

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 25 OCTOBER 1923

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

VOTE OF CREDIT.

ON ACCOUNT 1924-5.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt from His Excellency the Governor of a message recommending that provision be made, on account, for the services of the several departments of the public service for the year ending 30th June, 1925, of the following sums:—

From the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland, exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account, the sum of £1,200,000;

From the Trust and Special Funds, the sum of £760,000;

From the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account, the sum of £600,000.

The message was ordered to be referred to the Committee of Supply.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—SIXTEENTH ALLOTTED DAY.

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

TRUST AND SPECIAL FUNDS.

PUBLIC LANDS—MAIN ROADS FUND.

Question stated—"That £614,612 be granted for 'Department of Public Lands—Main Roads Fund.'"

Mr. CLAYTON (Wide Bay): I should like to point out the disadvantage under which hon. members labour in discussing a vote of this kind when they have not before them the annual report for the previous year. Yesterday we had to discuss the vote for State enterprises without the report of the Commissioner for Trade. It seems to me that the policy of the Main Roads Act is wrong and that if, in accordance with the platform of the Country party, main roads were built by the State and handed over to local authorities to maintain as feeders for our railways and other important centres, it would be more in the interests of Queensland. I have nothing but praise for the way in which the chairman of the Board has attended to all the details of his work and for the way in which the other members of the Board have discharged their duties. They are most courteous and do everything possible to assist the member for the district when he has to call upon them; but I think that the regulations of the Board are altogether too drastic and in country districts make the roads too costly and therefore too heavy a burden on the ratepayers. That is the fault I have to find with respect to the shires in my electorate, and I think other hon. members on this side have had similar experience. I propose to quote one or two instances of the heavy cost of main roads.

We often have discussions concerning contract and day labour, and it is interesting to note that the chairman of the Main Roads Board in his report for 1922 says—

"It has been found more economical

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for shires to let contracts for certain works, such as the cartage of metal spalls, the erection of bridges, etc.?"

There you have a statement by a man with practical knowledge of the extensive work carried out by the different shires, who says that it is proved that a great saving is effected by shire councils carrying out the construction of bridges under the contract system instead of under the day-labour system. I sincerely hope that the Government will take those remarks into consideration, but I am inclined to think that some hon. members opposite will be in favour of the chairman being carpeted for daring to put such a remark in his report.

I was very pleased to note that in a great many instances, when work was carried out by the Board, the men living in the localities had an opportunity of getting the work on those roads. In my own electorate, where a fairly large sum of money has been spent on a main road, I was very pleased to know that, owing to the dry conditions prevailing and the impossibility for farmers to make a reasonable living, nothing was placed in the way of preventing them from getting the work on the main road, and I can assure this Committee that those men were a credit to any Main Roads Board.

The present regulations could be modified, which would have the effect of reducing the present cost of construction. In the country districts the Board is going to an enormous expense in taking grades off hills, which is making the cost too great for the ratepayer to carry. It is very nice to travel on such a road, but the burden is too heavy for the people concerned. If the regulations were modified and were not quite so drastic, the amount of money expended could go further. Just recently the Main Roads Board took over the road between Maryborough and Tiaro, a distance of 15 miles, 9 miles of which are in the Burrum Shire. It was the intention of the shire council to borrow £1,700 for the construction of the first nine-tenths of a mile, but the Main Roads Board took over the road and constructed it. It is only fair to say that the road was not constructed under the Board's supervision, but was constructed under the supervision of the engineer of the municipality of Maryborough. That engineer stated that he had to draw up his plans according to the existing regulations, and he could not cheapen the cost in any way if he had to comply with those regulations. We witnessed there the taking up of one of the finest foundations that ever existed for a road, the carting of it away, and the carting back of another foundation, which meant incurring unnecessary expense, as was proved by the engineer from the Main Roads Board, who came up when the work was very nearly completed and stated that that had all been so much unnecessary expense. The Main Roads Board officers should have seen that that expense was not incurred, for then this nine-tenths of a mile would not have cost the ratepayers £2,400. They certainly have a good road, but they could have had just as good a road if it had been constructed in the way suggested by the Board's engineer when he visited the site at a time when the road was about completed.

The capital value of the division is £35,000. If the ratepayers have to repay the cost of the road over the next thirty years at the rate of £35 per £1,000 in addition to half the cost of maintenance, it will cost them £109

per annum. That means the imposition of a rate of 3d. in the £1 for nearly every mile of the road. It will be seen what the rate is going to be if the Board is going to build the additional 8 miles of road at the same cost. It will be an impossible burden for the ratepayers to carry. I appeal to the Board to modify the regulations. The Burrum Shire Council is prepared to let the Board construct a road within the shire, but it wants it done at a cheaper cost. The cost can be cheapened. I have practically arranged with Mr. Kemp to visit the Maryborough district next week, when I hope that something will be done which will allow the Board to proceed with the roads at a cheaper cost per mile. The Board has also taken over the Maryborough-Bundaberg road. It has engaged Mr. Price, the city engineer of Maryborough, to inspect and draw up specifications for the first section. The estimated cost of the construction of the first 9,000 feet is £4,000. Naturally the council has had to turn that proposal down because an additional 9 miles of road will have to be constructed before it is completed. There is no use constructing 1½ miles and leaving the balance. If the construction of the road is proceeded with on that specification, the cost for the 9 miles will be £21,119 17s. 3d., which will mean that the ratepayers will have to find £755 per annum. That is another very small division, and the ratepayers are not in a position to carry such a burden. The present rate struck in the division is 4½d. in the £1, which provides an annual revenue of £1,062. If this road is constructed, it will mean that only £300 will be left to carry on the general work of the division. The Board has been advised by the council to leave the proposal in abeyance for the time being. The Board has also taken over the Maryborough-Pialba road. The residents of Maryborough make use of that road more than the farmers or residents of Pialba. It is only fair, therefore, that Maryborough should bear a portion of the expenditure. It will be really a road for the motorists of Maryborough. I hope that the Minister will see that justice is done to the ratepayers of the Burrum shire by Maryborough assuming its just proportion of the burden. Two or three years ago the Burrum Shire Council constructed a bridge on that road over Saltwater Creek at a cost of £3,000. The Government in that instance called upon Maryborough to meet the Burrum Shire Council in the cost on a basis of 40 per cent. to 60 per cent. The Government would only be doing a fair thing if they saw to it that Maryborough took a share of the expenditure of the road. I recently travelled over the road from Cooroy to Tawantin, in the electorate of the hon. member for Cooroora. Some very fine work has been done by the Board on that road. When going along that road we had to leave it, because the people are waiting for the construction of a bridge in a certain place. The only obstruction to prevent people going along that road was a sapling on two forked sticks. I mentioned the matter to the hon. member for Cooroora, and he admitted how extremely dangerous it was that in any case it should have a light at night. The result was that last Saturday, when a body of railwaymen from Gympie were going out in a car from Cooroy, they followed the road and went over the embankment, and the accident very nearly resulted in a loss of life, great damage being

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done to the car. That was due to neglect on the part of the Main Roads Board in not proceeding with the work and of the shire council in not safeguarding the public. I believe that the hon. member for Cooroora will deal with the subject when he is discussing this vote.

Mr. BRUCE (*Kennedy*): The activities of the Main Roads Board are of vital importance to the people of the country districts as a means of conveying produce and passenger traffic to railway lines, and also in the matter of facilitating motor traffic between towns. Motor traffic is becoming more important throughout Australia as a means of transporting produce and passengers. The policy of railway construction that has been actively pursued by the Government has, in many cases, isolated towns by diverting the course of traffic from routes that previously existed. As in the past, these main roads are of great importance to the whole of the State. They have meant the populating of areas that were once unoccupied, and they will be the medium of restoring our depopulated centres to their normal prosperity by connecting them with the railways. An outstanding case is that of the town of Halifax, in the Kennedy electorate. Halifax is a prosperous town connected with the outside world through the port of Lucinda Point, which also feeds Ingham. The lack of communication facilities has caused most of the products of the district to pass through Townsville, with the exception, of course, of raw sugar. Ingham holds the balance of power in the Hinchinbrook Shire Council, and all the efforts of the residents to get an up-to-date road and approach between Halifax and Ingham and to Lucinda Point have been unavailing. The Government were prepared to grant loan money to the Hinchinbrook shire for this purpose, but the offer was not accepted. The road is a necessity and will be the means of increasing the prosperity of the district through which it passes. As the shire council has failed, I look forward confidently to the time when the people of Halifax and Ingham will have their wants attended to by the Main Roads Board. The difficulties facing the Board were mentioned by the hon. member for Oxley in his speech. It is a great conception and is only in its initial stages, and I am confident that its efforts will meet with success.

Our Queensland workers are as capable and as efficient as any in the other States of Australia, and, if the management is efficient, the roads may be constructed soundly and well and at a reasonable cost. I trust that the activities of the Main Roads Board will be increased so that the requirements of country residents will be met. The case that I have mentioned in regard to Halifax emphasizes the necessity for the Main Roads Boards Act, and I am particularly anxious that the Main Roads Board will extend its activities in that district so as to meet the wishes of the people of Halifax.

Question put and passed.

WARREGO RABBIT DISTRICT FUND.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I beg to move—

“That £14,500 be granted for ‘Warrego Rabbit District Fund.’”

Question put and passed.

AGRICULTURE AND STOCK—COTTON TRADING FUND.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I beg to move—

“That £400,000 be granted for ‘Department of Agriculture and Stock—Cotton Trading Fund.’”

Mr SWAYNE (*Mirani*): I notice that this vote has increased from £250,000 for 1922-3 to £400,000 for the current year, and I take it that that is an indication of an extension of the cotton industry, and I am very pleased indeed to learn that such is the case. I notice that there is a difference in this vote from what previously obtained, inasmuch as the £400,000 is only for the purpose of purchasing seed cotton, and the ginning and handling of same; and I would like to urge on the Minister, in view of the facts that are constantly coming to light in regard to ratoon cotton, that before we definitely pass this vote he should seriously consider whether more consideration should not be given to the question of ratoon cotton. As an indication of the information that is constantly coming to light on this question I might say that the day before yesterday a telegram was sent to Bond and Co., cotton millers in Sydney, New South Wales, inquiring whether they were working ratoon cotton, and a reply came to hand yesterday which shows that they have been working ratoon cotton within the last few days.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What do you mean by “working ratoon cotton”?

Mr. SWAYNE: Manufacturing it. I have also seen a letter from the Central District Council, Rockhampton, signed by Mr. Ritchie, in which he states that the farmers there are willing to furnish the money to send Mr. Dan Jones to Great Britain for the purpose of investigating this matter, in order to ascertain whether or not there is a market for ratoon cotton. No one will dispute that, when the farmers in such a season as this are willing to put their hands in their own pockets in order to finance an inquiry of that kind, the least the Government might do is to stay their hand in the matter until the question has been definitely determined. The evidence brought to light in the discussion that took place in this House on the matter is by no means conclusive, and the weight of evidence has been in favour of ratooning. The farmers in the Central District at the present time are saying they must be allowed to grow ratoon cotton or else they will have to apply for relief rations. In view of what I have said, and the facts I have brought forward to show that private people interested in the industry are willing to defray the cost of investigation in Great Britain on this subject, and that there are mills now in Australia which are working ratoon cotton, I think the Minister must see that he has been precipitate in this matter. It is my opinion that he has been led away by biased and interested evidence on the question. I would ask before it is too late that part of this sum of £400,000 should be made applicable for the purchase of ratoon cotton. I would also urge on the Minister to delay bringing the Cotton Industry Act into force for at least six months. Surely there can be no objection to that! We have been growing ratoon cotton, I suppose, for sixty years in Queensland, ever since the American civil war. We know that Queens-

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land cotton has held its own in the markets everywhere, and some of it has been ratoon cotton. Surely in view of the almost unanimous request of those who are in the industry it is only reasonable that the matter should be held over for six months! After sixty years of cotton-growing, an additional six months should not make any difference. Let the matter be settled by inquiry through other sources than the one group of buyers whom the Minister has tied himself up to in this matter.

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*): I cordially support the contention of the hon. member for Mirani, and earnestly plead with the Minister to defer the operation of the Cotton Industry Act for six months. I propose to submit further evidence to strengthen our case, but before doing so I wish to comment on a telegram which was received from Bond and Company, who are very large manufacturers in Sydney.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Will you publish that telegram?

Mr. PETERSON: I will publish it and produce it. It seems remarkable that during the progress of the debate it was stated that Bond and Company were adverse to ratoon cotton.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No; it was stated deliberately by me that Bond and Company offered 10d. a lb. for ratoon cotton and 1s. 4d. a lb. for plant cotton.

Mr. PETERSON: We have evidence that Bond and Company, who manufacture a delicate article—silk stockings—some hon. members should be authorities as to that, having come from drapery establishments. (Laughter.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not in order in discussing silk.

Mr. PETERSON: They mix ratoon cotton with silk, and by doing that they get better silk stockings. (Laughter.) The hon. gentleman pointed out that Bond and Company were using ratoon cotton. Bond and Company, who have such a great name in connection with the manufacture of ladies' articles of clothing, would not use something which was going to deteriorate their manufactures. If we can say that Bond and Company are prepared to use ratoon cotton, it is a *sine qua non* that ratoon cotton is used in other parts of the world. While the Minister has proposed to increase the vote by £150,000 this year, this fact must not be lost sight of. The Minister stated during the previous debate that the department had lost a considerable sum of money through its guarantee; but the department has not been the only loser as the result of this. Despite the fact that the guarantee has been given to the farmers, the farmers themselves have lost a considerable amount of money. I received a letter yesterday morning from one of the largest growers of cotton in Central Queensland, Mr. J. H. Bukowski, and the letter speaks for itself. It is an earnest appeal to the Minister and Parliament to defer the operation of the Cotton Industry Act. The letter is written from William street, Rockhampton, and is dated 22nd October, 1923, and *inter alia* it states—

"I am sure that, taking my crop as a basis, there is nothing in growing cotton as an annual crop. The profit per

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acre is much less than I have shown here, as I omitted to deduct the cost of planting and of pulling out the cotton after it has come up, what is called throwing out. It would take a man all his time to do 2 acres a day, in fact most men would do less, so that is a further charge say of 6s. per acre against this profit. The growing of annual cotton cannot pay, because my crop as an instance was a better crop than the average by 50 per cent. at the least, and was a crop that had a very good average rain, and it is hardly likely that the growers of Queensland will get as good rains, on the whole, as I had.

"If the Minister would show the average poundage per acre for all the acres planted, he would find there was a very big loss in the industry by the farmer, as well as the amount spent by the Government, £57,000."

That is evidence from the grower of some of the best plant cotton in Central Queensland—a man who was favoured by thunderstorms when everybody else was not so fortunate—but, despite that fact, an analysis of the result shows that the crop was [11.30 a.m.] practically lost to him because it was not ratoon cotton. Had he had the opportunity of growing ratoon cotton and taken the responsibility of finding a market in common with the rest of the growers of ratoon cotton, he would have been able to earn three times as much as he did. Surely it is time the Minister awoke to the position in which hundreds and thousands of growers are placed.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I have been awake while you have been asleep.

Mr. PETERSON: I have not been asleep on my parliamentary duties, and I can hold up my end of the stick so far as that is concerned.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You have been manufacturing certain articles when I have been dealing with the cotton question.

Mr. PETERSON: And the hon. gentleman has been manufacturing other things. If I received the same salary as the hon. gentleman, probably I would be able to do more for Queensland than the hon. gentleman. I am pleading for the vast majority of the growers of Central Queensland, and am asking other members of the Central district to be true to themselves and to those who put them in Parliament. It is astounding that these people should be prohibited from growing ratoon cotton under any circumstances whatever. What is Parliament but a place where we can submit the requirements of the people for the consideration of hon. members? Why should we be called together if we cannot present evidence from the producers' point of view, even though, when we do get the opportunity to present that evidence, members on the other side are afraid to get up and express what they honestly believe? They sit dumb and are prepared to sacrifice the farmers. (Government dissent.) All I can say is that time will tell its own tale, and if the movement to send Mr. Daniel Jones to Lancashire is successful the Minister will be in a very sorry position indeed when the report comes back. It is not too late now. There is no need for heat, insults, or mud-throwing. All we ask is that the Minister will give an opportunity

to the growers of ratoon cotton to prove their case, instead of absolutely prohibiting the cultivation of ratoon cotton. I suppose this is the last opportunity we shall have this session of appealing to the Minister, and, on behalf of the vast majority of growers of Central Queensland, I endorse the application which has been made by the hon. member for Mirani for a reconsideration of the decision of the Government.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): On the Cotton Industry Bill I referred to the fact that Captain Svensen had grown a good deal of cotton in the Solomon Islands at one time and received very satisfactory prices for ratoon crops. Of course, some years have passed since they were engaged in cotton-growing there, as I explained at that time. The crop was put in when the land was being planted with cocoanut trees and the crop was taken off from time to time. By the goodness of Captain Svensen, some of the returns have been obtained, and it may interest the Committee if I give an indication of the result of some of the shipments. In 1910 the British Cotton Growing Association sold on account of the Solomon Islands nine bales of ratoon cotton at 14d. per lb. I understand that it was a very good crop and that the price realised was a good one. In 1911 two bales were sold at 11½d. per lb., seven bales at 11d., four bales at 11¼d., one bale at 11¾., one bale at 11d., and ten bales at 12d. per lb. I am sure that hon. members will understand that nobody is desirous of interfering with the development of the cotton-growing industry, and the Government may be perfectly right in their decision—or they may be quite wrong. The evidence in favour of ratoon seems so strong that it would appear right to allow those who are ready to cultivate ratoon cotton to do so, provided they take the full responsibility for their actions. As in the case of other commodities, the produce is graded, and if it is not up to the mark we may rest assured that the remedy will soon be forthcoming, because the growers will receive very much less for their article. In this connection I am not sure whether hon. members have noticed a cablegram which appeared in the "Telegraph" of the 23rd of this month—

"Cairo, 22nd October.

"The law restricting cotton cultivation to one-third of the cultivated area is expected to end with the present cotton season, and will not be renewed. The intention of the law was to reduce the output and enforce fallowing, in order to maintain quality, but cultivators in recent years have not heeded the restrictions."

It is quite evident that the authorities in Cairo are changing their viewpoint, and it would be well for the department to ascertain the experience in Egypt and see whether it does not clearly indicate the undesirability of a general prohibition of ratooning. I quote these facts and figures in order that we may arrive at a fair and just decision in dealing with an industry which I suppose we all hope will develop beyond any dreams we may cherish of its success.

We are going on right lines in pinning our faith to the article that we can export and for which there is a market. I hope that the Minister will give full attention and a degree of sympathy to the men who are urging their case in the various parts of the State to be allowed to grow ratoon cotton.

It would be a distinct unkindness to them if they were interfered with, if we could at the present time make regulations safeguarding the industry so that no harm could come to the State.

Mr. KELSO (*Nundah*): I have much pleasure in supporting the request of the hon. member for Mirani. It has been suggested by the Minister, by way of interjection, that if we refuse to ratify the agreement made with the British-Australian Cotton Association, Limited, we would be encouraging repudiation.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I did not say that.

Mr. SWAYNE: The Minister admitted that the question of ratoons was not mentioned in the agreement.

Mr. KELSO: The Minister said that we would be repudiating the agreement. I do not think there has been the slightest suggestion about repudiation.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Do not get the agreement mixed up with ratoon cotton. Ratoon cotton is not mentioned in the agreement.

Mr. KELSO: Can the Minister go on with the agreement independent of the ratoon cotton question?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The ratoon cotton has no relation to the agreement. The agreement provides for the ginning of the cotton by the Association.

Mr. KELSO: I just wanted to clear up the question of repudiation. I consider that, if there is any delay in the matter, it is not a question of repudiation at all.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I do not wish to restrict the debate on this vote, but I would point out to hon. members that Parliament has already passed through all its stages a measure which prohibits the growing of ratoon cotton in Queensland. Hon. members will therefore realise the futility of proceeding with a discussion as to the advisableness of ratoon cotton being grown when an Act of Parliament already prohibits it.

Mr. PETERSON: We are asking that the Act be postponed.

Mr. KELSO: Seeing that the Bill has not been read a third time I ask the Minister to reconsider the question.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (*Hon. W. N. Gillies, Bacham*): The Bill has been read a third time. This is a very important matter indeed for Queensland, Australia, and the Empire. The hon. member for Mirani and the hon. member for Normanby stated in effect that a telegram had been sent to Bond and Company, who are the only spinners in Australia, and they replied that they were working ratoon cotton. I should like to know what is meant by the expression "working ratoon cotton." I hope that the full text of that telegram will be made available to this Chamber and the public. I stated during my second reading speech on the Cotton Industry Bill that, whereas it had been stated—I believe by Mr. Daniel Jones, a gentleman who is going to be sent home by certain people—that Bond and Company were prepared to take ratoon cotton at the full guaranteed price—which would be equal roughly to 1s. 6d. per lb. in Liverpool, or 1s. 4d. per lb. in Sydney—the facts are that the Department of Agriculture advertised the sale of ratoon cotton and Bond and Company offered 10d. per lb.

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for ratoon cotton and 1s. 4d. per lb. for plant cotton, which is a difference of 6d. per lb. I have never stated that Bond and Company would not manufacture ratoon cotton, but I have found that certain people are conveying the impression that Bond and Company are prepared to take ratoon cotton and pay the full guaranteed price for it.

Mr. PETERSON: The growers are prepared to take a lower price.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What price are the growers of Queensland prepared to take for ratoon cotton in the seed? I ask the hon. member for Mirani and the hon. member for Normanby to furnish that information. When the acid test was put on Bond and Company it was found that they would offer only 10d. per lb., and then tenders were called for ratoon cotton and McDonnell and East offered 1s. per lb., which price determined the value of ratoon cotton in Queensland and Australia, and Bond and Company subsequently agreed to take a limited quantity of ratoon cotton at 1s. per lb., which to the grower would be worth something less than 3d. per lb. in the seed. Messrs. Bond and Company have now agreed to purchase 100 bales of ratoon cotton ex store at 1s. per lb., to be delivered in 25-bale lots per month, delivered in October, November, December, and January. That offer has been accepted. That offer was the result of calling tenders and receiving 1s. per lb. as the highest tender, and saying to Bond and Company, "If you are prepared to give the same price as the highest tenderer, you can have the ratoon cotton." That is the position with regard to ratoon cotton so far as Bond and Company are concerned. The following figures show the amount paid by the Queensland Government in respect of cotton harvested to 24th October, 1923—

	£	s.	d.
10,986,320 lb. at 5½d. ...	251,752	14	3
184,941 lb. at 5d. ...	3,852	18	9
62,554 lb. at 4d. ...	1,039	4	8
707 lb. at 3½d. ...	11	0	11
1,951 lb. at 3½d. ...	23	11	11
376,838 lb. at 3d. (ratoon) ...	4,710	9	6
117 lb. at 3d. ...	1	9	3
116 lb. at 2½d. ...	1	4	2
470 lb. at 2d. ...	3	18	4
11,613,824 lb.	£261,401	12	2

Out of the total amount of £261,401 12s. 2d. paid for the cotton crop, the sum of £4,710 9s. 6d. was paid for ratoon cotton, which is evidence of the small percentage of ratoon cotton harvested. As already promised, experiments are going to be made. It is better that we should wait for two or three years, and make experiments and inquiries with regard to the manufacture of ratoon cotton to see if the spinners are prepared to buy it, rather than make a mistake now and ruin the whole prospects of a great industry by allowing ratoon cotton to be grown. We are wise in taking that step on the evidence furnished to the Government by the people who are going to buy the product. After all, they are the people to whom we must listen, because they are the people who are prepared to buy the product. They are prepared to pay a price that will enable the farmer to live as white men should live and pay reasonable wages to their employees, which I submit cannot be done on the price they are prepared to pay for ratoon cotton. In addition, there is the danger of damaging the whole reputation of plant cotton. The amount of advances paid in

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connection with plant cotton as disclosed by my figures is a very big item. The Government are wise in the action they have taken, and they are going on with their policy and at the same time carrying out certain investigations.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): It will be very poor consolation to those at the present time who have to put in seed cotton, which perhaps will not germinate, and root out their ratoons, to find in two or three years that they are right but in the meantime they have lost their crop. It would be far better to allow the embargo to stand over for another six months, especially in view of the exceptionally bad season that we are experiencing, and allow the settlers to have the benefit of the ratoon crop. We have been growing ratoon cotton for something like sixty years, and surely another six months will not make any difference.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Tell the Committee what the Commonwealth Government have to say about it. They are about to share the guarantee with us.

Mr. SWAYNE: I am not concerned about that. Growers say they will take the risk.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We are concerned about it.

Mr. SWAYNE: I maintain that there is ample evidence forthcoming to justify the postponement of the embargo. I have seen this telegram which has been mentioned, and it stated that ratoon cotton was being spun into 16's. It also stated that A grade cotton was being spun into 30's, and it also mentioned that ratoon cotton was rather short in staple. During the discussion that took place on the Cotton Industry Bill it was pointed out that there are ratoon cottons quite as long in staple as seed cotton. I take it that seed cotton can also be produced too short in staple to be classed as A grade. As the hon. member for Normanby interjected, the growers of ratoon cotton have intimated their willingness to take a lower price. We produced evidence during the debate on the second reading of the Bill showing that there are ratoon crops just as long in staple as seed cotton. The telegram that I saw from Bond and Company certainly did say that ratoon cotton was being spun into 16's while another grade was being spun into 30's.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What are 16's?

Mr. SWAYNE: The hon. gentleman knows so much about it that he should know. That is the information from the people spinning it. They are similar terms to those used in the wool-spinning industry, but I do not know much about it. As I understand it, it means a certain number of fibres in a certain circumference. Many growers are quite prepared to take a lower price for ratoon cotton, because of the advantages attending its cultivation.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope that the hon. member will not pursue that subject any further.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I want to add my protest to the embargo on ratoon cotton. I am pleased to know that the Minister is doing something in the nature of carrying out the experiments which were advocated by the growers. I am only sorry that those experiments were not made before ratoon cotton was banned, in order to show that ratooning is not detrimental in the interests of the State.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have already pointed out to the hon. member for Nundah, and I make the suggestion again to the hon. member for Burnett, that, while I have no desire to restrict the debate, this House has already passed a Bill in which the question of growing ratoon cotton was dealt with. The hon. member must realise that it is futile to pursue the subject any further outside of suggesting that the inquiry should be extended.

Mr. CORSER: I do not think there is anything in the Standing Orders that prevents me from complimenting the Minister. (Laughter.) The telegram from Bond and Co. offering to take ratoon cotton breaks down the argument that ratoon cotton was impossible because it did not enable the mills to work as they should.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What quantity will they take up to?

Mr. CORSER: They will certainly take it at 1s. per lb., and they may pay more. The growers expect to be paid a lower price for ratoon, but against that fact is the larger production and more certainty of a crop than if they grow plant cotton. It does not seem to have been established and we have had no proof that it is not a legal tender. I congratulate the Minister on the things that he has not said and the things he does not do, in order to please you, Mr. Kirwan. (Laughter.)

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*): The Minister was good enough to state that the price to be received for ratoon cotton under the scheme he spoke of this morning will be considerably less than that received for plant cotton. That is not a fair comparison, for the simple reason that it has been proved beyond doubt that it has been a failure as regards the poundage return per acre. A man growing ratoon cotton will get four times as much per acre as the man who grows plant cotton. What does it matter if he can only get 600 lb. of plant cotton per acre if he gets far more from his ratoon crop?

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): There is just this matter in regard to the ban that has been placed on the production of ratoon cotton: We might as well condemn all our beef because the British people have put a ban on beef with nodules.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We are not condemning all cotton.

Mr. CORSER: The Government might just as logically say that we should only export veal.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): When the Minister was speaking he asked what the Commonwealth Government thought of this question and of the guarantee. The growers of ratoon cotton are not asking for a guarantee, and are agreeable to its elimination.

Mr. PETERSON: They are not asking for a fixed price.

Mr. MOORE: No; they are only asking that someone shall be sent home to test the market. It seems extraordinary that the Government should impose this embargo before the subject has been definitely tested. The department admit that it has not been definitely proved, because they propose to conduct experiments for the next two or three years to see whether it is a profitable marketable commodity. The growers are prepared to take the risk, so that it cannot

affect the State or the Commonwealth Government one way or the other. The individuals who are growing ratoon cotton are prepared to put their hands into their own pockets to test the market. I ask the Minister to be reasonable and allow these people to carry on their business in a way which will be most profitable to themselves.

Question put and passed.

THE DISEASES IN STOCK AND THE BRANDS ACTS.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I beg to move—

“That £49,794 be granted for ‘The Diseases in Stock and the Brands Acts.’”

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): In the vote for “Contingencies” under this heading, the item “Printing Brands Directories, Gazettes, etc.” has increased from £850 last year to £2,000 this year. It is a fairly substantial increase, and I should like to know its cause.

Mr. CLAYTON (*Wide Bay*): I should like to bring before the Committee the question of the stock inspectors that I referred to in my speech on the Address in Reply. These officers are doing good work, but the Government want to make it possible for them to move about in the country more than they do. The stock inspector at Maryborough has a very large district to cover in addition to his duty in issuing permits for travelling stock. Provision is also made that, in his absence, the meat inspector for Maryborough, who occupies the same office, may issue permits. Unfortunately, and to the inconvenience of the many persons who have to remove

stock, both these officers are [12 noon] occasionally absent at the one time attending to their various duties elsewhere. If it is possible, I should like the Minister to devise a plan whereby people desirous of getting permits may get them in some other way. For instance, if a junior were appointed in the inspectors' office it would allow both of them to go away, as is necessary in the efficient conduct of their duties. Better work would be done, and it would be a great convenience to stockowners.

I think that the police in the suburban districts around Maryborough should be permitted to issue permits for stock to travel or to be dipped. That would save many men going into town and having to wait until the inspectors' office is open. An instance happened only the other day where a man desired to entrain a horse from Maryborough to Kingaroy. He booked his truck and paid for it, and then went round to get the permit, because the Railway Department would not take the animal without a permit. He found both officials absent and was unable to go on with his business. If the office had been kept open by having a junior there, it would have prevented much inconvenience and loss of time to the settler. The same thing applies to the sales conducted at Croydon Junction yard. On some occasions the stock inspector is there, but on other occasions his duties take him elsewhere. If the police were permitted to issue permits for persons to take the stock they purchase to their homes or for those who are unfortunate enough not to be able to sell to remove their stock, it would be a great convenience. Again, owing to the fact that stock have to travel through the municipality of Maryborough, it is necessary to

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get a permit for this purpose from the police. If one permit could be issued to suit all purposes it would be a great benefit to the people, and I hope the Minister will devise some means whereby this convenience may be given to stockowners.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): This vote deals with the Government Bacteriologist and the Experimental Station at Yeerongpilly. I have always hoped that this sub-branch would be made more practical, and that the knowledge held by the officials of that institution should be available to the people of our country districts. We know the tremendous danger attaching to the feeding of human beings, particularly children, with milk from a cow affected in the udder. While we have occasionally had lectures illustrating the troubles that are likely to be brought about through carelessness in this matter, it is scarcely known to our farmers. I would suggest to the Minister, as a humanitarian suggestion, that a pamphlet be drawn up by the Bacteriological Department at Yeerongpilly, to be issued to the country people, to make them appreciate the dangers arising from the use of infected milk or from storing milk in places where it might become contaminated from unwholesome odours. This subject is even more important than that of ratoon cotton, because it affects the welfare of our people and children. We also know that it has not received public attention in the past. It is most essential that this should be remedied. Milk is probably the most wholesome of our foods, but, if neglected by the people using it, it becomes extremely dangerous. I make the suggestion that the Minister should issue a bulletin pointing out the dangers that are likely to fall on our youngsters in town and country districts and which may be guarded against through care, provided that users of milk have a little of the knowledge that is at present available at Yeerongpilly.

In the matter of diseases in stock, we know—and I think it can be attributed to the want of knowledge of the tick problem in New South Wales—that our stock are at present meeting with opposition at the border. This is only brought about by New South Wales interests which are against the introduction of Queensland cattle, and which are backed up, unfortunately, by want of knowledge on the part of the authorities in New South Wales as to what is a sufficient precaution to prevent the introduction of ticks across the border and as to what might be the result if they appeared across the border. In Queensland we have clean areas, the same as they have in New South Wales, and we have not the stringent preventive methods demanded by New South Wales authorities. Those areas have not and probably never will have ticks, because they have been proved to be non-tick areas. Whilst I understand that ticks might occasionally get across the border, that fact is not likely to cause a tick area in New South Wales. I think that we are losing a tremendous amount of income owing to the want of knowledge on the part of the New South Wales authorities in regard to ticks. If two dippings, as has been suggested by practical people in the State and has been backed up by departmental experts, are not sufficient to prevent the spread of the tick in new districts, then I know of no precautions that are likely to be effective. It is impossible for us to have our cattle placed in quaran-

time for six weeks and more and to be subjected to dipping, and have them sent to New South Wales as fat cattle. We realise that the tick question can only be dealt with in a practical manner and not in the theoretical manner that is hampering our growers at present.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): With regard to the question of the leader of the Opposition, who called special attention to the item "Printing Brands Directories, Gazettes, etc.," this year as compared with last year, the reason for this is that in 1915 the then Secretary for Agriculture amended the Act, which prior to that provided that the brand register should be printed every year, costing roughly about £1,200. Now it is only printed every two years, and, in my opinion, the Act should be amended again to make the period greater, because I think that supplementary printing would be sufficient. The extra money is wanted now to print the brands directory.

With regard to the suggestions made by hon. members of the Opposition, these will receive consideration, and, if they are found to be practicable, they will be put into effect.

Question put and passed.

THE REGULATION OF SUGAR CANE PRICES ACT.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I beg to move—

"That £15,715 be granted for 'The Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act.'"

Question put and passed.

SUGAR EXPERIMENT STATIONS ACT.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I beg to move—

"That £13,575 be granted for 'Sugar Experiment Stations Act.'"

Question put and passed.

STATE ADVANCES CORPORATION—ADVANCES TO SETTLERS BRANCH.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I beg to move—

"That £408,581 be granted for 'State Advances Corporation—Advances to Settlers Branch.'"

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I notice that this vote has been reduced by nearly £70,000, and, being one who has always held that the State Advances Corporation has not in any way been as lenient to its borrowers as it might have been, I certainly do not agree that there should be a reduction in the vote. I understand that a Bill has to be introduced to remodel the Agricultural Bank, the State Advances Corporation, and other advancing institutions, and I hope that that Bill will make provision to obviate the complaints that we have had to make in the past in regard to these advances. I could not allow the vote to go through without saying that in the past the State Advances Corporation has not carried out the spirit of the Act, and unfortunately has hampered quite a number of settlers who have been refused advances, or who have been offered an advance that was not in keeping with their requirements and they have therefore had to refuse it.

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Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): The practice at present followed by the State Advances Corporation when applications are made for a transfer should be altered. I understand that it is the practice to require a certain amount of the loan to be repaid before consent is given to a transfer. There is no fixed rule as to what percentage of the loan should be repaid, and, if it was fixed definitely that consent will only be granted on the repayment of 10 per cent., 15 per cent., or 25 per cent. of the loan money, then the people would be in a better position to make arrangements for the sale of their properties than they are to-day. A fixed percentage of the debt should be required to be repaid or nothing at all. This matter is causing a good deal of delay and trouble in the country districts, and I hope a different practice will be followed in the future.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Queenton*): In recent times I have had a good deal more to do with this department than I had in the past, and, generally speaking, the State Advances Corporation is both fair and reasonable to the people whose cases I have brought under the notice of the officials. One difficulty that is experienced—I do not know whether it applies all over the State or not—is to get an inspection and get a report when an application is made.

Mr. COOPER: It has greatly improved in that regard.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: The position may have improved but there is room for further improvement in the northern part of the State. The inspector for the northern division lives in Cairns, and he has to travel from Cairns right down to Townsville and out west of Charters Towers, and everybody knows that it is beyond the capacity of one man effectively to inspect and report within a reasonable time on the applications received. In the majority of instances, if a man desires to borrow, he likes to know as soon as possible whether he can get the money, or whether he cannot get it; and if there is one thing that is discouraging, it is to be kept waiting three weeks or a month, and sometimes six weeks, after making an application before getting a reply, and then perhaps get an adverse reply. Some improvement might be made in that regard. Perhaps it is not feasible to have more inspectors, but in exceptional cases the Crown land ranger has been asked to report, and on other occasions other people have been asked to make a report, and they have complained that they are asked to do work that they should not be called upon to do, and they are not very considerate. Something should be done to expedite matters, in order to get an inspection fairly quickly, and get the report down to head office so that the matter can be definitely decided upon, so that a man will know where he is, and will know if he cannot get the advance from the State Advances Corporation, that he will either have to abandon the project or try some other financial institution. Very often when applications are sent in the officers here cannot locate the inspector by wire, and the inspector gets back to Cairns before he receives instructions to inspect, and he has then to let the matter stand over or retrace his steps—which is unfortunate for him, unfortunate for the applicant, and unfortunate for the office down here. If anything can be done to remedy that kind of thing, it will be highly appreciated both by

members who have to look after their clients and by the applicants themselves.

Question put and passed.

DEPARTMENT OF MINES—CHILLAGOE STATE SMELTERS.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I beg to move—

“That £275,000 be granted for ‘Department of Mines—Chillagoe State Smelters.’”

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): This vote puts me in mind of Oliver Twist, who was always calling for more. Although this enterprise is a forlorn hope, the Minister is still asking for more.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You want to send Dan Jones home to England.

Mr. TAYLOR: If Dan Jones had been in charge of the Mines Department he could not have lost more money than the Minister has. I am hoping the day is not very far distant when we shall see these votes for mining eliminated from our Estimates.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You do not want any mining at all.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Minister is going the right way, in his administration of the Department of Mines, to have no mines in the future. Although I quite believe that the hon. gentleman has the very best intentions in regard to mining, I still think he has committed the most grievous blunders in connection with the department during the last few years.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): I notice that the amount appropriated last year for the Chillagoe State smelters was £250,000, and I should be glad to know if the Minister can tell us what was the actual amount expended last year. In connection with such big amounts it is of interest to hon. members to know exactly what has been spent. My experience as a Minister was that sometimes an appropriation was exceeded, and sometimes the whole of the amount voted was not spent. When an increased amount was put down for the following year it was sometimes an indication that the amount voted for the previous year was not sufficient.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones, *Paddington*): The figures are given on page 87 of the Auditor-General's report under the heading of “Trading Account.” The sum placed on the Estimates last year was £250,000, and the vote was exceeded.

HON. W. H. BARNES: By how much?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: An expenditure of £319,838 5s. 3d. is shown by the Auditor-General's report. The amount placed on the Estimates this year is £275,000, and we shall probably keep within the estimate—we may be a few thousand pounds over or under—it cannot matter very much.

HON. W. H. BARNES: From a financial point of view it matters a great deal, otherwise the Estimates are misleading.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We try to keep within the vote as much as possible. Last year, despite the reference of the leader of the Opposition to this matter as a forlorn hope, I kept within the vote. With regard to the Chillagoe works, the Auditor-General's

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report shows that last year the loss was £58,793 15s. 1d. That included interest on the capital expended, namely, £32,440 11s. 9d. That loss would have been increased if we had taken the advice of hon. members opposite and closed the works down during the mining depression; the actual loss would then have been about £36,000.

Mr. TAYLOR: Who advised you to close down?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Our friends.

Mr. TAYLOR: Who are the friends who did so?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Our friends opposite. Chillagoe was described as "Theodore's circus" and "Jones's folly," but we kept the mines open.

Mr. MOORE: Did the position improve?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Of course the position has improved. Hon. members should appreciate the fact that it has improved, not because metal prices have improved, but because we have improved the conditions in the mines. We spent a good deal of the money placed on the Estimates last year in developing the Lady Jane, Girofla, Consols, and other mines. I have no desire to stonewall, but I am not going to sit here quietly and be described as the Minister of forlorn hopes without offering some word of protest. (Laughter.) I hope hon. members opposite will take a more optimistic view of the mineral wealth of our great State. There is no other country in the world in which the mineral resources are so great as they are in North Queensland, particularly in the Cloncurry and Chillagoe districts, and in the Bowen district with regard to coal.

Mr. COLLINS: Hear, hear. (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. CORSER: We should like to hear something about Yampi Sound.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I did not have an opportunity when the Estimates in Chief were under discussion of informing hon. members that we have had an offer for the purchase of the Yampi Sound lease. Yampi Sound will one day be one of the iron producers of the world. I was advised to sell it because of its wealth.

The Auditor-General points out in his report how the department has suffered from fluctuations in metal prices. On 30th June, 1920, copper wire bars were £95 per ton; on 30th June, 1921, £76 per ton; on 30th June, 1922, £71 per ton; and on 30th June, 1923, £75 16s. 2d. per ton. The quotation in this morning's paper is something like £66. This is for electrolytically refined copper; so the metal prices have not improved. Lead in 1920 was £33 per ton; in 1921, £23 2s. 6d. per ton; in 1922, £24 14s. per ton; and in 1923, £24 15s. 7d. per ton.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: What justification have you for believing prices will improve?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I hope they will. We have no control over metal prices in Australia, unfortunately. Mr. Goddard is a splendid manager, and one of the best in Australia, and he is endeavouring, without interfering with the wages and the conditions of the workers, to make the metal prices and the cost of production meet by having up-to-date plant and keeping the mines in good condition, and I believe he

will succeed in doing so. Only this morning he told me that, if lead remains at the present price of £26 per ton, we shall be all right. He has brought Chillagoe up to such a condition that we have ore supplies for two or three years. We have learnt that it is no use having a State mine, or any other State concern in connection with mining, unless the State has reserves of its own—as you cannot expect producers of ore to send it to the smelters when ore is low in price. We take as much as we can get, but we have our own reserves to fall back upon. I am satisfied from the work Mr. Goddard is doing that Chillagoe will not always be showing a loss. The loss is infinitesimal when compared with the great benefit which has accrued. The actual loss is £26,000, the interest on capital expenditure being £32,000, and if we close down we must shoulder that loss.

Mr. TAYLOR: Could you not sell the land for use in other ways?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You cannot sell the land at Chillagoe; there is no timber there. I do not suppose the country would carry a beast to 20 acres. Comparing Chillagoe to-day with what it was five years ago after it was closed down by private enterprise, we have kept going approximately the average number of employees—between 700 and 800—and there are other people dependent on those employees. After all, there is an obligation on the Government to feed people who cannot get work, and it is better to provide work even at a little loss than

[12.30 p.m.] to create a whole army of unemployed. Moreover, the railway revenue has increased to such an extent that the advantage to the Railway Department is greater than the loss in the Mines Department. In fact, if we considered all these things together, we would not show a loss at all in view of the compensating advantage being more than the £24,000 I have mentioned.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: What is the value of those reserves?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We have about 250,000 tons in one level of the Girofla mine.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: What is the value of the ore at grass?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: When I speak of ore reserves I mean ore that has been developed in the mine by the necessary underground connections to enable it to be raised conveniently and put into the smelters. We need not close down the Chillagoe smelters for the next two years even if we depend only on our own ore reserves. Hon. members opposite should endeavour to appreciate the fact that we have suffered from the depression in metal prices. Only a day or two after the Estimates-in-Chief of the Mines Department were discussed I read a report in the "Courier" to the effect that the Wallaroo and Moonta copper mines in South Australia had lost £137,000. Although I appreciate the gentlemanly way in which the leader of the Opposition handled the subject, I cannot see that his arguments were correct. Although he said that we were not doing wrong to subsidise the Mount Morgan Company to keep the mine there going—or words to that effect—he criticised our action in regard to Chillagoe. If it is

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right to subsidise Mount Morgan, one of the richest mines in the world, it is right to keep Chillagoe going even at a little bit of a loss. I hope that hon. members opposite will take a more optimistic view of their own State and not be so pessimistic regarding its great wealth. The policy of this Government is to "Produce, produce, produce."

Mr. COSTELLO: "Produce for use and not for profit!" (Opposition laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Useful metals are required for our industrial enterprises, and on the present metal prices we are producing between £800 and £1,000 worth of copper per day, and I hope that the time is not far distant when we shall be producing those metals for manufacture in our own country and not merely for sale overseas.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): We are all obliged to the Minister for furnishing us with the information he has given, but I am sure the leader of the Opposition was correct when he said the hon. gentleman was optimistic. I think some of the glasses in the Chamber must be out of order this morning. It reminds me of the man in charge of my egg department, who finds it necessary to wear glasses. His trouble began when he looked at the eggs, because then all the small eggs became big eggs. (Laughter.) I am very much afraid that the glasses which the hon. gentleman wears are the kind of glasses which my man has. (Renewed laughter.) I quite agree with the hon. gentleman that we should do all we can to develop the mineral resources of the State, but let us look at Chillagoe for a moment. The Minister referred to the loss last year, but might I remind him that on the very page of the Auditor-General's report to which he referred the total loss is given as £178,000?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That is for three years.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Exactly. The point I want to make—and we in Queensland have to face it—is this: Can we everlastingly go on with various undertakings which are showing losses? I take it that in this Committee there are at least some business men who would say that if it were a business matter it could not go on. Where is the State going to drift if we continue along the lines we are following in State enterprises? How much money has been lost at Chillagoe, not only by the Government but also by the company which previously owned it? Evidently, except in 1919-20, when there was a profit of a little over £1,000, there have been losses right along the line. The Minister was complaining because the leader of the Opposition referred to Mount Morgan, but the hon. gentleman was very unfair when he compared Mount Morgan with Chillagoe. The Mount Morgan Company has paid its way year in and year out till quite recently.

Mr. COLLINS: It has paid £3,000,000 to its shareholders.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The pity is that we have not a number of companies which have paid £3,000,000 to their shareholders. It would be a very good thing for the State. It was unfair for the hon. gentleman to compare the two places, because one has been a failure and the other has not. We can only hope that the anticipations of the Minis-

ter will be realised—because we all admit that the success of an industry concerns the whole State—but, although I have had very little to do with mining, and the little I have had to do with it has made me want to have less, I know that miners are about the most optimistic people in the world, and the hon. gentleman has a very difficult task before him.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*): Hon. members opposite have had a good deal to say at different times as to what private enterprise can do as against State enterprise. Private enterprise is responsible for a good deal of the loss that has occurred at the Chillagoe State smelters. For the last ten or eleven years the Chillagoe Mines, Limited, has been engaged in trying to produce fuel for the Chillagoe smelters at Mount Mulligan, and got the Government to put in a railway to help it. It has made a complete mess of the whole concern and has had to admit failure, and the loss on one small mine at Mount Mulligan goes a good way towards equalling the loss which the Government have made on the Chillagoe undertaking.

Not only have they made a complete failure of that, but they have made such a mess of the position through their mismanagement and bungling of the business that it will be sometime next year before the Government will be able to get their coke fuel to run these State smelters. At present they are not able to get an ounce of coke, owing to the mismanagement of private enterprise. In addition to that, they have spent thousands of pounds in putting down expensive machinery and altering the whole of the workings down below, and now the management has to pull the whole lot out and work the thing on a different basis altogether—all through the failure and mismanagement of private enterprise. Private enterprise has practically retarded the development of the Chillagoe State smelters and has been practically responsible for the loss on those smelters; because you have to take into account what it costs to obtain the fuel to-day as compared with what was paid to bring it from other parts of the State and from other States. Private enterprise hung on to this one bright spot, and often stated what it was going to do, and now within the last few months it has had to be handed over to the Government, and the Government have to take steps to remedy this mismanagement and failure in order to carry on the work. The Auditor-General, in his report in connection with the State smelters at Chillagoe, says that a large amount has been spent in developmental work and obtaining means whereby the ore will be obtained and placed on the market. That cost is spread over the whole period that the State smelters have been there. Most of the work was developmental work. We know that it is not wise to obtain any metals unless there is a payable market for them, and the idea all along the line in establishing the smelters at Chillagoe was to keep the population in the North. I had the opportunity of visiting Chillagoe after private enterprise had failed and the place was closed down, and I found that all the persons employed on the whole of the works numbered nine. I was told that previously there were something like 1,000 men employed on the field. There was a large township, with eight or nine hotels, and the whole place went to rack and ruin through the failure

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of private enterprise to keep it going. Quite apart from the cost the Government have started those works and kept the people employed in the North. The Minister has very aptly pointed out that we have actually no loss because we have been able to keep the men in employment instead of having an army of men receiving relief from the Government. The railways are running, and the men on the railways are employed. The storekeepers are still going, and in all there must be 2,500 men employed indirectly through the State smelters. Not only are the men in the Chillagoe district employed, but it means employment for all the country between Chillagoe and Cairns. Then we have to take into consideration the families of those men. These things have to be looked into in a broad way. The Government are doing the right thing in keeping Chillagoe going even if there is a small loss, as it is going to be the means of developing the mineral resources of the North and enabling us to take advantage of the markets when they are available, thus recovering from the present loss. The action of the Government will keep an army of men and women in the North for the development and protection of that part of our State.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I was rather interested with the speech of the Minister, in which he drew such an attractive picture that it was like reading the "Arabian Nights." He spoke about the amount of wealth that was underneath the ground, and the only trouble seems to be the cost of getting it up, and he put forward the proposition that it did not matter whether the cost was more than the metal was worth, so long as we kept men employed.

Mr. FOLEY: The cost has been in developmental work.

Mr. MOORE: When you get past the developmental stage, it does not matter how much metal is recovered, it is useless to go on with it unless it can be obtained profitably. The Minister never attempted to prove that it could be obtained profitably. His argument seemed to be that the cost did not matter, so long as there was a large number of men in the North and the railways were kept going.

Mr. FOLEY: He did not say that.

Mr. MOORE: He is one of the most optimistic Ministers we have ever had.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: There are benefits to compensate for the loss.

Mr. MOORE: Are we going to carry on State enterprises on a system of compensating benefits for the loss to the State so as to keep a number of men employed? It reminds me of an illustration placed before me two or three years ago, when one of the men working on the railways admitted that the railways at that time were considerably overstaffed, but he considered it was far better to keep men employed on the railways than have them obtaining relief. If we are going to run our State enterprises on the basis of merely keeping a certain number of men employed in a certain district, rather than put them out of work, we are going to land this State in serious financial difficulties. There is no possibility of getting this enormous wealth to the top unless by some such method as Aladdin's lamp. The Minister drew pictures of beautiful caves full of gold and silver underneath the ground, and said that it did not really matter what it cost to

get the metals to the top, so long as it kept men employed in a certain district. It is time that that sort of thing was stopped, and some benefit accrued to the State. It would be better to do that rather than keep men employed in an industry where the cost of production exceeds the value of the article produced. The Minister did not give any information to show that the price of metals was likely to increase to such an extent in the future that it would be profitable to go on with this work at the present time. If he did that, there would be something in it. The Minister hoped that at some future date metal prices would go up.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Do you advocate that a farmer should leave his land because he has one year of depression? He has to stick to it.

Mr. MOORE: I do not advocate that. If a farmer has a year of depression, he has to live on less and has to be content with a lesser return, but he is not allowed to pile up a load of debt during that period. If he were able to get the same rate of wages in a bad season as in a good season, and trusted to luck whether he would get his money back again, farms would be in the same position as many of the State enterprises. We are asked to subscribe to the proposition of keeping an industry going, irrespective of whether it is payable or not, merely to keep a number of men employed in a certain district. If we are going to continue that, then unfortunately we shall get the State into such difficulties that we shall not be able to carry on.

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*): I take it that we are discussing the source from which the smelters obtain their ore. Very shortly the new silver-lead field will be supplying ore to the State smelters at Chillagoe. To-day in North Queensland there is an influx of company promoters and other sharks on the new field outside Duchess that would do credit to any new oilfield in America.

Mr. MOORE: Where did those sharks who would do credit to America get their experience?

Mr. POLLOCK: I said that they would do credit to America, because when new oilfields are discovered there they live on the earnings of others. The field that has been opened near Duchess gives every promise of being a big one. If it does anything like what people imagine it will do, it ought to enable Queensland to weather a drought. If it does, it will not be the first time that mining has come to the aid of Queensland when times were bad. It will be remembered that, when boom times were on on the goldfields in Western Australia, it did not matter very much whether the cattle or sheep men or orchardists were doing well. Since the decline of the goldfields Western Australia is practically a no-man's-land with the exception of those districts where fruit farming is engaged in. Queensland could do with the discovery of a good mining field to-day, and there is every indication that such fields have been discovered in the Chillagoe and Duchess districts. I am not sure, and I am convinced that the Government are not sure, that the policy of granting 10-acre leases on the Duchess field is a very good one. From what I understand every advantage is being taken of the find by men who are bonâ fide prospectors to evade the Act for the purpose

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of acquiring some of the land for people who are not entitled to it and who will not work it. The sooner some representative of the Government visits the field the better it will be for all concerned. I suggest to the Minister that he should visit the field immediately the House rises. I would like to see the man who could work out an ordinary mining claim in a lifetime on a silver-lead show. A mining claim is 300 feet by 200 feet. The policy of granting leases instead of mining claims is not a good one in the interests of those prospectors and gougers who have starved on the off-chance of finding something payable. These men in the Duchess district have for four or five years been in many cases living on kangaroo at times. There are scores of prospectors in that district who have starved and blazed the way. When this show was found the very first men to take up the 10-acre leases were the business men of Cloncurry and the adjacent towns, who had never gone outside the shade of their verandahs to prospect the field. The trouble with a new field is that the men who get out to it first and peg out a 10-acre lease are the men who secure the ground. The prospectors who are out in the country with only a couple of poor, broken-down horses are usually squeezed out. For that reason the Government ought to be opposed to the granting of leases on that field. The leases that have been pegged out have been secured by storekeepers, who have been able by their own motor-cars or by hiring a motor-car to get to the field and peg it out. That is not fair, because those men will not leave their businesses to work the show, while the men who have been prospecting will starve, as they appear too late on the scene. Unless the Government reconsider their decision, the field will pass into the hands of big companies. If the claim system is adopted, there is reason to believe that ten times the number of men, as compared with the lease system, will sell out their interests to the big companies. More money will go around amongst the prospectors; but, as I said, the field will eventually pass into the hands of the big companies, as they will be able to handle it more economically. The Government have everything to gain by assisting the prospector. The prospectors in my electorate have received a very fair deal in the matter of assistance, and I hope that the time will come when that deal will be extended a little farther. The Minister or his Under Secretary or representative should visit the field at the earliest possible moment and see that the men who blazed the trail get a fair deal.

Question put and passed.

SAPPHIRE TRADING FUND.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I beg to move—

“That £20,000 be granted for ‘Sapphire Trading Fund.’”

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): I would like the Minister to tell us the reason for increasing the vote from £3,500 in 1922-23 to £20,000 in 1923-24, and as to how much money was spent in 1922-23.

Mr. FOLEY: You can get that information from the report of the Auditor-General.

HON. W. H. BARNES: This is the place to get the information. Is £20,000 likely to be sufficient for the requirements this year? I would also like to know whether the hon. gentleman thinks he will be able successfully to deal with the sapphires. The public and miners are interested in this matter as well as this Committee.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones, *Paddington*): The hon. member for Wynnum asked the reason for the increased vote this year. It will be observed that £3,500 was appropriated [2 p.m.] last year, and that this year we require £20,000. The reason is that the sapphire trading scheme was inaugurated during the last financial year, and the £3,500 was not spread over a whole year. We anticipate that £20,000 will be adequate to cover the gem production this year.

The first scheme adopted by the Government was a scheme of relief during a period of depression, and we advanced certain sums weekly to the producers of sapphires. Now we have evolved a greater scheme, and are taking the whole production of blue sapphires from the field and marketing the gems overseas ourselves. Mr. Knowles has been appointed for this purpose, and he has now arrived in London. He will take over the accumulated sapphires and market them. We have about £30,000 worth of these gems overseas.

Mr. KERR: How many years' accumulation does that represent?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: About one year's accumulation. Although we ask for the sum of £20,000, we do not anticipate that that will be the value of the sapphires produced during the year. Anyhow, we are hoping, in the interests of the miners, that a greater sum of money will be received than is being advanced. We have had an offer for those gems, but we declined the offer because we thought it was not high enough. Under the present scheme we are allowing for the actual out-of-pocket expenses of the Department of Mines and the actual cost of mining. It is my desire to market the sapphires overseas and charge the miners only with the actual cost of marketing. I believe that Mr. Knowles has a good knowledge, not only of the fields and of the sapphires, but of the gem industry generally. A valuable trade can be established, and we desire to stabilise the industry. It must be remembered that under the competitive system about £46,000 worth of sapphires were marketed in one season. It must also be remembered that the sapphire is not altogether a gem that is used for ornamental purposes, such as making tie-pins and rings. I do not think sapphires have much value for those purposes.

For industrial purposes the sapphire is a very valuable gem, and it is used in the manufacture of watches, gramophones, and for other purposes. The difficulty will be in marketing the gems because already there is on the market a synthetic gem which is as brilliant as the true sapphire, and for ornamental purposes is just as good as the true sapphire. However, I anticipate that £20,000 will be adequate for the year, and we anticipate that in the spending of that money we shall get a good advance on the prices previously paid to the miner. Our desire as a Government is to give to the producers the full value of the sapphires they are marketing. In order to bring that about to the

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fullest extent a lapidary would need to be established by the Government, because the true value of a gem is not known until it is cut, especially a gem used for ornamental purposes.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): I would like to know from the Minister whether any attempt is being made in the disposal of gems from sapphire fields to exploit markets other than the European or the English market. It appears to me that owing to the position Europe is in at present they are not likely to buy our gems. There are two or three nations ready to fly at each other's throats and those who are not fit to fly at each other's throats would be more likely to buy potatoes than gems, and I do not think "John Bull" is likely to patronise us very much, because he has to pay off "Uncle Sam" the money he borrowed from him to pay for the war supplies he got, and as America is the home of millionaires—a tremendous lot of millionaires were created there during the last war—and they have nearly all the English gold, I would suggest that Mr. Knowles should be sent over to America to see if he can sell our sapphires there. The Government are justified in attempting to establish a market for our gems, but I do not think we are proceeding on sound lines in trying to sell our beautiful sapphires to the people of Europe, and I am satisfied that "John Bull" will not have much inclination to dabble in gems until he has paid off "Uncle Sam," and I therefore suggest that this agent should go and see "Uncle Sam." Some of these millionaires in America may take a fad into their heads to decorate their pyjamas with sapphire buttons, and then the whole question will be solved.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You don't have buttons on pyjamas. (Laughter.)

Mr. HARTLEY: I do not know what the Minister has, but, if there were no buttons on my pyjamas there would be trouble. (Renewed laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones, *Paddington*): In reply to the hon. member for Fitzroy I wish to say that we are trying to establish a market in America, and when Mr. Knowles has completed his work in Europe he will go on to America. We already have placed a quantity of sapphires of different standards with reputable firms in America. We have sold some at reasonable prices, and we are trying to establish a market there with reputable firms. The difficulty in America is that a duty of 10 per cent. is imposed, which is rather a heavy duty on our valuable gems.

Mr. FOLEY (*Leichhardt*): The Minister pointed out that endeavours are being made in America to find a market for Queensland sapphires. There is a great quantity of Queensland sapphires already marketed in America and purchased by the gem merchants of America in Paris from firms which have connections with agents on the Continent. Then, again, we have evidence of a number of agents who have in the past purchased sapphires from the miners in a small way, and made periodical trips to America and marketed the sapphires they have purchased to connections they have built up. There is a good deal in what the hon. member for Fitzroy says, and an endeavour should be made to exploit the markets in some of the richer countries of the world in preference to Europe. I understand that Mr. Knowles,

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who has a good grip of the position, intends to exploit the London market for a start, and later on, Paris. Paris, it is well known, practically has taken control of the gem-cutting industry, which was previously under the control of the German gem merchants and lapidaries. They had practically the control of the whole of the sapphires produced at Anakie in the past. As a matter of fact, the town of Idar, in Germany, has been built up during the past twenty years from a small village, where persons used to come and polish sapphires handed out to them in the winter months, into one of the largest gem-cutting towns in Germany. The industry, of course, has slumped owing to the dislocation caused by the war.

We also have another valuable market for a certain quality of sapphires produced on the gem fields—that is what are known as seconds. From every parcel of gems purchased as first-class blues, only a percentage of those sapphires when they are cut and polished can be sold in the retail trade as gems. The bulk of them—somewhere in the vicinity of thirty carats—are classed in the gem trade as seconds after they are cut and polished. It has been the custom to market those seconds in some of the Balkan States, and also in Russia, where a great quantity were used by the people for ornamental purposes, and for the adornment of the ikons in their churches, and also in connection with all kinds of ornaments, such as cigarette cases. Since the war that market has been closed to us, but I understand from what I have read that there is a tendency for the market in Russia—which was one of the best markets for that class of stone—to improve in the very near future. Although we are not taking much of this class of stone from the miner—what are known as seconds on the field—yet there is a chance of things improving in the very near future. Czechoslovakia is another State which also handles a lot of the sapphires produced on the Anakie field—cutting and polishing them and marketing them in America, Paris, and London. Mr. Knowles, with whom I had a conversation, intends to get into direct touch with the lapidaries in Paris, Czechoslovakia, and wherever there is any business doing. By that method we hope to get the true economic value of the sapphires that are produced in Queensland. In the past the gem merchants have had control of the sapphire industry at Anakie through their agents on the field who, to the number of about twenty, were occasionally receiving grants from their firms and purchasing sapphires.

Those merchants have sold in turn to small merchants, who in turn sell to other merchants and dealers, with the result that, when the sapphires reach the lapidary—the man who really cuts and polishes the stones and disposes of them—he has to pay an exorbitant price, and the price obtained by the miner is small in comparison with the actual economic value of the stones.

We are really trying to create an organisation for dealing with these gems, and I would like to tell the Committee that I do not think it is going to be an easy task for Mr. Knowles. He will naturally meet with a good deal of opposition from the gem merchants already established in the trade, who will try all kinds of methods to defeat him, including, perhaps, boycotts; nevertheless the small quantity of stones which he has for sale is infinitesimal in comparison with the

total quantity sold. I have met men who have been making periodical trips to America, and from the information given by them the Minister and I find that they have received better prices for the lower grades of stone which are used for industrial purposes than for the actual gem stones, for the reason that they will stand an enormous pressure—a greater pressure than synthetic stones. It can be readily understood that where a manufacturing firm is drawing 20 or 30 miles of copper or other wire, the steel or other tempered metal through which it may be drawn will suffer a certain amount of wear and tear, but by using the sapphire they can go on indefinitely with the wire-drawing, and the gauge will be exactly the same at the termination of the length as at the beginning. For that reason, when the market is properly organised, we can expect to get much better prices for the industrial classes of stone than in the past. Hitherto the miner has been receiving practically a mere song for that class of stone.

Then we have what is known as the corundum, which is practically the same element, although not in a crystal form. It is non-transparent, and it serves the purpose of mixing with different bases for the cutting, polishing, and grinding of implements.

I have no doubt that we shall recoup ourselves for the advance of the money already made. As a matter of fact, one firm with whom we endeavoured to do business offered to take the whole of the stones from the Government at a price which came within a few pounds of the amount advanced. The reason why it offered a price somewhere in the vicinity of the amount advanced is that it has an agent on the field who could form a fair idea of the average price the Government were paying to the miner and could then get into touch with his firm, who would quote a price accordingly. It is well known that these merchants sell to prominent firms in Europe and America, and surely Mr. Knowles should have no trouble in realising at least as much as this firm has offered, with the possibility of building up an organisation which will give to the miners a greater price than they have received in the past. (Hear, hear!)

The actual benefit that will result to the sapphire fields will be that where they have to work fairly high-grade wash—which is very scarce on the leads they are working at present—once they receive a better price for their article they will be able to work much of the lower-grade wash, which is quite plentiful on the fields.

Question put and passed.

STATE ARSENIC WORKS (JIBBINBAR).

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I beg to move—

“That £15,000 be granted for ‘State Arsenic Works (Jibbinbar).’”

Question put and passed.

STATE BATTERY AND TREATMENT WORKS, IRVINEBANK.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I beg to move—

“That £4,500 be granted for ‘State Battery and Treatment Works, Irvinebank.’”

Question put and passed.

STATE COALMINES.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I beg to move—

“That £105,000 be granted for ‘State Coalmines.’”

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I would like some information on this vote. The Auditor-General in his report on the Department of Mines, says—

“The accounts in connection with the following undertakings under the control of this department—

State coalmine, Bowen;
State coalmine, Baralaba;
State coalmine, Styx No. 2;
State coalmine, Styx No. 3;
State arsenic mine, Jibbinbar;
State store, Jibbinbar;

were not finalised at date of this report, and therefore are not available for publication.”

Mr. TAYLOR: That has been explained.

Mr. MOORE: I did not know that. There is a big increase in this vote, and I cannot see what it is for. I suppose the coalmines are working, but coal is not a commodity that can be kept or sent overseas for sale. Is it not sold as it is produced, so as to keep the mine going? Is this amount from Trust Funds for further developmental work? I understand that the mines have gone past the developmental stage and have reached the producing stage. I can quite understand Trust Funds being expended for developmental purposes, with the idea of getting that cost afterwards when the mine is actually producing, but I cannot understand why such a large amount of Trust Funds should be expended on coalmines when they have reached their producing stage.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): Like the hon. member for Aubigny, I desire some information on this vote. I would like some detailed information as to how this £105,000 is to be allocated, more particularly with respect to Baralaba and Styx River. I understand that the State coalmine at Bowen has gone beyond the developmental stage and has reached the producing stage. That is not the case at the Styx River; and whether it is justified or not, there is an impression in my district—I must admit that until I heard the Minister speaking on the Mines Estimates the other night, I was rather inclined to favour the impression that was going round—that the Government were a little bit shy about going ahead with the Styx River field. I do not know that there should be any ground for hesitation when the Government have prospected a field thoroughly and tested it thoroughly, as they have done with the Styx River field. They have a pretty good idea of the extent of the coal measures and the depth they have to go for them. We have not seen up to the present anything in proportion to what has been spent at Bowen. The quality of the coal at Styx River is equal to the Bowen coal. I would like to know whether it is the intention of the Government to erect coke ovens at the Styx River. Coal is produced at the Styx River equal to anything in Queensland. It is a high-quality gas coal. I would also like to know whether the Mines Department contemplate erecting facilities for the export of coal, or whether they are prepared to join with the Rockhampton

Mr. Hartley.!

Harbour Board in erecting coal facilities at Broadmount. I am particularly interested as to what stage of development has been reached at the Styx River. I know that a number of shafts have been sunk, but I want to know whether the big development shaft is going down with all the celerity with which it can be sunk.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): Like the hon. members for Aubigny and Fitzroy, I would like the Minister to give the Committee some information on this vote. It is more than likely that in the very near future, owing to the recent developments in the Cloncurry district, coke will be required for the smelting of the silver-lead ores. I have been reading in the newspapers, that it is a fairly large field. In that case a large quantity of coke will be required for smelting the ore. Do the Government propose under this vote to spend any money in the erection of coke ovens at the Bowen coalfield? The State should be in a position, if the occasion arises, to supply the Cloncurry mines with coke as well as coal. When the Cloncurry mines were working some years ago all the coke required was imported from Southern Queensland or New South Wales. The Minister stated the other night that a considerable saving could be effected in smelting costs by securing coke from the Bowen State coalmine. Although the full details of the transaction for the past year were not available for inclusion in the report of the Auditor-General, it was stated that the profit on the working of the Bowen coalmine for the past financial year was £5,369. That is very satisfactory. I would like to know whether that is the profit after allowing for interest and redemption on the £70,000 that was spent in its development.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*): This vote is for the working of the State coalmines, and not for their development. I do not want to talk about the further development of these coalmines, but about the development of the markets to consume the coal that is at present being produced. It is not good business for the State to open up a mine, develop it, and produce coal if the coal is going to remain at the mine and practically no work be found for the men to do.

Mr. HARTLEY: It would be rather awkward for the privately-owned mines at Ipswich, wouldn't it?

Mr. GLEDSON: I do not know what the hon. member for Fitzroy is talking about.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: He is an expert.

Mr. GLEDSON: The coalmines of Ipswich do not supply North Queensland or Central Queensland with coal.

Mr. HARTLEY: They used to do so.

Mr. GLEDSON: If the hon. member knows anything about it, he knows they do not supply coal to those districts, and the Ipswich mines therefore do not come into the matter at all. What I do know is that the men at Bowen are not able to get work because more coal is being produced than there is a market for.

[2.30 p.m.]

Mr. KERR: What about coke ovens there?

Mr. GLEDSON: What is the use of having coke ovens if you have no market?

Mr. KERR: Where does the coke for North Queensland come from?

[Mr. Hartley.

Mr. FOLEY: From New South Wales.

Mr. KERR: Yes, and our coke ovens are lying idle.

Mr. GLEDSON: The position is that at present Chillagoe would be getting coke from Mount Mulligan if we were able to supply them, but at present Mount Mulligan is not able to do so.

Mr. HARTLEY: Why not get it from Bowen or the Styx River?

Mr. GLEDSON: It is all very well to say that, but the Government would be very foolish to put down a battery of coke ovens for the purpose of supplying coke to Chillagoe just because the Mount Mulligan mine is out of commission. If there is no market for that coke when the ovens are put down, what is the use of spending £50,000 or £60,000 on the venture?

Mr. PETERSON: Mount Morgan consumes a large amount of coke.

Mr. GLEDSON: Since the Baralaba mine started Mount Morgan has used a lot of coal. This has practically cut out the Ipswich supply. The Mount Morgan mine used to take from 18,000 to 20,000 tons annually from the "Tivoli" mines, but since Baralaba started they have substituted coal, and that coal is acting in the same capacity as coke did previously.

Mr. PETERSON: Would that not imply that coal would be used to a greater extent?

Mr. GLEDSON: It would depend on the quality of the coal. In Mount Morgan coke was used in the fluxing of limestone and for other purposes. Baralaba coal is now used for those purposes. The question of the Styx River is another matter that should be gone into, and I should like the Minister to go into it carefully in the endeavour to find a market for Styx River coal. I can see that in the near future the shaft will be down and coal will be produced, but there will be no market for it. We are producing far more coal in Queensland than we can find consumption for. I make the plea that the Government should do something to assist the colliery proprietors in Queensland, with themselves, to find overseas markets to take our surplus production of coal and so enable our Queensland mines to keep going. Instead of working three days a week as they have been doing—not only in the private but in the State mines—they would be able to work five or six days and produce the coal profitably.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): I do not want the impression to go abroad, by reason of the remarks made by the hon. member for Ipswich, that at the Bowen State coal mine the men have been out of work. I understand that it is only within the last month that they have been put on short time. Up till then they were on full time, and I think they were the only coal miners in Queensland on full time. I do not want that false impression to go abroad because, as hon. members are aware, there is a new jetty being constructed at Bowen, a considerable sum of money has already been spent upon it, and it will be completed next year. That jetty is being built solely for the purpose of assisting the export of our coal.

Mr. HARTLEY: That will not get you orders.

Mr. COLLINS: Inquiries have already been made in Java and other centres in the East in reference to a market for the coal. If we were to receive an order to-morrow for 100,000 tons of coal we would not be in a position to ship it. I have no doubt that the Government are making preparations not only in connection with the Bowen State coal mines, but in connection with all other State coal mines with a view to finding a market for the coal. As I have said on previous occasions, we have an abundance of coal in Queensland, but we cannot ship coal from Bowen until the jetty is completed. I understand that the electrical machinery for the jetty will arrive in Queensland in January next year, when steps will be taken to erect it and make the jetty ready for the loading of coal.

I rose to attempt to prevent any rumour getting abroad to the effect that we are not able to employ the miners in the Bowen State coal mine; short time, I have been informed, has been in force only within the last month.

Mr. FOLEY (*Leichhardt*): Like the hon. member for Ipswich, I am rather anxious to know whether anything is being done towards building up an export for the coal that is likely to be produced in the near future. In my electorate we have a splendid coal deposit—one of the largest in the world. In comparison with it the Styx River and Bowen coalfields are insignificant. (Opposition laughter.) What I say is correct. Even granting that the estimate for those coalfields is about forty, fifty or say seventy or eighty million tons, at Blair Athol we have one deposit of coal with an area of 5 square miles which, on a low estimate, runs into 150,000,000 tons. That coal is available without going down into the bowels of the earth. It is lying flat just under the surface.

The point I am bringing forward is that I do not believe in being too optimistic in building up this export trade. I make this statement as a sort of warning to the Minister—that 4,500,000 tons of coal go past our door every year from the coalmines of Newcastle. We have been endeavouring to get some of that trade for quite a number of years and have got very little of it up to the present time. If we are to get it, we must sell our coal at a price that will compete with Newcastle coal. I have yet to learn that that can be done with Styx River coal or Bowen coal.

Mr. COLLINS: You can land coal from Bowen cheaper than the Southern coal.

Mr. MOORE: In Bowen it takes three men to load a case of tomatoes. (Laughter.)

Mr. FOLEY: I understand the Secretary for Mines can land coal at Broadmount at something in the vicinity of 30s. a ton.

Mr. COLLINS: Don't you believe it.

Mr. FOLEY: I understand that it costs 20s. to produce, and on top of that it has to be railed 100 miles to Broadmount, which would bring it up another 5s. a ton, making about 25s. Newcastle coal, which is recognised as one of the best standard coals in the world, is put on boats at an average price of £1 0s. 6d. a ton. Unless you can land our coal at the wharf at a price, taking into consideration royalties, handling charges, etc., lower than the Newcastle price, you are not going to get much of the trade. The Government in the near future

will have to consider the competition from Blair Athol coal.

Mr. HARTLEY: At what price can you lend Blair Athol coal at Broadmount?

Mr. FOLEY: In the near future the coal deposits at Blair Athol will be worked on a different principle to what they have been worked in the past. I quoted instances in this Chamber of what has been done in the State of Alabama, in America, where they are stripping 30 feet of earth for the purpose of raising a 28-inch seam of coal, and with modern machinery and up-to-date methods they are doing it profitably. At Blair Athol we have an average of 60 feet of light stripping, and, when that is removed, we have an average of 65 feet of clean coal.

Mr. KELSO: Is Blair Athol a private mine?

Mr. FOLEY: Yes, but I am not going into that aspect of the question. If America can mine coal profitably on those methods—engineers in America look with a certain amount of antipathy to going into the bowels of the earth to mine coal—if they can strip and mine 28 inches of coal profitably, it will only be a matter of a short time when engineers from that country will come to Blair Athol and mine coal there at 1s. 6d. or 2s. per ton. That is not stretching things by any means, as it is being done in America at the present time. Blair Athol coal is not so good as Bowen or Styx River coal, as it has 5 per cent. or 6 per cent. less heating capacity, but in the near future we shall be producing coal at Blair Athol in the vicinity of 2s. or 3s. per ton, and with 11s. railway freight and a couple of shillings for handling charges we shall be able to land that coal at Broadmount at a price much cheaper than coal can be landed from the State coalmines.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You must take into consideration the value of the Styx River coal.

Mr. FOLEY: The fact of the price being lower will compensate for the lower heating value of the coal. I ask the Minister to take notice of this point, and not to wait till a large expenditure has been incurred in building a pier at Bowen or otherwise before attempting to find a market overseas. The Government should at once make arrangements to charter a boat and load that boat to the decks with coal, send it to the Eastern States, give the coal away to the big users of coal, and ask them to send an order on the merits of the coal. That is being done by Blair Athol companies at the present time. The manager there has come to the conclusion that that is the only possible way of establishing an export trade in the future. If that is done, the position indicated by the hon. member for Ipswich will be brought about. We have had a slump at Blair Athol for the last two years, and the miners there do not work more than a day or a day and a-half a week, and the same thing will occur at the State coalmines once they are developed to such an extent that they can produce more than the local consumption, if we have no overseas market for the coal. The Government should make every endeavour to exploit the overseas market in order to find a market for our coal.

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*): I must come to the conclusion that the hon. member for Leichhardt has sounded the death knell of the State coalmines, if the hon. member is not talking with his tongue in his cheek.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. Peterson.]

Mr. PETERSON: The hon. member states that the Blair Athol Company under their new system of stripping coal will be able to produce coal for trade in the vicinity of 1s. 6d. per ton, and, if that is so, the Minister ought to take the advice of one of his own supporters and close up the State coalmines. That is the logic of the hon. member's argument.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: He did not say that.

Mr. PETERSON: He inferred it. He was very eloquent as to what was to be the outcome of the development now taking place at Blair Athol. Everyone knows that the Blair Athol Company was badly stung by the development of the Styx River and Baralaba coalfields, but as a result of the new process of stripping they will be able to land coal in Rockhampton or Broadmount at a much lower price than coal can be landed from Bowen, Baralaba, or the Styx River.

Mr. COLLINS: You do not accept the figures that they can mine coal for 2s. or 3s. per ton.

Mr. PETERSON: I honestly believe the remarks of the hon. member for Leichhardt, and I am sorry to state that, as a result of the operations of that company, the State coalmine in my own electorate will be largely affected. The hon. member for Fitzroy admits that the Styx coal is a better quality coal than the Blair Athol coal; but, if the Blair Athol Company can sell their coal at a considerably less rate than the Styx River coal, even taking into consideration the better quality of the Styx River coal, the users will purchase the cheaper coal.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We will export the Styx River coal and use their coal for railway purposes. That is its best use.

Mr. PETERSON: I heard a different story some years ago. We were told that the Styx coal stood out on its own compared with Blair Athol coal for railway purposes. The hon. gentleman has said that many times, and it has not been disproved by the engine-drivers in the Central District. The hon. gentleman is changing his ground if he says Blair Athol coal will take the place of Styx coal.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I say the Styx River coal is superior coal. It is too valuable to use for railway purposes.

Mr. PETERSON: Where does the hon. gentleman propose to find a market for that valuable Styx River coal?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Overseas.

Mr. PETERSON: We have missed the bus so far as the oversea markets are concerned. During the war there was a tremendous demand for coal, but there were no suitable loading places for coal from the fields in any part of Queensland. We had the opportunity then of a lifetime, because, if we had built up a trade during that period, we would have been able to hold it and would have had a field of operations for a large number of years. That opportunity was lost. The Government were asked to erect loading facilities in the Central District: but what did they do? They built a slipshod sort of arrangement at Broadmount.

Mr. HARTLEY: Only on the advice of the Blair Athol engineer and against the advice of myself and other Government members.

Mr. PETERSON: I am not going to gain-say that, but the hon. member will admit

[Mr. Peterson.

that it is a slipshod arrangement. I am open to correction, but I understood that it was built on the advice of the Railway Department in consultation with their engineers.

Mr. HARTLEY: In consultation with the engineers of the Blair Athol Company.

Mr. PETERSON: Then the Government are partly responsible for the mistake if that is so. The point is that we have State mines in operation at Styx River and Baralaba producing coal, and it would have been very good business if the request of the hon. member and myself with regard to the State owning shipping appliances had been given effect to four or five years ago. I am pleased that we are taking time by the forelock at Bowen, and if we receive large orders for that coal we shall be ready next year to supply those orders. That will be a factor in bringing about the success of that field. The hon. member for Leichhardt pointed out that we had about 450,000 tons of coal coming to Queensland from Newcastle. Why is there such an anxiety to open up these new coalmines? Why is there this desire on the part of hon. members opposite to take away trade from their fellow-workmen down South and starve them?

Mr. GLEDSON: He did not say there were 450,000 tons.

Mr. PETERSON: I am open to correction—the hon. member for Leichhardt said that a large amount of coal came up from Newcastle—I take it that he meant it came to some Queensland port.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: There is some coming here.

Mr. PETERSON: I could understand that objection coming from hon. members on this side, but I cannot understand it coming from hon. members opposite, seeing that they are part and parcel of the one union, and the other unionists down there have just as much right to live as they have.

Mr. HARTLEY: We are standing for State enterprise as against private enterprise.

Mr. PETERSON: There was no harm in the hon. member for Leichhardt the other day asking for the assistance of the Government in finding markets for coalmine owners; but, of course, the Government are out to find markets for themselves. I trust that, as the Styx coalmine showed a profit last year, according to the figures, it will be able to figure in future Auditor-General's reports as a very successful venture. From the analysis we know that it is a most excellent coal, and I hope that the Minister will do all he possibly can to bring it to a producing stage at the earliest possible moment, so that we can be recouped some of the money spent in development. I would ask the Minister also if he has taken into consideration the shortage of water at the Styx mine. I trust that he will have something done in regard to that matter.

The next question is with regard to homes for the miners. I notice from the report that there is a fine class of miners' cottages put up at the Bowen coalfield. I believe that in isolated centres such as the Styx River and other places it is the duty of the Government to provide decent accommodation for miners, who will pay rent, so that they may live and rear their families under civilised conditions. It will be interesting to know what the Minister proposes to do

in that respect. I shall do everything I possibly can to assist in giving these men better conditions in that way. I am sure that nobody will object to the Minister doing his best in that direction. I hope that the example with regard to miners' cottages will be followed on the Styx River field.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): The criticism which has been raised by hon. members opposite will not cause the Secretary for Mines any loss of sleep. It simply means that this party has to come to the position as to whether they are going to stand for the socialisation of industry because our State enterprises will affect different districts, or whether we are going to whittle down our policy.

Mr. VOWLES: You have done it already.

Mr. HARTLEY: We have not done it. The hon. member for Ipswich talked about our State coal not displacing the Ipswich coal, but it has displaced a lot of orders. I have not been here for nine years advocating the development of State mines without knowing the peculiar influences which are behind the coal trade in order to prevent the best quality coal from State mines getting into the Railway Department. It has been one long period of vigilance and effort to see that the State coal was used on the railways. There is no doubt that, if we had not been careful in that respect, a lot of these mines would have been condemned, and would not be under operation by the Government at the present time. If we cannot justify our State coalmines against either Blair Athol or Ipswich mines, then we are willing to chuck them overboard.

Mr. MORGAN: You cannot.

Mr. HARTLEY: Take the Ipswich coal, for instance. For years before this Government came into power there was a series of reports about the rotten quality of the coal supplied to the Railway Department.

Mr. MOORE: And it is still going on.

Mr. HARTLEY: The more we develop the high-quality coalfields as an asset to the State the greater will be the returns from that coal and the less the inconvenience to railway passengers. There will be an advantage all round.

Mr. MOORE: Are you going to throw men out of work?

Mr. HARTLEY: That is the cry of hon. members opposite, but it is pure "kid." It is gammon, pretence, humbug, or any other thing you like to call it. It is the purest "kid-stakes" on the part of hon. members opposite to ask if we are going to throw men out of work. They do not care twopence whether they are going to throw men out of work or not. What will happen if the State mines are developed sufficiently and all the State requirements are drawn from them is that all the workers will be State employees. That will be the only difference. What will be very grievous to hon. members opposite is that the big profits which previously went into the pockets of private owners will go into the coffers of the State. That is the "nigger in the wood pile." With regard to Blair Athol, I have known Jack Hotherington and other Blair Athol shareholders for a very long time, and they are not at all concerned in the interests of the miners. They are concerned about the interests of Jack Hotherington and the Blair Athol Coal and Timber Company's balance-sheet. They can

come any time they like for a contest with either the Styx coal or any other State coal, and they will go to the wall. I have seen the important features of the Blair Athol scheme, and I know something about the removal of the overburden. I worked in connection with the removal of overburden at Mount Morgan, which was under the control of the second engineer in charge there. We did not remove merely 30 or 40 feet—in places we removed anything from 60 to 80 feet from a cliff on the top of the Mount Morgan mine. We took eight or nine months to do it, and

[3 p.m.] we had a Yankee steam shovel in operation. I know just about what it cost, and I am satisfied that where our cost was about 1s. 6d. or 2s. per cubic yard, Blair Athol Company could not shift its overburden for 4s. or 5s. per yard, for the simple reason that after it has taken the overburden from a 40-foot face it has to haul it to a level before it can transfer it again to the trucks to take it away and dump it.

Mr. EDWARDS: They have a contract at 1s. 6d. per yard.

Mr. HARTLEY: Contract my foot! (Laughter.) The next disability the Blair Athol Company is under is that it has 246 miles of railway carriage to a port, against 126 miles from the Styx River, with this difference: that, if it could run the quantity of coal it would have to run to pay the capital cost of the removal of that overburden, the Central Railway would not be able to accommodate the wheeled traffic. It could not get the coal down to the coast; but, if it could get it down to the coast, its cost would be not 26s. a ton, as the hon. member for Leichhardt would lead us to believe, but somewhere in the vicinity of 36s. a ton. The Styx River coal can be mined for 16s. a ton and delivered in Rockhampton for another 10s. a ton. That is not a conservative estimate, so that there is a difference of 10s. in favour of the Styx River coal. The next disadvantage is that 15 cwt. of Styx River coal will do the same work as 1 ton of Blair Athol coal, that is to say, the user saves 5 cwt. of coal in every ton he burns.

Mr. FOLEY: You are not right.

Mr. HARTLEY: The hon. member is up against a big proposition. This talk about offering a choice between Blair Athol coal and Styx River coal is like asking a boy to do something and saying to him, "Here is a penny, and there is 3d. Will you take the big one or the little one?" If the kid knows anything—and he generally does if he is a Queenslander—he takes the 3d. That is what the coal user will do when you offer him his choice between Styx River coal and Blair Athol coal. I remember that they wanted to close down one Central Queensland coalmine because they said the coal could not be burned, and I entered into a challenge with the Commissioner for Railways that I would burn the coal. They made three secret trials in the Railway Department and found that what I said was correct, and that mine is in operation to-day because of that challenge.

The hon. member for Normanby said something about a contraption we put at Broadmount for the loading of coal. I want to tell the hon. member that we put it there at the request of the engineer of the Blair Athol Company, although we wished to put

Mr. Hartley.]

a much more adequate arrangement, so that the Government are not to blame. But it only cost about £2,100 and it loaded 40,000 tons of coal for the Northern ports.

There is no need for the Minister to worry about whether we have a market. We have a market in Queensland for all the coal we can produce.

The bell indicated that the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. KELSO (*Nundah*): I move—

“That the hon. member be granted an extension of time.” (Laughter.)

The speech of the hon. member for Fitzroy is so informative that I am sure members on both sides would like to hear more. (Laughter.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member cannot submit that motion in Committee.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): I want to point out some advantages which the Bowen State coalmine has in comparison with most other coalmines. The Bowen State mine is 54 miles from the jetty. That is advantage No. 1 when comparing it with other coalmines. That brings me to advantage No. 2. We argue—and I think logically—that we can put coal on ships more cheaply than they can at Newcastle, or at least just as cheaply, and we are much nearer to the Eastern markets. As the Minister said in his speech, a fair average price for our unscreened coal would be 16s. a ton, and the freight on the railway on coal for export is 2s. 4d. a ton landed at the jetty, or a total of 18s. 4d. per ton. Allowing for loading charges, we claim that we can put it on board the boats at Bowen just as cheaply as they can at Newcastle. Boiled down, our advantages are that the Bowen State coalmine is the nearest to any seaport in Queensland, its quality enables us to compete successfully with other coal, and we have an unlimited supply. We have four different seams of coal, of which only one is being operated. The Bowen seam is 12 feet thick, the Garrick is 8 feet thick, the Denison is 8 feet thick, and the Scott is 6 feet thick. To use the words of Mr. Dunstan, the Chief Government Geologist, every square mile contains 44,000,000 tons of coal, and one other geologist said to me on one occasion that, when other coalfields are worked out, the Bowen coalfield will still be in existence, because there are not only 44,000,000 tons of coal to the square mile but many more millions of tons in sight. What my friend the hon. member for Leichhardt should advocate—I am advocating it for my own electorate—is the establishment of a big woollen factory in Central Queensland so that it will become a great manufacturing centre such as exist in other parts of the world. Bowen has a splendid climate. The temperature never reaches as high as it does in Brisbane, and the fact that it has such cheap coal supplies should make it one of the best manufacturing centres in the State.

Mr. FOLEY (*Leichhardt*): My two colleagues, the hon. member for Fitzroy and the hon. member for Bowen, have put up very good cases for their coal, and I am not one of those who try to depreciate State enterprises. I am looking forward to the time when the Secretary for Mines will see his way clear to work some of the coal country at

Blair Athol which has reverted to the Crown and cannot be operated by anybody else unless he gives approval, or which is, perhaps, still held by private companies. What I said was more in the nature of a warning to the Minister and other members that they should not be carried away by the thought that they have a supply of good coal, but that they should consider the cost at which it can be produced and delivered at the port. That is the only point.

Mr. HARTLEY: You do not want to take too much notice of Jack Hetherington.

Mr. FOLEY: I do not take any notice of what anybody tells me until I have properly investigated the question, so as to be able to speak about it. There is a good deal of common sense in the contention. I am not under-estimating the value of Styx River coal or the value of the Bowen coal. Neither am I criticising the cost at which it may be landed at the port. I am emphasising, as I mentioned before, that if a 30-foot overburden can be stripped to mine 23 inches of coal, as was done in America with modern machinery, then Blair Athol in the near future, with the same machinery and at practically the same cost, will be able to strip the overburden and produce the coal very cheaply.

Mr. HARTLEY: The conditions are not the same.

Mr. FOLEY: The conditions are better. The Blair Athol coal, the Baralaba coal, and the Styx River coal, which will eventually have to find an export market, can be so blended as to meet the desires of any coal-user in any part of the world. In the near future, as we get in touch with oversea markets, different kinds of coal will probably be required. I am looking forward to the time when the Minister will prospect the areas that he has at his disposal at Blair Athol to see if it is not possible to open up the deposits there cheaply, and work them in conjunction with the present State coalmines.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones, *Paddington*): I have no desire to enter into this controversy or take sides on the question.

Mr. MORGAN: You should be the referee.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The hon. member for Aubigny raised some matter contained in the Auditor-General's report which I explained very fully when the Estimates-in-Chief were being discussed, but the hon. gentleman was not present.

Mr. MOORE: I have since looked that up.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I have already given the figures in connection with the State coalmines, which show that we have come out on the right side. Last year the Bowen State coalmine showed a profit of £5,369 3s. I want to emphasise the fact that during the year we supplied the Railway Department at their depôts at Townsville and Bowen with 51,367 tons of coal at £1 per ton cheaper than they had received it previously. I contend that that was a profit to the Railway Department and to the Government, and that the opening of the Bowen coalmine has proved very profitable to North Queensland industries also. The sugar-mills have been supplied with that coal. The same applies to the Styx River mine, from which coal is sent to nine sugar-mills. At the present time the mills in the Mackay district are receiving Styx River

[*Mr. Hartley.*]

coal at £1 10s. 9d. per ton, including railage from the mine to Mackay, whereas they previously paid £3 3s. per ton. Strange as it may seem, while the sugar-mills are taking Styx River coal, the gasworks at Mackay still continue to take Newcastle coal, and to pay £3 per ton, when the Government are prepared to supply gas-producing coal of equal quality at £1 10s. 9d. per ton.

Mr. HYNES: The Townsville Gas Company are taking Bowen coal.

Mr. DEACON: What is the reason for the action of the Mackay Gas Company?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I cannot assign any reason. I am now negotiating with those people, and I believe that eventually they will take our coal.

Mr. TAYLOR: Have they entered into contracts?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: They may have.

The hon. member for Fitzroy wants some information about the Styx River coalmine. The biggest portion of the money spent last year was spent in developing the Styx River mine and the Bowen coalmine. Some money was spent in developing the Baralaba mine. The biggest amount to be spent this year will be spent on the development of the Styx River mine. I am not referring to loading facilities, but only to the development of the mine and mine equipment.

Mr. MOORE: Are loading facilities included in the £105,000?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: No. The amount would be greater if it included loading facilities. The leader of the Country party rightly said that these mines have to go through the developmental stage, and he asked if it was not a fact that these mines had gone through that stage. I contend that they have not. During that stage you cannot show very big profits. In the case of the Bowen State coalmine we have shown a profit and carried on a lot of developmental work also. The hon. member for Bowen wanted to know, and rightly so—and it is information that hon. members should have—whether the profit shown was the profit after allowing for the payment of interest and redemption. It is. We pay interest and redemption; and, further, we have not included in that amount the royalty paid by private mineowners of 6d. per ton, or 1s. per ton, as the case may be. We have credited the royalty to the department, and we still show that profit and bring about a big saving for the Railway Department. Therefore, I rightly contend that the State coalmines of Queensland are indeed very profitable for the State, and have a very bright future; particularly so, as we have three fields of clean coal of exceptional quality to develop. I have followed this discussion very carefully, and I would point out that in discussing coal it must be remembered that there is a very great difference in its uses. It is wrong to make a comparison between different coals, because each has its special use. You may get a very good gas-producing coal, which would not be suitable for other purposes. You may get a coal that is suitable for cokemaking, and that is its only use. I ask hon. members to keep that fact in mind when discussing the various coals. The Blair Athol coal is a very valuable railway coal, but you could not utilise it for producing gas.

Mr. HARTLEY: It is low-efficiency coal.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The Styx River coal is one of the best in Australia.

Mr. MOORE: Is it not too volatile?

Mr. HARTLEY: No. You know very little about it.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We have what is known as the Garrick seam at the Bowen State coalmine, which is a splendid coking coal. The standard of ash is 16 per cent., and it does not require to be washed. It is one of the best coking coals in Queensland.

That brings me to the question of the erection of coke ovens. We cannot erect a coke oven in the Central district until there is some big mining development. The Mount Morgan Company would not be likely to take our coke. They have their own coking coalmine, and they mix their coke with Baralaba coal. We are supplying them 100 tons per day from the Baralaba mine, and they do their smelting partly with coke and partly with Baralaba coal direct from the mine, resulting in a reduced cost of production.

The same thing applies to Bowen. If new developments occur in the Cloncurry district and the smelters resume operations, coke can be produced at Bowen. We would not think of producing coke at Bowen to supply Chillagoe, because it would have to be shipped from Bowen to Cairns, whereas the Mount Mulligan State coalmine is an adjunct to the Chillagoe works. The department have taken over and are renovating the Mount Mulligan coalmine. All the coke necessary for the Chillagoe works will be made there. The consumption of coke at Chillagoe is about 1,200 tons per week. The hon. member for Enoggera, by interjection, raised the question of importing coke from the South. I would like to remind the hon. member as one Australian addressing another that, after all, New South Wales is a part of Australia. I hope that hon. members will not take the narrow view that men in New South Wales are being done out of work by the establishment of coke ovens in Queensland. Some men come from New South Wales to Queensland to engage in this work because more work is offering, the conditions are better, and because the State is governed by a progressive Government, and they are pleased to accept work under a Labour Government. I was severely criticised prior to the last general election for bringing coke to the Chillagoe works from the South. The Mount Mulligan coalmine had closed down notwithstanding the fact that the Government had come to its assistance by advancing thousands of pounds. The Government had then to make big contracts for coke in the South. I was wrongly criticised not only by the Press but by the coal producers of Ipswich because the coke-producing works there had 1,000 tons of coke on hand. That was only about the consumption for Chillagoe for a week. We had to make contracts ahead or allow the Chillagoe works to be closed. I personally made the contract in Sydney. The general manager of the works could not travel down, and I acted under his instructions as to the standard of coke he required. The shipping companies are interested in coalmines, and, naturally, supply coke. I believe that the freight from Sydney to Cairns is £1 5s. per ton, and from Brisbane to Cairns, I stand corrected, it is the same.

Hon. A. J. Jones.]

The freight from Townsville to Cairns is £1 per ton.

Mr. TAYLOR: You can easily understand the difference.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I was criticised at the time for not procuring the coke from the Ipswich district, but although I was instrumental in getting a reasonable quote from the Secretary for Railways there would still have been a difference of 17s. per ton between the Ipswich and Southern ccke. I hope that the day is not far distant when we shall not only make coke in Queensland for our industries but when we shall make it compulsory to have it made on up-to-date lines. There are wonderful by-products in coal, but for every ton of coal that is used for coke-making we lose in by-products an amount equal to the cost of the coal.

Mr. MOORE: Can you sell them?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The by-products can be used as fertilisers, dyes, and for innumerable other purposes.

Mr. MOORE: The Coal Products Company could not sell them. They only sold limited supplies.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We import chemicals from overseas, including sulphuric and nitric acids, which are derived from coal. We have a by-product oven at Mount Mulligan.

Mr. MOORE: Have a talk with the Government Analyst, and he will tell you what chance there is of selling them.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The Government will sell them when our industries are established. The hon. member for Ipswich knows that what I have said is perfectly correct.

Mr. GLEDSON: You are quite correct; you took all the coke they had.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The criticism was so severe that one would think the Government had imported coke from Japan or some other foreign country, whereas we imported it from a sister State. Hon. members should take a more Australian view of this and other questions.

Mr. KELSO: If there was a State mine at Ipswich, you would have taken it from there.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: No; it was purely a business transaction.

Mr. KERR: If you can produce coke in Queensland, you should do so. There are dozens of coke ovens idle here.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I want to inform the hon. member for Fitzroy, in reply to his inquiry, that a good sum of money will be spent in the development of the Styx River coalmine. A difficulty has been experienced in getting the coal from the mine. The shaft is very nearly down on to the seam. It is hoped to be down on it in a week or two. The Secretary for Railways and myself have gone into the question, with the Treasury, of establishing an overseas trade. The hon. member for Ipswich is quite right in saying that more coal is being produced in Queensland than can be sold.

Mr. HARTLEY: How much of the coal produced by the State mines is the Railway Department taking?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: They are taking the whole of the output from the coalmines in the North, and a large proportion elsewhere. We are trying to encourage

the use of coal for domestic purposes. The Secretary for Railways is now engaged in strengthening the railways to encourage the export trade from Blair Athol, Styx River, and Baralaba. The Styx River coal will make an excellent export coal.

Mr. HARTLEY: The customers will choose and mix the coal for themselves.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The Railway Department has ordered two cranes, one of which will be erected at Port Alma and the other at Broadmount. The work of providing facilities for the export of coal at Bowen is proceeding as rapidly as possible.

Mr. KELSO: You said a little while ago that you were going to use Blair Athol coal for the railways.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I said that every ounce of coal that could stand the test would be exported from the Bowen and Styx River mines to the available markets. I hope that the Government will have some power to interfere and see that the first shipment of coal from Queensland is good coal. If good coal is wanted, it can be procured from the State mines. Precautions are necessary in order that the first shipment shall not mar our overseas trade. (Hear, hear!)

It stands to reason and is clear to the average mind that every ton of coal that we ship overseas is going to foster our trade; it will enable us to compete with Newcastle coal and will make it easier for private

mines to supply our railways. [3.30 p.m.] The difficulty, at present is that we are producing more coal than we can consume, and we are now busy endeavouring to secure overseas trade. We cannot expect orders from overseas until we have loading facilities available. I claim that our Bowen mine has reached a stage of production that will enable us, as soon as loading facilities are available, to compete for overseas trade. Quite recently I was unable to accept an order for 100,000 tons of coal for overseas because we could not load it quickly enough. That proves that the price and quality of our coal were right and that there is a possibility of our procuring overseas trade.

Mr. MOORE: When you said that you hoped Government interference would stop the shipment of anything but the best coal, did you mean that the Government would in any way interfere with Blair Athol?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I do not suppose we shall interfere with any coal mine—I do not think we have that power—but the coal owners should take the question of quality into consideration. It would be very serious if we sent coal to a big coal-using country and our first shipment was not up to the mark. Business is built upon reputation, and we should supply only our best coal. I do not say anything about Blair Athol coal. A coal may be very useful for one purpose and be useless for another.

The hon. member for Normanby raised the question of water supply for the Styx River. The work is already being proceeded with, and we are laying a pipe line to ensure a good water supply. We have to face a serious difficulty in the shape of an outbreak of fever.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*): I was very pleased to hear the Minister refer to the by-products

[Hon. A. J. Jones.]

of coal. If our coal-mining ventures are going to pay it will be by reason of the by-products. If there is any means of preventing waste and putting the system of handling coal upon an efficient basis, it will be when we are enabled to use our by-products from coal in chemical as well as fertilising channels. When that day arrives the coal proposition will be more profitable.

I should like to remind the Minister that the greatest opposition to his purchase of coke from the South at the time he referred to was caused by reason of the enormous number of unemployed that we had in Queensland. If he will cast his memory back to that period, he will remember that the coke ovens at Ipswich were idle and that the men needed work. That is our chief objection.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We were not in a position to supply the coke quickly enough.

Mr. FRY: I should like to know the truth about it, but I assure the Minister our main concern is that the suppliers of the State should be given first consideration. I do not make those remarks in any spirit of carping criticism. I should like to see our coal industry developed so that the by-products will be made the chief feature. Electricity is going to play a great part in industrial undertakings in the future, and will take the place of coal. Therefore to keep our mines going we must successfully utilise the by-products.

Question put and passed.

STATE MINE, MOUNT MULLIGAN.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones, *Paddington*): I beg to move—

“That £65,000 be granted for ‘State Mine, Mount Mulligan.’”

Question put and passed.

LOAN FUND ACCOUNT.

PREMIER AND CHIEF SECRETARY—SOLDIER SETTLEMENT AND REPATRIATION.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I beg to move—

“That £50,000 be granted for ‘Premier and Chief Secretary’s Department—Soldier Settlement and Repatriation.’”

Question put and passed.

PUBLIC WORKS—CONSTRUCTION BRANCH.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I beg to move—

“That £16,744 be granted for ‘Department of Public Works—Construction Branch.’”

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*): I visited the West End school recently and saw the walls eaten with white ants and dry rot. I hope that the Minister will carry out the necessary repairs before the building gets into a worse state.

Question put and passed.

ESTIMATING, PURCHASING, AND COSTING BRANCH.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I beg to move—

“That £5,565 be granted for ‘Estimating, Purchasing, and Costing Branch.’”

Question put and passed.

BUILDINGS, ETC.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I beg to move—

“That £394,100 be granted for ‘Buildings, etc.’”

Question put and passed.

WORKERS’ HOMES.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I beg to move—

“That £50,000 be granted for ‘Workers’ Homes.’”

Question put and passed.

TREASURY—LOANS FOR LOCAL BODIES.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I beg to move—

“That £600,000 be granted for ‘Treasury—Loans to Local Bodies.’”

Question put and passed.

CENTRAL SUGAR-MILLS.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I beg to move—

“That £100,000 be granted for ‘Central Sugar-mills.’”

Question put and passed.

PUBLIC LANDS—WIRE NETTING.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I beg to move—

“That £25,000 be granted for ‘Department of Public Lands—Wire Netting.’”

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*): I would like the Minister to give us some information in connection with the disposal of this wire netting. I am receiving quite a number of letters regarding the delays that occur in connection with the execution of the orders, and I would like to know if the Minister can give us some enlightenment as to the cause of delays, and whether it is not possible to increase the amount placed on the Estimates. The wire netting is not being given away, as the settlers have to pay for it.

Mr. COSTELLO (*Carnarvon*): The Minister has been leading the settlers to believe that they were to get wire netting on terms similar to those granted before the war, but up to the present we have not been able to get any definite information from the Department of Public Lands as to what is going to be the procedure in regard to this wire netting. In many cases the settlers have their fences erected waiting to put up their wire netting, but they cannot get any information

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from the department as to when the wire netting will be available. The Government are not losing over this netting, as they receive interest and redemption yearly, and it is a short-sighted policy on the part of the Government to provide only £25,000 for this purpose. The vote should be increased to at least £60,000. Any country that is made dog-proof is worth a good deal more than country that is not dog-proof, and I hope the Secretary for Public Lands will realise his responsibilities in this connection.

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*): I received a letter to-day asking for information as to why a certain farmer in my electorate cannot receive wire netting when his application has been approved of. He planted 50 acres of cotton which he is desirous of netting, but so far he has been unable to get the netting. When the department undertake to supply wire netting for which they are being paid, the least they can do is to notify the settler when he can get that wire netting. The settlers are under some misapprehension regarding this wire netting grant.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There is a demand for more wire netting than we can find money for.

Mr. PETERSON: That may be all right; but I am dealing now with delays in supplying netting for which applications have been granted.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That will be attended to.

Mr. CLAYTON (*Wide Bay*): It would be in the best interests of settlement if the Government could see their way to increase this vote. There are many farmers settled adjacent to forests, and these forests are the breeding ground for pests. It is almost impossible for these farmers to grow crops on account of the pests, and more money should be made available for the purpose of supplying the farmers with wire netting. These settlers are an asset to the State, and we should assist them in every way possible. I am pleased to know that it is possible the Government will get a grant from the Federal Government for the purpose of providing wire netting, and I was glad to get an assurance the other day from the Minister that he would consider the question of spending some of that grant in my electorate. I can assure him that it is urgently needed, and I hope he will give the matter the consideration he promised.

Question put and passed.

RESUMPTIONS.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I beg to move—

“That £518,000 be granted for ‘Resumptions.’”

Question put and passed.

LAND SETTLEMENT.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I beg to move—

“That £55,200 be granted for ‘Land Settlement.’”

Question put and passed.

[*Mr. Costello.*]

PUBLIC ESTATE IMPROVEMENT.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I beg to move—

“That £20,570 be granted for ‘Public Estate Improvement.’”

Question put and passed.

FORESTRY OFFICE.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I beg to move—

“That £30,000 be granted for ‘Forestry Office.’”

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): There is a reduction of £12,000 in this vote, and I would like to know if the activities of the Forestry Office are being curtailed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*): We did cut down the vote, but we decided to restore it to the full amount. It would have meant breaking up the organisation of the office if we had kept our Estimate down, and I have induced the Treasurer to agree to restore the amount to enable us to continue the same organisation as previously.

Question put and passed.

IRRIGATION AND WATER SUPPLY COMMISSION.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I beg to move—

“That £281,210 be granted for ‘Irrigation and Water Supply Commission.’”

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*): I would like to draw the Minister's attention to a fault in regard to the channelling in the irrigation area. I am not finding fault, but merely wish to prevent what will be a costly mistake. In the channelling work going on in the Dawson area the earth excavated from the channels is being put right on the edge of the channels, and with the very first heavy weather the whole of that earth will silt back again. The practice followed in dam sinking is to cart the excavated earth a considerable distance from the edge of the dam. The earth excavated from the channels in connection with the Murrumbidgee scheme was taken a considerable distance away, so that it would not silt back again. It is no good denying that these things occur.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is a matter for the Commissioner. I don't know anything about channelling.

Mr. PETERSON: There are a lot of things which the Minister will admit ought to be known.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If I did that work, I would want the salary the Commissioner is getting; I would not be here. (Laughter.)

Mr. PETERSON: I admit that, if we want practical men to run these State undertakings in the interests of the whole of the State, they are being badly paid at the present salaries.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I should say that if Mr. Partridge is doing wrong he is not fit for his job, but you must show that he is wrong.

Mr. PETERSON: I am only giving the statement made to me. What I am concerned about is that the whole of the cost of that irrigation work has to be charged to the settler. Therefore, in order to avoid any superfluous charge from being put on the settler, I think the matter should be brought before the Commissioner. Mr. Partridge is a first-class man.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why don't you talk to him about this?

Mr. PETERSON: It is not my duty to go into his office and tell him these things. I am representing the settlers in the Normanby electorate. We are asked to vote a certain sum of money, and it is the function of members of Parliament to bring up these questions here.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You know my position. Mr. Partridge is a highly-paid officer in charge of the undertaking. How can I tell him he is doing anything wrong? I am not competent to tell him. The political head is not competent to tell an engineer how to perform his work.

Mr. PETERSON: There is no engineering about this at all. It is simply a matter of excavations taking place in channels and the earth being put on the side of the drains. With the first wet weather it will all go back again. Miles and miles of this excavation are to be gone on with. I am just as anxious to see the success of that scheme as the hon. gentleman is, because I am an irrigator, but I do not want to see any of the overloading that has taken place in connection with Inkerman in connection with this settlement. I am not in a position to give advice.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Commissioner has been on these settlements all his life. He ought to know the right method. He was there last week, and he has just returned. We must put our confidence in him. I certainly cannot check him in these things. It would be the worst sort of political interference if I started to tell him how to make irrigation drains.

Mr. PETERSON: It may savour of political interference, but we see from the report on the Inkerman irrigation area the other day that Mr. Partridge practically condemned in toto the work of Mr. Eklund, the previous engineer.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He may come under the criticism of some future engineer.

Mr. PETERSON: I have said already that I do not want to make a noise about the thing other than to protect the settlers.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He will read what you say in "Hansard."

Mr. PETERSON: I do not think he will read it. He is far too busy to read "Hansard." I believe that the Minister picked the right man in Mr. Partridge, and I hope that the information I have received is not correct.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I am rather surprised at the Minister's attitude with regard to the statement of the hon. member for Normanby. The hon. member is not asking the Minister to tell the engineer how to do his job, but is simply voicing the complaint that has been made to him. All he is asking the Minister to do is to pass it on to Mr. Partridge.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Suppose Mr. Partridge told me that the statement is absolutely wrong? I must accept his statements.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Minister said that the hon. member for Normanby should have gone to Mr. Partridge. I think a complaint like that should be sent on to Mr. Partridge by the Minister.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: A thing like this has nothing to do with my department.

Mr. TAYLOR: One item which I am pleased to see is the grant of £5,000 to local authorities for small water conservation schemes. I hope that amount will continue to grow in the future in connection with these irrigation proposals.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): If the criticism of hon. members is not conveyed in some way to departmental officers it is useless to get up and criticise.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Criticism on political matters.

Mr. MORGAN: On matters pertaining to all work carried out by the Government—it may not be political. The remarks of the hon. member for Normanby bring to my mind what occurred at one time in Victoria in connection with the construction of channels. In the first work they did there they just dug the soil out and pitched it alongside the gutter, and in the first heavy rain which came along all the soil fell back into the drain. I was a member of the trust in which it happened. We were supposed to have one of the best engineers for work of that description. When a dam was constructed in Victoria, under the specifications the soil had to be removed to a distance of 16 feet from the side of the dam in order to stop the soil during heavy rain from re-entering the dam which had been constructed. The same thing applies to these irrigation channels. If what the hon. member for Normanby mentions has taken place in the Dawson Valley, it is similar to what happened at one time in Victoria in connection with the construction of similar drains for the supply of water.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Judging by the photographs of the channels in the irrigation area, it is true.

Mr. MORGAN: If it is true, the Minister must admit that, when rain comes, it is likely to wash the soil back into the channel.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Not if the grass grows.

Mr. MORGAN: It may take years for couch grass to grow on it and bind it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The chief danger is from yabbies.

Mr. MORGAN: Rain may come a fortnight or a month after the soil has been removed. They will then have to go along the channels and clean them all out again. I am surprised that a man with Mr. Partridge's experience is allowing this to happen. I think the information must be more or less correct. His attention should be specially drawn to the matter, so that he will be able to intimate whether it is true or not, and, if it is true, he should let us know whether or not the rains will have the

Mr. Morgan.]

effect of causing the soil to re-enter the channels. There has been a lot of money wasted in other places in this respect. A similar thing happened in Victoria, and we had to pay for our experience there. We do not want these mistakes to occur in connection with the channelling in the Dawson Valley.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): I disagree with the hon. member for Normanby and the hon. member for Murilla. (Laughter.) The Commissioner may have very good reasons for having the soil put close to the edge of the channels. (Hear, hear!) I have seen drains where the soil was put close to the edges purposely, and it may be that in this case it was done to protect the irrigation channel.

At 4 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN: Under the provisions of Standing Order No. 307, and of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 18th October, I shall now proceed to put the questions for the vote under consideration: the balance remaining unvoted for the Department of Public Lands; the balance remaining unvoted from the Loan Fund; the Supplementary Estimates, Revenue, 1922-23; Supplementary Estimates, Trust Funds, 1922-23; Supplementary Estimates, Loan Fund, 1922-23; and the Vote of Credit on account 1924-25.

Question—That £231,210 be granted for 'Irrigation and Water Supply Commission'—put and passed.

The following items were then put and passed:—

"Department of Public Lands (balance of vote), £496,000;

"Loan Fund Estimates (balance of votes), £2,394,517;

"Supplementary Estimates, Revenue, 1922-23, £173,619 0s. 1d.;

"Supplementary Estimates, Trust Funds, 1922-23, £334,643 3s. 8d.;

"Supplementary Estimates, Loan Fund, 1922-23, £216,362 1s. 4d.;

"Vote of Credit on account 1924-25, £2,500,000."

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to certain resolutions.

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

RECEPTION OF RESOLUTIONS.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I beg to move—

"That the resolutions be received to-morrow."

Question put and passed.

QUESTIONS.

GRANT FOR PRICKLY PEAR DESTRUCTION ON BAJOO MAGAZINE RESERVE.

HON. W. H. BARNES, in the absence of Mr. Peterson (*Normanby*), asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"1. Was the sum of £350 allotted by his department about the year 1914 for the purpose of destroying prickly-pear on the Bajool Magazine Reserve?

[Mr. Morgan.]

"2. Was this amount expended in such destruction?"

"3. If not the full amount, how much of the £350 grant was so expended?"

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

"1. No.

"2. and 3. See answer to No. 1."

PROPOSALS OF JOINT CATTLE COMMITTEE AND COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURE IN RE MEAT INDUSTRY.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

"1. Were the proposals of the Joint Cattle Committee (representing the cattle owners of Queensland and the Council of Agriculture) for the betterment of the conditions in the meat industry submitted for his approval?

"2. Did he disapprove of such proposals; and, if so, for what reason?"

"3. Is it the intention of the Government to introduce legislation to give effect to these proposals, and, if so, when?"

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

"1. Yes.

"2. and 3. No, but the Solicitor-General, on the 4th of August, called attention to serious Constitutional difficulties. The most important of these was that the proposals, if embodied in legislation, could not affect the absolute freedom of interstate trade, commerce, and intercourse secured by section 92 of the Federal Constitution, and that the proposed tax would not apply to interstate transactions, even in cases where the cattle would not be required by the transaction to leave the State."

LEGISLATION TO MAKE PROVISION FOR WATER SUPPLIES FOR SETTLERS.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"Referring to the water supply scheme and for provision of communal water supplies for individual settlers, which was lately discussed by and received the approval of the Council of Agriculture, is it the intention of the Government to introduce legislation to give effect to this scheme during the present session?"

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

"The Bill is ready and will be passed next session."

AVERAGE COST OF SLAUGHTERING AND RETAILING IN STATE BUTCHERIES.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*) asked the Secretary for Public Works—

"Can he furnish particulars of the average cost in the State butcher shops per 100 lb. of beef for slaughtering and retailing?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *MacKay*) replied—
“Yes.”

RAILWAY ROUTE FROM CASINO TO KILLARNEY.
Mr. COSTELLO (*Carnarvon*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

“1. Has his attention been drawn to the proposed visit of a New South Wales Parliamentary party to inspect the railway route from Casino to Killarney, arriving at Killarney on 4th November next?

“2. Have any arrangements been made for representatives of the Government to meet this party with a view to encouraging the construction of this railway?”

“3. Is he aware of the advantages this line would provide in the opening up of markets for the produce of the Darling Downs and Granite Belt?”

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

“1. No intimation has been received by the Railway Department regarding this matter.

“2. and 3. See No. 1.”

DENTAL, OPTICIANS, AND PHARMACY BILL.

INITIATION.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): 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 Dental Act of 1902, the Opticians Act of 1917, and the Pharmacy Act of 1917 in certain particulars.”

Question put and passed.

PRICKLY-PEAR LAND BILL.

INITIATION.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*): 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 make better provision for the administration of lands infested with prickly-pear within the State, and for other consequential purposes.”

Question put and passed.

FRUIT MARKETING ORGANISATION BILL.

INITIATION.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): 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 provide for the organisation of the marketing of Queensland fruit.”

Question put and passed.

MEAT INDUSTRY ENCOURAGEMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): There will not be a very great deal of difference of opinion about this measure, particularly when I remind the House that it is really part of a Federal scheme, agreed to by the representatives of the industry themselves, sitting in conference on 19th and 20th September last year. Hon. members who were present at the conference are familiar with the discussion, which resulted in a Federal Meat Advisory Board and a State Meat Advisory Board being appointed. This Bill is to ratify the decision arrived at at that conference. There seems to be some confusion in the minds of some people as to the connection between the scheme in the Bill and another scheme submitted to the Government by the Council of Agriculture as the result of several conferences in Queensland, particularly the conference held at Roma, where certain resolutions were passed, and, as the result of subsequent conferences with a select committee of the Council of Agriculture. That scheme was entirely different. It had for its object the marketing of meat or cattle. This scheme has for its object the organisation of a purely advisory body, and is what can be referred to as Mr. Rodgers's scheme.

I wish to show the attitude that I took up with regard to the question at the conference in Melbourne. I pointed out then that something more than an advisory scheme was necessary, and I also pointed out that no State scheme could be of any advantage because of constitutional difficulties and because the industry was an Australian-wide industry. Amongst other things, I urged on the conference, particularly on the chairman, Mr. Rodgers, the wisdom of the conference fully considering the scheme which Mr. Massey brought in in New Zealand, where he created a Board to control the whole of the export of meat. I pointed out that, if this State, which is the largest cattle-producing State in the Commonwealth, did anything in the way of marketing meat or controlling prices of meat, our actions would conflict with section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution. At that conference I quoted some of Mr. Massey's remarks when introducing the Bill which became law in New Zealand in February, 1922. Those remarks can be quoted in this Chamber particularly, because, while this advisory scheme might be of advantage with regard to new markets and giving advice generally, the various States of the Commonwealth still feel that, if the industry is going to be placed on a sound footing, some huge co-operative marketing scheme must be evolved; and even that scheme, as is the case with Mr. Massey's scheme, must involve a measure of compulsion. It is all very fine to talk about the freedom of the individual to do as he likes; and in the next breath to talk about co-operation. You cannot have both. Mr. Jowett rightly pointed out at that conference that, in his opinion—which should carry considerable weight coming from such an individualist—the time had arrived in the history of this great Commonwealth when the defaulter who wanted to stay outside of a voluntary scheme and receive the full benefits without taking the responsibilities—just the same as a “scab” worker endeavours to remain outside a union and obtain

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all the advantages—that individual should be subject to some form of compulsion by the Government to compel him to fall into line with any great co-operative marketing scheme that might be brought forward. At that conference I quoted Mr. Massey, when introducing his Bill, as saying—

“During the discussion, I, or someone else, expressed the opinion that it was a pity that we could not go back to something like the commandeer which was in existence in war time, and some of the members who have since been members of the committee asked me whether, if they drew up a report making suggestions to go over the present difficulty and on the lines of the commandeer, I would be willing to consider it. I said I would. I thanked them for the suggestion and asked them to get to work as soon as possible, and they did.”

The Bill was the result of that suggestion. I quoted Mr. Massey further—

“The Act, which is called the Meat Export Control Act of 1922, empowers the Board—

(a) To direct and control all export sales and shipment of New Zealand frozen meat of the 1921-22 season output, and for such periods thereafter as shall be determined;

(b) To take control of all meat derived from stock slaughtered for export as soon as it is placed in the freezing chambers in good and merchantable condition and graded as required by the Board, which may from time to time, as it considers desirable, decide as to any class or classes of such meat which it will not accept as suitable for export.”

I think Mr. Massey was wise in recognising, as he evidently did, that the time had arrived when the exporter should not be allowed to send any old thing to the London market or to foreign markets where we desire to build up a reputation. He therefore created a Board on which the producers were dominant, and gave them power to say that not 1 oz. of meat could go from New Zealand unless they were satisfied that it was right up to the quality they desired and complied with all the conditions as to quality and other things essential in connection with an export trade, so that the good name of New Zealand would not be injured by any exporter for his own gain. I stated at the conference—

“A Board such as that constituted in New Zealand should represent the producers. The producers should see that only the best of meat went on to the London market. In this way we would retain the good name that we have or endeavour, as one delegate said, to improve that which we have at the present time.

“The conditions of the New Zealand Act continue—

(c) The Board from time to time assess the net value of the meat delivered into store at the works. The Government, through the Board, to advance to the owner a percentage, to be agreed upon, of such net value, with recourse against the person from whom such advance is made, and in addition to advance such sums as will cover charges for slaughtering, freezing, bagging, railage, putting f.o.b., freight,

insurance, exchange, and all overseas storage and selling charges, taking as security store warrants, bills of lading, or other documents of title.

All by-products to remain the uncontrolled property of the owner of the stock slaughtered for export, who may make such arrangement as he thinks fit with freezing companies or others in regard to same.

(d) The Board to make sales of meat f.o.b. or c.i.f. or to consign meat for sale overseas as at its discretion, according to what it considers to be in the best interests of producers.

(e) To negotiate freight contracts and freight arrangements for the overseas carriage of frozen meat. No contract to be entered into until approved by the Government.”

I pointed out with regard to the question of freight—and I am satisfied every member agreed with me—that a board, constituted as Mr. Massey had constituted it in New Zealand, to speak for the whole of the exporters of Australia, would be able to go to the shipping lines—not go cap in hand asking the Government to use their influence—but to go and say, “We are the sole exporters, and our price for freight is so much.” The time is past when one party should dictate what the conditions should be. That condition of affairs existed years ago with regard to the worker; but the worker has now some say as to what wages and conditions he shall work under. If the council fixed a price, they could say to a shipping line, “We are satisfied that such-and-such a freight is a reasonable freight, and we ask you to consider that, otherwise we will have to consider the advisability of having our own boats.” That is an important power that was placed in the hands of the board under the Massey scheme.

I referred the marketing scheme brought forward by the Council of Agriculture to the Solicitor-General, Mr. Webb, who pointed out, as I did, the constitutional difficulties which faced the State under the scheme. While the scheme brought forward by the Council of Agriculture would be a very good one if the constitutional difficulties could be overcome, they cannot be overcome by any State scheme, though they could be overcome if the Commonwealth Government acted on the suggestions I made on that occasion. I am not making any comparison between the two schemes. There seems to be some confusion in the minds of men outside in relation to the scheme for marketing brought forward by the Council of Agriculture and the organising scheme embodied in the Bill of which I am moving the second reading. Mr. Webb, in dealing with the marketing scheme put forward by the Council of Agriculture, said this—

“Briefly the proposals are—

(1) That a cattle board be empowered to fix a minimum price for stock for slaughter; this price to vary with cost of production.

(2) That the board be empowered to impose a percentage tax on sales of cattle in Queensland.

(3) That although the board is to be elected only by graziers owning 100 or more head, the tax be paid by dairy farmers owning less than 100 head.

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(4) That the tax be applied *inter alia* to reimbursing losses incurred by cattle and meat exporters.

(5) That butchers and slaughterers be licensed by the board and keep accounts of purchases.

(6) That the penalty for breach of regulations be £50 or double the levy."

Mr. Webb also says this in regard to the scheme—

"These proposals, if embodied in legislation, could not affect the absolute freedom of interstate trade, commerce, and intercourse secured by section 92 of the Federal Constitution.

"The proposed tax would not apply to interstate transactions, even in cases where the cattle would not be required by the transaction to leave the State."

This is important. That is to say, the tax proposed to be levied under this scheme would not be imposed on interstate transactions. Mr. Webb goes on to say—

"And, of course, the minimum price could be fixed only for local sales."

That is to say, if some business man came to Queensland and made a purchase, he would not be subject to any levy that the local State Board proposed to impose on all cattle within the State. That practically destroyed the scheme so far as a State levy was concerned, and so far as interstate contracts were concerned. The minimum price can only be fixed for local sales. The Council desired to fix a price for all meat produced in Queensland. Mr. Webb further states—

"*Macarthur v. Queensland*, 29 C.L.R., 530 at 545 and 549.

"This means that the whole burden of the proposal—the tax and the minimum price—would indirectly fall on local consumers."

It was not the desire of the Board only to impose a tax on the Queensland consumer. What they proposed to do was to organize the meat industry of Queensland so as to be able to fix the price for the whole product, and to put a levy on the whole of the products to reimburse those who lost by exporting the surplus.

Mr. TAYLOR: That is the wholesale price?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes.

Mr. EDWARDS: Did not the Council of Agriculture write an explanation on that opinion?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes.

Mr. EDWARDS: They did not agree with the opinion, did they?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They did not agree with the legal opinion of Solicitor-General, but I am not going to accept the Council of Agriculture as a legal authority. Their knowledge of the industry may be very great, but on a legal question I am compelled to accept the opinion of the Solicitor-General. If the Council of Agriculture had obtained the opinion of an eminent counsel—not an ordinary lawyer practising in Brisbane—and he had differed from the Solicitor-General, then I would have gone further into the legal aspect of the question. I have not done so. I expressed an opinion in Melbourne on the constitutional difficulties long before the Council of Agriculture put forward their marketing scheme,

and I suggested that the Commonwealth should do what the Council of Agriculture desired the States to do.

I wish to say just a few words in regard to the Bill itself. It is no use wasting too much time in its elaboration, because it is a Bill on which there will not be any great difference of opinion, as it is simply carrying out a promise that I made and that the Premier made to enact any Commonwealth scheme which would have for its object the betterment of the meat industry. We promised that such a scheme would have the support of the Queensland Government. A Federal Bill was drafted and submitted to all the cattle-producing States in the Commonwealth, and I am pleased to say that Queensland is the first of those States to introduce the Bill. The Bill will become law by proclamation. What I mean is that, if the other States do not keep their part of the contract, and if the Commonwealth recedes from its idea, it will be no use Queensland putting this Bill in operation.

Mr. TAYLOR: If the Commonwealth stands out and some of the other States disagree, what then?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am satisfied that Queensland will not stand out if sufficient of the other States agree. The Bill will be brought into operation by proclamation as soon as there is a reasonable chance of making it effective. The scheme was evolved last year at a very large and important conference.

Briefly, the scheme provides for the creation of an Australian Meat Council. The functions of the Council are advisory. They are to advise the Federal Government on export and other matters affecting the industry. A State Meat Advisory Board will also be constituted. I have appointed that Board in accordance with the promise I made. The Board will hold office for some time after the Bill becomes law. Its functions will be to advise the Minister, act as the agent of the Australian Council; making levies and assessments, and deal with measures which may be deemed necessary to increase production, the improvement of methods in the industry, standardisation, etc. The maximum levy will be 1d. a head for cattle and one-sixth of a penny a head on sheep, with a minimum of 100 head in the case of large stock and 500 sheep. Owners of less than 100 cattle and 500 sheep or less will not have a vote or be taxed under this scheme. It is believed that the maximum levy will not be necessary, or that it will not be necessary to make a levy every year. Fifty stockowners have the power to demand a poll before a second levy is made. I insisted on that clause myself. It is necessary to make a levy to carry on as soon as the Bill comes into operation. No further levy will be made unless the poll, if demanded by fifty stockowners, is taken and the majority of the stockowners decide on a levy.

Mr. TAYLOR: Are those fifty over the whole of the Commonwealth, or to be in one State only?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: In one State only. The Bill provides for the appointment of a first Board, which has already been appointed as a provisional Board. After that, elections [4.30 p.m.] will take place for the appointment of the Board. I think I might refer to the system of voting. I did

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not agree altogether with the system of voting—I thought the principle of one man one vote should apply, but there were strong arguments put up in favour of the man with the large herd having greater voting power, and we agreed on the following scheme:—

Under 1,000 head of cattle or 6,000 head of sheep—one vote.

Over 1,000 and under 5,000 head of cattle, or over 6,000 and under 30,000 head of sheep—two votes.

5,000 head of cattle or 30,000 head of sheep and upwards—three votes.

The triennial elections will take place upon a day to be appointed by the Board, and the first Board will be appointed by the Governor in Council by notification published in the "Gazette." No doubt, that Board will be the provisional Board that has already been elected. Then it is provided that—

"All acts done by such Board and appointments and elections made by it shall be and remain valid as if this Act had been in force, and such Board shall be deemed to have been constituted under this Act. Such Board shall remain in office for a term to be fixed by the Minister, not exceeding one year after the commencement of this Act."

That is to say, if the provisional Board is confirmed when the Bill becomes law, it shall only hold office for not more than twelve months, when an election will take place.

Clause 15—"Powers of Board"—is an important one. It reads—

"The Board may at all times—

(a) Advise the Minister on all matters relating to this Act;

(b) Act as the deputy or agent of the Australian Meat Council in the making of levies and assessments, and in each and every matter in respect of which the said council is empowered by its constitution to delegate its authority to the Board; and

(c) Deal generally with respect to any measure which it may deem necessary to increase the production of beef and mutton and their by-products, and to improve the methods at any time in use of breeding, carrying, killing, cold-storing, or selling stock and meat and other products thereof."

Those are briefly the powers and duties of the Board.

Mr. TAYLOR: Does not the Bill deal with by-products?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It does not deal with any form of trading. The relation to the Australian Meat Council is that before every general election of members of the Australian Meat Council the Board in duly constituted meeting, of which not less than thirty days' clear notice has been given, shall choose and nominate four persons to be its representatives upon the Australian Meat Council in the following manner:—

"(a) Those of its members who are representatives of the meatworks interest shall, all of them together, in writing in a single document over their several signatures, nominate one person; and

"(b) Those of its members who are representatives of the cattle interest and

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the sheep interest, respectively, shall each, according to their sections and in like manner to the representatives of the meatworks, nominate three persons according to the following proportions, namely—the cattle interest, two persons; the sheep interest, one person."

I do not think there is anything else that I need to expound at this juncture. I do not anticipate that there will be much criticism or objection to the Bill. I admit that there are one or two slight alterations in the Bill as submitted by the Australian Meat Council. It was proposed in the original Bill that a fund should be vested in the Treasurer, and that the Treasurer should collect the money. It was thought better that the cattlemen should collect the money themselves, and the Agriculture Department, of course, will assist them in every way. The cattlemen will establish their own fund in some bank, to be decided upon. The Government really have no control in this matter other than to pass the Act and give effect to the principles embodied, and the representatives of the industry themselves will carry out the scheme.

I have much pleasure in moving—

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

Mr. BELL (*Fassifern*): I rise to support the second reading of the Bill. I desire to congratulate the Government and the Minister on introducing this measure, because it is following out the recommendations that were made at a conference held in Melbourne in September last year, at which all the Australian States were represented.

The swing of the pendulum has affected all primary industries, and those of Australia, in common with those in other parts of the world, have felt the depression severely. The responsibility rests, not only with the producer, but with the Government to do all that is possible to improve stock and affect economies in production and distribution. This is demanded by the impoverished condition of the world to-day.

The Government can help very considerably in doing their share by reducing rents and granting cheap railage—because it is of very great importance, not only to Queensland, but to all the Empire, that the meat industry shall be enabled to carry on. The need for organisation in the industry is very great indeed. It is one of the worst-organised primary industries in Australia to-day, and it is high time that we had some organisation which will link us up with the other States of the Commonwealth—an official organisation which will enable us to have some control of our great export trade.

I might just mention some of the functions that this Board will undertake. First of all, the duty of the Board will be to encourage the improvement of stock. In that matter Australia is rather behind some of the other countries of the world. The Board will have to encourage early turning off and fattening; beasts will have to be turned off when they are two and a-half years old. We have seen that theory applied in Argentina, our greatest rival, and it has enabled them to market younger stock and get better prices in the markets of the world. It will also be the duty of the Board and the Australian Meat Council to encourage scientific

investigation. We have lagged behind too long in this matter. Doctor Leiper, who, I think, is one of the greatest authorities on parasitical diseases, says that Australia is greatly lacking in this respect. We have ticks, nodules, and other pests. With reference to nodules I might say that other countries of the world are also afflicted with them, and they are known as the *Ouchocerca* group. We have the "*Ouchocerca Gibsoni*," which attacks our beasts but is not found in other parts of the world. Doctor Cilento, of the Tropical Diseases Hospital in Townsville, has now discovered that this parasite is spread by a fly which he calls "*Tabanus Germanicus*." We have made a step in the direction of combating these pests. We know the cause of the parasite and probably shall be able to apply a remedy in the future. That is a matter for investigation, and I think there is a very big field awaiting scientific investigators in Australia to-day. Also, it will make investigations and encourage experiments in defrosting. The Commonwealth Government have carried out experiments in England in connection with one process, and there is also an electric process which is being experimented with to-day. If a perfect system of defrosting is invented, it will be of considerable advantage to Australia in connection with our export trade, and also the Southern trade, which we hope to see developed to a very much greater extent.

Then it is also proposed to establish a bureau of information. Stockowners of Australia can apply to the Australian Meat Council, and they will get information about markets in other parts of the world, or any information affecting the industry in Australia. It is also proposed to carry on propaganda in Great Britain and in the larger centres of the world, and also in the East. We have been asking that there should be some sort of preference granted to us by Great Britain. We do not expect very much from the British Parliament in the way of direct preference, but we do suggest that the report of the Bridgeman Commission should be adopted, and that all importers of foodstuffs into Great Britain should be licensed, and a condition of their license should be that they handle a certain proportion of Dominion-grown goods. It will also be the function of the State Boards and of the Australian Meat Council to advise the Federal and State Governments on any matters affecting the industry.

I would like to draw attention to what the Australian Meat Council has accomplished up to the present time. We have been successful in getting a subsidy granted by the Federal Government on meat exported. I do not claim that subsidies are a solution of the problem. Subsidies are not economical and they are not sound, but the conditions in the industry demand that something should be done. Under that subsidy Queensland's share in 1922 amounted to £100,000. Then we were successful in inducing the meat-works to reduce their treatment charges, and the shipping companies to reduce the shipping freights. In 1913—before the war—the freight from here to London was 9/16d. per lb., while in 1922 they were as high as 1½d. per lb. The Australian Meat Council, by its endeavours, has been able to get that freight reduced to 1d. per lb, and we are hopeful that the shipping companies will be induced still further to reduce the freight and so

place Australia in a position to compete with other countries of the world.

I wish now to deal with the question of the interstate livestock trade. We have seen within the last few months high prices ruling in the South, but Queensland stockowners were debarred from participating in these high prices. As we know, "Schedule S" is the area in Queensland which is affected by ticks, and stock from that area are not allowed to go to the South except under conditions of inspection with a three months' quarantine. "Schedule W," in which is included one-third of the stock of the State, is free from ticks. "Schedules T and Z" are buffer areas on the Darling Downs, and stockowners in those areas can also send their stock to the South subject to certain restrictions and inspections. It does not seem right or fair that Queensland stockowners should be debarred from taking advantage of high prices in the South. We claim that with proper dipping and inspections, when our stock are free from tick the stockowner should be at liberty to send their stock to New South Wales, South Australia, or Victoria, provided he has a certificate from the inspector at the border. We have kept the area within "Schedule W" free from ticks, and it is quite possible, by proper supervision, to see that no ticks are introduced into New South Wales or Victoria. It is proposed to interview the representatives of the Southern States and the chief stock inspectors of the various Governments with reference to having these restrictions removed, so that stockowners in Queensland, in times of high prices, will be able to take advantage of those high prices in the South. We have seen stock in Victoria bringing up to £28 a head when we could not get much more than £8 10s. a head in Brisbane; and in Sydney similar stock were fetching up to £23 a head.

Those are some of the functions that the State Meat Boards and the Australian Meat Council will carry out. I have already pointed out what has been accomplished, and I think the stockowners of Queensland will be amply repaid for any small levy that may be made upon them.

I will not deal with the constitution of the State Meat Boards and of the Australian Meat Council, as the Minister covered that ground. Up to the present time the Australian Meat Council has spent a sum of £9,400, which includes an amount of £5,000 to send two delegates to the East to ascertain if there are new markets there, and to report upon the possibility of an expansion of trade in the East. They have already visited the Philippines and Japan, and they are now coming round via Singapore and Java, and shortly we should receive a report as to the possibility of opening up trade in the East.

It is also the duty of the Australian Meat Council to search for new markets and to ascertain the conditions operating in other countries of the world. If we cannot carry on our industry in Australia economically, then we shall either have to find fresh markets or the industry will be reduced to such an extent that we shall only be able to rear livestock to supply our own internal markets, which will mean a very great loss, not only to Queensland, but to Australia generally.

Also, it might be necessary to subsidise shops in England and subsidise companies who will open cold stores in the East. The great difficulty in the distribution of meat in the East is that there are not sufficient cold

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stores available. If the Australian Meat Council think it advisable and that it will assist the industry in Australia, it will probably subsidise shops and have some controlling influence over distributing shops in other parts of the world.

There have been many propositions put forward for the protection of the industry. We have had suggestion of a cattle pool. Pools are very difficult to work, and the system was not feasible, and, as the Secretary for Agriculture has pointed out, it would not be constitutional.

I notice that Argentina has just passed an Act of Parliament providing that no beef can be exported unless the producer receives a minimum price. They realise that the meat companies there have sole control over the distribution in Britain, France, and other countries on the Continent of Europe, and they say, "We will not give you permission to export this beef unless the producer is assured a minimum price." Argentina can do that, but we in Queensland could not pass such an Act, as it would be against the spirit of the Federal Constitution.

I do not anticipate that the State Meat Advisory Board or the Australian Meat Council are going to be a complete solution of our difficulties. They will not be a panacea for all our troubles—we shall have to do something else. It has been suggested to the Premier that he should establish abattoirs in the Brisbane area, and also in the Central and the Northern divisions, as required. I might say that we suggested a bigger proposition. We suggested that the Meat and Dairy Produce Encouragement Act of 1893 should be re-enacted, and a levy made on the whole of the stock of the State to enable the stockowners to acquire meat-works in the North, the Centre, and the South. To get over the greatest bugbear of the operators in Queensland—lack of continuity of operations—it was suggested by the stockowners that these should be declared to be central abattoirs for North, Centre, and South. However, the Premier suggested that there should first of all be abattoirs in the Brisbane area, and I think it is high time that abattoirs were established here. This is the only capital State in the Commonwealth that has not got abattoirs. There would be proper inspection and supervision and the people would be supplied with healthy food, as the inspection would be centralised. Under the present system we have some sixty slaughter-houses in and around Brisbane, and under such a system it is impossible to have efficient control of the cattle slaughtered. Further than that, it is not economical, because there is a great deal of waste. Under a central abattoir system there would be a great saving in the by-products alone. We would also suggest that the abattoirs should be big enough for a stockowner to have stock treated on his own account, so that, if he was not satisfied with the price he received he could either export his meat overseas or send it to the South in a chilled condition, as that is done in connection with the Metropolitan Meat Industry Board in New South Wales, where they have one of the finest abattoirs in the world. We would like to see such abattoirs established in Brisbane.

Hon. F. T. BRENNAN: When the railway connection is made between Beaudesert and Kyogle it will be an advantage in that direction.

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Mr. BELL: It would be of very great assistance if the Kyogle connection was built. We could then send chilled beef either by train or boat. The proper way to tranship beef from the North to the South is in a chilled condition. People in the South would get a wholesome product, and we would provide work in Queensland for our workmen. We would also treat our by-products—our hides and so on—and we would probably have more competition, as buyers for these by-products would come here. In establishing abattoirs I would suggest also that an abattoir Board should be appointed on similar lines to the Meat Industry Board of New South Wales, which is a Board of three. There they have control also of the saleyards, and I think that such a Board should have control of the saleyards in Queensland, because we look upon the saleyards as a public utility.

I hope that the Bill will pass, because it will place in the hands of the producers in Queensland some means of organisation—it will co-ordinate the activities under one head. When we have one head to appeal to it will be very much more satisfactory.

The Minister explained the provisions of the Bill with regard to the system under which members are elected to the Board. Owners with under 1,000 head of cattle or 6,000 head of sheep are to have one vote; owners with over 1,000 and under 5,000 head of cattle or over 6,000 and under 30,000 head of sheep, two votes, and owners with more than 5,000 head of cattle or 30,000 head of sheep three votes. That is similar to the provisions under the Rabbit Act in operation in Queensland to-day, which has been carried out most successfully. The principal clause in the Bill is clause 13, which refers to polls which may be demanded by fifty owners. This is a democratic idea and probably one which the Government might try in their taxation Bills; but at the present time the industry is going through such a bad period that no matter what taxation is proposed the taxpayers will vote against it. I propose at the Committee stage to suggest an amendment to provide that at least 60 per cent. of the stockowners who pay the assessment shall vote, and that the question must be carried by a three-fifths majority of that number. I would ask the Minister if there is to be only one poll in Queensland. Clause 13 states—

"After a first levy of an assessment has been made under this Act, any number of owners of stock, not being less than fifty such owners, who have duly paid such assessments, shall be entitled to demand that a poll of stockowners liable to pay assessments under this Act shall be taken on the question whether a further levy of assessments under this Act shall be made or not."

Is there only one poll to be taken after the first assessment has been paid, or can they have any number of polls so long as fifty owners ask for them?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is intended that they shall have any number of polls, but it is not quite clear. We shall have to alter that.

Mr. BELL: I want to be clear on the point. If it is the intention to have more than one poll, I think there should not be more than one poll in a period of three

years, and I will move an amendment in that direction.

Then there is a slight mistake in clause 23, which says—

“Every such complaint shall be made by the chairman in his official name of ‘the Chairman of the State Meat Industry Board.’”

The assessment is only proposed as a maximum levy of 1d. per head of cattle and one-sixth of a penny per head of sheep, and it is proposed only to raise half of this in the first year, which amount, it is hoped, will carry us on. The Federal Government made available to the Australian Meat Council £50,000 for organisation purposes. We as a Board are to do our best to see that that is paid. If, after a poll is taken, it is decided that the Board shall cease to exist and there are to be no more levies, it means that the Board will go out of existence. The first year's assessment we estimate will produce £40,000—that is, $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per head of cattle and one-twelfth of a penny per head of sheep.

Mr. MORGAN: Is that for Queensland alone?

Mr. BELL: For the whole of Australia. The Northern Territory has signified its intention of coming under this Bill, which will be sanctioned by an Order in Council. New South Wales is also very much interested and will probably come in; Victoria will come in; and Tasmania has signified its intention of coming in. Western Australia and South Australia are doubtful—in fact, they say they do not want to come in at present; but I think that, if this Bill is passed and the other Eastern States of the Commonwealth fall into line, Western Australia and South Australia will also fall into line.

I would like to point out the need for some organisation in the meat industry in Australia to-day. We have been carrying on the industry for the last three years at a great loss.

At 5 p.m.,

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

Mr. BELL: We have sold our products at less than the cost of production. In proof of that statement, I would like to draw the attention of the House to some figures in reference to State stations. In 1921-1922 it cost the State £217,466 17s. 10d., including interest and depreciation and all other charges, to run the State stations, spread over 208,837 head of cattle, which works out at £1 0s. 8d. per head. In ordinary seasons, the normal cast from this number of stock should be 11 per cent., or about 23,000 head. This would mean that the Government ought to receive £9 8s. per head for their fat stock to enable them to pay working expenses and interest on their cattle properties. Assuming that the cattle average 600 lb. in weight, this would represent 32s. per 100 lb. Hon. members know that that is far above what we have been receiving on the average. Then the Government are free from liability for Federal and State taxation, and the private owner does not get his borrowed money at as low a rate as that charged to the Government cattle stations—that is, 5 per cent. and 6 per cent. from Loan Fund and Trust Funds, respectively. In 1922-1923 the cost of running the State stations was £224,717 3s., spread over 218,413 cattle, or

£1 0s. 7d. per head. So hon. members will realise that we are not getting anything like the cost of production, and the industry cannot be carried on unless we are getting at least that cost. It, therefore, behoves the Government to give every assistance they can, not only to the cattle-growers who remain in the industry, but also to those who can convert their country into sheep-carrying country. Large areas of country at present carrying cattle can carry sheep, but the owners have gone out of sheep because of the enormous cost of dealing with rabbits, dingoes, and other pests. I think the Government should provide cheap wire-netting on extended terms so that that country can again be made profitable for sheep.

I have much pleasure in giving my support to this Bill, and I hope it will have a speedy passage through the House.

Mr. FOLEY (*Leichhardt*): I appreciate the fact that some move is now being made to organise the cattle industry on a firm footing, although the Bill is really a machinery Bill with very little in it besides provision for the establishment of the Advisory Board and a fund to carry on. It is to be hoped that when the cattlemen have the opportunity of appointing their officers on the State and Federal bodies, they will be intelligent enough to appoint men who will carry out their duties in the interests of the cattlemen vigorously and well. The industry is in such a position to-day that every thinking man must regard the outlook with a certain amount of alarm. I have received this letter from the secretary of the Australian Labour party at Withersfield, on the Central Railway—

“Withersfield, 14th October, 1923.

“F. A. Foley, M.L.A.

“Just a few lines to let you know how we are getting on here.

“It is keeping very dry and cattlemen are having a pretty rough time, not only with the dry weather, but they are also ‘rooked’ by the ‘ring.’

“Though we know you are unable to alter present conditions, still the information may be of use to you in some future debate, as we have no doubt the Government will try to make things better. A case in point: One of our members sent thirty head of fats to Robert Duncan and Company last month, which netted the owner 7s. 6d. per head. With beef at the price it is in Rockhampton, this is simply robbery. This is not the only case, and should you require it, I will forward full particulars at any time.

“With good wishes from all here,

“Yours fraternally,

“(Sgd.) SYD. A. MASON,

“Hon. Sec. A.L.P.”

The cattlemen are apparently at the mercy of the middleman.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The State butcher shops.

Mr. FOLEY: Not necessarily the State butcher shops. No doubt their buyers attend the sales at Rockhampton and Brisbane, but it does not follow that they attend every sale. From the remarks of Mr. Mason, it is evident that there is an impression that some influence is operating at the cattle-yards to the detriment of the stock producers of the State. It should be apparent

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to everyone that a fat beast should bring more than 7s. 6d. to the owner who has only to send it 120 or 180 miles. Something is wrong somewhere when that price only could be obtained. Somebody is making something out of it, and it will be up to the Board, when established, to see that the organisation covers every branch of the industry and endeavours to prevent such things as I have indicated.

Practically two-thirds of the cattle we produce in Australia are consumed in Australia—I think my figures are approximately correct—and with a little organisation it should be possible so to regulate the supplies on the Australian markets that a fair and stable price could be obtained, and the cattle industry safeguarded against bankruptcy. That is all that is necessary, and it is to the discredit of the cattleman of Queensland and of Australia generally, that he has not had some sort of organisation before now. With the hon. member for Fassifern, I have much pleasure in giving my hearty support to this measure, which I hope will lead to better times for the cattle industry.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murrillo*): I am very pleased to know that the Minister is not altogether satisfied with this Bill. I certainly am not, because all that we are doing is to create what we might call a steam hammer to crush a nut. We are practically creating a Board to make levies for raising funds. There is nothing in the Bill directing the Board in the expenditure of the money, or saying anything as to the benefits that are likely to accrue to the people engaged in the industry. It seems to me that it is almost impossible to expect that all the States will carry similar measures. Although we may carry the Bill, I do not think it will come into operation generally throughout Australia, because several of the other States will not pass similar legislation, and I would suggest the deletion of the clause which provides that the Bill shall not come into force, or the Board be formed, till the Commonwealth has passed an Act constituting the Australian Meat Council, so that after a certain time, if the Minister so desires, the Queensland Advisory Board will be able to carry on operations whether other States follow our example or not.

We in Queensland more than in any other State require power to regulate particularly the price of beef. After I have quoted these figures hon. members will agree that the overseas market is confined to cattle fattened in Queensland. The following figures show the number of cattle and sheep in the various States:—

—	Cattle.	Sheep.
Queensland	6,955,963	17,641,071
New South Wales ..	3,546,530	37,177,402
Victoria	1,785,060	11,765,520
South Australia ..	419,197	6,257,052
Western Australia ..	938,630	6,664,095
Tasmania	216,704	1,551,273
Northern Territory ..	659,840	..

Queensland possesses 48 per cent. of the cattle and 22 per cent. of the sheep of the Commonwealth. Queensland possesses 70 per cent. of the beef cattle of Australia. In New South Wales and Victoria they have as many, if not more dairy cattle than are possessed in Queensland, but Victoria

possesses, comparatively speaking, only a small number of beef cattle—not sufficient to feed the people living in that State. The same thing applies to South Australia and Tasmania. Queensland and Western Australia are practically the only States that possess more beef cattle than are necessary to feed the people living in those States. One must therefore come to the conclusion that the beef industry is confined almost exclusively to Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: What do you think of the proposal contained in the letter that I read yesterday?

Mr. MORGAN: It was a wonderfully good proposal, and I am going to deal with it later on. Queensland possesses 8.58 head of cattle per head of the population, and Western Australia possesses 2.57 head of cattle per head of the population. Some of the States do not possess one beast per head of the population. During the last five years Queensland has slaughtered an average of 475,000 head of cattle, including calves. During the last five years Queensland has exported beef preserved by the cold process to the value of £4,000,000 per annum. The United Kingdom was our best customer, with Egypt next; last year we obtained a new customer in Italy, and we sent £62,000 worth of preserved meat to that country from Australia. The following figures show the value of the export trade from the Commonwealth for the year 1920-21:—

—	Lb.	Valued at.
		£
Queensland	159,464,532	3,301,814
New South Wales ..	12,401,397	346,465
Victoria	1,911,841	42,803
Western Australia ..	5,756,126	123,865
South Australia ..	168,583	4,894

The amount exported from Queensland was £3,301,814 and from the other States of the Commonwealth only £518,027, so that Queensland exported six-sevenths. These figures prove conclusively, apart from what other States may think about improving the beef industry, that Queensland is principally concerned. New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia principally export mutton and lamb, while Queensland unfortunately does very little in that direction. The Southern States are more concerned about the value of mutton than the value of beef. Those States do not produce sufficient beef for their own requirements, and they depend on Queensland cattle for it. It has been pointed out by the hon. member for Fassifern that it is doubtful whether New South Wales intends to come into this scheme. He has informed us that Victoria and Tasmania have agreed to come in. Western Australia and South Australia have already announced that they do not intend to ask their respective Governments to pass similar legislation.

If the full amount of 1d. per head on cattle and one-sixth of a penny per head on sheep is levied in Queensland, there will be obtained about £20,000 from cattle and £10,000 from sheep. If New South Wales came into the scheme, that State would contribute £30,000, being £10,000 from cattle and £20,000 from sheep. The Bill provides that, if a person possesses less than 100 head of cattle or 500 head of sheep, he will not come under the

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operations of the Bill. I have a very good knowledge of the position in Victoria, and I know that the average sheepowner there who goes in for breeding lambs principally for export does not possess 500 head of sheep.

Wimmera is the principal sheep or lamb raising district in Victoria, and the average farmer there does not possess more than from 250 to 350 ewes. From those he breeds his lambs for export and uses them in conjunction with wheat farming in the locality. The fact that Victoria is going to come under the scheme will not bring much revenue to it. I estimate that Victoria will not contribute from the whole of its resources of sheep and cattle more than £3,000, even if the maximum levy is made. Tasmania will contribute little or nothing at all. It would be difficult to find any person in Tasmania who possesses more than 500 sheep or 100 cattle, so that the fact of Victoria and Tasmania coming into the scheme will not help Queensland in any shape or form. Both these States are dependent for their cattle on Queensland and the other States. That is why I advocate that we should go on with the Bill.

I trust that the Minister will accept certain amendments I intend to move in connection with the Board. I would like to see the Board called a Meat Industry Board and not a Meat Advisory Board. We want something more than advice to put our cattle industry once more on a solid and sound foundation. We want a Board that will not only be able to operate and collect a levy, but which will assist in co-operative enterprises, control slaughter-yards, and, generally speaking, control the cattle from the time they leave the fattening paddock until the meat is placed on the plate of the consumer. No pool or compulsion to do this is required. All that is needed is a certain control. If it was found that rings were in operation, and that certain influences operated detrimentally to the consumer, the Board would be in a position, with the Government behind them, to defy the greatest trust or combine in this State. A combine or trust with their millions might be able to fight the Board, but with the Government behind the Board they will have to fight the State of Queensland, and the State will be powerful enough to prevent them from interfering. The opinion is held by some that it is absolutely imperative that the overseas market should be improved. The policy of Great Britain is to supply cheap meat, bread, and all the necessaries of life to the people. That has been the policy of Great Britain for the last hundred years. In fact, no Government has ever survived in the United Kingdom that has been in favour of taxing foodstuffs and increasing the price to the consumer.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman obtained a record majority in 1905 on the cheap loaf cry.

Mr. MOORE: So did the Queensland Government in 1915. That is how they got in.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: We delivered the loaf.

Mr. MOORE: You ruined the loaf.

Mr. MORGAN: The point I want to make is that only the cattle industry is down and out. Good prices are being realised for mutton, lambs, and wool, but not so with cattle. We export only 19 per cent. of the cattle slaughtered in this State. Why should

19 per cent. regulate the price of 81 per cent.? If an organisation is created under this Bill, it will be able so to regulate matters that, while consumers get meat at a reasonable rate, the producer will get a price for his cattle that will not only allow the industry to carry on but return him a profit. The general body of workers recognise that an industry which is down and out and financially bankrupt must go out of business. While such a condition of affairs might make for cheap meat for a year or two, they would soon be called upon to pay exorbitant prices when the herds were reduced to 3,000,000 or 4,000,000. The Board should be able to regulate the market so that beef would not reach exorbitantly high prices or fall to the ruinous prices which exist at the present moment. That is why I say that the Bill is by no means perfect, and I hope the Minister will accept amendments in Committee to enable this Board to be established. The Minister should bring the Meat Industry Board into existence by proclamation even if some of the other States do not fall into line and the scheme does not come to maturity. I admit that the Australian Meat Council has done good work up to the present. I also admit that the State Advisory Board, which has been in existence for eleven or twelve months, has done good work. It succeeded in inducing the Federal Government to renew the subsidy for last year, and in getting a substantial reduction in oversea freights, a reduction in the freight of cattle on the railways, and a reduction in the killing charges in the freezing works not only in Queensland but in other States. It has also succeeded in finding new markets for our beef, although not on a very large scale. It has also gone into the matter of chilled or frozen meat and defrosting of frozen meat. The defrosting of frozen meat really means that our meat, which at times has been frozen for several months or years, when it reaches its destination overseas is placed in a chamber and brought back in appearance, taste, and quality, to the condition of the chilled meat that is imported into Great Britain from Argentina and other places.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The objection to frozen meat in Britain is raised in the interests of the chilled beef from Argentina.

Mr. MORGAN: I have had the opportunity of having placed before me fresh, frozen, and chilled meat, but I could not taste the difference. Frozen meat can be picked out before it is cooked because it is hard and solid as a stone. Mr. Jowett when in England asked a number of experts to assemble at a place where he had frozen, chilled, and fresh beef placed on the table before them. When the meat was cooked his guests could not tell the difference between the frozen beef from Australia, fresh beef from Scotland, or chilled beef from Argentina. The majority of the people did not know whether they

[5.30 p.m.] were eating the fresh meat from Scotland or the frozen meat from Australia. That will demonstrate the fact that our frozen meat does not deteriorate, and that we are suffering merely through the propaganda of those people who make more profit by trading in meats scoured outside of Australia than by selling Australian meat.

It is an irrefutable fact that the best meat sent from Australia has been marked up and sold by the retailers as Argentine meat,

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while the worst cuts have been placarded as coming from Australia.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: As a matter of fact, the butchers selling Australian meats have sold the best cuts as home-fed meat.

Mr. MORGAN: Yes; and the second quality is sold and placarded as coming from Australia. This takes away all the credit of our excellent first-quality meat. It is necessary for the new Board to be in existence for the purpose of counteracting methods such as that, which are injuring our meat industry. The meat sent away from Australia during the past twelve months or two years was equal to any meat from any part of the world. During the war, owing to the fact that the article was so badly needed, we sent anything across the water—our old cows, stags—anything—and quality did not count. After the war there were 7,000,000 tons of Australian meat that had been some four years in England awaiting consumption. The Imperial Government, instead of dumping that meat or sending it to feed the people of some European country in necessitous circumstances, placed it on the open market, and it damaged our name considerably. Since the war the excellent quality of our meat has partly re-established our good name.

The hon. member for Fassifern mentioned that it was necessary to fatten our cattle in two to two and a-half years. I agree with him up to a certain point. I contend that we in Queensland shall never have cattle at the age of two and a-half years fit for the best market unless we go in for artificial feeding—artificial grasses or lucerne, as the case may be. Our natural grasses will not bring cattle to the proper proportions in two and a-half years. The Argentine cattle people are able to do this successfully owing to the hundreds of thousands of acres of alfalfa grown there. They take their cattle from the prairies, where they are reared, to the artificial feed and fatten them for the market. In Queensland we may eventually come to that. On our natural grasses we can fatten cattle satisfactorily in three and a-half or four years and have them equal to cattle produced in any part of the world, other than those produced by stall feeding.

I shall quote a few figures to show the state of the cattle industry throughout the world. British India, which is the largest producer of cattle, possesses 129,000,000 head. The United States of America, the next largest producers, have 67,000,000. Argentina, which is fifth on the list, has 27,000,000—twice the number of Australia, which is seventh on the list and has only 13,500,000. Brazil is coming into prominence, and will be a great factor in the supply of meat to the United Kingdom in the near future. It possesses 37,000,000 head. We have much to fear from Brazilian competition. The United Kingdom has for many years obtained an enormous supply of meat from Brazil owing to the fact that the Argentine Government has thought it necessary to prohibit the sale of beef for export unless it is purchased at a certain price. I think they were wise in doing that, as they assured to the grower a sufficient remuneration for the work he had put in. Unfortunately, we in Australia cannot legislate in that fashion, because we are not of sufficient importance. We supply only about 3 per cent. of the meat necessary for consumption by the people of the United Kingdom, and it would not make a great

deal of difference to the British Isles whether they were supplied with Australian beef or not. We should concentrate upon such markets as Italy. There is no reason why we should confine the whole of our attention to the British market. If Italy is prepared to buy our meat, we should sell to them. I am pleased to know that last year they took from Australia £62,600 worth of meat. If this market and the markets of the East are properly exploited, we shall have no difficulty in getting rid of our meat. We only need to find a market for 19 per cent. If our population goes on increasing, and sheep multiply and cattle decrease—and I sincerely hope that sheep will increase enormously in place of cattle—in ten years we shall not be able to produce any more beef in Australia for export, as we shall need it for our people.

All we want is a measure to enable us to regulate the Queensland and Australian markets. We need not worry a great deal about meat going overseas. If we could get a fair price for the 81 per cent. of the beef consumed in Australia, it would not matter much whether we sold the remaining 19 per cent. That could be sold perhaps for a loss.

I am pleased that this Bill has come into existence, because we know from experience that something must be done to regulate prices and to control the rings operating in Australia. We know that meat that was bought by Queensland meatworks at from 15s. to 16s. per 100 lb. is going to the Southern States and that huge profits are being made. The producers of the cattle are not making those profits; they had to sell at a low value. Those who handle and freeze the meat are making the huge profits. Had we had co-operative meatworks operating in Queensland we would have participated in that profit. We would have got for our cattle the same price that the meatworks paid in the first instance, and then, when the meat was sold in the Southern markets, we would have got the extra profit. The high prices ruling in the Southern markets during the last three or four months have been caused by the drought in Australia. The co-operative companies would have participated in those high prices, and would have been able to distribute a bonus to the producers from the profits made on the distribution of meat in the South. Until the producers of cattle have their own co-operative meatworks and are able to control the beast from the time it leaves the fattening paddock until the beef reaches the consumer, we are not going to receive any great benefit. We have received a subsidy from the Commonwealth Government and a reduction of freights on the railway, but the greater proportion of that money has gone to the meatworks. It has not gone into the pockets of the producers at all. That is what we want to prevent, and it can only be prevented by having a Board properly constituted and consisting of the best men obtainable.

I would like briefly to deal with one or two matters contained in the Bill. First of all, I would like to delete the proviso that the proclamation fixing the date on which the Act shall come into operation shall not be made until the Parliament of the Commonwealth has passed an Act defining the Australian Meat Council. That proviso should be eliminated, and the Government should have power to declare the Act in operation independent of whether the other States fall into line or not. Then

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the name of the State Meat Advisory Board should be altered. It should be called the "State Meat Industry Board." It should be something more than an advisory board. The election to the Board should take place six months after the Act has been proclaimed in force. Twelve months is too long a period. The present Board has not been elected by the producers; it has been appointed by the Minister. I have no fault to find with the Board, but the sooner it becomes elective the better it will be for the people interested. The Bill provides that fifty owners may demand a poll as to whether any fresh levy shall be made or not. That number is too few, and I would like the Minister to increase it to 100. I am not in favour of any proviso that a vote must be carried by a three-fifths majority and that at least 60 per cent. shall vote. We live in a democratic age and a simple majority should be sufficient, but before we are put to the expense of having a poll, at least 100 stockowners who contribute to the funds of the Board should demand such poll. There should also be a provision that the Board can be terminated by a vote of the producers who pay levies. If they have power to create the Board, they should have power to terminate the Board if it outlives its usefulness. The levy should be collected in the same manner as levies are collected under the Diseases in Stock Act and the Brands Act. A form is issued each year by the department to those who desire it, and all that would be necessary would be to add another column to that form. At the present time, levies under the Diseases in Stock Act and under the Brands Act are paid to the clerks of petty sessions in the different districts, and when the stockowners are paying these levies they could also pay the levy in respect of the State Meat Advisory Board. The machinery already in existence could be used for the purpose of collecting these levies from the stockowner, and no further expense need be incurred.

The State Meat Advisory Board should control the fund. This Bill provides that the money has to be sent to the Australian Meat Council. That Council might consist of anyone. That is an unsatisfactory provision. Men who have not been elected by the producers to the State Meat Advisory Board may become members of the Australian Meat Council, and the levies are to be sent down to that Council, which will send back a certain amount to cover the expenses of the State Meat Advisory Board. We should contribute our proportion of the expenses of the Australian Meat Council and the balance of the funds should be used for local requirements. I have already explained that Queensland will contribute £30,000 under this scheme, while Victoria will contribute about £3,000, and Tasmania a little over £1,000. Those are the only three States that so far have definitely decided to pass legislation of this kind.

I object to the constitution of the Australian Meat Council. That Council may be elected from Melbourne men or Southern men, whereas it should consist of men elected by the producers in the different States. We are entitled to send three representatives to the Council—two representatives of the cattle industry and one representative of the sheep industry. These representatives should be members of the State Meat Advisory

Board. We should not be allowed to elect others to represent us on the Australian Meat Council. I also object to the form of the ballot. The Bill provides that the State Meat Advisory Board shall consist of four owners of stock representing the cattle interest and two owners of stock representing the sheep interest, in addition to three representatives of the meatworks of the State and a Government representative. The sheepmen will have an opportunity of voting for the representatives of the cattle interest and the cattlemen will have an opportunity of voting for the representatives of the sheep interest. There should be two ballot-papers: one for the cattle representatives, and only the cattlemen should have a vote as to who the cattle representatives should be. The same thing should apply to sheep. The ballot-papers should be sent to the sheepmen, who should have a say as to who should represent them on the Board. It is not right that one section should have the whole voice in the election of members of the Board. If a man is assessed in regard to both cattle and sheep, he should have a ballot, paper sent to him as an owner of cattle and sheep respectively. In my opinion that is the only way in which it properly can be done.

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

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): I move—

"That the hon. member for Murilla be granted an extension of time."

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the hon. member for Murilla be allowed an extension of time?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MORGAN: I thank hon. members for their courtesy—I shall only be two or three minutes longer. The Bill does not provide for the time within which voting-papers have to be sent in after nomination.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That will be done by regulation.

Mr. MORGAN: I think not less than six weeks should elapse from the day of nomination until the return of the ballot-papers. Then we ought to be more democratic in regard to the witnessing of signatures to voting-papers. It is really quite sufficient if the signature is attested by an elector of the State.

I do not intend to occupy the time of the House much further. I have a number of amendments which I propose moving in Committee. I hope that the Minister will not treat the Bill as a party measure. The hon. member for Fassifern represents one organisation in the cattle industry and I represent a different organisation; but, while we may disagree in some matters, generally speaking we are in accord in our views with regard to the industry. We recognise that something must be done to place the industry upon a solid foundation. We are losing too much in Queensland, and we have no right as a State to sit still and wait for other States or other parts of the world to come to our rescue.

The meat industry has been ridiculed as a disorganised industry which has done nothing for itself. I agree with that, and the imputation is justly deserved. We have been trying to do something lately, and we

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have a co-operative company in course of formation; but owing to the state of the industry we find it difficult to get sufficient money. We hope that it will eventually be successful. Certain measures are going through the House which will help us. Cattlemen recognise that two things are necessary. One is to have this Board created, and the other is to have co-operative works to compete against the present private companies—not to abolish them or run them out of business or build new works. We intend to acquire existing works, not by way of repudiation or seizure, but by way of purchase. We recognise that there are too many meatworks in Queensland at the present time to deal with our cattle. We think that meatworks in Brisbane, Rockhampton, Townsville, and one at Port Curtis will be quite sufficient. We think that we should have abattoirs in Brisbane run under co-operation. They should not be run by the Government, but under co-operation, and we could slaughter for the whole of the people. That would do away with the present insanitary conditions which arise through having forty or fifty slaughter-houses. We would slaughter for the butchers and supply them with their beef and mutton, and after that send the surplus overseas and down South. Our idea is to keep the works in operation all the year round, instead of for four or five months, as at present. We could have a chilled meat trade with the South, and have regular services running to Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide, and, if there was anything left after that, it could be sent to the East or to other markets. The people would get good meat at a cheap rate. We would do as well as, if not better than, the butchers can do at the present time. We would not interfere with their trade; the meat would be under proper supervision, and there would be a constant supply. Those who have fat cattle could send them along to the works, or have them treated at their own expense if they liked, and they could do what they liked with their own meat. That is the object we have in view, and we want the Government to assist us. I anticipate that this measure will do a great deal to assist to bring back the prosperity of the cattle industry in this State.

Mr. WEIR (*Maryborough*): I want to congratulate the Government on the introduction of this measure. At the same time, the cattle-men are a very powerful organisation, and we are under no obligation to them. These are the gentlemen who have poured their money down the drain in years gone by, and, when the bad seasons come, they squeal and come along to the Government to help them.

There is another point in this matter which strikes me, in view of what the hon. member for Murilla has said. No one can question the fact that the hon. member has given us one of the most damning indictments of private enterprise this afternoon, that anyone could give. He showed that the markets overseas have been ruined owing to the corruption of private enterprise in sending overseas beef of inferior quality. That indictment is against people who howled for blood during the war and sent inferior meat to the soldiers. Those are not my words, but those of the hon. member for Murilla. He admitted candidly that not only did they send bad stuff to the soldiers, but they ruined the industry in order to get their pound of flesh out of the soldiers. It

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is well that, even at this late hour, these people should be brought to judgment. It is well, in the interests of the country, that we should know from their own mouths what happened during the war. The argument will be raised that the Labour Government are wet-nursing still another industry. The fact of wet-nursing this crowd will be that, as soon as they are financially strong, they will use still more money in the nefarious practices that the big cattle people of this country have adopted in the past in trying to defeat the Labour Government. It is our duty to put them on their feet.

Mr. MOORE: Why are you squealing about it?

Mr. WEIR: I am not squealing about it. This Bill is only possible on account of the fact that our party is behind the Minister in introducing the measure. I want the House to realise this. This matter has had to go through our caucus meetings and has the stamp of the caucus upon it. I am going to support the Bill because I think it is necessary. These people have ruined the industry, and it is up to us to do what we can to rehabilitate it.

Mr. MOORE: You are the biggest cattle-owner in Queensland.

At 7 p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. WEIR: I suppose I am—I have one cow. (Laughter.)

Mr. MOORE: I mean the Government.

Mr. WEIR: Clause 15 contains provisions which allow the council in due course to deal with the question of the best methods to adopt in connection with the selling price of beef. Before the tea adjournment, I referred to the speech of the hon. member for Murilla, and the way in which the overseas meat market had been damaged. Corruption and private enterprise invariably go hand in hand. One has only to look at the history of the war to see that that is so. Inferior rubbish was being sent to the troops, whilst men like the hon. member for Murilla were howling for blood. At that time we were saying that this would happen, and we were being charged with disloyalty, and were even threatened with proceedings in the criminal courts.

Mr. MAXWELL: Who said that inferior meat was sent to the troops?

Mr. WEIR: If I understand English aright, the hon. member for Murilla said in effect that one reason why the British meat market is so bad—I did not take a note of his exact words—is that they sent inferior meat home during the war. He specially mentioned "stag meat." He conveyed to this House the impression that that was one of the real reasons for the breaking down of the overseas market. Another fact of which I wish to remind the House is that during the early stages of the slump it was difficult to get meat placed on the overseas markets because there was already a surfeit of meat there, and it was not until the British Government saw fit to get rid of a lot of meat at a very low rate that a consignment was sent from Queensland—I think to Russia—and we in turn derived some benefit. It was men of the same kind of political thought as the hon. member for Murilla who in the old world were responsible for the war, and who created the position we are in to-day. There are millions of people on the other side of the world hungering for meat and unable to get it. Here we have a

handful of people with tons of meat which they cannot sell. The whole process of supply and demand, the whole process of marketing, was destroyed from end to end, just as the whole structure of human life and happiness was destroyed.

Mr. MORGAN: What happened in Russia?

Mr. WEIR: I am just trying to tell the hon. member. Had the ruling classes of Britain, instead of acting as harpies on the Russian people, trying to starve the lifeblood out of them, treated them rationally and decently—as they have been forced to do recently—had they regarded them as human beings and decent men and women, instead of as criminals, we would have had an additional market for our beef in Russia, and have been able right through the piece to get rid of some of our surplus meat there. What applies to Russia applies to other countries. I heard the hon. member for Bowen mention what I have heard him say before about what might have happened had we spent our efforts in trying to build up a market in Italy also. I am one of those who believe that it has come to this—that it is only the Labour Government that has done something for the man on the land.

Mr. MORGAN: We are only asking for legislation.

Mr. WEIR: Of course you are. But why come to this Labour Government for legislation? What has been done in other States by the Governments of hon. members opposite? They have turned them down with a thud.

Mr. MORGAN: No.

Mr. WEIR: Nobody knows better than the hon. member for Murilla that certain markets in Victoria have closed their doors to the meat industry of this State through some stupid tick regulations. If there was a Labour Government in the Federal Parliament to-day the meat trade would be preserved and those doors would be open, and the cattle ring in the South would not be squeezing the very life out of the cattlemen of this State. The hon. member for Murilla knows perfectly well that the hon. member for Fassfern and himself have strained every nerve in their own organisations, amongst their own people, and amongst the people of their political thought in the Federal and State spheres to try and arrive at the same position as has been arrived at to-night by a Labour Government, and they have failed dismally. They know that, and they come cap in hand to this Government and say, "For God's sake save us from ourselves!" We are saving them from themselves. I want to remind hon. members opposite, and particularly the Country party section, that the Bill is, in effect, the very best process whereby the cattle people can look after their own business. It is a machinery Bill for the very purpose of protecting the cattlemen from themselves. What would they say if I, as a representative of a union, had come here in the early days and asked this House to pass a measure allowing us to form a union? Hon. members opposite allowed us to form a Police Union—I don't think! If the Australian Workers' Union members in this House had got up in the old days and advocated the passing of a similar machinery Bill for the establishment of the Australian Workers' Union in the same way as we are passing a Bill for the cattlemen to-night, hon. members opposite would have howled

the House down. Here we have the Labour party, first of all, wet-nursing the farmers. I say advisedly we have wet-nursed the farmers right through the piece, and then we spent the sum of £70,000 to organise them and allow them to form a union to protect themselves from themselves.

Mr. MORGAN: We are not getting a penny.

Mr. WEIR: When we get that far the cattlemen come along and say, "Give us a measure and make us organise!" That is what this Bill means. I admit that they do not get one penny. It looks as though they have not got one penny yet. No doubt, when this measure is passed, we shall get many applications for assistance.

Mr. MORGAN: We expect the State stations to contribute their quota.

Mr. WEIR: Of course you do. That is the first loophole. They admit candidly that as soon as this scheme is on the stocks they are going to come cap in hand to the Government and ask us to subscribe something in the way of £ s. d. to help them organise themselves. I am not going to say for one moment that the Government are going to be small in these matters. I hope that the Labour Government will always be big in these things; but I want to remind the cattlemen that their case is a striking indictment of their own mismanagement, which has brought them to this position. They have to come, as it were, crawling on their stomachs to a Labour Government whom they detest and abominate, and say, "For God's sake save us from ourselves!" That is what they are doing to-night. If you look at the history of Governments fairly in the face and do a little unbiassed thinking, as men can do if they try, I say definitely that the only Government that have tackled this question have not been the Governments of hon. members opposite, but our own Labour Government, composed of men who have not been bred in rural occupations, but bred in industries in the city. It is they who have evolved a plan such as this to save these cattle people from the rapacity and the corruption of their own private enterprise system.

Mr. WARREN (*Merrimbla*): I would like to congratulate the Minister on the introduction of this Bill, which I believe will benefit the cattle industry. It is a pure, clean Bill, with not even a drag-net clause in it. I thank God that the hon. gentleman is not like the hon. member for Maryborough. That hon. member reminds me of the man who held out an apple to his child, and, when the child put his hand out for it, he slapped him in the face. The hon. member spoke of the generosity of the Government, but they are actually giving nothing in the Bill. They are only permitting the machinery of Government to be used to allow the cattlemen to organise their own industry.

Mr. WEIR: Forcing them by Act of Parliament to organise.

Mr. WARREN: The hon. member is so ungenerous as to slap them in the face when they ask for this privilege. I hold no brief for the beef barons, but they were very necessary in the early history of Queensland.

Mr. WEIR: And in the war too.

Mr. WARREN: If the hon. member had had to eat some of the American beef like I had to do, he would have different views

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on this question. The hon. member also talked about "stag" beef having been shipped overseas, but it was preferable to some of the American beef that was stuffed down our throats there, and the tinned meat was equally as bad. A lot has been said about Australian meat, but my experience of it was that the troops would run after it in preference to eating other beef. The meat industry in Queensland is in a bad way, and generous-hearted men who desire to see the State prosper will not stick a dagger in its back and kick it when it is down. I like the Bill because it seems to hold out a hand to the men in the industry. In the course of time the men now engaged in the industry will make way for other men. It is only right that they should. We hope for the time when there will be no squatters, when the land will be so populated that there will be no large holdings, and the land will be put to better use than it is at the present time. Until that stage of development has been reached we should do all we can to save the industry. There is a great amount of interest and money at stake. We are not worrying about the individual, but the State. Means have to be originated to enable the cattlemen to meet their working expenses and payments to the Crown. We should approach this Bill in a true perspective. The cattlemen have asked for something and the Government have been generous enough to give them practically what they ask for. The Government at the same time are adopting proper safeguards for the industry. There are specific clauses which will prevent the cattle-owner becoming a tyrant in the industry. We have reached a time when schemes of co-operation and pooling have become the rage. I am afraid that they have become too much the rage. We have heard a lot about the industry being wet-nursed. I do not know what profession or trade the hon. member for Maryborough followed before he entered politics, but I want to give an emphatic denial to his statement that the farmers have been wet-nursed, or nursed at all. They have not been given a fair chance up to date. Perhaps the hon. member meant they were wet-nursed when the Department of Agriculture stole their butter, or when they were suffering from excessive taxation through the extravagance of the Government. I may be mistaken, and it may be wet-nursing, but I have never yet seen any instance of it. The Government brought in an organisation scheme and have subscribed to the upkeep of it. It is a very questionable scheme any way you like to take it. The Minister will probably admit that it has become a tyrant. We all know that the consumer has a reasonable case to put up, and any scheme that is put forward that is going to injure the majority of individuals is not going to do any good for the State. This Meat Industry Encouragement Bill is not going to injure the people. The cattle industry is in its present position through no fault of those concerned in it. I dare say that, as a class of men, they are as hard to organise as any other. At the same time it is merely a matter of circumstances that has put the industry in its present position. It is no use hon. members opposite saying that the industry is going to become a dangerous organisation. The hon. member for Fassifern, when speaking on the Bill, represented the pastoralists,

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and he outlined a very fine scheme that should benefit not only the industry but Queensland generally. I do not think there is the slightest danger of those in the industry going to the Government for money.

Mr. CARTER: Oh, no; they won't go to the Government!

Mr. WARREN: I am not going to worry about it—they would not get very much out of the Government.

Mr. WEIR: What about your crowd? They got £70,000.

Mr. WARREN: I never saw any of the £70,000. This scheme must finance itself if it is going to be a satisfactory one. I am of the opinion that the cattlemen and sheepmen of Queensland are quite able and willing, once they have the machinery, to put the machinery into operation and effect their own salvation. I did not quite agree with the hon. member for Murilla when he said that the pastoralists must put the meat on the plate, because I am afraid he might take it off again. All schemes must enable the producer, as nearly as possible and in the course of time, to evolve a plan that will put the article produced into the user's hands. I know that any scheme of a revolutionary nature, if it is not built upon a sound foundation, will be a failure. If the pastoralists will accept the responsibility and put their best leg forward, I see no reason why this scheme should not derive the benefits pointed out by the hon. member for Fassifern.

It is no use denying that it is possible to breed a class of cattle that will develop much quicker than the average herds in Queensland to-day. I do not believe that the people of Queensland have ever put their minds to the production of an early maturing beast as they have done in other parts of the world. The idea in the past was to hold bullocks: the older the bullock the better they thought the meat was. A scheme of this description will do more to bring about a better system in the pastoral industry than has ever been followed before. I was in New Zealand a few years ago, and the people of New Zealand are much more advanced in the matter of co-operation than we are. Small holders who are breeding lambs for the market have established a system under which they can carry twice as many sheep on their small holdings as they could previously. It did not matter how small the paddocks were, the flocks were changed to a different paddock each day. They had seven paddocks—that is one for each day of the week. That system was brought about by co-operation, and the scheme provided for in this Bill is going to bring about a better condition of things in the pastoral industry. I would not be a bit surprised in a few years, if the best men are put forward by the pastoralists, to see a very much better system followed in the pastoral industry, with the result that we would have a great deal more beef to send away from Australia.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): Like the hon. member for Maryborough, I am surprised that we have to pass a Bill to organise what are generally termed the captains of industry. The captains of industry having failed in modern society, it has now been left to a Labour Government, who represent the collective school of thought—who would not have

been on these Treasury benches had they not had sufficient intelligence to organise the workers, who placed us in the position we now occupy. We have tried to organise the agriculturists if they can be organised—I admit they are a difficult class to organise—and now we are starting to organise the cattle-owners and sheepowners. Those are the people who at one time told us we were not fit to govern; that we had not sufficient experience in the government of mankind; and now, when they get into a difficulty—owing to the disastrous war which they helped to bring about—they come to us for assistance. Do not forget that the capitalistic system of society was responsible for the war. It was responsible for all the millions killed in Europe, and it was responsible for the slump that took place in regard to cattle. I am not finding any fault with them because they have to appeal to us, recognising as they do that in appealing to us we have superior intelligence. In this measure, provision is made for a Council and for a Board, and power is given to that Board to levy assessments. I notice they cannot assess over and above 1d. per head for cattle and one-sixth of a penny per head for sheep. Then I notice that there are to be certain exemptions. The exemptions are 100 head of cattle and 500 head of sheep. Let us examine the exemptions, because it is very interesting to know whom we are really legislating for. Let us examine the number of people who own the cattle in Queensland. I am going to quote from the latest report to hand—that for 1921-1922—of the Department of Agriculture and Stock, page 101. I find that we have got 48,719 cattle-owners in Queensland. How many of that number will be exempt? The figures are—From 1 to 100 head, the number of owners is 41,009, owning 1,178,980 head. These will be exempt from the assessment. Now we come to the cattle-owners who will have to pay the assessment—

Cattle.	No. of Owners.	No. of Cattle.
From 101 to 300	4,846	817,130
From 301 to 1,000	1,859	976,396
From 1,001 and upwards ..	1,005	4,074,564

It will be noticed that 1,005 owners own over 4,000,000 of the cattle in Queensland. These are the cattle barons who have proved that they cannot organise themselves, and it is left to men who have come from the mines, the factories, and the shops to show them how to organise—to lift them out of the difficulties they find themselves in. The total number of cattle in Queensland is 7,047,376. Let us examine the sheepowners who are to be assessed under the measure, and ascertain how many of them will be exempt. There are only 4,090 sheepowners in the whole of Queensland. These people make more noise than the whole of the rest of the population. These few cattle-owners on the one hand and the few sheepowners on the other hand are able to create more noise than anybody else owing to the economic pressure they can exert from time to time. Owing to the fact that they control the means of production to a large extent and also the financial institutions, and are able to apply pressure all round, they can kick up a noise in their daily papers from time to time. I will give the

figures with regard to sheep from page 10^c of the report already quoted—

Sheep.	No. of Owners.	No. of Sheep.
From 1 to 500	1,965	179,974
From 501 to 1,000	305	232,192
From 1,001 to 2,000	408	612,923
From 2,001 to 5,000	558	1,861,362
From 5,001 to 10,000	426	3,036,394
From 10,001 to 20,000	211	2,084,081
From 20,001 to 50,000	157	4,770,684
From 50,001 to 100,000	47	3,192,221
From 100,001 and upwards ..	13	1,532,568
Total	4,090	18,402,399

We find from these figures that there are 428 owners who own 12,479,554 sheep out of a total of 18,402,399. Four hundred and twenty-eight sheepowners own the bulk of our sheep, and 1,005 persons own the bulk of our cattle! These are the people [7.30 p.m.] who could not organise themselves—the people with whom the Country party are allied, the hon. member for Burnett, and others! They have got themselves into a quagmire, and they come to the Labour party to get them out. It is left to the Labour party, who represent and look after the interests of the whole community, to show them how to organise.

Let us examine these figures more closely for a few moments. Of the total number of owners of sheep, 3,662 persons own only 5,922,345 sheep, whilst 428 owners own over 12,000,000. Is it any wonder that the people have been saying that the sheepowners have been on a good wicket? These 1,005 owners of cattle and these 428 owners of sheep are the ones who pull the strings and make the puppets—the small cattle and sheep owners—jump. We have to come to their rescue and show them how to get rid of their surplus cattle. There is the hon. member for Murilla, who says they are not approaching the Government for any assistance, but who expects the State cattle stations to contribute to their fund.

Mr. WARREN: Why not?

Mr. COLLINS: Why not! Why do they not do as we did? We had no Government behind us in the early days of our movement to organise us. We organised ourselves and suffered in the doing of it. I have watched very closely the legislation which has gone through this Chamber, and I realise, with all other thinking men, that it indicates the breakdown of the capitalist system. As the hon. member for Maryborough says, we would never have had this difficulty if we had a Federal Labour Government with broad views, concerned not so much about the interests of a section, but concerned for the masses of the people—not concerned for 428 sheepowners and 1,005 cattle-owners, but for the whole of the people. I am not going to lodge any objection to the measure, because I recognise that it is good to organise, and we realise that they have not the brains to do it. We who belong to the masses must show them how. We who belong to the masses had to pull them out of the war, just as we shall have to pull them out of the difficulties which they are in in Great Britain because of the war, so that there will be people in Great Britain who will be able once more to consume the beef of which we have a surplus.

Mr. Collins.]

I do not intend to speak any longer. I just rose to let the people of Queensland know that, although we hear so much about the poor sheepowner and the poor cattleowner, 423 persons own 12,000,000 of our sheep, and 1,065 persons own the bulk of our cattle—I emphasise the point!

Mr. CLAYTON interjected.

Mr. COLLINS: I would expect the hon. member for Wide Bay to be in sympathy with the big businesses and the big cattle-owners. He is more conservative, and the Country party are more conservative than even the hon. member for Wynnum; and, God knows, he is conservative enough! (Laughter.)

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): An Australian organisation of the cattle industry is essential. We are not calling upon the Labour party in this State to give the industry anything. We are only asking for a Bill which will bring us into line with the people in the other States under measures to be passed there, in accordance with a scheme drawn up by the cattle interests themselves. The cattle people in this State are practically down and out, and through their organisations they have evolved a scheme which we are asked to ratify. Because they come to this House with a Bill for that purpose, hon. members opposite say that we have to crawl to the Labour party to pass something to save them from destruction.

Mr. WEIR: From themselves.

Mr. CORSER: If that is so, does the hon. member claim that the sheepmen are down and out and crawling to be saved from themselves—because they are included in this Bill? The cattlemen are not asking to be saved from themselves, but only for a fair means to enable them to bring about a restoration of their industry. And it is not being done for the cattle people alone, but for the whole of Australia; not only for the cattle-owner, but also for the worker engaged in the industry. Since the industry has been practically ruined, we have had to go to the shipping companies, the Railway Department, the meatworks, and everybody else, with a request that they should help us to reduce the cost of production, so as to make it possible for us to sell our product on the other side of the world.

Mr. WEIR: And we have to pay through the nose for it here.

Mr. CORSER: You have not; and if you have to pay through the nose at a time when the grower was receiving a price which was not equal to the cost of production, it is the fault of your own Government. What is the use of the Commissioner of Prices, of the State butcher shops, or of the State stations? When the cattle-grower cannot make wages or pay his rent in a time of drought and low prices, there must be some lack of organisation in the fixation of prices if the hon. member has to pay through the nose for his product. All we are concerned about is to make it possible for the grower to receive a fair remuneration, and we are not asking the Government for one penny towards the improvement of conditions or for the organisation. Power is sought in the Bill to enable the cattle-owners to make levies upon themselves.

Mr. WEIR: And penalise them if they do not pay.

[*Mr. Collins.*

Mr. CORSER: If the people in an industry are not allowed to organise, what right have the Labour party to say that compulsory unionism is essential? They say that it is necessary to compel people to organise and to penalise them if they do not join with one another. They preach the doctrine and put on the statute-book measures of compulsory unionism, and, because we come here with a Bill providing for co-operative associations between one grower and another, they decry us and say that we are asking for something from the Labour party, that we are down and out, that we come cap in hand, or that we crawl to the Government. I do not think that is fair, and I am sorry to hear hon. members on the Government benches so expressing themselves when men are down and out. When men are down and out, when they cannot pay their rents and rates, when they cannot live in the comfort they have enjoyed in the past, when they are compelled to live under the conditions which the unions permit, it is no time to put in the boot. Because we are looking for organisation and hoping for assistance for workers of the State it does not say that we are crawling and coming cap in hand. "Save us from ourselves," says the hon. member for Maryborough.

Mr. WEIR: I brought you to your feet. I have made you howl.

Mr. CORSER: Whether I am howling or not, what I am saying is genuine and I am sincere. The hon. member for Maryborough said that the cattlemen had done nothing for themselves and that they did not attempt to organise. They did endeavour to organise during the time they were supposed to be prosperous, but the Government took away that prosperity by fixing the price of the commodity and seizing sufficient meat to feed the whole of the people of Queensland at a price that did not pay the grower. (Government laughter.) They also increased their rentals out of all reason.

Mr. KIRWAN: You are not game to quote Booker's speech on that.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. gentleman can quote what he likes. I am responsible for what I have to say. "Save us from ourselves," says the hon. member for Maryborough! He also says that the cattle industry has to come to the Government for assistance. Whom did the workers come to when they wanted to establish unions in Queensland? They came to past Liberal Administrations. We had unions established in Queensland before the Labour party ever came into existence.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CORSER: This Bill is only to ratify an agreement and to give statutory power for organisation and the collection of levies, and we are not doing any more than any other section of the community when we ask for that. Because hon. members opposite do not always agree politically with some of those who are interested in this Bill, is that any reason why they should view this Bill accordingly? The hon. member for Maryborough stated that it was left to the Labour Government to save this industry. They have not saved it. It is the Commonwealth Government who have saved the industry. The State Government have done nothing to save the industry. This is not their scheme. This is the growers' scheme. During the whole time of the depression in

the cattle industry the State Government did not do one thing towards saving the industry.

Mr. KIRWAN: What has the Commonwealth Government done? Nothing!

Mr. CORSER: During the year 1921-22, the Commonwealth Government advanced £100,000 to this State by way of subsidy for the cattle industry; they advanced £100,000 during the year 1922-23; and they will probably advance another £100,000 this year. Out of £140,000 advanced by the Commonwealth by way of subsidy to the cattle industry, £100,000 came to this State. That has given us encouragement, has made it possible for us to organise our industry, has given us hope for the future, and has enabled us to push forward with legislation similar to this in all the States, which will be better than any Government subsidy. It will enable the cattlemen to save their industry through their own endeavours instead of looking for subsidies. This year we expect another £100,000 by way of subsidy.

Mr. KIRWAN: The cattlemen received £200,000 from this Government by way of railway concessions.

Mr. CORSER: The Government had previously increased the freights by 63 per cent.

Mr. BRUCE: Why are you stonewalling the Bill?

Mr. CORSER: If the Labour Government had not been in power we would not have found it necessary to come forward and ask for this measure, and the cattle industry would not be in its present position. The growers in Victoria have been able to get a fair price for their cattle and have been able to market their cattle. The Labour Government in this State have made it impossible for the meat to be marketed and impossible for the grower here to make a fair living in time of depression. The hon. member for Murilla said that 70 per cent. of the cattle of Australia were owned in Queensland. That is the reason why this Bill should concern every legislator in Queensland more than it should concern any other Parliament in the Commonwealth. We should not look at it from the point of view that these cattlemen are down and kick them and keep them down and say, "Why should we allow them to get up and save themselves from themselves?"

Mr. WEIR: You forgot the tear.

Mr. CORSER: Seeing that we hold 70 per cent. of the cattle it is necessary for us to save this industry not only for the owners of the stock, but in the interests of the employees in the industry so that they can look for something better in the future, which can only be brought about by giving them better conditions when they are engaged.

Mr. WEIR: Do you think they are paid decent wages now?

Mr. CORSER: We are paying what the union asks.

Mr. WEIR: Look at the hon. member for Fassifern grinning at you.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. member for Maryborough said the farmers were being wet-nursed.

Mr. WEIR: So they are.

Mr. CORSER: I wonder who are the parasites on the farmers who are sitting opposite?

Mr. COSTELLO: They are parasites on the workers.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. member for Bowen gave a compilation of figures, and said that 1,005 cattle-owners hold the majority of cattle in the State. He did not say that the State was excluded from that compilation and that the State is the biggest holder of cattle in the State.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Ah! Ah!

Mr. CORSER: If the State as a cattle-owner is taken into consideration, then that average would be reduced considerably.

Mr. COLLINS: I took my figures from the stock returns.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. member for Bowen quoted companies as individual owners. Those companies probably represent hundreds of shareholders—widows and others who have put their money into cattle. (Government laughter.) Many individuals in these companies have put their money into Queensland industries and we should stick to them. Probably many workers through certain institutions have put their money into the cattle industry, and, as that is the greatest industry, those companies should be commended and not counted as one big combine or one big individual holding cattle to the value of millions of pounds. Those cattle are not worth anything on the market at the present time. You could not dispose of them. They are of no commercial value. This Bill is to enable the industry to organise co-operatively and collect the levies that are essential so as to pay experts to handle this meat properly and look after the markets in other parts of the world. It is only to pay the people to carry out those duties which the Agent-General has failed to carry out. (Government laughter.) We have not had one iota of assistance from the Agent-General in connection with our meat industry in Great Britain, and that is one of our greatest troubles. We know that during the war and after the war our great trouble in the cattle industry was State control. State control in the cattle industry has to a very great extent brought about the present debacle. The hon. member for Brisbane waves his hand because he is getting plenty of cheap steak.

Mr. KIRWAN: I am getting plenty of your cheap tripe.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. member for Gregory in a very interesting speech to-day stated that there were miners in the North who had only two feeds of meat a year. The Government should see to it that those workers obtain meat from the State stations to enable them to have a feed at least every Sunday. The handling of the meat market during the war by the Government has brought about this debacle. They contracted for and sent the meat away to Britain. The cattle-owners had no individual representation there. The stores in Great Britain became choked with meat, and when the war terminated millions of pounds of beef were lying in the stores undistributed to the people in the countries where it might have been sent. Why was it allowed to accumulate? The Government were the agents for the people. Its accumulation was due to lack of foresight. After the war it was found necessary to sell £25,000,000 worth to Vestey's,

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and the world's market was held up for some time owing to that sale. If the meat had been handled by the co-operative methods that are sought to be set up under this Bill, the markets would never have been allowed to get into the condition they did get into. It is sincerely hoped that all the cattle-owners will be included in the organisation, and that the State will be included. It is hoped and desired that the State will pay its contribution, just as the owner of 100 or 300 cattle will have to do. The State should not back out of the organisation, considering that nothing has been done by it to help the industry. Some hon. members on the Government side appear to hold some grudge against the industry, and now that it is down wish to keep it down. I hope that hon. members will not repeat the statements that have been made to the effect that the industry has not been able to do anything for itself, and that it has to go cap in hand to the Government to save it from itself. No such thing is asked for. We are only asking for the ratification of a measure which is going to operate right throughout the Commonwealth. We shall not get the maximum of good from the industry until we have co-operation among the whole of the meat interests in Australia. When that time arrives the industry will be saved from the trouble it is in to-day.

Mr. KIRWAN: More State socialism.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): The Bill we are considering to-night is the outcome of a conference of meat interests which took place last year in Melbourne in order to devise some method to organise the industry which played a very important part until the last two or three years in the development of Queensland and Australia. The function of any Government is to assist and encourage industries of the State as far as they possibly and reasonably can. With the knowledge we have of what the industry has meant to Queensland in years gone by, and what it will mean to Queensland in the days that are to come, the necessity was forced on the Government to do something in its interests. The Minister was at that conference, which was attended by the representatives of the cattle industry in all the States. It was thought that some means or methods could be devised by which the whole of the cattle-breeders in Australia could be brought into line to save the industry from practically being extinguished. That fact was on the horizon then as well as it is at the present time. It would be very disastrous for Queensland if anything of the kind happened. We have been told during the debate that Queensland was responsible for six-sevenths of the total quantity of meat exported from Australia in 1921. A fair proportion of the value of that export for the Queensland interest amounted to over £3,000,000. We do not want to see anything happen that will cause this industry to stagger and fall, as it is practically doing at the present time. The State is interested in the preservation of the industry just as much as the individual owners. The State is the owner of big stations and a very large number of cattle. Those of us who are not engaged in the industry are cognisant of the accumulation of stock that is taking place at the present time, and for which no remunerative market can be found. When the cattle reach a certain age they depreciate in value and quality. We have been told that the demand

in Great Britain is for cattle of two and a-half to three years old. We must supply cattle of that age to satisfy the consumers on the other side of the world. We have not been able to prove up to the present time that we are able to do so. The council that is to be appointed under the Act is going to take over the management of all questions concerning the industry. Scientific methods are to be employed to improve the quality of stock, not only in this State, but throughout Australia. It must be patent to anyone that, no matter how careful the cattleman may be in a selection or breed of his stock, their quality deteriorates in seasons such as have prevailed in Queensland for quite a long time. If the cattle do not get the best fodder or grass to maintain them in good condition, that high quality which Great Britain and the other consuming countries desire will not be attained. We hear a good deal at times about the world's parity. If the price in London comes down below the cost of production, that is no argument why the consumers in Australia should pay a similar price to what is being paid in London. I contend that the people of Australia have every right to pay such a price for their primary produce as will return to the producer the full cost of production and something over, so that he will be able to make a living and hold his own. The fact that the world's parity comes down to a point below the cost of production is no argument why that price should prevail here. It is only during the last few years that these troubles have come upon us. We have been told that these troubles have been brought [5 p.m.] about by a breakdown of the capitalistic system, and quite a number of other reasons are assigned for the trouble that the world finds itself in to-day in so far as food supplies are concerned. I certainly do not think that it is a breakdown of the capitalistic system. I think the results of the war have been much more far-reaching than anyone of us anticipated they would be. We only have to consider the position of Germany at the present moment, where the people are practically without food. The unfortunate part of this European position is that, although we in Australia could trade with them by taking their promissory notes if there was a possibility of their being honoured, we find that those countries have neither cash nor credit. We cannot afford to be so philanthropic as to give away our products that are so badly needed by the European countries. If we adopted such a policy, it would mean that we would soon be in a similar position to them.

I welcome the Bill and think it is a step in the right direction, and that it will assist to stabilise what is one of the greatest industries not only in Queensland but in Australia. I consider that the immense areas now growing cattle will for many years be utilised for that purpose, and that the industry will remain one of our principal industries. One thing that has stood to us in Queensland, and in Australia generally, has been the high price that we have been able to secure in the markets of the world for the wool from our sheep. This has enabled Australia to tide over a very difficult period. I think that this Bill should be considered and discussed as a non-party measure, and with the desire to assist the industry, which is in a very parlous condition. If we can by this legislation put it on its feet, we should do so. There may be some

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difficulty in getting the other States to pass similar legislation, but perhaps they will do so. There is one difficulty that I foresee, and that is that, if a certain number of pastoralists in New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia do not desire to have a second levy made upon them after the Council has been brought into existence, it is probable the whole scheme may break down. However, we have to take that risk, and I sincerely hope that the measure will be adopted by the whole of the States of the Commonwealth, and that it will not be long before we see the industry again occupying the position it previously held.

MR MOORE (*Aubigny*): I recognise that the cattle industry is in such a position to-day that it is absolutely necessary to give it an opportunity to recover. I strongly object to the position taken up by hon. members on the other side of the House when they say that the cattle industry is going cap in hand to the Government and asking for assistance. Those concerned in the cattle industry are not asking for any assistance, but merely for a Bill that will allow them to organise and so right themselves. There is no question of a Government subsidy; it is simply a question of enabling the industry to organise itself on similar lines to other industries throughout Australia. We had the Minister, when introducing the measure, stating that co-operation would never be successfully established unless it was compulsory. That is bunkum. He also made a statement that it would be a good thing that the industry, when it was organised, instead of going cap in hand to the shipping companies, could demand a scale of rates satisfactory to the industry. He might as well say that the shipping companies had the same right to go to the cattle people and say they should lower their cost of production so that the freights charged could be paid. That is ridiculous. There is no question of the industry demanding rates when it is organised; but it will be able to make contracts and have a regular supply, thus enabling an agreement of a satisfactory nature to be made. The idea of going to shipping companies and compelling them to charge a certain freight is ridiculous.

We have to recognise that the other States have to come into the scheme. I am rather doubtful whether they will or not; but, even if they do not, this Bill will still be of some assistance to Queensland. We have to remember that the Government have a large interest in cattle; in fact, they are as much interested as other cattle-growers. It is all very fine to put the blame on cattle-growers for the destruction of the overseas market. We know that contracts were made during the war, when food was scarce and there was a difficulty in getting it overseas owing to the dislocation of shipping, and that a larger quantity of inferior foodstuffs was shipped from Australia. That was not the fault of private enterprise. The Government undertook the supervision of these exports, and it is not a question of blaming the industry for supplying poor foodstuffs but the Government for allowing those foodstuffs to go out of the country. A similar position arose in regard to other industries, and it has taken a lot of time to recover our good name. During the war contracts were loosely drawn up, and people took advantage of the wonderful market to get rid of inferior food products. People were going round endeavouring to

secure food products of all descriptions, and there was a big risk when sending them overseas. A lot of our consignments went to the bottom and never reached their destination. Not only meat but jams, tinned fruits, cheese, and butter were supplied of inferior quality. I consider that it was a question of faulty inspection, and that the inferior products should not have left the Commonwealth; and there is no occasion for hon. members opposite to get up and endeavour to hang all the blame on the cattle-growers for having ruined the market.

This Bill is brought in with the definite object of organising the meat industry in Australia, if possible. If that is not possible, it will at any rate organise the industry a little better than it is at present so far as Queensland is concerned. It is no use saying that there are rings and combines, or of blaming private enterprise for exploiting the public. It appears to be only politic for hon. members to say this, and they are endeavouring to secure votes. This Bill goes a step in the right direction, because it gives the Board an opportunity to improve the conditions and devise methods of marketing and distributing. After all, if we can get individuals to help themselves to bring about such a state of affairs it is going to be of great advantage, not only to Queensland, but to Australia. This will be particularly so if the Bill is made a Commonwealth Bill.

I take great exception to hon. members opposite putting the whole of the blame on the cattle-growers of the State. We know that they were prepared to make a deal that was satisfactory to the British Government. We have hon. members going round the country saying that the British Government robbed the producers of this country because they sold meat which they obtained from Argentina at a greater price than we in Australia were able to sell meat to the British Government. Now, merely because we have a Bill like this, the cattle-growers are blamed for ruining the market through sending bad beef to Great Britain. You cannot have it both ways. The cattle-growers rose to the occasion and shipped home all the meat that was possible. They did not get half the price for that meat that was obtained by people in other parts of the world, and they should not now be blamed merely because the situation and the financial position in Europe have made it difficult to re-establish the markets of the world. Until those markets can be re-established, it is necessary to have some form of organisation so that the supply shall be organised in a better way than it was in the past.

MR. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): Just a word or two on a very pertinent side of the question before the House. The criticisms of members on the other side would seemingly indicate an intense want of sympathy with the measure before the House. While the discussion has been proceeding, I have taken out the figures in regard to the exports from Queensland for a number of years. For the years 1914-15 to 1918-19 our total exports amounted to £59,071,704. Of that amount we exported wool, meat, tallow, and hides of no less value than £49,752,870. All that there is left for other goods exported, including butter, is a sum of £9,318,834. Whilst we have been railing against the meat-growers and the wool-producers of the country, it is those industries that have carried

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the country, and without the value of these exports—which has meant bringing gold to Queensland—we could not have existed. The whole of our lives we have been entirely dependent and will continue to be dependent upon the industries which hon. members opposite have found so much fault with. The real trouble with hon. members opposite is not that sanction is being obtained for the movement that is in progress just now, but that the Government have not taken the matter in hand, and have in some coercive way regulated this industry as they intend doing in connection with other things. I simply rose to put this absolute fact before the House, so that hon. members might understand how dependent the wellbeing of this country is on the prosperity of the wool and meat industries.

Mr. BRUCE (*Kennedy*): After spending day after day in attacking the Government for not making progress with their State enterprises and in boosting private enterprise, members of the Opposition must feel very melancholy when they contemplate the failure of private enterprise in regard to the meat industry.

Mr. EDWARDS: The Government have failed, too.

Mr. BRUCE: As I pointed out in a previous speech, they have to come to a Labour Government and make use of their business acumen to try and save them. The leader of the Opposition claimed that the Australian consumer should pay the grower the full productive cost of meat. I would ask the hon. gentleman and those who support him, if they are not prepared to accept world's parity for meat, not to put forward the argument that the workers of Queensland should accept the deflated rates of pay of the European workers. Day after day we have them stating that wages must come down in Australia in conformity with wages in other countries—that is, the world's parity in wages must be accepted by the Australian worker.

Mr. TAYLOR: Absolute nonsense.

Mr. BRUCE: That has been said day after day by members of the Opposition and by every paper that supports the Opposition party. It has been continually reiterated, and I am asking the leader of the Opposition if he supports that. I shall be very pleased if he says that he does not support it, or if members of the Opposition will say that they do not support it. When it is a question of the worker selling the only commodity he has to sell—his labour—we find these attacks on the price that he should receive for that labour. All the energies and all the organisations of the anti-Labour party are used to keep the price of that labour down. That is why the Labour party are in power.

The hon. member for Murilla said the reason for the destruction of the meat market was that, while the war was on, cattle-growers—he claimed to know something about cattle-growing and cattle-growers—sold stag beef and cow beef, and that when this beef was sold on the European market it destroyed that market. He stated that during a time of stress, when members of the Opposition party were supposed to have all the patriotism in the world and when Great Britain was fighting for her life, the cattle-growers sold them a poor article.

Mr. MORGAN: The British Government wanted every pound of beef they could get.

Mr. BRUCE: Although they wanted every pound of beef they could get, it was not a wise policy to sell them cow beef, because they wanted the cows to produce more beef. Cow beef was what they sold to the British soldiers.

Mr. MORGAN: The Government are selling cow beef every day.

Mr. BRUCE: The hon. member for Burnett said the Imperial Government were responsible for destroying the market because of the fact that they had millions of pounds worth of beef left on hand when the armistice was signed. We know perfectly well that in a war such as that, when we had millions of soldiers at the front and millions of people in Great Britain who had to be supported, it was a wise policy to have millions of pounds worth of beef on hand, and it was only natural that they would be left with a large quantity of beef on hand when the armistice was signed. They also had millions of pounds worth of other commodities on hand. The hon. member was so illogical in his conclusion that he said the surplus was responsible for the destruction of the meat market. We have had a different argument from each speaker as to why the meat market was destroyed. We have had—a very wise provision, too—to make provision for the workers to insure themselves against unemployment. We know that, although the cattle industry is now in a desperate state, at one period huge profits were made in it; and why should the cattle-owners not be made to insure themselves in regard to their position, just the same as the workers are made to insure themselves against unemployment? I think that should be done. These people were selling beef at one time in large quantities on a high market and making huge profits. There was a collapse of the beef market, and no doubt they are now in a desperate condition. I would point out that the worker has only one commodity to sell—that is his labour. Wages did not keep up in accordance with the increased cost of living, and the worker was actually selling his labour at a lower price during the war than he was before the war, as his wages were not raised in accordance with the increased cost of living. He has had to insure himself against unemployment—against the loss of the market for his labour. There is no reason why these people should not insure themselves against the loss of their markets, or be made to do so by the Government. They come cap in hand asking for a scheme of organisation to be ratified by the Government. Certainly, many of the suggestions in the Bill were made by representatives of the cattle industry—it was only to be expected that those interested in that particular industry should make suggestions as to the lines on which the Bill should be drawn—but I am of opinion that even with all this suggested machinery we shall not get much further ahead. You cannot introduce legal machinery of any kind to contend successfully against the fact that the purchasing nations are not able to give the necessary price for the commodities we desire to sell. It is just the same with regard to the metal market, which is depressed to-day, and in regard to the fact that the cost of production in Australia will not meet with the purchasing power of the impoverished people of Europe; and so it will be in the cattle industry. I hope, as

[*Mr. G. P. Barnes.*]

one hon. member anticipated, that the population of Australia will so increase that we shall be able to get our beef consumed by a class of people who will have a high purchasing power through the wages they receive. Seeing that the beef industry is destroyed by the low purchasing power of the people in Europe, due to the low wages received by the workers, we should seriously consider any attack on wages and the reduction of the purchasing power of the workers in Australia. I think that this Bill may do some good, because I realise that the collapse of any industry is not for the benefit of the community in general. (Hear, hear!) There is not an individual in the community who does not suffer by the destruction of any particular industry. The hon. member for Warwick said that we depended on this industry. No man who sits down to dinner sees beef on his own plate and bread on another plate without knowing that he is dependent on beef and bread and other commodities: but he must remember that the wages of the workers who are producing these commodities have to be paid. There are men engaged in looking after the cattle and in producing wheat and the many commodities that we use.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: That is why you should support the Bill.

Mr. BRUCE: Naturally, if an industry is destroyed, the result is disastrous to those who are engaged in the production of the commodity and to everybody in the community. I do not think that any legislative machinery will do much towards creating a demand for beef. That depends entirely on the purchasing power of the people in other countries who require it; still at the same time I hope that the Bill will do something to stabilise the beef industry.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*): One is at a loss to understand the attitude taken up by hon. members opposite in connection with this matter. The speeches we have heard from the Government side of the House would lead us to believe that this measure has been introduced to enable them to "slate" and denounce the cattlemen of Queensland. If there was any truth in the statements of the hon. member for Bowen and the hon. member for Maryborough tonight when they said that the cattlemen had come crawling to the Labour party and asked them to bring in this measure, it would ill become public men, who should show a better standard to the people of Queensland, to kick a man when he is down and out. I am not surprised at the hon. member for Maryborough, because I do not think he knows any better; but I am astounded at the attitude of the hon. member for Bowen in connection with this matter. I rose particularly to contradict a statement made by the hon. member for Kennedy, who stated that hon. members on this side are constantly saying that wages in Queensland must come down to the level of those paid in other countries. That is absolutely untrue.

The statement of the leader of the Opposition that the consumer of Queensland should pay a fair price for his beef in comparison with what it cost to produce it was a fair and reasonable statement. As the hon. member for Kennedy stated, all our industries must be kept going in the interests of the State. The workers are a big factor, and the industries of the State are another factor.

The sooner we realise the necessity for working hand in hand and assisting not only workers but everyone in our industries, the better it will be for Queensland, instead of continually bickering and introducing party feeling into the discussions. I contend that there is no reason for that. Every hon. member on both the Government and Opposition sides of the House should welcome this measure. I do not give the Labour Government any credit for it, because the cattlemen have discussed this question amongst themselves for months past. They have practically brought the Bill into being, and the Labour Government being in power they have naturally asked the Government to bring in the legislation. If hon. members opposite realised what is going on at the present time in connection with the cattle industry, they would not only welcome this measure but they would assist the cattlemen to get out of the difficulties they are in. There are men rearing cattle who have not made one shilling for the last two years. If any working man in the cities or elsewhere expects an industry to go on under these conditions, he is not playing the game with his fellowman. The sooner we cut out the party politics so frequently introduced into such measures as this the better it will be for the worker and everyone in the State.

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

COMMITTEE.

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

Clause 1—"Short title"—put and passed.

Clause 2—"Commencement of Act"—

Mr. MORGAN (*Murrilla*): I move the omission of the following words on lines 12 to 15:—

"Provided that such proclamation shall not be made until the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia has passed an Act providing for and defining the Australian Meat Council."

The omission of these words will enable the Minister, if the other States do not fall into line, to bring the Act into force by proclamation, so that we can work under it in Queensland. If those words are allowed to remain in the Bill, the Minister will not have the power to bring the Act into operation unless the Commonwealth and the other States fall into line. I claim that, whether the Commonwealth or the other States fall into line or not, we should bring the Act into force in Queensland. This measure is very important to Queensland. I have already

[8.30 p.m.] given figures to show that we have 70 per cent. of the beef cattle of Australia in Queensland, and that for the last five or six years only a very small proportion of the meat exported from Australia went from the other States, and the bulk of the beef which went from other States was from Queensland fed and fattened cattle. Much of the beef which was shipped from New South Wales went from the southwestern corner of Queensland, and much of the beef which went from South Australia went from the far western portion of this State, so that practically the whole of the beef which went overseas during the last five or six years was from cattle bred and fattened in this State. I contend that the

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amendment is important. We do not want to lose this Bill. We want the power it gives, anyway. It is going to be beneficial to the State, and it will help the State stations.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I should like to point out to the hon. member that this Bill is part of a Commonwealth scheme, which cannot come into operation unless the Commonwealth Parliament passes a Commonwealth Act; so that there would be no advantage in accepting the amendment. The Government have not framed this scheme—it is part of a Federal scheme agreed upon at the conference last year. No scheme can work unless the Commonwealth Government pass an Act and give the Australian Meat Council legal standing.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I want to make it clear to the Committee that, if the Commonwealth Government do not pass an Act, it will mean that twelve months will have to elapse before we can get any organisation. If the Commonwealth do not pass an Act—and they will not do it unless the other States fall into line, and we have been told that New South Wales is doubtful and really only two States other than Queensland will certainly agree—we shall have to wait till another session commences before we can get any organisation. If we accept the amendment we can collect the levies and use them locally. We need not even send any to the Commonwealth Government unless we wish. It seems a pity that we should have to wait twelve months until Parliament meets again before we can get a Bill passed. The producer is in favour of it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Federal Parliament meets next March.

Mr. MORGAN: And if it does not pass an Act we shall have to wait until the next session of the State Parliament twelve months from now before we can introduce another Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We will not introduce another Bill. Don't get away from that.

Mr. MORGAN: We have not a day to lose in the extremity we are in. The amendment is not going to interfere with the principles of the Bill, and, if the Minister does not want to proclaim the Act, the amendment does not compel him to do so.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is no use collecting money to hand over to the Commonwealth if the Commonwealth Parliament does not pass an Act.

Mr. MORGAN: I have an amendment to move later on which will allow the Board to collect the levies and control them and send any portion it desires to the Commonwealth Government in repayment of their advances.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You want to make it a State matter.

Mr. MORGAN: If the other States do not come in, let us ignore the other States.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is not so much the other States as the Commonwealth.

Mr. MORGAN: People from the other States come over here and buy our cattle—the bulk of them go to New South Wales—and the workers there get all the benefit of

the employment created, while our meatworks are empty for the greater part of the year. They are taking advantage of our disorganised conditions, and apparently the Government are not going to help us. We have 70 per cent. of the beef cattle in Australia, and not one of the other States produces enough for its own requirements, yet the Minister is going to leave us at their mercy for another twelve months simply because, if the other States do not fall into line and the Commonwealth does not pass an Act, he will not proclaim this Bill. Under the amendment he may proclaim it or not as he wishes. We may be able to convince him that, if the other States turn it down or if the Commonwealth does not pass an Act, the scheme should be brought into operation here, and, if so, he should have power to do it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I have already pointed out that it is not so much a question of what the other States do as of what the Commonwealth does, and, if the Commonwealth does not pass an Act making provision for the scheme, it is no use putting this Bill into operation. The essence of the thing is that it is part of a Commonwealth scheme.

Amendment (*Mr. Morgan*) negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—"Interpretation"—

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I beg to move the omission on line 23, page 1, of the word—"Advisory," with a view to inserting the word—"Industry."

I think the Board should be more than an Advisory Board, and I have another amendment to propose later on to give it greater power. It should be something more than a collecting body. If I thought that this Bill was merely to come into operation for that purpose, I would vote against it. We would merely collect £30,000 and send it down to Melbourne to be operated on there, and we would get no benefit at all. The people who do the work and collect the money should spend it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I do not think it is advisable to accept the amendment. We are only ratifying what the conference of stockowners decided, and we cannot make a trading Bill out of it.

Amendment (*Mr. Morgan*) negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—"The Board—Establishment"—put and passed.

Clause 5—"Qualifications of members and electors"—put and passed.

Clause 6—"Appointment of first Board"—

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I beg to move the omission, on line 14, of the words—

"one year,"

with a view to inserting the words—

"six months."

After the Act has been proclaimed and becomes law six months is a sufficient period to elapse. The Minister has power to cause an election within three months or within any period not exceeding one year. The people who find the money want to elect their own Board, and I think one year is too long.

[*Mr. Morgan.*]

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. M. Gillies, *Eacham*): I do not think the time should be limited to six months, as it may not be possible to carry out an election within that time. I think we might trust the men who have been elected to the Provisional Board until such time as we have an election. I will undertake that no unnecessary delay will occur in giving the stockowners an opportunity of electing the Board, but I do not think it is advisable to limit the period to six months.

Amendment (*Mr. Morgan*) negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 7 to 10, both inclusive, put and passed.

Clause 11—"Fund"—

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I beg to move the omission, on line 46, clause 11, of the words—

"Australian Meat Council,"

with a view to inserting the words—

"State Meat Advisory Board."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That principle has been defeated on your amendment on clause 3.

Mr. MORGAN: No. The Bill provides that levies are to be collected and the money sent to a fund down South, which I do not think is right. The original draft of the Bill provided that each Advisory Board would collect its own funds and contribute so much to the Australian Meat Council.

The PREMIER: The Australian Meat Council or the State Meat Advisory Board must have altered that subsequently.

Mr. MORGAN: It was not altered at the conference consisting of representatives from different States. That consultation was of more importance than any action by any other body in making subsequent arrangements. We may raise £30,000, Victoria £3,000, and Tasmania £1,000; they are the only three States coming into the scheme, and the Australian Meat Council will consist of an equal number of delegates from those three States. Is it fair that that Council should have the control of £30,000 from Queensland, when only £3,000 comes from Victoria, and £1,000 from Tasmania? Why, the people of Queensland would vote against this measure if that were so. I would vote against it myself. It is not right to allow the people in the South to have the control of £30,000 from Queensland. The State Meat Advisory Board will be elected by the taxpayers who find the money, and then the money is to be sent to another Council to pay its expenses. That is not in accordance with general practice, and I hope the Minister will accept the amendment. I am surprised that the Government have foreseen their own principles in this matter.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumbidgee*): The hon. member for Murilla seems to take a wrong view of this matter. Because the money is going to the headquarters of an organisation that is not to say that Queensland's needs will not be attended to. If it does happen, then we shall very soon get out of the scheme. I am of the opinion that the clause should be allowed to stand. It is just as well to say that we should not pay our income tax because the money goes to Melbourne. In a business matter like this

I assume that the State Meat Advisory Board will be strong enough and wise enough to see that the right thing is done. The matter should be allowed to stand as it is.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. M. Gillies, *Eacham*): The clause contained in the Bill is practically identical with the clause set out in the original draft Bill. I cannot understand where the draft came from that has been furnished to me by the hon. member for Murilla.

Mr. MORGAN: I got it from one of the delegates.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: If this amendment is agreed to, it will practically make it a State scheme and not a Commonwealth scheme. Personally I thought it was unfair that the bulk of the money should go to the Australian Meat Council, but it is recognised that the Commonwealth Board should represent the whole of the States. We are dealing with a Commonwealth industry, although 90 per cent. of the cattle may grow in Queensland. We have a 90 per cent. interest in the success of the scheme. The stockowners control the scheme when all is said and done, and by accepting the amendment the scheme as a Federal scheme would be upset.

Amendment (*Mr. Morgan*) negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 12—"Levies"—

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I beg to move the omission, on line 28, page 5, of the word—

"ten"

with a view to inserting the word—

"eight."

A penalty of 10 per cent. is too high, and 8 per cent. is sufficient. A 10 per cent. penalty is imposed on selectors for arrears of rent, and we are continually complaining about it as an exorbitant penalty.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I suggest to the hon. member for Murilla that he withdraw his amendment, as I have a prior amendment on line 26. I propose to move the omission, on line 26, of the word "fifty," with a view to inserting the word "ten." We should not reduce the penalty, because it is not much encouragement to a man to pay his assessment, and if a man does not pay his assessment the scheme cannot succeed. After all, a penalty of 10 per cent. is not a large one when considered in the light of a penalty.

Mr. MORGAN: I ask leave to withdraw my amendment for the time being.

Amendment (*Mr. Morgan*), by leave, withdrawn.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I beg to move the omission, on line 26, of the word—

"fifty."

with a view to inserting the word—

"ten."

Amendment (*Mr. Gillies*) agreed to.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I move the omission, on line 23, of the word—

"ten."

with a view to inserting the word—

"eight."

Amendment (*Mr. Morgan*) negatived.

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Mr. MORGAN: I beg to move the omission, on line 33, of the word—

“fifty,”

with a view to inserting the words—

“one hundred.”

The clause provides that fifty stockowners who have paid their assessments can demand a poll as to whether a further levy shall be made. In my opinion, fifty is too small a number to be able to demand a poll to defeat a levy, and I think that the number should be increased to 100.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I am prepared to accept the amendment.

Amendment (*Mr. Morgan*) agreed to.

Mr. BELL (*Fassifern*): I beg to move the omission, on lines 45 and 46, of the words—

“the majority of stockowners voting thereat decide,”

with a view to inserting the words—

“at least 60 per centum of the stockowners entitled to vote thereat have voted, and at least three-fifths of the stockowners voting thereat have decided.”

My object in moving this amendment is to ensure that a majority of stockowners exercise their vote. It would not be fair if only 40 per cent. of the stockowners voted that this scheme should be practically wiped out by a bare majority.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): A simple majority should rule. I am opposed to a three-fifths majority. If the Board is not doing its duty or carrying out its functions, it has a right to be abolished. At least 60 per cent. of the stockowners should record their votes, but a simple majority should rule.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: In that case a minority could upset the scheme.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I am inclined to agree with the hon. member for *Murilla* in so far as the first part of the amendment is concerned. I suggest to the hon. member for *Fassifern* that he should agree to the insertion of the following words after the word “taken,” on line 45:—

“at least 60 per centum of the stockowners entitled to vote thereat have voted, and a majority of the stockowners voting thereat have decided.”

That would cut out any suggestion about the three-fifths majority, which I do not agree with. I think it is a fair thing to say

that at least 60 per cent. of the [9 p.m.] stockowners should vote, but I do not agree with the latter part of the amendment. If the latter part is withdrawn I am prepared to accept the amendment.

Mr. BELL (*Fassifern*): I am prepared to accept the suggestion of the Minister, and I therefore ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. BELL (*Fassifern*): I now move the omission, after the word “taken,” on lines 45 and 46, page 5, of the words—

“the majority of stockowners voting thereat decide,”

with a view to inserting the words—

“at least 60 per centum of the stockowners entitled to vote thereat have

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voted and a majority of the stockowners voting thereat have decided.”

Amendment (*Mr. Bell*) agreed to.

Mr. BELL (*Fassifern*): I beg to move the insertion on line 46, after the word “Board,” of the words—

“upon the taking of any poll on the question of the levying of assessments under this Act, during the period of three years following the taking of such poll, no further poll on such question shall be taken.”

There seems to be some doubt as to whether only one poll shall be taken or a succession of polls. It is provided that 100 stockowners who have paid their assessments shall be entitled to demand a poll of stockowners liable to pay assessments under this Act on the question as to whether a further levy of assessments shall be made or not. If that means that a number of polls may be taken, I think it only reasonable to provide that during the period only one poll shall be taken. My idea is that the poll shall not be of a frivolous nature, and that the stockowners, if they desire to wipe out the levy on a future occasion, shall have the right to do so. I desire to ask the Minister whether only one poll is to be taken.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I think the amendment of the hon. member will make the position quite clear.

Amendment (*Mr. Bell*) agreed to.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 14—“Returns” —

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): Regarding sub-clause (3) of clause 14, should the return which has to be forwarded by each clerk of petty sessions to the Department of Agriculture be a monthly or an annual one? I think that at present the clerk of petty sessions makes a return annually.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The wording is correct. The returns are made monthly by the clerk of petty sessions.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 15—“Powers of Board” —

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I beg to move the insertion on line 29, after the word—

“thereof,”

of the words—

“and (d) Recommend financial assistance for the establishment of co-operative meatworks, abattoirs, or factories, for the manufacture and preparation of products and by-products.”

If that amendment is carried, it will mean that the Board will have power to recommend to the Australian Meat Council that a certain amount of funds shall be used for such a purpose in certain States. The Queensland Meat Advisory Board might recommend the establishment of meatworks, abattoirs, or factories, and they might also recommend the establishment of retail shops. We know that one of the things that is likely to affect Australia more than anything else is the establishment of retail shops in Great Britain. If the Australian Meat Council considered on a future occasion that it would be advisable to take such an action, they would then have power to do it. If they have not such power, I consider they are going to do little or no good. The present intention is only to find markets for

the meatworks in existence and to find new places to send our produce to, but not to participate in the profits. At the present time we know that the meatworks have bought our meat for about 15s. per 100 lb. and have sent it to Sydney and made enormous profits. If we had our own co-operative meatworks, the people producing the meat would get the profits. There is not much harm in inserting the clause, as it only means that the State Meat Advisory Board may make the recommendation. I have deleted the word "Render" appearing in the printed amendment sheet and substituted the word "Recommend." My original amendment was prepared on the assumption that my earlier amendments would be carried.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): The alteration of the word "Render" to "Recommend" makes the amendment less objectionable, but I point out again that I do not think it will accomplish anything, because this is not a trading Bill. However, as there does not seem any serious objection to the amendment, I shall accept it.

Amendment (*Mr. Morgan*) agreed to.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 16 to 20, both inclusive, put and passed.

Clause 21—"Elections to Australian Meat Council"—

Mr. MORGAN (Murilla): I beg to move the insertion on line 24, after the word—

"persons,"

of the words—

"who must be members of the Board."

At the present time the Bill does not make it clear that the representatives on the Australian Meat Council must be elected from the members of the State Meat Advisory Board. At the present time, if the State Meat Advisory Board likes to elect men outside the State who are not members of the Board, it can do so. I do not think that is a proper thing. The Council of Agriculture is composed of men who have been elected by the Local Producers' Associations to the District Councils.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I accept that amendment.

Amendment (*Mr. Morgan*) agreed to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 22—"Vacancy in representation"—put and passed.

Clause 23—"Penalties"—

Mr. BELL (Fassifern): I beg to move the omission, on line 56, of the word—

"Industry,"

with a view to inserting the word—

"Advisory."

This is only a consequential amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I accept that.

Amendment (*Mr. Bell*) agreed to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 24—"Regulations"—put and passed.
First Schedule—"Rules for Elections of Members on the Stock Interests"—

Clause 4—"Secretary to prepare annual roll"—

Mr. BELL (Fassifern): Subclause 2 of clause 4 reads—

"The said list, when so certified, shall be delivered by the secretary to the

returning officer, and shall be the roll of electors to be used at every election, and such roll shall continue in force until a new roll is made."

I beg to move the insertion on line 49, after the word—

"election,"

of the words—

"or poll."

That will provide that the certified list shall be the official roll to be used at every election or poll. Those who pay levies are entitled to vote at every poll, and I think the insertion of those words will make it clear.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (*Hon. W. N. Gillies, Eacham*): The Parliamentary Draftsman points out that clause 13 of the Bill contains a paragraph which reads—

"Thereupon the Board shall cause such poll to be taken, and the provisions of this Act relating to elections of representatives of the stock interests shall (so far as applicable) apply to every such poll."

The amendment is therefore quite unnecessary.

Mr. BELL: I only desired to make sure that that was so. I therefore ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 13—"Voting-papers"—

Mr. MORGAN (Murilla): I beg to move the omission, on line 28, of the words—

"in two sections;"

with a view to inserting the words—

"on two ballot-papers."

This clause provides that the ballot-papers shall contain the names of those nominated to represent the cattle interests and those nominated to represent the sheep interests, and the persons who pay levies for sheep will have a vote in determining who shall represent the cattle interests, and those persons who pay levies for cattle will have a vote as to who shall represent the sheep interests. It is quite possible, if the ballot-paper is sent out in that manner, that the sheepmen will dominate the whole position. They can elect the four representatives to represent the cattlemen. I do not think that is fair. We have decided that there shall be four representatives of the owners of cattle and two representatives of the owners of sheep, because the cattle industry is more important than the sheep industry. If the ballot-papers are sent out in the way provided in the schedule the sheepmen can elect the whole of the representatives. That was not the intention of the conference, and I do not think it is the intention of the Bill. If the amendment is agreed to, it will mean that a ballot-paper will be sent out to all these who are entitled to vote for the election of the four representatives of the cattlemen and another ballot-paper will be sent out to those who are entitled to vote for the election of the two representatives of sheepmen. If a man is both a cattle and sheep grower and pays both levies, he will get both ballot-papers. This is a most important amendment, because the two industries are separate and distinct and the organisations are separate and distinct. All along the cattle-

Mr. Morgan.]

men have been subservient to the sheepmen, and they are determined to get away from the sheepmen. Their interests are not always identical. In many important matters they clash. For instance, the United Graziers' Association could pick out a list of candidates after the nomination day is fixed and ask their members to vote as desired, and thus rule the whole roost. The Minister will agree that we are justified in protecting ourselves. Let the cattlemen have their own representatives and the sheepmen also have their own representatives.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I could not accept the amendment if I wished to do so, as it would upset the whole scheme of the Bill, which recognises only stockowners as such and does not make any difference between sheepmen and cattlemen. The ballot-papers provide that each owner shall have a vote. I think the industry may very well be trusted to look after itself in this respect. I do not think there is any danger of either the sheepmen getting the whole of the representation into their hands or of the cattlemen doing so. To alter the wording as proposed by the hon. member would not alter the scheme, which, right through the Bill, recognises stockowners. For that reason I cannot accept the amendment, although there may be some logic in the hon. member's arguments.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I am sorry to hear the Minister say that the amendment would spoil the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There are many men who own sheep as well as cattle.

Mr. MORGAN: The amendment will give an owner who has a sufficient number of both sheep and cattle the right to give a vote in each case. Under the Bill the control of the matter will be placed in the hands of the sheepmen. It is practically giving the United Graziers' Association power to elect the whole of the Board. The Minister says the Bill provides for stockowners. It provides that four of the members of the Board must be cattlemen and paying a levy in that respect, and also that two of the members must be sheepmen. Why is the discrimination made of having two sheepmen as against four cattlemen? It is done for a purpose—because cattlemen are going to contribute twice as much as sheepmen—they are going to contribute £20,000 and the sheepmen £10,000.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The sheepmen are going to contribute £10,000 to help an industry which is down and out.

Mr. MORGAN: Yes, and although the cattlemen are supposed to have the right to control the industry, it will react against them, because the sheepmen are the more numerous and are members of the United Graziers' Association, which is going to control the election of the whole of the six representatives. The Minister is going to allow that large association to dominate the situation. On behalf of the cattlemen I protest against it, and will do all I possibly can to bring about a different system. It is a wrong thing to place in the Bill, and is against the interests of the cattlemen whom we are out to try and assist.

Amendment (*Mr. Morgan*) negatived.

Clause 16—"Filling up of ballot-papers"—

[*Mr. Morgan*.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I move the insertion on line 24, page 11, after the word—

"close,"

of the words—

"which must be not less than six weeks after the date of nomination."

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I have consulted the Parliamentary Draftsman, who says that this is already provided for in clause 11 of the schedule by the following words:—

"(not being less than twenty nor more than forty days from the day of nomination)".

There is therefore no necessity for the amendment.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): The words "not less than twenty days" mean that the papers would be required to be sent in within twenty-one days, which would be impossible. It would be impossible to get ballot-papers returned from distant northern centres within three weeks.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: It says "nor more than forty days."

Mr. MORGAN: Ballot-papers might be sent out and the voters might not be allowed more than three weeks in which to return them. The shortest time in which they could be returned might be six weeks. Why not make it six weeks?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We are not dealing with criminals in this Bill.

Mr. MORGAN: It is all very well for the hon. gentleman to talk like that—he does not seem to care much about this matter. We know that twenty-one days is too short a period. It would be impossible to get a true vote in that time. If you want to "rig" the thing and not give people a fair chance to vote, have it twenty-one days; but, if you want to give the people a fair chance, let them have sufficient time. The shortest period should be forty-two days.

As the Minister will not accept the amendment in the way in which I have moved it, I suggest that he amend clause 11 of the schedule by providing that the returning officer, at the declaration of the nominations, shall announce a day, not less than forty days nor more than sixty days afterwards, as the day on which the poll shall close instead of a day not more than twenty days nor more than forty days from the day of

nomination, as at present. That [9.30 p.m.] would mean that stockowners who were away from railway communication would be able to record their votes, although I think forty days is hardly enough for people in the far northern parts of the State, where it takes the boat a week to go up, and the mail another week to go out, and another two weeks for the mail to return.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): If the hon. member will withdraw his amendment, I will agree to an amendment in the clause of the schedule he has mentioned. The Bill will have to be recommitted.

Mr. MORGAN: I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Schedule agreed to.

Second Schedule—"Rules relating to the election of members in the meadows interests"—agreed to.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with amendments.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I beg to move—

"That the Bill be recommitted for the purpose of further considering clause 11 of the First Schedule."

Question put and passed.

RECOMMITTAL.

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

First Schedule—

Clause 11—"Notifications of candidates"—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I beg to move the omission, on line 1, page 10, of the words—

"twenty" and "forty,"

with a view to inserting the words—

"thirty" and "sixty,"

respectively. I think that will meet the view of the hon. member for Murilla.

Amendment (*Mr. Gillies*) agreed to.

Schedule, as amended, put and passed.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with further amendments.

The third reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

SUGAR EXPERIMENT STATIONS ACT
AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I need not take up very much time in explaining the principles of this Bill. Its object is to provide for the systematic destruction of pests in the sugar industry. The request has been made by the sugar-growers, and has been approved of by the Council of Agriculture. The Bill gives power for the creation of Boards in gazetted districts, and gives them power to make compulsory levies of a maximum of 3d. per ton on sugar-cane on the basis of the growers paying one-half and the millers paying one-half. The Board will comprise three elected representatives of the growers and two elected representatives of the millers. The Board will have power to do all things necessary to control the fund and exterminate the pests.

The present Act provides for a levy and also a subsidy to the fund. That subsidy has been paid hitherto, but there seems to be some doubt as to the efficacy of the scheme, and this Bill will clear up that doubt and will make it possible in every district where cane pests affect the industry for the farmers to make a request for a district to be gazetted and a Board elected, and for funds to be collected so as to deal with the pests. The present voluntary system does not operate too well. In some districts they have done wonderfully good work under that system, but I believe that the compulsory system will operate much better and will enable the pest

to be dealt with. In some of the districts they are becoming very serious and crops are suffering very severely.

I have much pleasure in moving—

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

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): As the Minister pointed out, this Bill provides machinery for doing work that for twenty-five years was performed by voluntary action. I certainly agree with the principles contained in the Bill. Before the old system was done away with splendid work was done. I remember twenty-five years ago, when I was secretary of what was called the Central Destruction Fund, which covered a big district, something like £2,000 passed through the accounts of the central committee, which accounts were made up of two-third contributions by the industry and one-third subsidy from the Consolidated Revenue. We accounted for 40 tons beetles one season, and we pretty well cleared that district, and ever since work on those lines has been carried out. There has always been the difficulty that certain people who benefited by the work would not contribute, but under the Bill all those within the area will have to pay their share of the expense. Speaking as one who has come in contact with the practical conditions in the past, I think the Bill is a good one, though I think the levy of 3d. per ton is rather high.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is the maximum.

Mr. SWAYNE: In the past the levy could only be imposed on those willing to contribute, but under the Bill the matter will be in the hands of the elected representatives of the growers and millers. Although the maximum levy is large, the representatives elected by the contributors will see that no unnecessarily large levy is declared. The maximum levy under the principal Act is 1d. Last year a levy of ½d. was made, and I find from the report of the Auditor-General that there was a balance to the credit of the fund of £21,000, although £1,855 was used in various localities. It quite bears out what I have said, that the maximum levy in this Bill seems very large. The Board has power to deal with other pests that in the past have called for attention. The power to compel all to contribute is a good one.

I wish to point out before I sit down the difference between the sugar industry and other industries. Under the principal Act the work of the sugar experiment farms has been carried on at the expense of those engaged in the industry. All such work carried out in connection with other farming operations under the direction of the Department of Agriculture is supplied with funds from the Consolidated Revenue. In this case, as in most other cases, the sugar-farmers pay out of their own pockets for anything they get.

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

COMMITTEE.

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

Clauses 1 to 6, both inclusive, put and passed.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill without amendment.

The third reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

The House adjourned at 9.45 p.m.

Mr. Swayne.]