them
Grew wheat enough for four;
And 'two sacks he,
And one each we.'
Was how they shared their store.

One sack sufficed each farmer,
Well used to frugal fare;
But the lord waxed fat,
And, in spite of that,
Might not consume his share.

Then spake that noble landlord,
'My capital is large,
And I'll spend a hunk
On a menial flunk
To flunky in my charge.'

And then he took one farmer
From the soil both tilled so well,
And bade him sprawl
In his master's hall,
And answer to the bell.

Meanwhile the lusty landlord,
By Hodge's work exists;
And loves to sing
'God Save the King
And the great economists.'

Well might he say "And save the great economists," who sit opposite, hour after hour, opposing the provisions of this simple

amending Bill being extended to the workers of the rural industries without one thought of the workers or thought that those workers get married as well as the farmers, and have children as well as the farmers.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BRUCE: They also have to keep them in something like decency in accordance with the conditions existing in Queensland. The electorate of Kennedy is largely made up of the farming community.

Mr. KIRWAN: "Dinkum" farmers.

Mr. BRUCE: They have told me, man after man, that they were quite contented to pay the rates of wages they were doing at the present time, and even a little more had they received a continuation of the sugar agreement that had previously existed. When the hon. member for Murilla said that the sugar industry was a pampered industry, he showed his colossal ignorance of the industry, or he was giving powder and shot to Mrs. Glencross and his National Federal party in the South. The sugar industry is not a pampered industry. During the war, when sugar was costing 1s. 1d. per lb. in America and 1s. 2d. per lb. in Great Britain, the consumers of Australia received the product of the sugar farmer at 6d. per lb., and the confectionery and jam manufacturers received it at approximately 2½d. per lb. Had the sugar-growers formed a pool similarly to the woolgrowers, £2,000,000 would have been returned to the primary producers in Queensland in excess of what they received. Instead of that, that money went to the Southern States, and the jam manufacturers of Tasmania and the confectionery manufacturers of Tasmania and Victoria reaped the products of the sugar-growers of Queensland. That is why this State does not prosper as it should; and it is due to the opposition of the Federal Parliament. When they got the price for the sugar that they did get, they could pay decent wages to their workers, and this could be done in any other industry that was properly managed, taking the products from the primary producer direct to the consumer and cutting out the middleman.

Quite apart from the fact that we are in opposite parties and that publicly hon. members opposite may resent a little of the criticism, I trust that they will consider this matter and extend some sympathy to the workers, who are the same flesh and blood as the farmers, and that they will adopt the Labour party's attitude and represent both parties, as we do.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): The hon. member who has just resumed his seat thought that we should discuss this question in a very cool, calm, and dispassionate manner, but he worked himself up into a white heat—the hon. member for Albert was not in it with him. He lashed out at the middleman and the exploiter and a lot of taradiddle that was no argument at all—there was no argument in his remarks to-night.

Mr. BRUCE: I brought the exploiter to his feet.

Mr. TAYLOR: I would rather be a middleman than a tail-end man—that is what a lot of the members on the other side are. I certainly give some service to the farmers in any business connections that I have with them.

The hon. member for Kennedy has a lot to learn before he can speak with any confidence with regard to the middleman. Talking of the middleman and agriculture generally, I would like to tell the hon. member this for his information: We have in the city of Brisbane a State Produce Agency. It has been operating now for three or four years. The consignments of the farmers would not keep that Agency open for twenty-four hours, and it is on account of the goods it purchases in and out of Queensland that it has been able to continue its operations. That is a fact, and I challenge contradiction. Since that Agency started, I believe at least six more produce firms have started operations in the city of Brisbane.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Do you want to see it closed?

Mr. TAYLOR: No, I do not lose any sleep over the State Produce Agency. It does not affect me one bit. If these so-called exploiters and middlemen are doing such an immense amount of injury to the primary producers of this country, how is it that the State Produce Agency would have to shut up to-morrow if it had to depend on consignments? I say we are not robbing the primary producers. We are carrying on as honest and legitimate a business as any man in Queensland—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You should have told Mr. Corser that this afternoon. You should not scold me.

Mr. TAYLOR: I will repeat again to-night that there are thousands of men on the land to-day who owe the fact that they are on the land, and that in many cases they have been successful on the land, to the unsecured credit that has been given to them by the so-called exploiters and middlemen. There are thousands and thousands of men who can testify to that.

The hon. member for Kennedy spoke with regard to taxation and to the hon. member for Wynnum. He was referring, of course, to what the hon. member for Aubigny and the hon. member for Murilla had stated with regard to the amount of taxation paid by primary producers, and said that they should have quoted the amount of taxation paid by millers. Now, I was over in South Brisbane this morning, and I saw the opening there of the Commonwealth Flour Mills. The hon. member for Kennedy quoted certain percentages which, he said, farmers and other people receive, showing that the primary producer received a low percentage and the middleman a high percentage for their goods. I have not asked the proprietors of that mill, in which the hon. member for Wynnum and the hon. member for Warwick are partners, but I should estimate that the stock, land, buildings, and machinery cost anything from £80,000 to £100,000.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Made out of whom?

Mr. COLLINS: Made out of the farmer.

Mr. TAYLOR: The hon. member is not a farmer; he is a farmer on a 16-perch allotment. What farmer or what man engaged in agriculture to-day has a farm worth over £5,000. Who bears the whole cost of that mill? Who is getting a large percentage of the cost of putting up that mill?

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Where has it come from?

Mr. Taylor.]

Mr. TAYLOR: From the soil in the first place, where the hon. gentleman and I came from, and where we will go again. There is not an industry in the State of Queensland at the present time that has had a greater difficulty in maintaining a foothold and carrying on in the State of Queensland than the milling industry. If the hon. member for Toowoomba does not know that, he ought to know it. As the representative of a country electorate, he should know the difficulties that have been associated with the successful carrying on of the milling industry. There are only about three or four men who are responsible for that industry being established in Queensland at all to-day, yet there are hon. members on the other side of the House who say, "Scrap it! Tear it out!"

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Was there a necessity for another flour mill in Queensland?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. TAYLOR: I recollect the time when there were about six mills in the city of Brisbane, and, on account of the failure of the wheat crop all but one had to close. We could have kept six mills going if it had not been for cheap wheat and flour coming in from the other States.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Haven't we produced enough wheat for our own consumption the last three years?

Mr. TAYLOR: We did the year before last, but we sent a lot out and brought a lot more in.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: We should not have sent it out.

Mr. TAYLOR: The hon. member for South Brisbane, a few moments ago, found fault with the hon. member for Nanango for saying certain things which the hon. member for South Brisbane considered were derogatory to the farming industry of this State. I will read to the hon. member what the Premier said in regard to the agricultural industry of this State in April, 1922, at a conference held in Brisbane. I am quoting from the Queensland "Agricultural Journal"—

"Agriculture was almost stagnant at the present time, and had been so for years. There were literally millions of acres of land in Queensland suitable for cultivation, or, at any rate, close occupation by agriculturists, but there was no great development taking place at the present time."

Mr. FERRICKS: Quite true, too.

Mr. TAYLOR: The hon. member was finding fault with the statements made by the hon. member for Nanango, and I say he made no different statement to what the Premier made. The Premier further said—

"While men who were on the land considered themselves not sufficiently remunerated—while the people in rural districts considered themselves neglected, and there was a general atmosphere leading to the impression that there was no encouragement for a man to go on the land—there would be no great progress towards the extension of rural industries."

[Mr. Taylor.

Then, further on, he says—

"They knew in some cases that the man on the land toiled under conditions of absolute drudgery and hopelessness, but that should not be. In the early days of the colony it was necessary for the farmers to go out into the country miles away from railways and pioneer the land. In those days the farmers had no means of establishing settled communities with any degree of comfort. They were the real pioneers of the country, and all honour to them for the pioneering work which they had done. Although they could honour the pioneers of the past—because a man had to pioneer fifty years ago—there was no necessity to-day why the man on the land should be living a life of hard-ship and suffering from almost the same disabilities as the pioneers of old. There was no necessity for that, although, unfortunately, a majority of them were doing it."

That is exactly what is happening at the present time, and why the hon. member for South Brisbane should find fault with the remarks of the hon. member for Nanango I do not know. Hon. members on this side of the House have been accused of being opposed to arbitration. We are not opposed to arbitration, and no hon. member on the other side of the House can truthfully say that we are opposed to arbitration.

The matter of the sugar industry has been introduced into this debate. I think it was the hon. member for South Brisbane who said that immediately wages were increased and certain other things were done, the sugar industry prospered. Where would the sugar industry be to-day if we were producing 5,000 tons to 10,000 tons more than we required? What has stood to the sugar industry in Queensland has been the fact that we have been only producing for Australia; but, if we had been producing sugar and exporting it abroad, would sugar have been the price it is to-day? Hon. members know perfectly well that it would not have been bringing anything like the price it has been bringing only for the fact that we have no surplus, as we have of beef, butter, and cheese at the present time.

Mr. HYNES: Sugar is bringing 8d. a lb. in London to-day. We are not getting the world's parity.

Mr. TAYLOR: In connection with the proposal to bring the rural workers under the Arbitration Act, we have to ask ourselves this question: Is there a danger of primary production becoming less if this is brought about?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: No.

Mr. TAYLOR: It is quite evident hon. members opposite have no conception of what is happening in Queensland at the present time. By the end of the year 1923—I challenge contradiction—the State of Queensland will have imported in the way of chaff, potatoes—

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Because of the drought.

Mr. TAYLOR: Including lucerne chaff and hay, produce to the value of half a million of money. That is what we are sending out

of the State at the present time for fodder to feed the animals of Queensland.

Mr. FERRICKS: Don't you know there is a drought in Queensland?

Mr. TAYLOR: We are certainly importing more this year than we did in previous years, but it is continuous. We are importing all the year round. I have been in Queensland about thirty years, and there never has been a year since I have been in Queensland that we have not had to import fodder from the other States of the Commonwealth.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: We have exported it, too.

Mr. TAYLOR: We have never exported chaff in all the years that we have been a State. The hon. member does not know what he is talking about, and I do. This is the state of the industry at the present time. If it had not been for these supplies coming in from the other States, lucerne chaff to-day would probably be £20 to £25 a ton. We have had to get it from the Southern States. We always get oaten chaff, wheat chaff, and potatoes from the Southern States. We do not grow 5 per cent. of the oaten chaff used in Queensland.

Mr. CARTER: We do not grow good oaten chaff.

Mr. TAYLOR: I have seen oaten chaff grown in Queensland as good as any coming from the other States. While probably quite a number of men engaged in agriculture, principally in the dairying industry, do not employ labour, still there are some who do, and it is continuous employment for 365 days in the year, and I do not know of any men employed in the dairying industry to-day who are being sweated the way hon. members would like us to believe. There is no need for any man to be sweated in Queensland to-day. A good workman does not need to be sweated if he has good health and strength, as he can get a good wage in whatever occupation he likes to follow.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Therefore the industry will stand it.

Mr. TAYLOR: The rural industries cannot stand it. Just in exactly the same way as our millers have to compete with the Southern States of the Commonwealth, so the State of Queensland has to compete with the other States of the Commonwealth with its surplus products.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: The advocates of black labour used the same old argument.

Mr. TAYLOR: Black labour has been abolished, and it will never return.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: What about Barwell?

Mr. TAYLOR: Never mind about Barwell.

The SPEAKER: Order! I would ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the question before the House and not reply to interjections.

Mr. TAYLOR: During the course of the debate the hon. member for Murilla and the hon. member for Aubigny quoted figures to show the amount of taxation received from dairy farmers, orchardists, and various other people engaged on the land. What better evidence do hon. members on the other side want than that to show these are not industries of average prosperity?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is an argument to use in the Arbitration Court, and, if you can substantiate it, due weight will be given to it.

Mr. TAYLOR: I would like to put this aspect of the case before the hon. gentleman: A case is brought to the court for an award. From Brisbane to Gympie—probably from Brisbane to Maryborough—they have had an exceptionally good season. The whole country is looking splendid, and there are quite a number of butter factories up there. Go the other way, and you find quite the reverse to be the case. Are you going to make an award for those men on the North Coast who have had abundant rain, and a similar award for Southern Queensland, where they have had no rain, and where they are driving their stock to water?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The average conditions prevailing in the industry must at all times be taken into consideration by the court.

Mr. TAYLOR: You would require to have an award to apply from Caboolture to Gympie, and another award to apply from Brisbane to Toowoomba. The whole thing is impracticable. If it were possible to do what has been done in the sugar industry, and stabilise and control prices, it would be all right; but you cannot stabilise or fix the price of what we are going to

[9.30 p.m.] consume in Queensland, and of which we have an exportable surplus. It is not a question of getting the cost of production of what you export, but of getting the best price you can when competing in the markets of the world. I do not intend to say anything more on that point, as the matter has been very fully discussed. If the rural workers are included in this measure, I think that it will be disastrous to the primary producing interests of Queensland and to the State generally.

Certain remarks were made by the hon. member for Bowen with regard to bringing domestic servants under the Act. No one will suffer more than that hon. member if domestic servants are brought under the measure.

Mr. KIRWAN: Why?

Mr. TAYLOR: He usually gets a cup of tea and toast in bed about half-past eight every morning. (Laughter.) As soon as he finds out that that is stopped, and he hops out of bed in his Fuji silk pyjamas, slips on his toga or dressing gown, and strides out to the back of the house, with the "Courier" in one hand and the "Daily Mail" in the other, to see if his hot bath is ready, and finds he has to light the stove, he will get a shock. (Laughter.) That is what will happen to him.

Mr. GLEDSON: The hon. member for Bowen lights the fire every morning now. (Laughter.)

Mr. TAYLOR: There is a good deal in what the hon. member for South Brisbane has said with regard to the treatment meted out to domestic servants many years ago, but that day has gone.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: Only since the Labour party has got into power.

The SPEAKER: Order! I would point out that the hon. member is inviting these interjections.

Mr. Taylor.]

Mr. TAYLOR: That day has gone, and no capable girl who wants to go into domestic service now need live under bad conditions or accept low wages.

There are quite a number of features in the Bill which we can discuss in Committee, when we have a number of amendments to propose. The Minister says they must be reasonable amendments, but his idea of what is reasonable will probably be vastly different from ours. While we are anxious to see as many as possible brought under the Arbitration Act, we do not want to see our basic industry, on which we are all living at the present time, placed under any legislation which will tend to destroy it.

Mr. DASH (*Mundingburra*): I have listened very attentively to hon. members opposite, but they have not attacked the principles of the Bill. Their arguments are the same as those we have heard urged in the Arbitration Court time and again in connection with various industries. For years past the employees in an industry, when they had not the privilege of going before the Arbitration Court or a Wages Board, were paid by results, and the employers were the judges of what the wages should be. We know that for years the workers in every industry were practically on a starvation wage, and it was not until the force of their organisations was brought to bear on employers that the employees received anything like a fair deal. I have had experience of employers equal to that of any hon. member in connection with Arbitration Court proceedings, and, in many instances, when we asked the employers for a round table conference, they used to reply that no good purpose would be served. The hon. member for South Brisbane reminds me of the sugar strike in 1911. In 1911, when the Amalgamated Workers' Association of North Queensland made an application to the employers in the sugar industry for a conference, they simply ignored the application, and forced the workers in the industry to cease work and put up a fight. At that time the employees were asking for 5s. per day, or 30s. for a week of forty-eight hours. The employers refused the demand, and the men ceased work. For a few weeks it was a life-and-death struggle on the part of the workers and those who were supporting them to try and win. The 1911 strike, followed by the 1912 strike in Brisbane, was responsible for the Denham Government introducing and passing the Industrial Peace Act of 1912. If hon. members had been as generous as they say they are, when they passed the Industrial Peace Act in 1912, they would have made provision for the representatives of the men to appear on their behalf in the Arbitration Court or on Wages Boards; but that Act prevented any paid official of an organisation from representing the members of his organisation in any court or on a board. We know that the Wages Boards were of no benefit to the workers in an industry. This Bill is one which has been looked forward to by the industrial movement of the State in order to bring all workers within the ambit of the Arbitration Court. It is no argument to say that any worker in an industry should not have the right of appeal to the Arbitration Court. Hon. members opposite talk about the Wages Board system; but under the present Industrial Arbitra-

tion Act provision is made for Industrial Boards. If hon. members opposite had taken the trouble to study the principal Act, they would have found that it makes provision, in section 57, for Conciliation Committees. These committees can be formed for the purpose of discussing the wages to be paid by an industry. If hon. members opposite are so anxious with regard to rural workers, they can ask the court to grant a Conciliation Committee to go into the ways and means of the industry.

Mr. KELSO: That is the old Wages Board system again.

Mr. DASH: Hon. members opposite say that they believe in the old Wages Board system, but the provision I have mentioned is already in the Act, and they do not know what they are talking about when they say it is not. Furthermore, section 38 makes provision for Industrial Boards, to which I have already referred, and the Act also makes provision for a special inquiry into any industry.

Mr. KELSO: Why do you not extend this measure to all workers?

Mr. DASH: I believe that it should be extended to all workers without any exception whatever.

Mr. KELSO: And to all public servants?

Mr. DASH: And to all public servants as well. When the United party went to the country they tried to woo the employees on the farms for their votes, and the leader of the Opposition said in his policy speech, under the heading of "Industrial":—

"In this particular direction, we think the time has arrived when, by a re-arrangement of existing portfolios, there should be created a Ministry of Labour.

"We also stand for the principle of industrial arbitration and its maintenance.

"Also for the adoption of measures to ensure the observance of awards by both sides.

"Also the encouragement of boards of employers and employees, with a view to creating better understanding between the parties affected.

"Also the encouragement of the principle of payment by results, and the maintenance of a high standard of living."

He made no reference whatever to debarring any of the workers in Queensland from coming within the scope of the Act. That was a general statement, the object of which was to woo the votes of the rural workers, domestic servants, and everyone else, and I fail to see how members of the Opposition can now oppose the extension of the Act to all workers in rural industries. To show how the farmers are safeguarded, I want to read clause 7 of the Bill—

"Section ten of the principal Act is amended as follows:—

(a) The second paragraph of proviso (a) of subsection one is repealed, and the following proviso is inserted in lieu thereof:—

Provided that (notwithstanding the foregoing provisions in paragraph (a)

[*Mr. Taylor.*]

hereof) for employees in the callings following, namely, employees on coastal, river, and bay vessels, musterers and drivers of stock, employees on farms engaged in feeding or attending to stock or such other necessary services as the Court in its discretion may determine, and employees engaged in domestic service, the Court in its discretion may determine the maximum number of working days and hours in any week."

It is quite plain that the Bill leaves it to the court to consider the arguments put forward by the employers in every way. The arguments which have been used here are not arguments against the principle of the Bill, but upon the question of whether the industry is able to pay the wage which is necessary to maintain a man, his wife, and family in decent comfort. I heard the hon. member for Nanango, I think, say that 30s. a week was what they are paying on the farms at the present time. I would ask any hon. member opposite how he can expect a man with a wife and family to exist on 30s. a week? All these arguments to the effect that, "The court is going to do this and the court is going to do that," are put forward merely to prejudice a case when it comes before the court.

This question was dealt with by the ex-deputy leader of the United party when he was touring North Queensland in the interests of his party, and he put the case so well that both he and his colleague lost their seats. He stated that he and his party were in favour of arbitration and of extending it to all workers in any industry. That being so, I can see no reason why members of the Opposition should protest. We know and they know that the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act makes provision for all workers in any industry, and the Australian Workers' Union could, if it wished, file a claim in the Commonwealth Arbitration Court—the highest in Australia—for wages and conditions covering rural workers in every State of the Commonwealth.

At 9.45 p.m.,

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

Mr. DASH: I recollect that we had a very important case in which the metalliferous miners and smelter workers in the Cloncurry district were claiming increased wages and better conditions. When we were arguing our case, the representatives of the company put forward the same argument which we have heard from members of the Opposition—that the industry could not pay them. The court on that occasion adopted the very big principle of the right of the workers to work only forty-four hours, and we were told that the smelters would have to close. But they went on as usual, and every employee did his forty-four hours. The work was just as well done, and the mining fields have not been affected by any action of the Arbitration Court. Hon. members opposite cannot point to any award which has been responsible for throwing employees out of work. Their arguments are used, not because of any effect of the wage on them, but because the employers wish to make the employees

believe that they have to dismiss them because the award has affected the industry. We have heard a good deal about the cattle industry during the last week or so, and, as one who has had some experience of it, I know that, when I was an employee, the employers had no regard to the hours we were called upon to work. We worked from daylight till dark, as many hours as it was possible to work, on seven days a week, for the paltry sum of 25s. a week. Because the court has fixed—not a high rate of wages—not a rate on which a man could keep his family in decent comfort—

Mr. KELSO: The judge fixed that amount.

Mr. DASH: I am just trying to point out that the court has not fixed a wage which has ruined any industry. Hon. members opposite, or people who support them, have been going round the country telling the pastoral workers that the award has ruined the cattle industry. They know that that is not a fact. The awards of the court have not been responsible for reducing the number of employees on the cattle stations. They know that when a muster takes place they must have the full complement of men, irrespective of what hours or wages are stipulated in the awards, if the work is to be carried out properly, the stock branded, and the herds looked after as they should be.

Mr. KELSO: Do you not think it would apply very hard in the dairying industry?

Mr. DASH: No. Whenever a claim is filed before the court, the court is guided by equity and good conscience, and the judge always considers fully the merits and demerits of the ability of an industry to pay. If one takes the trouble to read the judgments in the mining, pastoral, sugar, and meat industries, they will find that the ability of the industry to pay has always been considered.

There is nothing wrong in bringing domestic servants under the operation of the court. We, as ex-union officials, know that time and again domestic servants have come to us and asked us to do something to protect them from the slavery to which they are subjected. Since awards have been applied to hotel employees, the hotelkeepers have been able to get their full complement of employees in that particular calling. The reason why there is a shortage of domestic servants is because they can get better wages and conditions by working in hotels and restaurants than they can get in domestic service. Is there any reason why the domestic servants should not have the protection of the court the same as their sister employees have in restaurants and hotels? If that protection is afforded, there will be just as many domestic servants employed as there are to-day.

Mr. KELSO: It will be rough on the poor woman who is sick and cannot get help.

Mr. DASH: When the Bill is in Committee I intend to have something further to say. I would ask hon. members opposite not to decry the rural industry or any industry, because the Government have seen fit to allow the employees access to the court. The reason why employers have not taken advantage of industrial boards is that they know that, if the chairman of the board

Mr. Dash.]

is not prepared to give the employees a fair deal, there is the right of appeal to the court. Many conferences have been ordered by the judges of the court for the purpose of considering the claims filed. At those conferences many decisions are arrived at, and then reference is only made to the judge for the purpose of giving a decision on the points in dispute.

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

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

LIQUOR ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Pollock, Gregory, one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, in the chair.*)

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

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Liquor Acts, 1912-1920, in certain particulars.

I desire briefly to outline the Bill. It consists of twelve clauses. There are two main principles. The first principle deals with the shortening of hours during which liquor may be sold on licensed premises. It is proposed in the Bill that the hours shall be from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., and that they shall apply to clubs, wine shops, licensed premises, and railway refreshment rooms.

Mr. GLEDSON: What about the Parliamentary refreshment bar?

The HOME SECRETARY: The Parliamentary bar is controlled by Parliament, and we are able to look after ourselves.

The next principle is the repeal of the Prohibition, Continuance, or Nationalisation poll which takes place in October every three years. There is due protection for the coming poll next October. The other provisions of the Bill are merely machinery clauses which require no explanation.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I am glad to have had that explanation of the Minister regarding the proposed reduction in hours, although we are not quite satisfied that that reduction will be sufficient. All I intend to say at this juncture is that we intend to move an amendment providing that the closing hour shall be 6 o'clock.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed.

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

The resolution was agreed to

FIRST READING.

The HOME SECRETARY: I beg to move—

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

Question put and passed.

an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

The second reading of the Bill was made

The House adjourned at 10 p.m.

[*Hon. J. Stopford.*]