

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 20 AUGUST 1924**

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WEDNESDAY, 20 AUGUST, 1924.

The Speaker (Hon. W. Bertram, *Marcc*) took the chair at 10 a.m.

APPROPRIATION BILL, No. 1.

ASSENT.

The SPEAKER: I have to report that yesterday I presented to His Excellency the Governor Appropriation Bill, No. 1, for the Royal assent, and that His Excellency was pleased, in my presence, to subscribe his assent thereto in the name and on behalf of His Majesty.

A message was also received from the Governor, conveying His Excellency's assent to the Bill.

MEMBER SWORN.

Mr. E. J. HANSON.

Mr. Edward Joseph Hanson, having taken the oath of allegiance and subscribed the roll, took his seat as member for the electoral district of Buranda.

QUESTIONS.

PRIVATE AND DENOMINATIONAL SCHOOLS.

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

"1. What control has he over private schools (grammar schools excepted)?

"2. Is there any registration scheme in existence in Queensland?

"3. How many denominational schools are in Queensland? Where are they situated? What denomination are they? How many pupils are enrolled? What is the State subsidy paid per annum in each case?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. F. T. Brennan, *Toowoomba*) replied—

"1. None.

"2. No.

"3. The Department of Public Instruction has no particulars—

(a) As to the number of denominational schools in the State;

(b) Where they are situated;

(c) The church authorities which control them.

No subsidy is granted by the State towards denominational schools."

LETTER RECEIVED BY PREMIER FROM BANKER.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*), without notice, asked the Treasurer—

"Will he lay on the table of the House the letter received from a banker of Queensland endorsing the Treasurer's statement made at the Exhibition luncheon last week?"

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

"The letter is a private one and I cannot lay it on the table of the House, but if the hon. gentleman doubts that I have received such a letter, he can see it at my office."

## ANIMALS AND BIRDS ACT AMENDMENT 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 desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend ‘The Animals and Birds Act of 1921’ in certain particulars.”

Question put and passed.

## APPRENTICESHIP BILL.

## COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Pollock, Gregory, in the chair.*)

Question—Clause 2—“*Interpretation*”—

On which the following amendment had been moved by Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*)—

“On line 17, page 1, omit the word ‘under’ with a view to inserting the words—

‘not less than fourteen years of age and not more than’”

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): I do not know what the hon. member for Enoggera has in mind in moving this amendment, but I desire that a boy and girl should have the right to learn a trade or calling from fourteen years of age. There are instances when, as a matter of convenience or assistance to a widow, a boy should be permitted to start work at an earlier age, say, 13½ years, even though he has not reached a certain standard at school. If the Arbitration Court is to have the right to say when a lad shall be apprenticed, then I think we should lay it down definitely that he can start from fourteen years of age. The sooner a lad starts his occupation, the better it will be for him. The Minister stated yesterday that the apprentices gained some experience at the technical colleges. Having seen some evidence at the demonstration given by the apprentices at the National Show last week in the particular trade that I follow myself, if that is the method adopted at the technical colleges, then it is not in the interests of the boy.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: What was wrong with the method of tuition?

Mr. ROBERTS: First of all, the apprenticeship was not provided with the necessary tools. I want it provided for in this Bill that a boy at a reasonable age should have an opportunity of being apprenticed to the calling he desires.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*): I am glad that the Minister will not accept the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Enoggera because, if he did, it would spoil the whole purpose of the Bill and would not meet the object which the hon. member had in view. If the hon. member looks at the clause he will find that the definition he seeks to amend is that of a minor. If the Minister had accepted the amendment, then a minor would be a person between the age of fourteen and twenty-one years, and we would have to deal with the Bill as it applied to the definition. The Bill in subsequent clauses provides that only minors who come under it shall have its provisions applied to them. If the amendment were accepted, that would mean that minors of fourteen years of age

[*Mr. Roberts.*

could be employed and would not be under any control whatever. The Bill itself is quite clear and makes provision that all persons up to the age of twenty-one years shall come within the control and be subject to its provisions. The definition provided is an open definition covering every person, but if the amendment was accepted, it would defeat that object. It has been said that there are differences in boys, and that some boys of fourteen years are quite as healthy, strong, and virile as older boys. The same thing applies to girls. Some girls of fourteen years are more developed than some at sixteen years.

The same thing applies in regard to industries. Some boys of fourteen or fifteen years of age could be apprenticed to some industries without doing them any harm, yet, if they were apprenticed to a different industry, it would do them a great deal of harm. We know very well that there are certain industries to which it would be impossible to apprentice boys of that age. The Bill in a later clause lays it down that the Arbitration Court shall determine the age at which boys and girls are to be apprenticed, and in arriving at its decision will take into consideration the conditions of the industry. The amendment would not accomplish that desire, and for that reason should not be accepted. Any person, even under fourteen years of age, if it was found necessary, after they had reached a certain standard of education and nothing further could be done to bring them into employment, would be subject to and protected by the provisions of this Bill. That being so, I am glad the Secretary for Public Works has not accepted the amendment. I feel sure that the hon. member for Enoggera will admit that the Act will be better if it is not restricted and no one is left out.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): Before my proposed amendment is disposed of I would like to reply to one or two statements made by the hon. member who has just resumed his seat. He stated that my amendment would possibly lead to the employment of boys under the age of fourteen. If the hon. member knows anything about the labour laws, he knows that they do not permit the engagement of any boy under the age of fourteen unless such is especially stated.

There was no need for the Secretary for Public Works to impute to this side of the Chamber the desire to employ child labour. The hon. gentleman had no right to do so. He said that this was a matter for the Arbitration Court—that he did not approve of youths of fourteen years of age being engaged as apprentices.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I told you that boys under fourteen years of age are not indentured now. When a boy leaves school there is no reason why he should not start a trade straight away.

Mr. KERR: I am glad to get an acknowledgment from the hon. gentleman that, when a boy leaves school now, he may become apprenticed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I said also that sixteen years was the best age at which to start a trade.

Mr. KERR: My amendment will make the definition read “not less than fourteen years of age and not more than twenty-one.” If the Secretary for Public Works would agree to this, he would be following not only my desire but his own. I know that apprenticeship

matters are considered by the Arbitration Court as industrial matters; but now that we have an opportunity we might as well insert this provision in the Bill and make the matter definite. It has been the practice for a number of years not to employ boys under the age of sixteen years. If we include this amendment in the Bill, we make provision for the boy of fourteen, who is fit, to be employed as an apprentice. A further argument is that there is no correlation between education and employment to-day. It is compulsory for a lad to attend school until he reaches the age of fourteen. There is a good gap to be overcome between fourteen and sixteen years of age. We must keep in mind that, while primary education is compulsory to the age of fourteen, secondary or technical education is not compulsory. The Secretary for Public Works says that he thinks sixteen should be the compulsory age for attendance at school. If he thinks that, why not have provision made for compulsory technical education up to sixteen years?

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. KERR: I do not intend to deviate from the question under discussion, and I shall attempt to show that a boy of sixteen years of age should have a chance of engaging in an occupation. This is one of the most important parts of the Bill. I desire the Secretary for Public Works to make provision by legislation whereby a boy who is fourteen years of age and physically fit may take up a job. I am against the practice of letting the Arbitration Court decide this matter. Under the Bill we shall have an executive constituted, consisting of men with a great knowledge of their trade as employers and of employees with a considerable knowledge of their trade. I venture to say that when this executive meets at a round-table conference we may expect better results than if the matter is placed in the hands of advocates in the Arbitration Court. The essential questions for consideration in an Arbitration Court are wages and conditions. When it comes to apprenticeship an advocate cannot give the consideration to the subject that would be given by the executive. I now ask that the matter be left in the hands of the executive instead of the Arbitration Court. I am out to get the best results, and that is my only reason for asking that this amendment should be accepted. From an economic point of view it is necessary to have this amendment in the Bill. When boys leave school at the age of fourteen years they are compelled to wander round the streets, and they become a source of anxiety to their parents. We should take into consideration the economic aspect of the whole business and give parents an opportunity of placing their boys in employment when they are compelled to leave school. It is a big question, and I hope the Minister will accept the amendment.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Witroy*): Before the amendment is put to the vote I would like to hear a statement from the Minister as to the interpretation of a "minor." At first sight the definition looks all right, but the remarks of the hon. member for Ipswich caused a certain uneasiness in my mind. The policy of the Government is that every child shall attend school until it reaches the age of fourteen years so that it may get the best education offering, and after reaching that age the child is eligible to go to work. If this definition means that anyone under the age of twenty-one years can be con-

sidered a minor and will come under the operation of this Bill—

Mr. GLEDSON: I did not say anything of the sort.

Mr. HARTLEY: I do not say that the hon. member did. I am giving the impression that has been created in my mind by what the hon. member said, and I say that, unless this definition is amended, it may open the door for the admission of child labour of the very worst sort. My impression is that the definition in the amendment moved by the hon. member for Enoggera is a sound one, and if the amendment is accepted, there can be no quibbling. If we are to understand definitely that the age for apprenticeship is to be from fourteen years of age, when a lad leaves school, then we know where we are; but if anyone under the age of twenty-one is to be considered a minor and to be eligible for apprenticeship, then we leave the door open for the employment of children of eight years of age, ten years of age, twelve years of age, and so on. This is a growing country, in which manufacturing have yet to be established, and there is one industry in particular in regard to which I am very apprehensive about the position of the workers. That is the cotton industry. All I can say is that, if this definition is allowed to go through as it is, then it opens the door for children of any age to be employed in cotton and textile factories. I am sure it is not the intention or the wish of this Government for that to happen; but if they allow the definition to go through, the Apprenticeship Committee will have the option of deciding the age, or it will be necessary for whatever Governments happens to be in power at the time to amend the Act and make it definite as to what age a child shall be apprenticed. I hope the Minister will consider the arguments put forward. I do not see any reason why the amendment should not be accepted, but, at any rate, I would like an assurance on the point I have raised.

Mr. KERR: It is a reasonable amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*): I stated last night my reasons for not accepting the amendment. I stated then that the Education Act provided that each boy shall attend school until he is fourteen years of age, and consequently no minor can be engaged as an apprentice until he is fourteen years of age. I also stated that, if it was desired by Parliament to increase the age for compulsory education up to fifteen or sixteen years of age, it should be done in a proper way by amending the Education Act, which deals with such matters, and not by a Bill of this kind. The position is that the Bill is to apply to certain skilled trades. A boy, after he leaves school at fourteen years of age, may be indentured for the period prescribed in the trade or calling he may go to. The average term of apprenticeship is five years, which means that, if a boy starts his apprenticeship at fourteen years of age, he will be a journeyman at nineteen and be entitled to the full standard of wages that his skill entitles him to. After he has finished his apprenticeship he will receive from the Technical College his final certificate of examination, which will be regarded as the hallmark of a tradesman and entitle him to all the rates of pay and conditions prescribed for journeymen.

*Hon. W. Forgan Smith.]*

There is no possible chance of anything such as the hon. member for Fitzroy fears taking place under this Bill. It does not deal with employees in the cotton industry at all; it deals with apprentices in skilled trades, and does not lower the age at which boys can be employed.

Mr. HARTLEY: A textile trade will be a skilled trade.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: At the present time, it is well known that if a boy has reached a certain standard of education, he may be permitted by the Department of Public Instruction to leave school at the age of thirteen years. The circumstances of each case are very fully investigated by that department, and it is only in extreme cases that the concession is granted. Then again, there is the further protection that no boy under fourteen years of age can be employed in any of the callings under the Factories and Shops Act without the permission in writing of the Secretary for Public Works. I also investigate very fully any cases that come before me. I do not suppose that I have signed twelve permits in the last three years, and in the cases where they have been signed it probably has been during the school recess and in cases where the boy would have reached the age of fourteen years at the time of the resumption of school. There is no chance of child labour. The amendment, as pointed out by the hon. member for Ipswich, would not accomplish that which the hon. member for Fitzroy thinks it would, because the law would still stand enabling anyone under fourteen years of age, having the permission of the Department of Public Instruction and the Secretary for Public Works, to go to work under that condition.

The Bill is devised deliberately for the purpose of protecting boys in industries and callings from being employed and thrust into dead-end occupations. It protects them at every period of their occupation, and provides that they shall learn their trades properly and that the conditions surrounding their employment shall be what they should be.

Amendment (Mr. Kerr) negatived.

Clause 2 agreed to.

Clause 3—"Application of Act"—

Mr. SWAYNE (Mirani): I beg to move the following amendment:—

"On line 16, page 2, after the word 'declare,' insert the words—

"This Act shall not apply to primary agricultural industries, but it shall be lawful to employ in any such industry a person with no previous experience in the industry in which he is employed for a probationary period not exceeding twelve months and at such remuneration as may be prescribed by any industrial agreement or award applicable to his case."

My object is specifically to exclude the agricultural industry from some of the provisions in this Bill. It may be said that at the present time there is not the slightest reference in the Bill to that industry, which is perfectly correct, but the first paragraph of the clause we are dealing with gives power to the Governor in Council—in other words, the Minister in charge of the administration of the Act—from time to time to bring other industries within the

scope of the measure. As I have pointed out very often, the hon. member [10.30 a.m.] occupying the position of Minister may be a gentleman of very extreme views, and, if it rested with him—that is, if this amendment were not carried—no minor would be allowed to work in that industry without being apprenticed. In other words, he would not be allowed even to milk a cow unless he became an apprentice. Without intending any reflection at all on the present Minister, I think it is right that when we make laws we should lay down in hard-and-fast terms just what we mean, and to make it clear that no crank shall bring about such an absurd position as that, something on the lines of my amendment should be introduced.

Secondly, we know that in some agricultural industries they are working under awards by which it is impossible for them to employ labour without previous practical knowledge unless they pay them the full rate of wages. The knowledge required is not such as requires a regular apprenticeship, as it cannot be termed highly skilled, but some experience is needed. I might mention a case which came under my notice in the sugar industry. Three persons who had £1,600 among them wished to invest the money in the sugar industry, but they also wished, very wisely, to gain some preliminary knowledge of the industry as workers in it, and for that purpose wanted to get jobs on a sugar farm. At that time the award rate was 16s. 8d. a day, and, however willing they might be, as they were from London and totally unused to country conditions, it was hardly likely that they would be worth that wage. Yet that was the only way in which they could get experience in that industry. When this Bill becomes an Act, if my amendment is not accepted, a similar thing may happen in the dairying, cotton-growing, and other agricultural industries, should they also be subject to an award of the Arbitration Court. It may be said that already something of this kind has been done under the present Industrial Arbitration Act to meet the case of "jackeroos" in the pastoral industry, but I would also point out that judges of the court have expressed themselves to the effect that it is desirable that legislative provision should be made for such cases—that is, for those who wish to start out in such industries without previous experience. I want to make it clear that my amendment is not designed to apply to anyone who has had any previous practical knowledge at any time, but merely to those who have had no opportunity whatever, as I have already said, to make themselves worth an adult wage.

Some people going from the city into the country to earn a livelihood do not possess the rudiments of the necessary knowledge for working on the land; some cannot even cut a bit of firewood. These industries are working under awards which provide a minimum wage which is considered a fair wage for those who have some knowledge of the work required to be done. I do not say that those employed are highly skilled employees. Again, the lads who come out from the old country to work in those industries have never had an opportunity of taking the first step in the direction of gaining the knowledge required in carrying out those occupations, and some provision should be made to enable them to gain that knowledge. It is an entirely different thing where

[Hon. W. Forgan Smith.]

an award lays down that a certain rate of pay shall be paid to those who are able to carry out that work. The amendment limits the probationary period to twelve months. This matter can be safely left in the hands of the judges of the Arbitration Court to hold the scale of justice evenly between the employer and employee, and to provide opportunities for those who have had no previous knowledge in the industry to acquire that knowledge, which will be beneficial to the State when it is attained. Many of those engaged in the industry, especially men such as I have mentioned, with £1,600 in hard cash, are not going to increase the number of employees in that industry and are not going to compete with other workers in the industry; but, by being able to secure the necessary knowledge and putting their capital into the industry, they will increase the number of employers, and so increase the demand for labour. I hope that the Minister will be prepared to accept the amendment.

**THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS** (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*): I do not propose to accept the amendment. In the first place, the Bill proposes to deal with the proper training and equipping of the boys with the necessary knowledge in certain trades or callings to enable them to earn a livelihood in a proper way in those industries. As far as I could follow the hon. member for Mirani, he referred more to adults.

**MR. SWAYNE:** I mentioned boys.

**THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS:** He spoke of men coming here with a capital of £1,600, and under his amendment he proposes to give them an opportunity of working as minors in the industry and becoming a kind of farming jackeroos.

**MR. MORGAN:** Does this Bill apply to the agricultural industry?

**THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS:** It does not apply to the agricultural industry. There is a fair body of opinion in favour of a scheme for the training of agricultural apprentices. I went into this matter some two years ago with representatives of the Council of Agriculture, the New Settlers' League, the Australian Workers' Union, and departmental officials, and it was pointed out to me that many boys come here as immigrants with a view to being trained and settled on the land. We know that there is a tendency in a number of the States to import boys to be taught rural occupations with a view to their becoming settlers in the future. At the present time, when these boys arrive in Queensland, they are dealt with by the Immigration Department, Commonwealth officials, and New Settlers' League. There is a fair demand for such boys, but there is no method of control once the boy is placed with an employer. The conditions of his employment, wages, and so on, are prescribed, and will be put on a permanent basis when the Arbitration Court grants an award in rural industries which are not covered at the present time. Some of these boys leave the places they have been sent to, come back to the city, and look for occupations there. It was felt by the gentlemen who approached me on that occasion, and they made the proposal, that a form of agricultural apprenticeship should be established for a period of three years. The conditions would set out the nature of the employment and place on

the farmers who engaged them certain responsibilities in the direction of seeing that they became proficient in the branch of the industry they were engaged in instead of things being left to mere chance, as they are at the present time. We are not dealing with that subject at the present time, but personally I think some form of regulation is necessary in all occupations dealing with boy labour. Boys should not be engaged in dead-end occupations, kept for a short time, and then turned adrift.

**MR. MORGAN:** Will this Bill make provision for apprentices for the shearing industry?

**THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS:** We have power under the Bill to define what is a skilled trade, and immediately an occupation is defined as a skilled trade, then Group Committees will be formed to set out the terms of apprenticeship in that particular industry, just as is done in those industries which are set out in the present schedule.

**MR. MORGAN:** It means that you can include all agricultural industries?

**THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS:** Yes. The scheme was put before me by that conference of representatives of the Council of Agriculture, New Settlers' League, Australian Workers' Union, and educational and agricultural experts, and there was a good deal in their contention. The conditions would have to be made suitable to the particular calling. The conditions applying to that of a stonemason would not apply to some other occupation. The occupation being dealt with has to be studied very fully and its needs carefully considered. I believe that boy labour in any industry or calling should be regulated and the boys protected so that they cannot be turned adrift into the world.

**MR. MORGAN:** To a certain extent, I agree with the hon. gentleman.

**THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS:** Hon. members can see the proposals that were made to me for themselves if they wish.

**MR. MORGAN (Murilla):** Something is necessary to be done with the boy immigrants who come from overseas. There are quite a number of them in my electorate, and a great number of them have never ridden a horse in their lives. They have never even seen a cow milked, and have had no experience of farming. Those boys receive 15s. a week and keep. They are sent away from Brisbane without a hat, and go out into the country with Scotch caps which are quite unsuitable for the scorching heat. They go out into the far West with a pair of shoes, and have not even a pair of farming boots. Before they go out into the country they receive £2, which is paid before they leave the boat. That money goes into the lolly shop for lollies, fruit, and soft drinks; it is not used to buy the boys a rig-out suitable for the country. I say this from my personal experience. Those boys get 15s. a week and keep, and that keep is worth £1 a week. They know nothing whatever about the conditions under which they are going to work, yet the man employing them has to pay them 35s. a week. No industry in the world pays that amount to an apprentice.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**MR. MORGAN:** There should be some board for the purpose of going into this

*Mr. Morgan.]*

matter to prevent the present indiscriminate treatment of the question.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: We are trying to make such an arrangement now.

Mr. MORGAN: The board should consist of a majority of experienced men so that it would work in an efficient manner.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I do not see why the Minister should say that this amendment would not allow the employees in the sugar industry to come under the Bill. If the sugar industry is defined as a skilled trade under this Bill, there is nothing to indicate that the employee would wish to be an apprentice at all. He may want a probationary period.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: A six months' probationary period is provided in the Bill.

Mr. MOORE: The Bill says that no minor may be employed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Have a look at clause 4.

Mr. MOORE: He may be, subject to certain conditions; but he may not want to be employed in the sugar or any other particular industry. I have read the New South Wales measure that was passed last year, which recognises the necessity for some form of training. It provides that a juvenile may be bound to any person to be taught a trade or calling—

“including domestic service, provided the period of apprenticeship does not extend beyond the twenty-first birthday of the juvenile, and when apprenticed on a farm it does not exceed three years.”

We should not apprentice the boys who are coming from England to an industry of which they know nothing. There should be a sort of probationary period in order that the lads may determine whether the industry is suitable and they like it. Some of them may not want to become apprentices at all. They should be given a certain amount of liberty.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. gentleman is not dealing with the amendment.

Mr. MOORE: The amendment says—

“This Act shall not apply to primary agricultural industries, but it shall be lawful to employ in any such industry a person with no previous experience in the industry in which he is employed for a probationary period not exceeding twelve months. . . .”

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to that.

Mr. MOORE: That is what I am attempting to do. Supposing this Bill, by an Order in Council, is made to apply to agricultural industries or the sugar industry, then it would be allowable for a minor—an immigrant boy who comes out to Australia—to be employed for twelve months. He may be able to tell in three or four months whether he likes his employment or not.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: There is to be a probationary period of six months.

Mr. MOORE: Well I cannot see that the hon. gentleman is losing anything by accepting this amendment. If the Bill is going to apply to these industries, it is quite feasible that the board controlling apprenticeship will allow these minors to be employed.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): I think the Minister rather strengthened the case for the

[*Mr. Morgan.*

amendment. I think he said that it was quite optional for the Minister to bring any industry under the operations of the Bill, although that industry might not be included in the Schedule to the Bill. What would happen if that is done by some subsequent Minister? I take it that in that case a farmer would not be able to employ his own son except as an apprentice. Clause 4 reads—

“After the passing of this Act no minor shall be employed or engaged in any of the trades or industries to which this Act applies except subject to the conditions of apprenticeship or probationership herein contained.”

Under that clause a boy will not be allowed to milk a cow unless he is apprenticed. We already have had experience during the past few years of how Acts of Parliament may be stretched to apply to all sorts of things that were never contemplated by members of this Chamber, and it is more than ever necessary that every safeguard should be taken that nothing in the shape of an additional load shall be put on the shoulders of those engaged in the agricultural industry, which already has sufficient burdens to bear. It is therefore most desirable that we should specifically exclude the agricultural industry from the scope of the Bill. The sugar industry already is under an award, and I think the rate of pay for boys between sixteen and eighteen years of age is £3 a week. I am not saying anything against the wage awarded by the Court, as a good boy who has been brought up on a farm and is used to the work can earn that amount; but what about the lad who has had no previous experience of farm work, and has never even put his hand on a horse? No matter how willing he may be, for the first few months it will be impossible for him to earn £3 a week, yet subsequently he may become a very useful worker. There are boys from the city who are anxious to obtain employment on cane farms, but at present they are unable to obtain employment owing to the fact that they have to be paid £3 a week. These boys should be allowed a few months' probation to enable their employers to train them and give them a preliminary knowledge of farm life and farm work. I hope for the sake of the boys themselves that this amendment will be agreed to. All the amendment provides is that the probationary period shall not exceed twelve months, and the Court may provide a probationary period of only three months or six months. The amendment through the court will provide against anything in the shape of sweating. At the same time, it gives the court power to provide that in the case of those who are totally ignorant of farm work there shall be a brief period during which they can acquire some rudimentary knowledge of the subject before the employer pays the full rates. I know that the judges of the Arbitration Court have already indicated that some provision of the kind is desirable.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I think we are justified in asking that some protection should be given in rural industries. The clause provides that the measure shall apply to the skilled trades and industries mentioned in the schedule, but it goes further than that and applies it to—

“such other skilled trades and industries as the Governor in Council may from time to time by Order in Council approve and declare.”

When the Industrial Arbitration Act of 1916

came into force it contained a special provision exempting the primary agricultural industries. This Bill is of a similar nature. The amendment provides that at any future date when an award is made in connection with primary agricultural industries, an apprentice may then come under that award. If at any future date it is intended to bring this measure into operation against agricultural industries, an amendment could then be made. Under the Bill the Minister has too much power altogether. He has power to alter the schedule any time he desires.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Oh, no! That will be done under an Order in Council.

Mr. KERR: What is the good of an Order in Council?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is a reflection on the Government. (Laughter.)

Mr. KERR: That is only quibbling. You are the Minister in charge, and if they take no notice of you, the best thing you can do is to get out.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would ask the hon. member to address the Chair.

Mr. KERR: The Minister led me off the track for a moment. It is necessary to make protective provisions in measures which come forward, and the Minister should not be allowed this power unless Parliament has the opportunity of saying something about it. The amendment does not alter the principle of the Bill, and this is a special industry which requires a good deal of attention. The Minister does not know very much about the primary products of the country, although he may know something about skilled trades, and he should take notice of what has been said by hon. members who are fully acquainted with the primary agricultural industries, and accept the amendment.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): If I correctly understood the Minister, he said a few minutes ago that he would be inclined to bring the agricultural industries under the Bill, and I think that is a reason why the Committee should accept the amendment. Knowing the conditions of agriculture and the dangers with which it is threatened, I think it should be taken away from the power of the Minister and also of the Governor in Council to bring that industry under the Bill by Order in Council. We know that the Governor in Council acts on the advice of the Minister who is charged with the administration of the Act; consequently it is useless for the Minister to try to shield himself by saying that this will be subject to the Governor. (Laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Does he not sign it?

Mr. ROBERTS: The Minister has indicated that it is desirable to bring the agricultural industry under the Bill; but we who know the conditions of that industry say that it is not desirable. I quite recognise that the agricultural industry is not included in this Bill as it stands, but it gives the Minister the opportunity to include other industries, and that means that

[11 a.m.] young men will not be able to embark in such industries without being apprenticed. Such a condition of things as that would certainly not be in the interests of the agricultural industry.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): I should like to bring under the attention of the Minister a side of the question which has not been touched upon. In the agricultural industry there are lads who have not reached twenty-one years of age who can, nevertheless, draw their full wage as farm hands, but they would be prevented from doing so by this Bill as it stands.

Mr. HARTLEY: They might get 13s. or even 10s. a week.

Mr. DEACON: There are any number of them who can get a full wage. The hon. member cannot get them for 13s. a week.

Mr. HARTLEY: I can get them for 13s. a week.

Mr. DEACON: Not skilled hands. Many farmers employ lads for a short time when they need extra assistance, and they are not going to be assisted at all by a Bill like this.

Mr. HARTLEY: There is nothing in the Bill to say that they cannot get the full wage.

Mr. DEACON: Yes, there is. Look at clause 4—

"After the passing of this Act no minor shall be employed or engaged in any of the trades or industries to which this Act applies except subject to the condition of apprenticeship or probationership herein contained."

The Bill defines a minor as a person under twenty-one years of age, and it also gives power to the Minister to include any industry under the provisions of the measure.

Mr. HARTLEY: He is not likely to make a mistake.

Mr. DEACON: The Government have made a lot of mistakes in their time, and they are continually engaged in amending them. Before they make another big mistake they should reflect upon their previous mistakes.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): I think the hon. member for Mirani has made out a very good case, and the Minister would be wise to accept the amendment, because it would save him from influences which will no doubt be brought to bear upon him later on.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You are very considerate of the Minister.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Of course, I am. The Minister admitted, perfectly frankly that he would have certain power under this clause. Let us follow that another stage.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The Governor in Council has the power

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am rather surprised that any gentleman with the experience of the Minister should try to draw a red herring across the trail. He now tries to make out that there are safeguards. Imagine His Excellency, or even the Governor in Council, interfering in a matter like this! We know that the Governor in Council, unless it is a matter of extreme importance affecting the nation, accepts the decision of his Ministers as a matter of course, and we know that, if he did anything else, he would have a very difficult time indeed. The clause, unless it is amended, will place in the hands of the Minister a power which will be used immediately, because the forces behind this socialistic Government will compel him to do so. The new leader of the party opposite, of course, would insist that he should do so.

*Hon. W. H. Barnes.]*



Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): The agricultural industry does not lend itself to the achievement of ideals which may be applicable in other branches of industry. Are we going to ask the wharf labourer or the navvy in the street to serve an apprenticeship before he receives the full wage? There is a certain amount of manual labour in agricultural pursuits, which may be of a lighter variety or not, for which young fellows are suitable and for which they can command a full wage from the time they begin. Why ask them to undergo an apprenticeship for a period of years, when after a very few weeks they may be able to command the maximum remuneration for a young fellow under twenty-one years of age? Then, again, in our rural industries there are seasonal occupations. One farmer may engage a young man to assist in the cultivation of his land for a short time, another may want him later on for dairying, another later on for cotton picking; and so a young fellow may transfer his labour from one farm to another or one branch of the industry to another until he becomes a competent farm hand, and so is educated in an industry in which afterwards, perhaps, he becomes an employer. It is that varied occupation with different employers which makes for his efficiency; whereas, if he were attached to one farm for the whole of the twelve months, he would probably be working along one line and never engage himself in the calling as an employer. I think the clause would only hamper young fellows by attaching them to one employer instead of allowing them to follow more than one branch of it and choose that which appeals to them most.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): I do not know whether the hon. member for Mirani is really serious about his amendment, but, if he is, he either pays a very poor compliment to the intelligence of this Committee or to the intelligence of the workers in the rural industry. First of all, he asks that the agricultural industry shall not come under the operations of this Bill, and then he goes on to say that it shall be lawful to employ a lad for a probationary period of twelve months to ascertain his fitness for the job. That is absolutely absurd. It would not take any man more than a week to find out whether a young fellow would ever make a horseman. He would only have to put him on an old pony and get it to kick up, and he would know inside of a week whether that lad would make a horseman or not.

Mr. MORGAN: No.

Mr. HARTLEY: I put it seriously to the hon. member for Murilla, the hon. member for Aubigny, or anybody who is a practical farmer, and ask, do they seriously contend that it will take twelve months to find out whether a boy is a suitable apprentice to learn the intricate art of using a hoe? (Laughter.)

Mr. MOORE: I had a lad employed for six months and he was worse at the end of that time than when he came.

Mr. HARTLEY: How long would it take the hon. member for Murilla or the hon. member for Nanango to teach a boy to pick corn and shell it?

Mr. F. A. COOPER: Six months. (Laughter.)

Mr. HARTLEY: It would not take them ten minutes to find out whether the lad was suitable to earn the wage that they were

paying. This amendment is really a subterfuge to get the right to employ youngsters. There is nothing to prevent lads being employed as they are being employed now.

Mr. DEACON: Yes, there is.

Mr. HARTLEY: There are lads working in the dairying industry and the farming industry at 10s. per week. They are fine big strong fellows, and it is just about time that the rural industries were brought under some Act and some award. I do not think this is the place to bring them under certain legislation. It is simply an absurdity to say that it requires a probationary period of twelve months to find out whether a young fellow is suitable for picking and shelling corn or hocking weeds.

Mr. HANSON (*Buranda*), who was greeted with Government cheers, said: I quite agree that primary industries under present conditions do not lend themselves to the operation of an apprenticeship scheme, but I can foresee the time when they will be placed upon a highly scientific basis, when it will be possible and advisable to have them brought under an apprenticeship scheme. Why should they be debarred from the benefits of such a scheme when the time arrives when they should come under such scheme? There is a tendency all over the world to-day for the primary industries to organise in such a way as to become skilled occupations.

Mr. MORGAN: That will mean dearer food.

Mr. HANSON: When they become skilled occupations they will reap the advantages of a proper system of training. No body of men would ever declare an agricultural calling a skilled calling without a great deal of investigation and inquiry. According to the procedure under the regulations at the present time—which will be followed in this Bill—no application is dealt with except that it comes from the employers or employees in a particular calling or industry, and no decision is arrived at by those concerned without very close investigation. I have a recent case in mind where an application was made by a body of employees. It was a rather unique case, and, in fact, it could safely be placed in very much the same position as an application coming from one of the primary industries. The Apprenticeship Committee took months to investigate this particular application, and ultimately turned it down because they were not satisfied that the occupation concerned was a skilled occupation. Although there was some disagreement in connection with that decision, I think it was a wise one, and I can foresee like decisions being come to under the present system of organisation in primary industries. In other parts of the world they have taken up the proper organisation of primary industries, and some of those industries are apt to become skilled occupations. In the near future steps may also be taken in the same direction in Queensland, and when that happens those industries should not be deprived of the right of a proper system of training, as is provided by this measure.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): I congratulate the hon. member for Buranda on his statement that at the present time the primary producer is not a fit person to exploit. His moderate views speak volumes. I do not think there is any country in the world where the primary producer can be exploited. If

[Mr. Corser.

you follow up the farming papers in America, you will find tens of thousands going insolvent.

Mr. MORGAN: That shows that they are being exploited.

Mr. WARREN: Throughout the world you will find that the producer is the slave of the present generation, and, if hon. members opposite think that the producers can in a few years be placed upon such a footing as to be treated as skilled artisans, they are making a very serious mistake. Unfortunately the producer is one who must be the under dog because he is in the minority; but there is no reason why he should be the under dog any further than he is to-day. To a great extent his present position is due to bad organisation, for a great deal of which the farmer is responsible himself. I do not see why this measure should be applied to the farmers.

Mr. GLEDSON: It does not apply to the farmers. Some hon. members opposite are endeavouring to apply it to the farmers.

Mr. WARREN: It seems that the Government want to have this tomahawk to hold over the heads of the farmers. We have statements from hon. members opposite to the effect that it is good enough to bring the farmers under certain measures because they have been given the benefit of certain schemes. The Government contend that they have given the farmers this and that, but I maintain that they have given them nothing at all. They are not sixpence better off than they were before, and until they can demonstrate that the farmer is getting more for his wheat, more for his fruit, and more for his meat it is idle for them to legislate in this way for the farmers. From the point of view of the lad himself the scheme is foolish. A great many boys come into the country and take on farming work, and never succeed, and have no hope of succeeding. Supposing a lad were apprenticed to a farmer under this Bill, it would mean that that boy would be tied to something that was obnoxious to him and for which he was not fitted, and something of which he had had a misconception. From that point of view there is no reason why primary producers should be covered by the Bill at all.

Mr. HANSON: They are not.

Mr. WARREN: The Minister admitted that the primary producers could be brought under the Bill. The matter should be decided by this Chamber, and should not be dealt with by regulations.

Mr. HARTLEY: The hon. gentleman's argument is in favour of bringing the primary producers under the Bill.

Mr. WARREN: My argument is right against that, both from the point of view of the industry and from the point of view of the lad. I consider that we are getting too many measures for the primary producers. I stated recently that the returns for income tax purposes show that very few farmers earn sufficient to pay income tax. That conclusively proves that so far as wealth is concerned they are a very poor class of people. It is time that the Government woke up to that fact, and not hand something out to them with one hand and then grab from them with the other hand twenty times as much as they gave. The producers have to thank the Government for nothing. We want the boys and the people of the cities also to go out and settle on the land.

In New South Wales they have established an agricultural school to train boys as agriculturists, and it is principally city boys that attend that school. If we had rural schools of that description where city boys could be trained, and on the completion of their training be apprenticed to farmers, I would have no objection to offer to it. The clause would tend to do more harm than good.

Amendment (Mr. Swaine) negatived.

Clause 3 agreed to.

Clause 4—“*Employment of minors*”—

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): I beg to move the following amendment:—

“On line 36, page 2, after the word ‘craftsmen,’ insert the words—

‘Provided further that in any particular case an industrial magistrate may, upon application, authorise the employment of a minor who is not an apprentice for any specified period not exceeding twelve months.’”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: This is a similar amendment to that of the hon. member for Mirani in a new dress.

Mr. DEACON: In the small towns there are employers who cannot take on an apprentice, as they have not sufficient work for any length of time. If a lad is to be indentured to such an employer, it simply means that many lads would be debarred from employment because the employers would be compelled to employ men on these small jobs at casual rates. There is not sufficient work in many of the small country towns for an employer to employ a tradesman continuously, and it often happens that there is a long period between job and job.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*): I do not propose to accept the amendment, as I consider it would to a very large extent destroy the whole purpose of the Bill. It is proposed under the amendment to give an industrial magistrate power to enable any employer to engage a minor for a period not exceeding twelve months. What would be the effect of that? In the Bill the Government provide that boys in any trade or calling covered by the Bill are to be subject to certain conditions and regulations. That is to say, the boy shall be employed at the particular trade or calling in the terms of the indenture, which will set out what form of instruction he shall receive. That means that we are to do away with the system that has existed in the past of the employment of unrestricted boy labour. That system has had the effect of getting boys into dead-end occupations and of being neither trade-men nor anything else by the time they grow up. Under the Bill a boy employed in an industry, by the application of education and intelligence, can become a skilled artisan at the end of his indenture under the conditions prescribed. Under the proposal of the hon. member for Cunningham it would be permissible for any employer who did not desire the responsibility of training apprentices to apply to an industrial magistrate for a permit to employ a boy, who would be outside the scope and conditions of this Bill and the conditions of the employment of apprentices. The effect would be detrimental to the whole of the Bill. If the hon. member studies clause 4 properly, he will see that it gives ample protection to boys in any occupation which may be called

*Hon. W. Forgan Smith.]*

a skilled trade or industry. That clause reads—

“After the passing of this Act no minor shall be employed or engaged in any of the trades or industries to which this Act applies, except subject to the conditions of apprenticeship or probationership herein contained:

“Provided that the Minister, on the recommendation of the Group Committee concerned, may exempt from the provisions of this section any class or classes of minors employed or engaged in any of such trades or industries whose employment is not, in the opinion of the Minister, of such a nature as will permit or require them to become skilled craftsmen.”

Hon. members, in discussing this and the previous amendment, showed that they were not familiar with the provisions of the Bill. In the first place, let me repeat that we have an Apprenticeship Executive, composed of men engaged in industry either as employees or employers. Then we have Group Committees, who direct the special trade or calling, composed of men engaged in that particular trade or calling. Consequently, they know all the conditions of the trade or industry and the conditions of apprenticeship suitable to the need of the industry, and which would permit a boy to become a skilled artisan. Under the amendment it is suggested that a magistrate, who might not have studied the scheme at all, should have power to give youths a permit to be employed without any restriction whatever.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): If we are not careful, this Bill will provide that every employer, particularly in the country, and every man who takes a job on his own, shall either have to employ a journeyman or a fully-paid labourer.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Do you want to employ boys as labourers?

Mr. ROBERTS: No.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Ah, that is it!

Mr. ROBERTS: No, it is not. I have had just as much experience as the Minister, and perhaps more, and I realise that there is certainly a difficulty in the point raised by the hon. member for Cunningham. The Bill will make it almost impossible for boys to get work at all. There is certain work which is only suitable for a boy.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The Arbitration Court provides for that class of work.

Mr. ROBERTS: I know it does, but the method is a very cumbersome one, especially to employers in the country. The employers first of all have to apply to the Minister in Brisbane.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: If you had read the Bill, you would know that the Bill only applies to those districts in which it has been gazetted, and only such portions of it as are suitable to those districts are gazetted.

Mr. MAXWELL: The Minister can “Gazette” it whenever he likes.

Mr. ROBERTS: I have read the Bill, and the closer I read it the more I realise the difficulty that our boys in future are going to have to get a standing in this country.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

[*Hon. W. Forgan Smith.*]

Mr. ROBERTS: I am with the hon. member for Cunningham. I know the difficulties of men in the country, and the difficulties of boys in the country to get a job of any description. Under the present conditions they are probably engaged for a few months, but in that period they secure a knowledge of the industry which enables them to make application later on for proper indentures. This method is going to make it impossible to do that. In the interests of the State I think it is unworthy of us to sanction that sort of thing.

Amendment (*Mr. Deacon*) negatived.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): I desire to ask the Secretary for Public Works at this stage if there is anything in the Bill which will prevent an employer from having the full advantage of employing [11.30 p.m.] a son in connection with his industry other than by indenture? I have in my mind many young fellows who follow a very good trade or calling, simply working in the business of their parents, and it appears to me that this is the stage when we should receive such information.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (*Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Mackay*): In the case alluded to by the hon. member for East Toowoomba, any man engaged in an industry who desires to have the services of his son will be given the same consideration as any other employer desiring the services of a boy. Hon. members opposite do not appear to realise that this Bill will apply first of all to the metropolitan area and Ipswich.

Mr. ROBERTS: In its present form the system applies to Toowoomba.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: There is provision that the Act may be extended wholly or in part to any other district. At the request of the people concerned the apprenticeship system has been extended to Toowoomba in certain trades and callings; also to Maryborough, Rockhampton, Bundaberg, Mackay, and Townsville. It applies chiefly in those places to the engineering and building trades.

If a man employs his own son as apprentice, he must give that son the same advantages and conditions as any other employer would give an apprentice. He must deal with him in the manner prescribed.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): I am not satisfied with the reply given by the hon. gentleman. I can quite understand that, if a man desires to train his son as an apprentice, there may be a matter of an indenture, but, from what I can understand, when this Bill becomes law it will prevent the son of an employer working in his father's establishment.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Not at all.

Mr. ROBERTS: I understand that it will.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Why?

Mr. ROBERTS: First of all, if he is a minor. I also understand that he will not have the right to work at his father's bench.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Why not? It would be a trade.

Mr. ROBERTS: That is what I want to know. I am standing for the right of the son to be employed even without being indentured. I consider that a boy should have a right to acquire a general knowledge of the trade and ultimately have the oppor-

tunity of carrying on the business of his father.

Mr. HANSON: Many parents are apprenticing their sons now.

Mr. ROBERTS: I have no objection to that, but I want an option, so that the parent may indenture his son or otherwise if he so desires. If he desires to apprentice his son in his own workshop, he should be able to do so; but I am quite satisfied that in many cases a boy acquires an excellent knowledge of his father's trade without any indenture at all. I want to know why that system cannot prevail.

Clause 4 agreed to.

Clause 5—"Registration and employment of apprentices"—

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I beg to move the following amendment:—

"On line 38, page 2, omit the words 'Director of Labour,' with a view to inserting the words—  
'the Executive.'"

The only question involved is who is the most competent authority to handle applications for employment of apprentices. This question naturally arises when one looks at the various duties of the Apprenticeship Executive under this Bill and then at the duties of the Director of Labour. Is it not a wiser procedure to place the applications in the hands of the Apprenticeship Executive direct rather than in the hands of the Director of Labour, who really has nothing at all to do with this Bill? Right at the outset it is proposed to handle the boys through the Group Committees and the Apprenticeship Executive, and those bodies are, in my opinion, the right and proper ones to handle all applications for apprentices.

Mr. HARTLEY: What rot!

Mr. KERR: If hon. members will look at the duties of the Executive they will appreciate at once that it will be impossible for that body to carry out their work properly unless they have a roll of the names of all boys who desire to become apprentices.

Mr. HANSON: They have that now.

Mr. KERR: Certainly, and there is no reason why the Executive by an internal regulation could not subsequently supply the Director of Labour with applications. I want the Apprenticeship Executive to handle the applications first, because later on I am going to move an amendment that the Executive shall get in touch with the boys at school by addresses and other methods.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The hon. member is certainly going to give the Apprenticeship Executive a lot of work to do.

Mr. KERR: What is work when such an important problem as apprenticeship is involved?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The members of the Executive are only paid for attendance at meetings. The hon. member will take up all their time.

Mr. KERR: I think it is absolutely essential, without infringing upon my rights in this Committee, for me to say that the time is opportune to express the opinion that the Apprenticeship Executive should have greater powers than they now have.

Mr. HARTLEY: The hon. member does not know what he is talking about.

Mr. KERR: The hon. member will have his say later. The executive will control the apprentices not only from the day they are appointed, but beforehand. They should make regulations, set examinations, attend to the grouping of trades, deal with applications, and so on.

Mr. HANSON: They do not sit all day.

Mr. KERR: I am aware that they do not sit all day for 10s. They will never be able to handle the boys properly until they have their applications and receive information as to what work is offering in the State. I venture to say that there is no justification in making a boy go direct to the Director of Labour. That is a bad place for him to go, as he will see hundreds of unemployed men hanging around there.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. KERR: The internal working of this department may cause a bit of jealousy, and it may be as well to define in this Bill exactly the different duties of those concerned so that there may be no conflict between the Apprentice Executive, the Group Committees, and the Director of Labour. We could very well let the Executive and Group Committees handle the whole of the applications, and then the Director of Labour could come on the scene. There is no necessity for the Director of Labour to come into the business until the boy has been placed. The applications from the schools should be dealt with by the Executive. The Minister will acknowledge that there are many conflicting interests in this Bill. First of all we have the Governor in Council, then we have the Minister, we have the Apprenticeship Executive, we have the Group Committees, we have the Director of Labour, and we have the Arbitration Court. How all these conflicting interests are going to make a decent Apprenticeship Bill I do not know. I am trying by this amendment to cut down, as much as possible, these conflicting interests. If we cut out the Director of Labour in the handling of applications, we shall go some distance towards wiping out these conflicting authorities.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*): I do not propose to accept the amendment, as it is necessary that the Director of Labour shall control the register. The functions of the Apprenticeship Executive are not the functions of an employment agency. When a boy desires to become an apprentice he registers with the Director of Labour, or any of his agents throughout the State, and the employer who desires a boy engages him from those enrolled in that register. Immediately the boy is employed as a probationer or as an apprentice, the Executive Committee functions. It is the function of the Executive Committee to administer the Act, to prescribe the standard of training that boys shall be given, and to see that they get that training. That is an entirely different function from that of an employment agency. If the hon. member's desires were carried out in their entirety, the Apprenticeship Executive would need to be in continual session and become full-time employees. At the present time the Chairman of the Apprenticeship Executive of the various groups is an officer of the Director of Labour, and there will be no clashing between the respective authorities. All the information will be available to the

*Hon. W. Forgan Smith.]*

Apprenticeship Group Committees at any time.

Amendment (*Mr. Kerr*) negatived.

At 11.40 a.m.,

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

*Mr. CORSER (Burnett)*: I beg to move the following amendment:—

“On line 50, page 2, after the word ‘registered’ insert the words—

‘The employer may choose as an apprentice any person whose name is so registered.’”

The clause provides—

“Every employer desirous of obtaining an apprentice shall make application to the Director of Labour in the form prescribed, and shall take as an apprentice only a person whose name is so registered.”

There is no objection to the registration as provided by the clause, but as a number of industries—particularly the agricultural industry—may be included in the operations of the Bill, it is desirable that an employer in the country, as well as those in the cities, should have the right to select his own apprentice. At the present time in some callings, the employers have the right to select their own apprentices, but there is nothing in this Bill to show that they are going to have the right to select their own apprentices after the Bill is passed. If it is the intention of the Minister to allow employers to select their own apprentices, then there can be no harm in accepting the amendment, as it will not alter the clause at all. We know, however, that in connection with some callings to-day, an apprentice must be nominated from the registered list, and the employer is called upon to take just what young fellow is put forward. In the rural industries—we know it is proposed to include them under this Bill—there are employers who might desire to select their own sons. Further, there are farmers who have employees whose sons they might want to employ, or they might want to take into their home some young fellow whom they know something about. They would not want any stranger from the city pushed on to them when there is some young man in the district whom they know who desires employment. I trust the Minister will accept the reasonable suggestion, and allow an employer the right to select from the registered list the young fellow who he thinks will be most suitable.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (*Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Mackay*): The amendment is quite unnecessary, as there is power now to enable an employer to choose anyone he desires.

*Mr. CORSER*: There is power to take that right away by regulation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: There is no necessity to alter the clause. The employer can choose any boy he likes who is registered.

*Mr. KERR (Enoggera)*: I hope the Minister will give the amendment greater consideration than he has done. It is not altogether inferior education or inferior wages that is the cause of discontent to-day; it is the square peg in the round hole; and, if this amendment is agreed to, it will give employers a chance to make their own selec-

tion. I would like to go further, and provide that any employer could put a boy on and register him afterwards. If we can get a boy settled in the right groove at an early age, it means greater prosperity for the boy, and greater prosperity for the community as a whole. For ten years under this Government no boy was allowed to accept a job at all unless he was registered and had passed an examination. We have got past that stage, but now we are told that an employer cannot take the boy he wants. It is a principle that is worth fighting for, and the Minister should make it very clear in the Bill that an employer shall have the right to select any boy at all who is registered. He may know of a boy who has special qualifications for his particular industry, and why should that employer be debarred from engaging that boy? The Minister, in my opinion, should accede to our request. All morning he has been opposing our amendments. He says that this amendment is redundant; but, if it is only redundant, he should give way to this side and accept it. It does not alter the principle of the Bill. If, as he says, it is possible now to do what we are asking, why not make it law? If he does not like the wording of the amendment, let him move an amendment of his own to the same effect.

*Mr. MORGAN (Mavilla)*: The Minister evidently is adopting the principle which has been in operation ever since the Government have been in power of refusing to accept amendments from the Oppositor.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Oh, no! I am going to accept some of the amendments indicated, but not this one.

*Mr. MORGAN*: This is a most important amendment. The Bill does not make the matter plain, although the Minister has informed us that it is not intended to prevent employers from selecting their own apprentices. If so, why not make it clear in the Bill? At present the wording leaves the matter in doubt.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Employers can take advantage of the names of persons who are registered, and have the right of choice. The clause does not restrict the choice.

*Mr. MORGAN*: It does not make it clear that, if a father desires his son to work for him in a certain industry, he is able to adopt that course. A number of boys may be registered as apprentices, and one of them may be sent to an employer who asks for an apprentice; but the boy may not want to be employed by that man. He may be waiting to be employed by his own father or some other relation, yet he may be allotted to some other individual.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: No, we do not allot them. The employers have choice of those on the register.

*Mr. MORGAN*: Why not make it plain in the Bill?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Why insert in the Bill something which is not necessary?

*Mr. MORGAN*: It will not cost much to insert those few words, and it will show that the Minister is reasonable in accepting our amendments if they are not going to interfere with the principles of the Bill. We are not asking for any alteration in principle, but only that the matter may be made plain

[*Hon. W. Forgan Smith.*]

and definite, so that there will be no misunderstanding. If an employer writes to the Labour Bureau and says that he wants "John Brown," who is registered, will he get him?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Yes, he must get "John Brown."

MR. MORGAN: It is not definitely stated in the clause. I admit that the Minister intends that an employer should get "John Brown" if he asks for that person, but it is not stated in the Bill, and we want it to be clearly stated.

MR. MAXWELL (*Toowong*): On the second reading of the Bill I raised the point against the system of rotation. The Minister then stated that it was not intended to continue that system. The amendment is necessary, because under the clause as it stands at present there is nothing to prevent an employer who makes an application to the Director of Labour from having to take whoever the Director may choose to send him. A man may wish to employ his own son, who is on the list; but it is in the power of the Director of Labour to send someone else who is before that son on the list. We are dealing with the position of affairs which we find to-day, and are trying to do something to improve the apprenticeship system. We on this side look at the Bill, not as a party measure but as an attempt to make for a better understanding and to give boys a better opportunity of earning a living. If the clause is passed in its present form, there will be nothing to prevent the continuation of a system which is most objectionable to employers and employees alike. A boy may desire to link up with a certain employer, but the Director of Labour may say, "Your name has only been put down lately. There is somebody here before you, and you cannot go to that employer." The Minister has given us an assurance that he has no desire to perpetuate a system that is wrong, and, if he desires to make the Bill what we on this side want it to be—and what I believe he wants it to be—he will accept the amendment.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): There is certainly a feeling in the minds of hon. members on this side that the clause requires to be made more definite. I understood the Minister to say that the condition of things which has been outlined by the hon. member for Toowong does not exist; in other words, the Minister has said clearly and deliberately that a person going to select a boy can get whoever he wants.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Of course he can.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member for Toowong has stated that in practice that has not been the case.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He is not stating what is correct.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Anyone who knows the hon. member for Toowong will know that he would not deliberately make a misstatement—and I am not suggesting that the Minister would do so—but the fact remains that there are members on this side who have had to do with the practical working of this matter, and in the past they have been confronted with this difficulty.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Was the hon. member for Toowong ever refused an apprentice that he asked for?

MR. MAXWELL: Others have been.

HON. W. H. BARNES: What earthly harm is this amendment going to do if it is put in the Bill if, as the Minister says, it is the practice now? It makes the matter clear. I think that the Minister in this case is a bit stubborn, although usually he is not so.

MR. GLEDSON: Were you not stubborn when you were a Minister?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member who interjects knows that I was one of the most reasonable and approachable of Ministers. (Laughter.) Hon. members who have had to do with this matter have found that the working of the system has not been as is claimed by the Minister, so what objection can there be to remove the difficulty? We are here to improve the Bill, and the Minister should not say he is wedded to the clause, and that, even if good reasons are given for the amendment, he will not listen to them. I hope the hon. gentleman will see his way clear to accede to our request.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I am willing to substitute the word "select" for the word "take," on line 49.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (*Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Mackay*): I want to make it clear to hon. members that there is nothing in this clause to give the Director of Labour power to compel an employer to take any particular boy. There is no power in this Bill, in the Labour Exchanges Act, or in any Act administered by the Department of Labour which would enable him to do that. At the present time, if

[12 noon] an employer asks for a certain man, the Director of Labour is compelled to send him that man, irrespective of how long or how short a period he has been registered. It is not intended under this Bill that boys shall be employed or apprenticed in rotation or according to the periods of their registration. I pointed out in my second reading speech that it is desirable that there should be a community of interest between the employer and the apprentice, and in order to achieve that it is necessary to give a power of choice. There is nothing in this clause to prevent that; but, to make the position perfectly clear and dissipate the fears in the minds of hon. members opposite, I beg to move the following amendment:—

"On line 49, page 2, omit the word 'take' with a view to inserting the word—  
'select.'"

Amendment (*Mr. Smith*) agreed to.

Clause 5, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 6—"Public examinations"—

MR. KERR (*Enoggera*): I desire to see the whole of this clause omitted. It is entirely unnecessary, and it is a hindrance to the whole apprenticeship system. There should be no competition between apprentices from an educational point of view. I think it is not right to have a qualifying examination, and competition in the past has done a great deal of harm. It has wiped out a boy's opportunity to accept a position as an apprentice to a skilled trade, and, if there is to be

*Mr. Kerr.*]

any selection of apprentices, it should not be on their educational attainments but rather upon their physical or temperamental adaptability and general characteristics during their school years. Hon. members will recollect that a lad is generally employed at sixteen as an apprentice, and that compulsory education ceases at fourteen years of age; and, if a boy has been away from school for perhaps two years, he is going to find it very difficult to pass any examination at all. Why there should be an examination I cannot see. In fact, there are going to be three or four different tests—by an educational examination, by selection, and by a certificate from the head master of the school. I think that the certificate from the head master introduces a wrong principle. At any rate, it is a sad commentary on our public educational system to say that any lad on leaving school must obtain a certificate that he is a proper person to learn a trade. I think every reasonable person will agree that there is a vast difference between a boy's ability to work out a sum and his capability of giving the best that is in him at a skilled trade. Some of our best tradesmen are unable to submit a report. I frankly agree that it would be to their advantage to be able to write a decent report, but our educational system already provides for that, and the sum total of this clause is that the Minister will have power to require a boy to pass an additional educational test. All the qualifications of a boy I have already mentioned should be considered in preference to any success at a competitive examination.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I think we are entitled to some explanation from the Minister on this important matter. I do not think it is right that the Minister should dismiss the matter straight away after one speaker has spoken, because other speakers may place before him evidence which may induce him to alter his mind. Take the case of a boy in a country place. Some such boys only get correspondence tuition.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The boys in the country do not pass examinations—only those in the metropolitan area.

Mr. MORGAN: The parents of country boys may not be in a position to give them the educational advantages that others have, and, therefore, I would ask the Minister to agree to omit the clause. Suppose a certain number of boys go in for an apprenticeship examination, some of them have the opportunity of getting in the large centres of population a higher education than other boys. What is the result? The boy who has the greater advantages gets first choice. Very often a boy with a higher education is not so successful at a trade as a boy who has not had such an education. We know that there have been boys from Oxford and Cambridge Universities out in Western Queensland shepherding sheep. They were highly educated, but could not make a living in any other calling.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: They may have been badly educated.

Mr. MORGAN: They were failures. If a man passes examinations and becomes a barrister, that is not to say that he will be able to make a good living in that profession. There is nothing to be gained by an educational test, and the Minister should not insist upon it. The boys should be given an equal opportunity. That is one of the planks of the Labour party's platform. One boy,

{Mr. Kerr,

through his environment and position, may be able to secure a first-class education, while another boy may not be able to get such a good education. I hope the Minister will see the wisdom of omitting this clause from the Bill.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): I understand the Minister to say that he required some information as to why this clause should not be adopted. I have definite knowledge of a case that occurred within the last four weeks. I know of an instance where a parent got to know that there was a certain opportunity for a boy to learn a trade, and he went along to the labour agent in Toowoomba and made full inquiries as to what was necessary on the part of the boy in making his application. The parent returned home and indicated to the boy what was necessary—a certificate from his head master and certain other conditions. In less than three days that boy had left home after definitely telling his parent that he was full of schooling and was not going to have anything more to do with schooling. We know that boys unfortunately do things which are not to their best interests at times. That means a considerable worry to their parents. To-day that boy is in Western Queensland, but I am not going to say that his action will be injurious to him, for, perhaps, he may be better off in the country than if he had remained in the city working under articles of indenture. Hon. members will recognise that there is considerable worry in that home, and the parent is feeling his boy having left his home.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Surely the hon. gentleman is not blaming me for the boy leaving his home?

Mr. ROBERTS: No, but I am stating the case as a reason why there should be no education test. There is the possibility that, if that boy had not been required to pass an educational test, he would have gone and worked for a month or two and ultimately become indentured as an apprentice.

Mr. PAYNE: How old is the boy?

Mr. ROBERTS: About 15 years. He left school considerably over twelve months ago, and I cannot understand why he should do what he has done.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Does the hon. gentleman say that the boy was asked to submit to an entrance examination?

Mr. ROBERTS: No. I said that he was told that he would have to get a certificate from the head master of his school, and then there would have followed in the usual course of events attendance at technical college classes. I am not saying that he went west because he had to get a certificate, but it was the thought of having to go back to school and the thought of regulations that drove him from the city. In the Railway Department we have first-class, second-class, and third-class carpenters who have to pass examination, or rather have to place certain answers to questions on paper. I have a knowledge of men who are most efficient tradesmen who have failed to pass the examination entitling them to get beyond the third-class position. The Railway Department not only require that these men shall be skilled in their trade, but that they shall pass an educational test. I have found it necessary to go to the Railway Department to make representations in the interests of these men, and I have been told that, according to the

foreman carpenter, although these men are highly efficient tradesmen, yet they could not pass the examination. In the Department of Public Lands examinations are set for Crown land rangers, etc. The person who has the time, leisure, and money to go to school to make himself efficient obtains the position over the man with the practical experience who has lived in the district all his life and who knows the business that is required, but still is unable to place sufficient on paper to pass the examination. The man who lives in the town and does not possess the necessary practical knowledge gets the job.

Mr. WEIR: What better could the hon. gentleman do?

Mr. ROBERTS: I would take the practical man every time.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ROBERTS: No one knows the conditions better than the practical man, who knows the nature of the grass and the timber, and how much it costs to make a dam, yet he is unable to place certain knowledge on paper because he has not got the necessary education.

At 12.15 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*): I was hoping that the information supplied from this side would have induced the Minister to eliminate the educational test from the Bill. I take it that competition from an educational standpoint is absolutely wrong, more particularly when applied to apprentices. What will be the position with regard to a number of youths who are backward in learning? The Minister is going to place those boys in the position of unskilled labourers. Let the hon. gentleman analyse the various building trades and he will find that in some instances the employees could not pass the educational test at all, but as skilled tradesmen they could not be beaten.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I do not believe that at all. Does the hon. gentleman say that those engaged in the building trade could not pass any educational test?

Mr. MAXWELL: I did not say that, and the hon. gentleman has no right to impute that to me.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The hon. gentleman did say it.

Mr. MAXWELL: I did not. I said that there were a number of men in certain trades in the community who could not pass an educational test, yet no one could beat them at their trades. I have seen colourists who could not be beaten at their work as colourists, yet it would be impossible for them to pass an educational test. The Minister will be discriminating and creating an unskilled class and a skilled class and he will find very great difficulty in getting boys to go to a trade or calling if they have obtained a first-class education. They will look for something bigger. Only a few days ago a prelate of the church pointed out what was happening to the boys in this regard. I am a great believer in boys and girls getting the best education possible, but I am not a believer in trying to place a barrier against those boys or girls learning any trade or calling, and there is a possibility of doing that with this clause. There are some boys and girls who have had a considerable setback from an educational point of view owing to some infirmity or illness during childhood. It is difficult to train them.

Hon. members opposite know full well that what I am saying is accurate. If the clause is passed, a barrier will be placed on those boys who are somewhat dilatory and they will be classed as unskilled labour. It does not always follow that the best educated man is going to be the best tradesman. I personally know a number of such instances, and I have been working amongst men all my life. I know of men who find it difficult to make out their time-sheets in the proper way, yet I venture to say nobody could compete with them as tradesmen.

Mr. WEIR: Would they not be better tradesmen if they had been educated up to the fourth-class standard?

Mr. MAXWELL: Of course, they would; I am not finding fault with that standard. If it were possible, such a standard would be all right. What I am stressing on the Minister is that he should not place a barrier on those who have not attained that standard. The clause should be eliminated altogether. The Minister would then give an opportunity to every girl and boy to learn a trade—an opportunity that will be denied to some if the clause remains in the Bill. The Bill provides that boys, if the Minister so desires, shall pass a prescribed examination, or submit a certificate from a head teacher that he has been educated up to the standard prescribed for the third half year of the fourth class before he can be apprenticed. The Minister said that it was desirable under this Bill to make boys and girls better fitted to be apprenticed to trades, but, if this is done, he is going to discriminate between one section and another. I do not think that is the Minister's intention. He wants to give them a fair deal, but if he persists in the clause he is going to create a position that will be unfair to the rising generation.

Mr. F. A. COOPER (*Bromer*): I have listened with interest to the arguments of hon. members opposite. I recognise that in the selection of apprentices there is a difficulty as to how it should be done. I suppose I have as much experience on the matter of apprenticeship as any hon. member, and for that reason I know that a difficulty exists, no matter what may be done in the selection of apprentices. There are, of course, many people who object not only to an educational test but to a measurement test, and to all sorts of tests. The only test some people like is the amount of push that they can give to push a boy into a job. Some selection is necessary, and, when we find the Opposition objecting to the standard for the third half-year of the fourth class in the State schools as a test for apprentices, it is high time that we took stock and considered the objection for what it is worth. We all know that the fourth-class standard in arithmetic runs to fractions and simple proportion. The average boy of twelve years can nowadays pass that test. If we are to have positions created for dunderheads who cannot pass that examination or produce a certificate from a head teacher to that effect, it is high time we considered what the effect would be. Hon. members know what a simple proportion sum is. Let me submit one; if it takes three hon. members opposite to display their ignorance in the speeches they have made, how many of them will it take to display their knowledge? (Laughter.) I cannot understand any party in a State like Queensland, which has spent so

Mr. F. A. Cooper.]



much on education, which prides itself on its educational system, and boasts throughout the length and breadth of the Commonwealth that its educational system is the best in the States, objecting to the standard for the third half-year of the fourth class being prescribed for apprentices.

Mr. KERR: Do you know that 50 per cent. of the boys who sat for the apprenticeship examination failed?

The HOME SECRETARY: What! Boys who reached the fourth class?

Mr. F. A. COOPER: The interjection of the hon. member for Enoggera displays the line of argument that the Opposition adopt. They will always take some other case to illustrate the point under review. I was surprised to hear it argued by the hon. member for Toowong that a lad is all the better for not being educated.

Mr. KERR: He did not say that at all.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: It is better to have an educated than an uneducated people. If we want anything in this country at all, it is skilled tradesmen who will be able to compete with the skilled artisans of the rest of the world. We are not going to get those skilled tradesmen while we listen to such pleas as were put forward by the hon. members for Toowong, East Toowoomba, and Enoggera, that no educational test should be instituted for apprentices. I hope that the Minister will stand firmly by the clause and see that this standard is adopted. In fact, I hope that he will move an amendment with a view to raising the standard to that of the fifth class.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Morgan Smith, *Mackay*): I cannot allow this clause to be deleted. So far as I am concerned, it is absolutely necessary. The hon. member for Toowong has made the suggestion that the clause would prevent certain boys having the opportunity to learn a trade. He has also used the argument that there are men engaged in various trades who could not pass any educational test at all.

Mr. MAXWELL: I said they could not pass this test.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That may be so; but there is no doubt the men he alludes to did not have the advantages of education that the boys in Queensland now have.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I say definitely that, if a boy could not pass the fourth-class examination by the time he is fourteen years of age, I would not like to have him as an apprentice. The better education a boy has the better apprentice and tradesman he will become.

Mr. KERR: Certainly; I am not arguing otherwise.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That argument applies equally to other trades as well as to the engineering and carpentering industries. Naturally one selecting an apprentice desires some knowledge of the mental qualifications of the boy. I do not for a moment suggest that the passing of examinations indicates everything in the nature of intelligence, but it does indicate industry and perseverance; and that knowledge is valuable in selecting an apprentice. There is a further point: We do not desire to have our skilled trades

filled with boys who are too lazy to study. If a boy of normal intelligence has not passed this examination by the time he reaches the age of fourteen years, he is lazy. There is a further point in connection with this clause. The Government find not only technical education but continuation schools for apprentices so that, if a boy desires to have higher educational qualifications, or has had deficiencies in his education earlier in life, he can attend a technical college at night time, and many boys do so. The argument of hon. members opposite in effect places a premium on the lazy boy who does not desire to sit for any examination at all.

Mr. MAXWELL: No, no!

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): The Minister is speaking from the point of view of the towns, where all the educational facilities are to be obtained. He must realise that there are other parts of Queensland where boys do not get the opportunities such as they have in Brisbane.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Every boy in Queensland gets the opportunity of being educated up to the standard of the third half-year of the fourth class.

Mr. VOWLES: There are many sons of primary producers in my electorate who have no opportunities for education beyond the educational postal facilities provided by the department. I take it that the object of this Bill is to fill a long felt want in Queensland. We have suffered from a lack of skilled apprentices. We do not want to make the way harder but easier for prospective apprentices. If this test is going to be the means of preventing boys from getting into certain groups of trades, then it is a thing that we should not have.

[12.30 p.m.]

Mr. WEIR: Do you favour that in connection with legal examinations?

Mr. VOWLES: I do not, because in a trade a high-class education is not wanted. What is wanted is practical knowledge.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The better education a boy has the better tradesman he will become.

Mr. VOWLES: Practical knowledge is what is wanted. A good deal of unnecessary education is given to the children, and not enough practical education. I know that from first-hand observation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Were you out at the Exhibition?

Mr. VOWLES: I was. I saw men doing practical work, but I did not see any doing sums, or French, or Greek. I repeat, we want practical education. Quite recently an educational test was dispensed with by the Department of Public Lands in connection with land rangers. There practical men are needed. Of course they have to qualify in certain directions; they must be physically strong, of a certain height, be conversant with the country, and know a good deal about timber.

Mr. WEIR: Don't you think they could pass a fourth-class examination?

Mr. VOWLES: It is not a matter of passing examinations, and the Department of Public Lands realised that. In the past Crown land rangers were appointed by examination, and it was found that the

[Mr. F. A. Cooper.]

department got bookworms. Many of the men who were successful in examinations proved hopeless so far as their practical work was concerned. Now the examination has been dispensed with I think the same argument applies to apprentices.

Although this educational test is not a high one, I submit we should dispense with it. It might be the means of preventing certain boys from becoming apprenticed. The brains of some boys mature later than those of others. One boy at fourteen years of age may be a dunce, but at eighteen years of age he may be brilliant. Anyone with a knowledge of our public schools knows that boys going through their whole course without distinguishing themselves have come to the front when their brains matured in later years, and have become leading men in some of our most important professions. That has occurred even in Queensland. The same thing may happen in regard to apprentices. We should consider the probable and actual effect of restricting our boys in entering trades. Every boy should have an opportunity of receiving the benefits of a trade, and I do not think we are working in the right direction by having this restrictive clause.

I agree with what the Secretary for Public Works said about many of the people in trades to-day. We know that they did not receive the facilities for education in the past that are available to-day, consequently the position is not so acute to-day. At the same time there are certain localities, more particularly country districts, where boys want to get to the cities to learn a trade, and, if they cannot reach the required educational standard, they will be restricted by this clause. That is why I want to see it eliminated.

Mr. WEIR (*Maryborough*): It was very interesting to hear the remarks of hon. members of the Opposition regarding the swallowing of Latin and other branches of education, and particularly the dissertation from the hon. member for Dalby on the non-existence of a necessity for educating boys for a trade. In the profession of the hon. member for Dalby it is incumbent to study geology and many other subjects which are not necessary in the practice of his profession. If these things are not necessary, why not remove the restrictions and have a fair go at the entrance to the hon. member's profession? There is nothing wrong, from his point of view, in having those restrictions in connection with his own profession, yet he argues that to insist on the sons of working men being educated before they enter their trades is wrong.

Mr. VOWLES: Why penalise the boy who is not educated?

Mr. WEIR: The hon. member does so in his profession. There is nothing wrong from his viewpoint with our working class boys being kept ignorant and made good slaves; but they cannot get into his profession. The hon. member for Toowong put the show away. According to him, the less education the worker has the better slave he is. Nobody is questioning the fact that the people standing for education are on this side of the Chamber.

Mr. CORSER: We all question that.

Mr. WEIR: The hon. member for Burnett has an absence of humour, for he always questions the obvious. The Opposition can

see no difference between drawing barriers around their own beautiful professions and their desire to have an open door to apprenticeship.

Mr. VOWLES: Don't you belong to a profession?

Mr. WEIR: I do, and I worked hard to get there, and I am working a great deal harder to get into the hon. member's. I am not in it for the very good reason that a tin fence has been put up around it.

The hon. member for Toowong says it is not necessary for boys to be educated. Why? Because he can then make slaves of them without any trouble. Hon. members opposite know perfectly well that once the workers become educated they cannot be made slaves so easily. The further the working class movement goes the more it depends on educated men. The Opposition know that. Now, after twenty years of straining at the gnat and swallowing the camel, they object to a prescribed standard of the third half year of the fourth class in State schools being used as a test for apprentices. The hon. member for Enoggera, in his wisdom, blurted out something about 50 per cent. failing at an examination the other day. He does not even know the difference between this standard and the scholarship standard. And he writes articles on finance!

We are not attempting to crowd boys out, but we wish to ensure that the boy who uses his brain gets the advantage. We want to ensure that the boy who racks his brains at night school as well as during the day shall have an advantage over the one who is too lazy to work at all. What advantage would the studious and industrious boy have if we allowed an open door? I am satisfied the standard is here, and make no bones about that. If I had my way, I would make the scholarship examination the standard. I was arguing with the Commissioner for Railways only this week that in accepting boys for the Government service preference should be given to those who have passed their Junior University examination, whether for the position of cleaner or any other position.

Mr. MAXWELL: You would make him a University student?

Mr. WEIR: I would make every boy a University student if I had my way by making the University free to all. We do not want hon. members opposite to have the exclusive right of education. The hon. member for Toowong has talked about a number of men being good tradesmen and yet not having education. I am not prepared to cavil at that. I know many excellent tradesmen who can hardly write their own names. At the same time they would be better tradesmen if they had been better educated. If the hon. member knew of two excellent tradesmen working at the bench and he wanted to select a foreman from those two, which would he select—the man who was educated or the man who was uneducated? Of necessity he would accept the good tradesman who had the education. If that is so, we find ourselves nearly in the same position as they were in the Railway Department. In years gone by the good fettler, because of his age and seniority, became a ganger, and in turn the ganger became an inspector. To-day the man who becomes an inspector is the good fettler with an education. Both may be good fettlers,

*Mr. Weir.]*

but the man with the education wins. For thirty years the same people have put regulations in the "Railway Rules and Regulations," making the boys pass an examination equal to the fifth standard, and now they squeal about what we are doing in this Bill. Under the "Railway Rules and Regulations" a boy cannot learn any trade unless he passes a standard equal to the scholarship standard. They forced these boys to qualify to that standard long before the present facilities for education existed; yet they now have the audacity to squeal because we are asking for a fourth-class standard in connection with this Bill. We are only wrong because we do not want to be unfair to any boy who has not attained the fifth-class standard. I hope we shall go further in good time, and that our tradesmen will be better educated. I am not one of those who have time for the theoretical man only. I think he is an encumbrance. A theoretical man is a nuisance unless he is a practical man as well; but I do say that the practical man who has an education is a better practical man than the practical man without an education.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): The hon. member for Maryborough has claimed that a dullard, even though he be a student, should not be permitted to accept employment until he has first passed an examination. In making it necessary to pass an examination before a boy can accept employment the Government are providing a reward for merit. It is a prize, and we know the Teachers' Union throughout Queensland is prohibiting prizes being given to children who may have special merit. No child is to be rewarded for special merit; yet under this Bill the Government are providing a reward for the child who can pass an examination. Hon. members on this side claim that prizes are essential in connection with our educational system, as they help the children in after life. We hold that encouragement should be given to the child, but hon. members on the other side say, "If Providence does not endow a child with ability, why make him look ridiculous by granting prizes to children who may be more fortunate and who may be able to pass examinations with merit?" The hon. member for Maryborough has indicated that he does not agree with that principle when it comes to giving employment, as he claims that all young men should pass an examination before they are given an opportunity to learn a trade. There are many young fellows who may not be able to pass an examination, but who may make better tradesmen than young men who can pass an examination. We know there are people who are able to pass the highest examinations in the world, and yet they are no good when it comes to the practical part. They could not follow successfully any profession because they cannot apply their knowledge. By asking for the deletion of this clause we do not say that we want uneducated tradesmen, because our system of education makes it compulsory for our boys and girls to attend school until they are fourteen years of age. That being so, we do not say that the young men shall not be educated, but we say that a young man who cannot pass an examination up to a certain standard should not be debarred from learning a trade. If he is not able to pass an examination under a system of compulsory education, we say, "Do not debar him from following the calling which nature probably may have fitted him for." The hon. member for

Maryborough said that an uneducated good tradesman would not have the same opportunity of employment as the good tradesman who is educated.

Mr. WEIR: I did not say that.

Mr. CORSER: I wrote down the hon. member's words. What he said was—"An uneducated good tradesman will not have the same possibilities of employment as a good tradesman who is educated."

Mr. WEIR: I said that respecting foremen.

Mr. CORSER: No—the hon. member said what I have quoted, and I quite agree with it, but why debar the young man who is not educated from having the opportunity of becoming a tradesman?

Mr. WEIR: Because there are not enough jobs.

Mr. CORSER: Is that the idea? We know that some eminent business men are not highly educated. They could not pass a high standard of examination, but they have special ability in connection with their businesses. We know of tradesmen who could not pass a high examination, yet they could give a much more accurate estimate of the cost of a building than probably a highly educated University man. I am not saying anything against a high standard of education, but I do say that we should give the young man who cannot pass an examination every opportunity to learn a trade.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): This discussion has opened up a very interesting aspect of the question. While I am not going to decrie the value of education, I am certainly not going to bow down in reverence to the intellectually stuffed "dud" which is what a lot of people mean when they talk about the educated man. In my experience one of the greatest failures in a skilled trade was a highly educated man. His head was crammed full of formulas, but in the words of the tradesman, "He was simply a fool." If the Government are going to make an educational standard the gate of entrance to the higher skilled trades, then they are going to condemn the children of many of their own people to the ranks of the unskilled workers.

That is the effect of the entrance examinations to-day. Under our economic conditions the wealthy parent can afford not only to educate his child but to keep him away from work in order to give him the higher education necessary to enable him to go through these examinations. But, when he gets through, he is not in many cases as well equipped to carry on the industries, arts, and manufactures of the country as the children of the working men, who have to go out and start on the bottom rung, such as a "carry-about" youngster who is employed in some of the shops. I say unreservedly that the Government would be wise to revise the educational standard of entrance into the public service and in every avenue of employment in the State. I am satisfied that they would thereby get better results. They would get a better class of worker in the railways and in the State departments. They would get the children of the working men, and nine times out of ten they would have somebody more loyal than they have now because they have been raised in homes in sympathy with the principles which the Government are trying to put in practice to-day.

[*Mr. Weir.*]

I look with the greatest fear at the barring out of the children of the workers by the educational standards which are set up for entrance into various occupations. This Bill sets up a standard of education which must be held by anyone who wants to be apprenticed to a skilled trade. There are two requirements necessary when a lad wants to go into a skilled trade. One is the ability to handle figures and to apply formulæ; but there is a greater requirement than that. One of the first things I want to know about my youngster before I apprentice him to any trade is whether he has got any natural ability or bent for that trade. That is something which no school or college can impart to any lad—natural aptitude and ability. What would be the effect of a mere scholastic examination on those boys? It is peculiar that many artisans, mechanical engineers, and carpenters are not quick at what we might call the “three R’s” in the educational sense; but, if you put them alongside other men, you will find they are very smart workmen. Some of the poorest men from an educational standpoint that I know have been the cleverest engineers. We have to-day in the railway service a locomotive foreman who rose from an ordinary apprentice in the engineering trade. In my opinion, he is the smartest locomotive man in Queensland, although he only occupies the position of locomotive foreman. He has not become locomotive superintendent from lack of educational ability to write out the silly, stupid reports that are required at different times from a locomotive superintendent; but put him in a crisis, when the engines are all to pieces and loads have to be got away, and he is a man of resource and ability, able to make an engine which apparently is in a very bad condition to carry the load properly, where a highly educated and qualified man from Ipswich probably would get into a tangle. Time and again the greatest blunders have been made by highly educated University engineers, and the ordinary practical man has pulled them out of the mud. Almost every invention and improvement in machinery has been made by men in the lower ranks of the profession, and not by University professors.

I hope that too much stress will not be laid upon an educational standard for applicants for apprenticeship. It is not fair to apply an educational test alone. It would be more fair to let each applicant go through an educational test, and then, if he wanted to be a carpenter, take him away to a carpenter’s bench and give him a saw, hammer, and chisel, and ask him to do some carpentering work. Probably the boy who got 99 per cent. in the examination would not get 20 per cent. in the practical work. Those are the two factors which should be taken into consideration. I do not stand for any spirit of stupid reverence towards mere book learning which is called education. Education which cannot be applied practically is not worth twopence, and the men who have that and that alone are generally out on the street selling matches. (Laughter.) You find any number of men in Australia with M.A. and B.A. degrees humping their swags out West—men who have had a good education but have not had the practical ability to apply it, and without that they cannot get anywhere. If we want to see how the educational system is working out to-day, we have only to look at any group of applicants when the Railway Commissioner

calls for applications for lad porters or apprentices in the workshops. What is the test of qualification? You should take physical stamina into consideration; yet time and again at the lad porters’ examination the brain-crammed youngster will get top marks, but nine times out of ten he will not have the physique and alertness which are required in that position, and such boys cannot compare with others below them in the examination. I throw out the suggestion that, if the Government are going to stand by the present educational standard, in common fairness to the youngster who has not the natural ability to assimilate the arithmetic, grammar, and other things taught in the State schools he ought to be given a chance to demonstrate that with his hands he is more capable than those who can get 100 per cent. at the examination. (Hear, hear!) Some of the leading ironmasters in Queensland would fail to pass a fourth standard examination, but at the same time they are thoroughly qualified to run their foundries and take on big contracts with success. I hope that a good deal of discretion will be used in making the educational standard a test for apprentices.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): I quite admit that, while the educational test for apprentices is not of a very high standard, it will debar a lot of youths from becoming apprentices in any particular calling. We can find any number of men who have reached a high educational standard, and have taken degrees at universities, yet they have not been able to do anything in practical life.

Mr. WEIR: What percentage of applicants fail to pass the fourth-class standard?

Mr. KING: There may be only 1 per cent., but, if there is only 1 per cent., you have no right to debar that number from being apprenticed.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

[2 p.m.]

Mr. KING: If a compulsory standard of education is going to debar even one boy from entering a trade as an apprentice, then it is going to create hardship. The percentage of boys who may be affected may be very small indeed, but small as it may be, it is nevertheless a hardship.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The clause will not have that effect. Where a boy does not possess the qualifications prescribed here we advise him to attend night classes and acquire those qualifications.

Mr. KING: That is all very well, but I say that, if a young fellow shows an aptitude for a trade, he should not be debarred from becoming apprenticed to it because he cannot pass an examination. In common with other hon. members on this side, I believe that equal opportunity should be given to all. We know perfectly well that any number of men in skilled trades have no education whatever; yet they are right at the very top of their trades. I know quite a number of such men who can barely write their own names. We know that the State compulsory education ceases at fourteen years of age. Compare the case of a lad who continues his school education up to that age and wants to become apprenticed with another lad whose parents are in better circumstances and who are able to keep him at school until he is seventeen or eighteen years of age so that he is able to acquire a secondary education. It happens

Mr. King.]

that they both go through the same test. Which is going to get the preference? In many cases the boy who has had the secondary education will get a preference over the other simply because he has been more fortunately situated. (Government dissent.) It is a preference, whether hon. members like it or not.

Mr. FARRELL: At the present time a State child can get a secondary education.

Mr. KING: Of course he can, but there is no equality of opportunity. The lad who has to go out to earn a living at fourteen years of age has not the same opportunity as the lad whose parents can keep him at school two or three years longer.

Mr. WEIR: A lad of fourteen can reach the fourth-class standard.

Mr. KING: He may, or he may not. On the other hand, we know that there are any number of cases of highly educated men who even take university degrees, who never make a success of their lives in any shape or form. We have them as rousabouts and keeping books on stations. In a question of this sort education should not be the determining factor.

The main factor is the adaptability of the youth to the trade he is going in for, and an educational test should not stand in his way. If he once proves his adaptability to a particular trade or calling and becomes apprenticed to that trade, any education that he finds necessary to enable him to carry on after he has become qualified will be secured by him.

Mr. HARTLEY: That is the way the best tradesmen get their best education.

Mr. KING: Probably it is the best education, because he is educating himself with the main object of bettering himself. The youth to-day who goes to the grammar school or the high school, goes because he is sent by his parents, and does not make full use of the opportunities that are given with the idea of bettering himself in life. He does not look at it from that point of view.

Mr. WEIR: Plenty of them do.

Mr. KING: When a boy is compelled to take on a trade when he reaches a certain age, that boy is going to make the very best of his life and he will secure the necessary education to enable him to carry on his business.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (Warwick): I look upon the action of the Minister in opposing the omission of this clause as indicating a very deliberate attempt to bring in class legislation.

Mr. WEIR: Your Government included the same provision in the Railway Act.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The Government are attempting to do what will inflict a very big injury on a large number of boys in our country.

Mr. HARTLEY: What class will it operate in favour of?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: It will operate against that class which has not availed itself of the educational facilities that are provided by the State. The argument put forward by hon. members opposite, with the exception of the hon. member for Fitzroy, would seemingly indicate that hon. members on this side are endeavouring to take away

[Mr. King.

from the youth of the land the opportunity to receive education. There is not one hon. member on this side who has spoken in that direction. We say that youths should be educated to the fullest possible advantage, and the real difference between the contention of hon. members on this side and hon. members opposite is that we hold that if a youth fails in one direction, then he should be given another opportunity. It may be the only possible opportunity that a boy or girl may have. Give it to them. We do not say that they are not to be educated, or that they are to be kept down; but, in the event of their having failed to receive their certificates, then give them a chance and give them a job, and do not throw them out upon the world. That is our deliberate attitude, and that is the difference between the contention of hon. members on this side and the contention of hon. members opposite. We say that there should be equal opportunity for every boy in the land.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is all pure sophistry.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: It is not. One must concede that the educational test is low enough. In my experience I have had to do with the employment of many hundreds of people, and I would like to relate what happened only three weeks ago. There is in my employ one man who unfortunately has had no education, but who is trusted and is able to do many things that cause one to wonder how he is able to do them.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: Does the hon. gentleman trust him with his accountancy?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: No. He is a carter and has to do with the checking of goods, and I have never known him to make an error. He stated the other day in my hearing that many years ago he was a casual worker in a certain establishment, but he was deprived of his work through failing to pass an educational test. He is a thoroughly fine chap, but like many other boys could not under any circumstances pass an educational test.

Mr. WEIR: He is a product of your beautiful system of equal opportunity.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The Government are now taking the opportunity away from those people.

Mr. WEIR: You took the opportunity away from that man.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Who did?

Mr. WEIR: Your system did.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: What do you find happens under the system of examination? Many a boy would never pass any examination. I have found that in my experience. It will be found that boys and girls who are thoroughly competent go up for examination every year, and their teachers will say, as I have been told again and again, that just when they come to the crucial moment and attempt to pass an examination some temperamental affliction seizes them and they fail. There are numbers of people who would never pass an examination.

Mr. FARRELL: There is nothing in the Bill to say that a boy must pass an examination of the fourth-class standard.

Mr. KERR: What is it there for?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I have found people who were so mentally built that, if they were going to a polling-booth, they would not know what to do.

Mr. CARTER: There are thousands like that. That is why they vote for your side.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: That is not so. I have known some people who were so unmoved by the fact of going into a polling-booth that, when they came out, they said they had made a mess of their votes.

Mr. WEIR: That is a product of your system.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: What do the Government intend to do in regard to boys who have already passed through the schools? There are a vast number of young fellows available to-day who would rejoice to become apprenticed to whatever their bent may be. They have left school and their opportunity is gone because they did not know when they did so that certain obstacles were to be removed, and in consequence they did not provide themselves for such a contingency as this. Do the Government intend to deprive those boys of the opportunity of becoming apprenticed? There are many capable lads and girls who could fill jobs with the fullest satisfaction, yet they would never be able to pass an examination. My contention is that, instead of a conspiracy existing on this side of the Chamber to deprive those boys and girls of that opportunity, there is a desire to give equal opportunity to all by permitting every boy and girl to find employment in one direction or the other even supposing they fail in an educational test. Of course, if they can secure the education let them do so. A person needs all the learning he can get; it will repay its cost again and again through life. At the same time we must not let educational tests work detrimentally to our young folk.

Mr. FARRELL (*Rockhampton*): Hon. members of the Opposition have stressed the fact or the supposed fact that it is necessary under this Bill for an examination to be passed. If we look at the clause, we shall see that it is only necessary for a certificate to be given by the head master to say that the child has been educated up to the fourth-class standard.

Mr. MORGAN: That is only one thing that has to be done.

Mr. FARRELL: Let us look at the facts of the case. We find, taking the average child who passes through a school, that a boy of twelve years of age usually has completed his fourth-class standard. The child who is slightly below normal has still a further two years under our compulsory education clauses to complete that standard. The majority of normal children actually complete that standard at the age of twelve years. I shall prove that by giving the Rockhampton schools as an example. There the Department of Public Instruction has instituted a class for the training of sub-normal children. The children who are classed as sub-normal from the six principal schools of Rockhampton are brought together at the Rockhampton Central Boys' School under one special teacher. Only fourteen are attending that class from schools aggregating an attendance of nearly 2,000 children. It will thus be seen that the number of sub-normal children—that is the children who have not passed through their fourth-class standard—is less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of the children attending schools in Rockhampton.

I agree that many of the things stated by hon. members opposite with regard to education are correct. Undoubtedly there are a great many men running businesses to-day who are excellent tradesmen but who are uneducated. But, with the facilities existing to-day, there should be no repetition of that state of affairs. In cases where there are men who have risen from the bottom of the tree to the top without educational training, those men are employing at large salaries other men who have gone through a course of education.

I think we should argue more on the lines of developing the trade classes or secondary schools, cutting out a lot of the cramming which was referred to by the hon. member for Fitzroy. If we did that, we could do away with a lot of the trouble at present existing in the training of boys.

We all know there are two distinct examinations for boys in the primary schools who desire to attend either grammar or high schools. Perhaps it is only a fair thing that parents should have the right to know whether their boys should pass a scholarship examination and be trained for a profession, or whether they should be trained for a trade, and attend vocational classes and workshops provided in the technical college. The great pity is that the scheme is not more advanced. I admit that, in the country districts, we have not the facilities that exist in the cities. Hon. members opposite have more or less argued in favour of keeping country children in the country and making them primary producers instead of trying to drag them into the cities to take up positions in the workshops and factories that operate in the cities. I remember the hon. member for Dalby stating that in parts of his electorate there were no facilities given for a child to pass any of these examinations. That is an absolute fallacy; because there is not one child in Queensland to-day who cannot reach the fourth-class standard.

Mr. VOWLES: They get no tuition at all.

Mr. FARRELL: They can get tuition per medium of the correspondence course which the Government have inaugurated.

Mr. VOWLES: If their parents are in a position to assist them.

Mr. FARRELL: Last year, since the correspondence course came into operation, no less than twenty-seven boys who have never seen a State school sat for the scholarship examination. They were educated by means of the correspondence course. The idea of bringing a child from his father's farm into the city to work in the factories is surely not an argument which the hon. member believes in. I am sure he does not. The argument of hon. members opposite all along—it is a sound argument, too—has been that we should try to keep these boys in the country. I do not think there is anything wrong at all with the clause in the Bill, and I for one would like not only to see the clause kept in the Bill, but to see provision made for greater facilities than at present exist to enable the child to get practical experience in the workshops connected with the technical colleges so as to raise rather than lessen the standard of apprenticeship, and to encourage in the State schools, even to a greater extent than they are doing now, physical culture as well as scholastic training.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): The hon. member argued that it was only necessary for an

*Mr. Moore.*]

apprentice to attain a fourth-class certificate. As a matter of fact, that is only the beginning. The clause reads—

“Whenever the Minister considers it so desirable, he may in respect of any specified trade prescribe public examinations which shall be passed by every minor before he may become apprenticed to any such trade.”

The Minister has power to dispense with a qualifying entrance examination, but he has also power to prescribe an examination. I would like to call attention to page 314 of this year's “Industrial Gazette,” on which there appears a report of an interview given to the “Daily Mail” by Mr. Hall, Chairman of the Apprenticeship Executive. Mr. Hall there says—

“Under the apprenticeship scheme formerly in vogue it was necessary for a boy to pass an examination before his name could be placed on the register, but this qualifying examination has now been done away with. Under the new conditions, if a boy produced a certificate from a head teacher that he had been educated up to the standard prescribed for the third half-year of the fourth class for State schools, he was allowed to register. This change had been greatly appreciated.”

Now, apparently, the Minister is going back to the old principle by which he can prescribe an entrance examination of whatever standard he desires.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: As a matter of fact, this clause is entirely the same as clauses 5 and 6 of the regulations.

Mr. MOORE: Apparently the proviso that a candidate for apprenticeship shall produce a certificate from a head teacher that he has been educated up to the fourth-class standard is only the beginning, because after he has that certificate the Minister can prescribe an entrance examination. That is the part we object to. Why should it be in the power of the Minister to prescribe an examination other than what is really required for a boy to become an efficient tradesman?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: No examination will be prescribed if it is not necessary.

Mr. MOORE: We say that it is not necessary for a boy to pass a high examination, nor to be compelled to pass an examination before he can get a certificate from the head master of the school.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Has the future of Queensland's industries to depend on boys who fail to pass a fourth-class standard examination?

Mr. MOORE: It is not a question of the future of Queensland's industries depending on them. All boys are not the same. There are many who do not pass examinations but still become efficient tradesmen. The majority of boys will probably pass the fifth standard, and, when they reach fourteen years of age, will probably have attained to a higher standard; but why should we debar a boy from apprenticeship who has not passed that standard? This is not a general case, but a case for exemption. Some boys may have a bent for a particular trade, but possibly may not be able to pass a fourth standard examination. There may not be many in that category, but why should any of them be debarred? They

[Mr. Moore.

may be capable of becoming good tradesmen although they may not have the capacity to pass the educational examination. I know some boys who could not do the simplest sum in arithmetic—they have no head for mathematics.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: What sort of an engineer or carpenter would such a boy make?

Mr. MOORE: There are other trades such as saddlery in which they would not require a capacity for figures. We want to give to boys who have not had educational advantages, or who have not been able to pass this examination, an opportunity of learning a trade. Our idea is to enable every boy to learn a trade if he wishes to do so. We should not think that boys will not study because in certain cases there is an exemption provided to enable them to become apprentices. Many such cases will arise when the Bill comes into operation.

Question—That clause 6, as read, stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 32.

Mr. Barber	Mr. Kirwan
„ Bedford	„ Land
„ Bertram	„ Lacombe
„ Brennan	„ Lloyd
„ Bruce	„ McCormack
„ Bulcock	„ Mullan
„ Collins	„ Payne
„ Cooper, F. A.	„ Riordan
„ Farrell	„ Ryan
„ Ferrieks	„ Smith
„ Foley	„ Stopford
„ Gillies	„ Theodore
„ Gledson	„ Weir
„ Hanson	„ Wilson
„ Hartley	„ Winstanley
„ Hynes	„ Wright

Tellers: Mr. Foley and Mr. Weir.

NOES, 17.

Mr. Barnes, G. P.	Mr. Maxwell
„ Brand	„ Moore
„ Corser	„ Morgan
„ Costello	„ Nott
„ Deacon	„ Roberts
„ Edwards	„ Swayne
„ Kerr	„ Vowles
„ King	„ Warren
„ Logan	

Tellers: Mr. Brand and Mr. Costello.

PATRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Dash	Mr. Appel
„ Dunstan	„ Clavton
„ Conroy	„ Petrie

Resolved in the affirmative.

[2.30 p.m.]

Clause 7—“*Reciprocal status of certificates*”—agreed to.

Clause 8—“*Apprenticeship Executive*”—

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I beg to move the following amendment:—

“On line 40, page 3, omit the word ‘Two’ with a view to inserting the word—

‘One.’”

I think the Minister will agree with me that there is no necessity for him to have two representatives on the Apprenticeship Executive. I certainly think that one will be sufficient, and he will be chairman. There is surely no necessity for more.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Oh yes, there is.

Mr. MORGAN: Why? I think one is sufficient. The unfortunate thing about it is that on most of the boards appointed by the Government there is not sufficient representation of those persons who are more actively engaged in the industry concerned—in this case the employers and employees and others connected with apprenticeship.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Mackay): I cannot accept the amendment. It must be borne in mind that this scheme is partly industrial and partly educational. The Chairman of the Executive appointed by me is also an industrial inspector, charged with inspection under the awards so far as they relate to apprenticeship and with the general administration of this measure. He is also Chairman of the Group Committees. He has a casting vote but no deliberative vote. On the other hand, it is considered necessary to have an educational expert sitting with the Apprenticeship Executive who will be able to supervise the instruction which apprentices should receive at the technical colleges and also to advise the Apprenticeship Executive as to the facilities for training which may exist. One can readily understand, as I stated during my second reading speech, that it is not the function of the technical college to turn out skilled tradesmen, but it is its function to assist in the training of artisans; that is to say, it should be supplementary to the training in the workshops. We cannot expect sixty hours a year to be a sufficient training to turn out artisans. The technical institutions can give training in the theory on which workshop practice is based. The boys could also be taught very many other things which would be of advantage to them as artisans, consequently we have Mr. Riddell, one of the leading officers of the Department of Public Instruction, on this Executive to give the Executive the advantage of his advice on educational matters and as to the facilities available at the various institutions throughout the State for apprenticeship classes; consequently two Government representatives are necessary.

Amendment (Mr. Morgan) negatived.

Clause 8 agreed to.

Clause 9—"Secretary"—agreed to.

Clause 10—"Duties of Executive"—

Mr. KERR (Enoggera): I beg to move the following amendment:—

"On line 20, page 4, after the word 'following' insert the following words:—

- (a) To arrange for addresses and for the distribution of appropriate literature to the boys in the schools, upon the possibilities of employment in industries, and to stimulate the interest of the boys for craftsmanship;
- (b) Advising all boys leaving primary and secondary schools, and their parents, of the occupation for which each boy, on his school history, appears to be best adapted, and of the opportunities offering for apprenticeship in different handicrafts, trades, and callings;
- (c) Advising such boys and their parents of the facilities offering for continued education, and encouraging and urging the use of such facilities by both boys and girls;
- (d) Advising a method for the guidance of youths engaged in unskilled occu-

pations into skilled occupations, and in securing the attendance of all youths and girls at continuation trade and technical schools and other educational establishments provided for continued education;

- (e) The collection of all data necessary to the discharge of the foregoing duties."

This is a long amendment, but it will go a long way towards making the apprenticeship scheme a success. The distribution of literature and the delivering of addresses to the youths in the various schools will stimulate an interest in the secondary industries of the State. It will have the dual effect of encouraging boys to go into industry, and it will perhaps give them a necessary knowledge of the industries of the State. Unfortunately we know that it is true that very little interest is taken by youths in the various schools in the direction of becoming apprenticed. We know that they would rather get a higher rate of pay doing odd jobs than study and put in a good deal of their time in taking up employment as an apprentice. We should certainly stimulate an interest in apprenticeship in the boys, and the best body to do that is the Apprenticeship Executive. It is useless for the Executive merely to handle the boy when an application has been sent from the Director of Labour to the Executive. If the scheme is to be a proper one, the boy should be taken in hand at school—perhaps in his thirteenth year—and the schoolmaster or members of the Apprenticeship Executive, or of Group Apprenticeship Committees should attend the schools and give interesting lectures and stimulate as far as possible the desire in the lad to become apprenticed. It is a big question, but the schoolmaster should be able to give to the Executive a brief résumé of what the boy is best adapted for on his school record.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I thought you objected to any record from the head master.

Mr. KERR: I have not done that at all.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You voted against it.

Mr. KERR: The best possible results are not obtained by taking the boy in hand after he has left school, but by taking him in hand before he leaves school. It is not asking too much of the Executive to do as is suggested in the amendment. Some of the public servants could very well be transferred to the department under Mr. Thompson, who could then do a tremendous amount of good work. It is a fact that many parents are unaware of the fact that continuation schools, technical colleges, and high schools have been established for that purpose. I come in contact week after week with parents who do not know what opportunities in this direction are open to the boy after he leaves school. We should disseminate information through our school curriculum which would give a greater knowledge of the facilities that are offering.

The sphere of the Executive could also be enlarged to get into touch with boys in unskilled trades with a view to drafting them into skilled callings. That might take a lot of thought, but the right people to do it are the Executive. Unfortunately the margin in pay to-day between skilled and unskilled work is so small that it offers no incentive

Mr. Kerr.]



to the youth to forego an easy path of living and assume a more difficult one. That is a difficulty which could very well be overcome and should be left to the Executive. The amendment does not alter the principles of the Bill, but simply proposes to give additional powers to the Executive.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Ample powers to do all that you suggest are contained in the Bill.

Mr. KERR: It seems to me that the Bill only contemplates interesting the boy in apprenticeship matters after he has lodged his application. We ought to go a little further than that, and get in touch with the boy while he is at school, and also let the parents know what is offering. We should tackle this question at the base. If the boy were taken in hand at the age of thirteen years while he was still at school, and enlightened as to the opportunities offering, he would be given an incentive that would go a long way to make the scheme a success.

Mr. FARRELL: Don't you think school teachers do that?

Mr. KERR: Yes, but they are not doing enough. If the boy was interested in the apprenticeship scheme while he was at school, selections could be made for the professional ranks, the highly skilled, and medium skilled trades, and those callings where little skill is required. Boys could also be selected then for the commercial life. The best people to guide the school teachers would be the Apprenticeship Executive Committee, which is composed of men who have had many years of experience in the industries. I hope the Secretary for Public Works will extend the Bill a little and accept the amendment which I have moved.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Mackay): I do not propose to accept the amendment moved by the hon. member for Enoggera. I have nothing at all to say against the proposals contained in the amendment; they may be very desirable; but there is ample provision in clause 10 for doing all the things which the hon. member considers necessary and desirable. I may point out, for the information of the Committee, that members of the Apprenticeship Executive are busy men—men who have their livings to earn in various occupations—and the duties which the hon. member for Enoggera proposes to impose upon them would give them no time to attend to anything but the apprenticeship scheme. Apart from the Government representatives, there are two representatives from the Trades and Labour Council, two from the employers, and, I take it, four allotted to the various groups sitting together for that purpose. Those men are either employers or employees engaged in industries in which they have the control of apprentices. I fail to see how those men are going to find time to carry out the onerous duties embodied in this amendment. If it were considered desirable to do these things, ample powers are contained in paragraphs (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), and (f) of the clause as it stands to enable those responsible to do anything for the advantage of apprentices or education generally.

Amendment (Mr. Kerr) negatived.

Clause 10 agreed to.

Clause 11—"Group Apprenticeship Committees"—agreed to.

[Mr. Kerr.

Clause 12—"Duties of Group Committees"—

Mr. KERR (Enoggera): I have an amendment which is on somewhat similar lines to my last amendment, but I hope that in this case the Minister will appreciate its necessity.

I beg to move the following amendment:—

"After line 15, page 5, insert—

(a) To interview (with their parents) the boys who desire to enter a trade within the industry. The Committee shall have at their disposal full information in regard to—

(i.) The scholastic attainment of the boy, particularly in respect of the inclination he has shown towards manipulative craft during his school career;

(ii.) His health record and physical development; and

(iii.) His temperamental qualities, and any special characteristics that may have been observed.

During the last couple of years I have had the honour to be on a committee which has to do with bursaries in Queensland, and during that time under the Commonwealth Repatriation scheme we have handled a couple of hundred dependents of soldiers who have been killed. The committee sat about once a fortnight in the Central Technical College, under the chairmanship of Mr. Wearne, the Principal of the College, and my experience on that committee has led me to move this amendment.

After leaving school many boys have not been placed in the right groove, and Mr. Wearne and others have formed themselves into a committee to interview the boys and their parents, and we find that the very best results are being achieved by reason of the personal interview. I venture to say that it is not too much for any Government to tackle this question in order to get each lad into the right groove as early as possible. I hope the Minister will accept the amendment and not consider the question of £.s.d. in this connection. The secretary could do a good deal, and the representatives of the Government who are in the public service and continuously employed could very well do the interviewing to a large extent. The work in the country could be done by the Advisory Committees. I hope the Minister will include this amendment so that the Group Committees will be au fait with the whole of the qualifications of a boy who makes application for apprenticeship, as this will assist the committees very much indeed and also assist the boys to get into the right grooves in life.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Mackay): I do not propose to accept the amendment for the reasons I set out in connection with the previous amendment. The duties of the Group Apprenticeship Committees only commence when a boy is finally apprenticed. One would naturally assume from the wording of the amendment that the Group Committees should consult the parents and conduct a sort of examination of the child in order to decide what trade or calling he has a particular aptitude for. That is placing a very important duty on any committee. I do not think the Group Committees have either the time or the necessary knowledge to be able to state what a boy of fourteen,

fifteen, or sixteen years of age is fitted for in the way of an industry, trade, or calling. The members of the Group Committees will be conducting businesses of their own, or will have their livelihood to earn in other directions and consequently will not have time to give boys the individual study that would be necessary to make a success of such a proposal. I prefer to leave it to the discretion of the parent or guardian to decide what a boy is best fitted for in the way of a trade or calling. Then again we have the other important factor—that it is not often so much a question of making a choice. Boys naturally desire employment after they leave school, and the avenues of employment in the skilled industries are limited. There is not the demand in Queensland for highly trained technicians that there is in countries that have highly developed secondary industries; consequently the avenues of employment are limited to a few skilled trades or callings, and the employment available is not as wide as we would like it to be. I prefer to leave it to the good sense of the parents or guardians to advise the boys as to the opportunities in the various industries. I know the schoolmasters in many of the large schools in Queensland take an interest in the boys and have given them advice in connection with their future career. The members of the Group Committee who are Government representatives—I refer to Mr. Riddell, Mr. Hall, and Mr. Thompson—regularly meet parents who desire to interview them with regard to the prospects of their boys, and they give the parents all the advice and information that is available or can be given in this direction. For these reasons it is not necessary to accept the amendment.

Amendment (*Mr. Kerr*) negatived.

Clause 12 agreed to.

Clause 13 to 16, both inclusive, agreed to.

Clause 17—"Indentures of apprenticeship"—

Mr. KING (*Logan*): Subclause (1) reads—

"At the end of the period of probation of each apprentice, if it is mutually agreed upon by the employer and the legal guardian of the minor but not otherwise, he may become an apprentice under indenture."

There are cases where a minor has no legal guardian. What does the Minister intend to do in a case of that sort?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (*Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Mackay*): Where a boy has no legal guardian, the Public Curator or, if he is a State child, the Director of State Children, would be the legal guardian.

Mr. KING: I think the Public Curator stands in loco parentis in such cases.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Yes.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): I beg to move the following amendment:—

"On line 44, page 7, after the word 'power,' insert the words—  
'with the consent of the parent or guardian of the apprentice.'"

The clause will then read—

"The Group Committee concerned, or if there is no Group Committee, the Director of Labour, shall have power, with the consent of the parent or guardian

of the apprentice, to transfer an apprentice from one employer to another either temporarily or permanently—"

I think everyone will admit that this Bill in dealing with apprentices enters intimately a realm into which no previous measure has entered. It enters into the intimate relations that exist in the family circle. I am quite sure that the Minister does not intend that an Apprenticeship Group Committee should come between a parent and his son or daughter; but, as the clause stands, a parent would have no say at all as to the destiny of his child in regard to apprenticeship. I think everyone will admit that a parent is concerned most intimately and earnestly in the welfare of his child, and has the first right to be consulted before any change is made in the training of his boy or his girl as an apprentice. I hope the Minister will accept the amendment.

[3 p.m.]

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (*Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Mackay*): I propose to accept the amendment. The clause as read deals with the transfer of indentures under certain conditions by the Group Apprenticeship Committee concerned, or, if there is no Group Committee, then by the Director of Labour, and for that purpose the inspectors are empowered to enter workshops and investigate the facilities provided for the training of apprentices. It is often found necessary to transfer apprentices from one shop to another so that they may get the all-round training which is necessary. Take, for instance, the plumbing trade. In some shops an apprentice might get only sheet metal work without any lead work or sanitary work, and generally work in the higher branches of the trade, and after he has served, perhaps, two years it may be necessary to transfer him to a firm where he can get the training in other branches. The same remark applies to other callings. It is consequently necessary and desirable to give the Group Committees certain powers in this respect. It is also desirable to make provision for cases where employers, owing to a shortage of work, are not able to find employment for their apprentices. Take, for example, the building trade. A large contractor may have periods during which he will have no actual work for his apprentices at all. Nevertheless it is necessary for the boys to continue at the trade, and in those cases also they can be transferred to other employers under the supervision of the Group Committee concerned. However, as the parent is a party to the indentures and has certain responsibilities under them, I have no objection to the transfer taking place with his consent. A parent would be very foolish to withhold his consent because the future of the boy would be affected, and, if he is not getting the fullest training, it is better for him to be transferred to some shop where every facility is provided.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*): I am rather glad that the Minister has decided to accept this amendment. An amendment to a similar effect has already been circulated by me, and I was not aware that the hon. member for Fitzroy was going to move in this direction. We are perfectly satisfied to know that it is going to be embodied in the Bill, although I should like to point out that it is the only amendment the Minister has accepted up to the present.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: No.

*Mr. Maxwell.]*

Mr. MAXWELL: However, hon. members on this side are quite prepared to agree to it, even though it does come from the other side of the Chamber.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): I do not see the need for the amendment moved by the hon. member for Fitzroy, but I appreciate one or two remarks that have been made. I think that subclause (4), paragraphs (a) and (b) meet the case. If there is any instance where the Group Apprenticeship Committee should have some power, it is in this instance. Subclause (4) provides—

“The Group Committee concerned, or if there is no Group Committee, the Director of Labour, shall have power to transfer an apprentice from one employer to another, either temporarily or permanently—

(a) If the employer does not provide the necessary facilities for the apprentice to become proficient in his trade.”

I take it that the instruction to be imparted to the boy will be set out in the indenture.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The indenture provides that.

Mr. ROBERTS: It must be done.

Mr. HARTLEY: What does the indenture provide that must be done?

Mr. ROBERTS: It will be a breach of the indenture if the lad is not taught his trade in accordance with the covenants of the indenture.

Mr. HARTLEY: Subclause (4) (a) does not say that the Group Apprenticeship Committee shall not transfer an apprentice from one employer to another if it thinks fit.

Mr. ROBERTS: If there is anything that the Group Committee should be able to say honestly and definitely, it is whether the boy is being provided with the necessary training, and it is in a much better position to do that than the parent of the child.

Mr. HARTLEY: I admit that, but is the Group Committee in the best position to say where the child shall go? I say it is not.

Mr. ROBERTS: I do not say it should say that, but it should see whether facilities are being offered for the training of the boy. The Minister has told us that there are not too many opportunities offering, but from the way the hon. member for Enoggera spoke, one would imagine that there were hundreds of positions. In the town from which I come there are hundreds of parents who want to get positions for their boys. The Minister is prepared to accept the amendment, but I do not see any need for it.

Amendment (*Mr. Hartley*) agreed to.

Clause 17, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 18—“Unions or Associations may take apprentices.”—agreed to.

Clause 19—“Period of apprenticeship”—agreed to.

Clause 20—“Age for apprenticeship”—

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowoong*): I beg to move the following amendment:—

“On line 46, page 8, omit the words—  
‘and latest.’”

The clause will then read—

“The earliest age at which apprenticeship may begin may be determined in

[*Mr. Maxwell.*

relation to any particular trade or industry by the court on application by any party interested.”

There are a number of young men at the age of twenty-one who are quite prepared to be bound so that they can better themselves by becoming efficient tradesmen. There is no limitation placed upon the solicitor, the barrister, or men and women in other walks of life, and why should there be any limitation in this connection? If a man can raise himself from the unskilled ranks to the ranks of a tradesman, even at twenty-one or twenty-three, or twenty-four years of age, we should give him the opportunity to do that. If the clause is allowed to go through in its present form, it may have a very detrimental effect.

Mr. HANSON: The hon. gentleman wants a man for a boy's wage.

Mr. MAXWELL: I have never done that at any time. This matter is controlled by the Arbitration Court. I want the opportunity given to a young man in an unskilled calling to learn a skilled trade. I realise the opportunities that are given in the technical colleges, but the opportunities of training are not there. The Minister has already pointed out that, while there may be a certain amount of assistance given at the colleges, the practical opportunities are greater outside. Irrespective of the interjection of the hon. member for Buranda, I want to give the man on the lower rung of the ladder an opportunity to raise himself.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (*Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Macleay*): I fail to see any advantage that would be gained by the amendment. The Arbitration Court has the power now under section 7 of the Industrial Arbitration Act to fix the earliest and latest age of an apprentice. What purpose would be gained by the amendment when the court has that power now? The omission of the words proposed would not have any effect. A minor is any person under the age of twenty-one years. Therefore, if a person over twenty-one years of age is indentured, or if a person at seventeen years of age is indentured for five years, special conditions must be framed for such persons after they reach the age of twenty-one years. The amendment would not take the present power of the court away from it. This Bill is to encourage the apprenticeship of minors, and the conditions under which persons over twenty-one years of age can be employed are a matter for the Arbitration Court.

Mr. MOORE: Why should a man over twenty-one years of age be debarred from learning a trade?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I am not arguing that at all. I am asking what is to be accomplished by the amendment? It will not assist the object of this Bill one iota. The object of the amendment is to give the Arbitration Court power to determine when an apprentice shall start in a given trade. Personally, I believe the best age is about sixteen years. There are some trades which call for greater physical endurance and hardihood than others, and in my opinion no boy should be apprenticed to those trades before that age. Possibly the court would hear evidence and get full information of the industry they are dealing with before determining the age at which the boy should start his apprenticeship.

Mr. MOORE: Why should a man over twenty-one years of age be debarred from learning a trade?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Even if the words "and latest" are omitted from the clause, the power of the Court is not limited, and it would still have the power to deal with such cases.

Mr. MOORE: The Court fixes the age at which the boy leaves school to become an apprentice.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The Court would require to determine the conditions of labour of every apprentice over twenty-one years of age.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): The Secretary for Public Works may be quite right, but I cannot quite follow him. The point the hon. member for Toowong wants to make is that a man over the age of twenty-one years should have an opportunity of becoming an apprentice. We do not wish that he should be tied down. We know that many boys on leaving school go into unskilled labour because of the attractive wages. When they are older they discover their mistake, and would like to become apprentices themselves, although they may be twenty-three, twenty-four, or twenty-five years of age.

Mr. HARTLEY: You can see the danger of what you advocate.

Mr. MOORE: I do not see any danger at all. It is only a question of giving a man an opportunity.

Mr. HARTLEY: It would mean that an employer would get all the apprentices he could.

Mr. MOORE: What on earth would be the use of an employer getting absolutely unskilled men. Those men would be of no more use than a boy would be. Our endeavour is to give the unskilled man an opportunity. Many people discover that they have made a mistake, and they should have the opportunity of apprenticing themselves. To my mind, there is no more advantage to an employer in securing a man at what might be called a boy's wages when he knows that that man knows absolutely nothing about the trade.

Mr. W. COOPER: Take the blacksmith's trade, for a start.

Mr. MOORE: There may be one or two odd trades where it would be an advantage.

Mr. HARTLEY: It would be an advantage to the employer right through the ironmaking trade.

Mr. MOORE: I do not think so. There are many portions of the ironmaking trade in which an unskilled man would be of no more use than a boy. Certainly a striker in the blacksmith's trade would be more useful than a boy, but why block men seeking to learn other trades for that reason? The employer recognises at the present time that a man can start to learn a trade after he has reached the age of twenty-one years. I have noticed in the "Industrial Gazette" many cases where men over twenty-one years of age have been allowed to become indentured.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: This amendment would not affect that at all.

Mr. MOORE: After this Bill is passed, if a man wants to become an apprentice, he must come under the provisions of the new Act. We find that men who wish to join a profession late in life are not debarred from doing so. Even hon. members in this Chamber occasionally want to adopt other walks of

life. Why, then, should we debar these men from learning a trade because they have reached a certain age? I cannot see how the proposed amendment would impair the usefulness of the Act.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Don't you see that the proposed amendment would not affect the position one iota?

Mr. MOORE: That is doubtful. Very likely it would. The court would fix the matter according to the representations from both sides, and they might possibly say that nobody over the age of twenty-one years could become an apprentice.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: After the passage of this Bill, which controls apprentices from the age of fourteen, anyone over twenty-one years of age, other than a journeyman, would require to get an improver's permit from the Arbitration Court just the same as is done to-day.

Mr. MOORE: That is not the point at all. I want to see a provision that will enable a man over the age of twenty-one years to come under the apprenticeship clauses of this Bill. The clause allows the Court to fix the latest age at which a minor may become apprenticed, and I want that wiped out. After a person has reached the age of twenty-one years he should be able to judge what is best for himself.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He can apply to the Arbitration Court.

Mr. MOORE: We want a provision to enable him to register himself with the Director of Labour, and come under this Bill to enable him to secure the advantages that this Bill confers. He is not likely to be taken on as an improver when he knows nothing about the trade or calling. The objection that was raised of getting a man for a boy's wage does not apply to all, because it is the skill that you pay for.

Amendment (*Mr. Maxwell*) negatived.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): I beg to move the following amendment:—

"On line 49, page 8, after the word 'interested,' insert the words—

'Provided that nothing done or determined under this or any other Act shall be construed to prevent the apprenticeship of a person who has left school within twelve months prior to his application to become an apprentice.'

If a young lad applies at any time within twelve months after leaving school for an apprenticeship, notwithstanding the age fixed by the Court, we desire that he should be allowed to become an apprentice. I ask the Minister seriously to take this into consideration. It does not impose any hardship on anyone, and it is giving such a lad a chance to become an apprentice, although he may not have made up his mind about it till twelve months after he had left school.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (*Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Mackay*): There is nothing in the Bill at present that would prohibit such a course being followed. While the court is given power to fix the latest age at which apprenticeship may begin, there is a provision in the Bill under which any person affected by the decision of the court has a right of appeal to the court for an alteration so far as it affects him.

In the event of the court determining that apprenticeship in different callings should

*Hon. W. Forgan Smith.]*

start between fourteen and seventeen years of age, and a person eighteen years old desires to become an apprentice so as to get an opportunity of securing employment, he can apply to the court for an order enabling him to be one. These things are often done under existing awards. The court almost invariably gives such permission. There is nothing in the Bill to prevent any boy between fourteen and twenty-one years from becoming an apprentice; consequently the proposal of the hon. member is unnecessary.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): As soon as the court makes a determination, that at once acts as a prohibition, and it remains in force until it is satisfied. It simply means that in a case such as I have mentioned, if a lad wishes to become apprenticed, and the court already has made a ruling as to age, he will have to go to the trouble and expense of making an application to the court to be exempted and to be allowed to become an apprentice. The amendment will not do any harm, and I would ask the Minister to reconsider his decision and not throw obstacles in the way. The amendment will make it far more easy and simple to deal with such cases as I have mentioned.

Amendment (*Mr. King*) negatived.

Clause 20 agreed to.

Clauses 21 and 22 agreed to.

Clause 23—"Mutual Duties"—

Mr. KING (*Logan*): I beg to move the following amendment:—

"On line 49, page 9, omit the words—  
'or as may be directed.'"

Will the Minister inform us by whom the direction has to be made?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is to be done by an order signed by the Minister and published in the "Government Gazette."

Mr. KING: The wording of the clause is "as may be prescribed." Surely "prescribed" ought to be sufficient without leaving anything to the direction of some unknown person or authority.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*): It is necessary to retain the words the hon. member proposes to omit. We find that it is necessary to give certain directions for the instruction of apprentices, and whoever neglects to carry them out can be prosecuted for the non-observance of the directions. It would then become a question as to whether they were directed or otherwise. The practice has been for the Group Committees to recommend to me that boys shall receive a certain amount of training during the employers' time, and that has been done in a number of industries.

Mr. KING: Would not that be "prescribed."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It would be "directed"; that covers the matter. I get a recommendation from the Group Committee, and it is then published in the "Government Gazette" as a direction to the employers to send the boys to a technical college at given times. If the employer obstructs a boy in that direction, he can be prosecuted. If the boy is given time off to attend the classes and fails to do so, proceedings may be taken against him. It is necessary to have this provision.

[3.30 p.m.]

Amendment (*Mr. King*) negatived.

[*Hon. W. Forgan Smith.*]

Clause 23 agreed to.

Clause 24—"Technical classes"—agreed to.

Clause 25—"Applications where insufficient apprentices employed"—

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I have circulated an amendment having for its object the deletion of this clause and the substitution of a new clause, but I now propose to drop the first paragraph of my proposed new clause and move the second paragraph as an addition to clause 25. I therefore beg to move the following amendment:—

"On line 52, page 11, after the word 'apprentices,' insert the words—

"Every employer or group of employers who reduces or suffers a reduction in the number of the skilled workers employed by him in any of the said industries, crafts, occupations, or callings, so as to increase the proportion of apprentices bound to or controlled by him beyond the proportion prescribed, shall within fourteen days of such increase of proportion report the circumstances of his case in writing to the Executive."

A good deal has been said in this Chamber on the question of the exploitation of child labour, and undoubtedly some protection has to be given to apprentices against exploitation by employers. The object I have in view in my amendment is not provided for in any other part of the Bill. My new paragraph will prevent any employer from dismissing his skilled men in order that he may retain a greater number of apprentices than he is entitled to, simply because they are under indenture to him. Whilst it is right to protect the employer who takes the right quota, it is also necessary to protect the skilled man. Very often there may be in a factory apprentices up to the full proportion allowed. If the skilled men are dismissed—owing to lack of work perhaps—the apprentices have to be kept because of their indentures, and therefore some protection has to be included in the Bill or the apprentices would be exploited by the employer.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*): Clause 25 deals with the chief difficulty which has confronted apprenticeship in Queensland, that is to say, the employer who does not employ any apprentices at all. It gives me power to go to the Arbitration Court and ask the Court to make certain investigations and issue such orders as may be necessary to ensure that each employer takes his quota of apprentices. Now the hon. member for Enoggera proposes that if a proportion of the journeymen are paid off, the employer shall notify the Apprenticeship Executive accordingly. The compilation of statistics in the event contemplated by the hon. member has no bearing on the clause at all. The responsibility of an employer in Queensland or any other country in regard to apprenticeship is to train as many apprentices as the industry needs. Each employer in any industry has a duty, and that is to train sufficient boys to meet the requirements of that industry both now and in the future. It is because that has not been done in the past that we have found it necessary to pass a Bill of this kind. This clause gives me power to move the Arbitration Court to make such order as may be deemed necessary to see to it that each employer carries

out his obligations to the State in this way.

Mr. HANSON: The court should be moved in that direction now.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I am prepared to do that where it is necessary. If the Group Committees concerned furnish me with information about employers covered by this Bill who are not employing any apprentices at all or employing nothing like the proper quota, I will move the court without delay to see that that state of affairs is brought to an end. However, there is no connection between the amendment and clause 25, and I regret I cannot accept the amendment.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): There is a distinction between the amendment and the clause. One deals with the employment of an insufficient number of apprentices, and the Minister says that the court will be moved if that situation arises. On the other hand, let us take a case of where the proportion of apprentices to journeymen is one to three. If we have nine skilled men, then we should have three apprentices; but there is the possibility—which has occurred—of three skilled men leaving the shop or being dismissed, with the result that there are six skilled men and three apprentices, or a proportion of one apprentice to two journeymen. There is nothing in the Bill to meet that situation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Yes, there is.

Mr. KERR: If the Minister can point to that, he will see the connection between the clause and my amendment. I hope that he will agree to the amendment, because it will probably save him a good deal of trouble later on.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): The Minister has been talking about moving the court to make the business people employ their quota of apprentices. If there is any defaulter in this respect, it is the Government departments. The Government departments are as bad as any private employer in the matter of putting on apprentices.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: In the Public Works Department we have a greater proportion of apprentices than any private employer in the State.

Mr. ROBERTS: The Government are doing a large amount of work at Toowoomba, and I would like to know how many apprentices they have put on since they started those public works, and how many tradesmen they have turned out? I know the position as well as the Minister, and I say that, if there is any defaulter, it is the Department of Public Works.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The hon. gentleman may say so, but it does not necessarily follow that that is an established fact.

Mr. ROBERTS: It is a fact, and I assert it again. The Government departments are the greatest defaulters. Look at the number of mechanics there are at the Ipswich Railway Workshops, and then ascertain the number of apprentices employed there. There are a great many mechanics employed in the Railway Department at Toowoomba, but how many apprentices are there working under articles of indenture?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Have you any apprentices?

Mr. ROBERTS: I rose particularly to say that I regret the necessity for this clause, and I feel very much for the boy who has to enter a shop under the conditions required of his employer. I have handled many men, and I know that they lose interest in teaching a boy his trade. The Government are going to throw the responsibility upon the employer, and he probably would rather not take that responsibility, or he has got to that age when it is past him to impart the necessary knowledge to others so that they may become competent tradesmen. He has to depend on the men in his employ, and they have not sufficient interest in the boy who is there as an indentured apprentice. Consequently the employer says, "I will not take any boys at all. I will simply pay the ruling rate of wage and give employment to tradesmen." It is to be regretted that men under such circumstances are to be compelled to take apprentices. Since the regulations were circulated in Toowoomba, and before this Bill was introduced, a man said to me in Toowoomba, "Here are the conditions of indentures as applying to Toowoomba. I have not had a boy for several years and I am inclined to go out of business." That is a man who is able to go out of business and not continue working.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: If he elects to go out of business some one else will come along and do his work.

Mr. ROBERTS: That is the same old cry—if someone is not doing the job someone else will. In consequence of certain industrial legislation in this State a number of people are unfortunately doing the job—not in Queensland but in other States.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ROBERTS: That is work that ought to be done and can be done in Queensland under reasonable conditions. Employers ought to be given the opportunity to train lads under the conditions best suited to the trade; but under certain conditions that have been imposed they do not want to engage indentured apprentices, and it is hard to think that, when a man carrying on business does not want to take apprentices, legislation should say he must do so. I have the greatest sympathy for any boy who enters a shop where his employer does not want him, but is compelled by legislation to engage him.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*): I cannot allow the statement of the hon. member for East Toowoomba to go unchallenged. He made a definite statement that the scarcity of apprentices in Queensland is due to the fact that the men—no doubt he means the employees—take no interest in boys and refuse to train them. As a matter of fact, since I took over the control of apprentices I know that the unions in Queensland have taken an active interest in the training of the boys. I know that the men who are members of the Apprenticeship Executive and Group Apprenticeship Committees take an active and keen interest in this scheme, and have done everything possible to assist the boys in their tuition. Some of the men have given their time and have even lost wages to attend meetings of the Executive and Group Apprenticeship Committees in order to look after the training of the boys. The trouble is that, unfortunately, there is a

*Hon. W. Forgan Smith.*

certain class of employer in Queensland who desire to employ boys at their own sweet will.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: They also desire to employ them in the proportion that they wish, and place them at work which will be most profitable to them, and then turn them adrift immediately there is no further profit to be made from them.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It is that state of affairs that has made this Bill possible. On the other hand, I know some employers who have taken a keen, intelligent, and active interest in this scheme, and have done everything to stimulate and assist it. That is as it should be. This Bill deals with the class of employers who have no apprentices at all.

The hon. member for East Toowoomba made reference to the Department of Public Works. The department has seventy apprentices under this scheme. I claim that is a greater proportion than any building contractor has in Queensland, having regard to the number of men employed. The apprentices in the Railway Department are subject to the Railways Act. There are a large number of apprentices in that department where facilities for training exist. The hon. member will accomplish nothing by seeking to cover up the neglect of a certain type of employer by making attacks on the employees.

My experience both as a journeyman and otherwise has been that where good tradesmen were employed, and where boys were given a decent chance by the employers, the tradesmen gave the boys every facility to learn the trade. I have been connected with the building industry for the last twenty-four years. I have been an apprentice myself; I have worked as a journeyman and foreman, and I have been an employer. I have worked in places where there have been very large numbers of journeymen and apprentices employed, and those journeymen have at all times taken an interest in the apprentices. From whom but the journeymen do you get your instructors in the technical colleges? It is an unwarranted slur on the workers of Queensland to insinuate that our journeymen have lacked the interest to assist our boys in learning their trades.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): I am just a shade surprised at the Minister who has talked about his twenty-four years' work. How many years has the hon. gentleman worked in a trade in Queensland? I happen to be somewhat like the hon. gentleman, inasmuch as I was indentured in a country where indenturing is encouraged. I recognise that where I learnt my trade opportunities were given and had to be given because the lads were indentured. As I have said before, when you have lads indentured, naturally there is an obligation on both the employer and the employee. I am not making an attack on the workers of Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You said definitely that the journeymen neglected to give the boys tuition.

Mr. ROBERTS: I recognise that under our system these boys have not had the opportunity. I have seen men employed who would not impart the knowledge. I have had men in my employ who would not impart

the knowledge to the lads. Those lads were not apprenticed to me because, unfortunately, apprenticeship in Queensland has gone by the board for many years.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ROBERTS: That has always been my regret, and that is why I welcome this Bill.

Mr. HANSON: That does not apply only to Queensland.

Mr. ROBERTS: I may not know as much about the rest of Australia as the hon. member for Buranda: I am dealing with Queensland. I realised the necessity for such a measure from the day I stepped into Queensland, and that was a long time ago. I realised that the lack of proper training of apprentices was a great weakness to the State. I recognised that employers wanted to get something from the boys, and also that the parents and possibly the boys desired likewise. This flogging of boys from one shop by another after they had gained a little experience, by offering them another 5s., was detrimental, as the lads overlooked the fact that they were losing the opportunity of learning their trade.

Amendment (*Mr. Kerr*) negatived.

Clause 25 agreed to.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I beg to move the insertion of the following new clause to follow clause 25—

“Every employer shall be entitled to employ at least one apprentice.”

I understood the Minister to say that he would accept such an amendment. To my mind it is going to assist a great deal in the one-man shops in the country. It will give lads an opportunity of learning a trade where otherwise they would be unable to do so. I hope the Minister will accept the amendment.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): I take it that this amendment will take precedence with the Arbitration Court. There are certain clauses under the Arbitration Court awards which prevent an apprentice being employed where there is only one master or one journeyman, or whatever you may like to call him. It is no use putting this in the Bill if it will not provide for that. I have cited in this House on previous occasions instances where there were opportunities for lads to learn a good trade, but they could not be employed because of an Arbitration Court agreement under which one person working in his own shop could not take an apprentice. I would like to be assured that this provision will take precedence of an Arbitration Court decision.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (*Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Mackay*): I have no objection to the new clause proposed by the leader of the Opposition. In many cases boys under these circumstances may receive a better training than the boys in a large business. I know that in the building trades those boys in the country districts who have to perform all the varieties of work in the particular trade or calling get the best opportunity of learning the trade. Often in the larger centres, where there is more subdivision of labour than is possible in country districts, boys are kept at a particular job they may be good at and are not taught the whole trade. Where the employer works himself without employing a journeyman, he must be a tradesman himself, and a boy working alongside of him

[*Hon. W. Forgan Smith.*]

should be taught the trade properly. In the case of one-man shops, such as saddlery and shoemakers' shops, I do not see why the employer should not be entitled to an apprentice.

The question raised by the hon. member for East Toowoomba is beside the point. If the provision is embodied in the Bill, it becomes the law, and it is a direction to the Arbitration Court which must be observed. The court observes the law when framing awards; that is to say, the awards must be in accordance with the statute. If this clause is agreed to by the Committee, it becomes part of the statute, and must be given full effect to.

New clause (*Mr. Moore*) agreed to.

Clause 26—"Where further apprentices may be ordered"—

*Mr. MOORE (Aubigny)*: I beg to move the following amendment:—

"On line 5, page 12, after the words 'Notice of,' insert the words—  
'application for.'"

The object is to give the employers and the unions concerned an opportunity to state their objections to the court granting an order requiring an employer to employ further apprentices.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: If the court intends to make an investigation, of course they would be notified. I have no objection to the amendment.

Amendment (*Mr. Moore*) agreed to.

Clause 26, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 27—"Case where employer cannot provide work"—

*Mr. MOORE (Aubigny)*: I beg to move the following amendment:—

"On line 16, page 12, omit the words 'the Minister,' with a view to inserting the words—  
'an industrial magistrate.'"

The clause reads—

"(1.) In the event of an employer being unable to provide work for the apprentice or to mutually agree with the legal guardian of the apprentice to arrange a transfer or to cancel the indenture, application may be made to the Group Committee concerned to arrange for such transfer or to have such indenture cancelled.

"(2.) Where in any case an employer is temporarily unable to provide work to employ an apprentice for his full time, application may be made by the employer to the Minister for permission to employ the apprentice for such less time per week or per month, and at such remuneration, as the Minister, on the recommendation of the Group Committee concerned, may determine, being not less than the proportionate amount of the rate of wages prescribed by the industrial award for the relative trade or industry."

That seems to me to be ridiculous. It might be all right for Brisbane, but in the country why should they have to go to the Minister when an industrial magistrate is quite handy? It should be within the province of an industrial magistrate to adjudicate on such a case as this rather than worry the Minister. It would be much easier for the Minister, and simpler for the apprentices and employers, if a question such as this were left to the

industrial magistrate in the district where a boy was working. After all, I suppose the Minister will only take the advice of the Group Committee. It is really a question for an industrial magistrate to adjudicate upon. He will have the evidence placed before him, and he knows the conditions in the district in which he is living. In my opinion, it would be much better for him to deal with the matter. The amendment does not interfere with the principles of the Bill in any way.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (*Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Mackay*): I do not see that there is any advantage to be gained by the amendment. It does not impose any hardship on the Minister to have to give this permission, because in the metropolitan area the various Group Committees deal with the matter, and when the operation of the measure is extended to the other portions of the State, the Advisory Committees can deal with each case on its merits. Those Committees will be fitted to deal with industrial disputes, being composed of an equal number of employers and employees, with an officer appointed to fill the chair. They have the powers in some respects of Industrial Boards, and they will deal with cases and make recommendations to the Minister. It is not a matter which calls for proceedings in a court; it is much better to leave the position as it is at the present time.

Amendment (*Mr. Moore*) negatived.

Clause 27 agreed to.

Clause 28—"Where special provision may be made as to number of apprentices"—agreed to.

*Mr. KERR (Enoggera)*: I beg to move the insertion of the following new clause to follow clause 28—

"An adult may, with the consent of the Executive, enter into a special contract of apprenticeship or continuation of apprenticeship for such period and upon such other conditions of apprenticeship as the Executive may deem just and expedient."

Already during the Committee stage a question somewhat similar to this arose. I do not think it would be outside the scope of the Bill to include this amendment, which will give an adult the right and opportunity to learn a trade, irrespective of his age. This is something which has to come sooner or later, and the Minister may as well accept it in this Bill. To-day a boy nineteen years of age finds it very difficult to get the approval of the court; he finds it more difficult at twenty years of age; and when he is over twenty-one years it is impossible to get it. Many employers to-day are prepared, by way of special contract apart from indentures, to give a man an opportunity.

*Mr. HARTLEY*: How can they provide by a special contract?

*Mr. KERR*: They will make a special contract apart from an indenture altogether. Take the construction of wharves in connection with which there may be a £30,000 contract. Many wharves have been built here during the last twelve months. There is not one apprentice engaged in that work,

but there are many men who are [4 p.m.] more or less improvers. Those men require to have many years of experience as improvers before they can get work as fully qualified men on those jobs. There are also many men who have been

*Mr. Kerr.*]



thrown out of work at wool stores and other jobs because the award rates were too high, and they have naturally fallen on the unskilled labour market. My amendment will enable them to learn trades.

The CHAIRMAN: I am afraid that I must rule the hon. member's amendment out of order. I would point out to him that it conflicts with the definition of "minor" already agreed to in the interpretation clause.

Clause 29—"Information to be given by employers"—agreed to.

Clause 30—"Payment for lost time, sickness, etc."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Mackay): I beg to move the following amendment:—

"On line 43, page 12, after the word 'lost,' insert the words—

'by reason of his enforced absence.'"

This clause provides for cases where the court has awarded higher average hourly or daily rates of pay than the amount received by the apprentice for time spent in compulsory military or naval training, and also for cases of absence through sickness or statutory holidays. It provides that, where an award does not stipulate payment for holidays, the employer shall not deduct it: that is to say, the apprentice shall receive a weekly wage and where one of the statutory holidays intervenes he shall be paid for it. My amendment, with another amendment in the following clause, makes the clause clearer.

Amendment (Mr. Smith) agreed to.

Clause 30, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 31—"Deductions from wages"—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Mackay): I beg to move the following amendment:—

"On line 26, page 13, after the word 'lost,' insert the words—

'and except in the case of holidays provided for in any relevant award or agreement made under the principal Act.'"

This amendment is consequential on the amendment already carried in the previous clause. It defines the holidays for which the apprentice shall receive payment. The Industrial Arbitration Act provides for twelve statutory holidays in the year.

Amendment (Mr. Smith) agreed to.

Clause 31, as amended, agreed to.

Mr. KERR (Enoggera): I beg to move the insertion of the following new clause to follow clause 31—

"The normal working hours for apprentices shall be those normally worked by journeymen under awards of the statutory industrial tribunals: Provided that no overtime shall be worked by any apprentice who is under the age of sixteen years."

I have gone to the trouble of looking up the regulations under Apprenticeship Acts in many parts of the world, and I find that no overtime is worked by apprentices under sixteen years of age. We must remember that apprentices have a good deal of night work in attending the technical colleges, and I hope that the Minister will accept the amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Mackay): I do not propose to accept the amendment, not because

[Mr. Kerr.

I do not approve of the principle contained therein, but because it is absolutely unnecessary. The hours of work of apprentices are fixed by the industrial awards, and then the overtime question is dealt with under the Factories and Shops Act, which provides that no person under sixteen years of age can work overtime.

Mr. KERR: I know that is so, but why not put it in this Bill?

Amendment (Mr. Kerr) negatived.

Clause 32 agreed to.

Clauses 33 to 36, both inclusive, agreed to.

Clause 37—"Examination where application made to work at lower than award rate"—

Mr. KING (Logan): I beg to move the following amendment:—

"On line 35, page 14, omit the word 'shall,' with a view to inserting the word—

'may.'"

The clause will then read—

"Before any application made by any person to the court or to any industrial magistrate for a permit to work at any trade or industry at a lesser rate of wages than that prescribed by any industrial award be granted, the court or such industrial magistrate may, where practicable, require such person to undergo a practical test at the class of work for which the application is made. . . ."

The amendment will make it optional instead of mandatory.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Mackay): I do not propose to accept the amendment. This matter was given very careful consideration by me when drafting the regulations and when this Bill was being framed. Under the regulations there is a provision similar to what is contained in this clause. The Industrial Arbitration Court, as a matter of fixed policy since the Apprenticeship Executive and the Group Committees have been in operation in Brisbane, has been in the habit of imposing that practical test. It is a thing that I consider necessary. We know that a man may apply to the court, and ask to be allowed to work for a lower wage than the standard wage on certain stated terms. It may be argued that he is a slow worker, or that he requires further training in his particular trade, and as a consequence he is often granted a permit to work for less than the standard rate. The claim has to be established as a matter of fact, and that is why it is made mandatory here that in such cases a practical test of the qualifications of the applicant shall be made. I am satisfied that there has been a good deal of abuse in connection with the issue of permits in Queensland with a view to evading the provisions of the awards. As the question can be determined by fact, there can be no objection to the test being made mandatory. If a man comes forward and claims that he is a slow worker or that he has not the necessary skill, and should be allowed to work for £1 a week less than the standard rate, that fact can be determined by the Group Apprenticeship Committee.

Mr. ROBERTS (East Toowoomba): The amendment appeals to me, but I have a difficulty in reconciling the clause with the Bill. I understand that this is an Apprenticeship Bill. This is a matter that might

not only deal with an apprentice, but might also apply to persons over the age of twenty one years.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I may deal with persons who have finished serving their apprenticeship.

Mr. ROBERTS: I would like to know whether this clause is only going to apply to those persons?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Take the difficulty that an employee finds himself in who starts his apprenticeship at the age of fourteen years and who will be a journeyman at nineteen years of age. This clause may apply to him.

Mr. ROBERTS: Certain examinations are held from time to time as to the qualifications of apprentices, and they should have learned a satisfactory trade on the completion of their indentures and not require a further period of time to make themselves efficient. I have no objection to the amendment, but I realise the difficulty in front of the clause. If it is a question of going slow to secure a permit to work for less than the standard rate, then this clause will afford that opportunity. If a man cannot get work and sees the opportunity of twelve months' work at a lesser wage than the standard rate, this clause will afford him the means of obtaining it.

Amendment (*Mr. Moore*) negatived.

Clause 37 agreed to.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*): I beg to move the insertion of the following new clause to follow clause 37:—

"The chairman of the Executive or any Committee under this Act may require any person (including a member) giving evidence before the Executive or any Committee to give his evidence on oath or affirmation, and for such purpose may administer an oath or take an affirmation.

"For the purpose of compelling the attendance of persons to give evidence and the punishment of persons failing to attend when summoned or refusing to give evidence or produce documents or writings in their possession or power, the chairman of the Executive or any such Committee shall have all the powers and authorities of a police magistrate sitting in a court of petty sessions."

That power is similar to that given to the chairman of an Industrial Board. That is what the Apprenticeship Executive really is, and it is necessary that this power should be given to it.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): I think the wording in this proposed clause is rather peculiar—

"The Chairman of the Executive . . . may administer an oath or take an affirmation."

That word "take" is rather misleading. The word "accept" would be better. The chairman would administer the oath, and the witness would take the oath or make affirmation.

Furthermore, in connection with this proposed clause and the question of producing documents or writing, I suppose the usual protection will apply in the case of documents produced.

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

hon. member for Logan is inclined to be facetious this afternoon.

Mr. KING: Not at all.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The word "take" as used in the proposed new clause is perfectly right.

New clause (*Mr. Smith*) agreed to.

Clauses 38 and 39 agreed to.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*): I beg to move the insertion of the following clause to follow clause 39—

"(1) All orders and notifications made and published, all appointments made, all districts constituted, and all things done or purporting to be done under the apprenticeship regulations made on the twenty-eighth day of September, one thousand nine hundred and twenty-three, and gazetted on the twenty-ninth day of September, one thousand nine hundred and twenty-three, under the principal Act shall, as far as is consistent with this Act, be deemed to have been made, published, constituted, done, and originated under and for the purposes of this Act.

"(2) All matters and proceedings commenced under the said regulations and pending or in progress at the passing of this Act may be continued, completed, and enforced under this Act."

The meaning of that clause is perfectly obvious. Everything done under these regulations shall be maintained and given effect to under the powers of the new Act.

New clause (*Mr. Smith*) agreed to.

Schedule agreed to.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with amendments.

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

## POLICE ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

### INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Pollock, Gregory, in the chair.*)

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

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Police Acts Amendment Act of 1921 in certain particulars."

The measure is a short one, and it is the result of a conference presided over by the Secretary for Public Lands, who was then Acting Premier, and the Executive of the Police Union. It deals with three principles. The first is the retiring age of the police. Under this Bill the compulsory retiring age will be sixty years, except in cases where a continuance in office will be of public benefit, when the retiring age, with the consent of the Minister, will be extended to sixty-five. The second important principle provides for an appeal against promotions to members of the Police Union up to and including the rank of senior sergeant. The third important provision provides for an increase from £13 to £26 in the amount paid as sustenance allowance for the children of members of the police force.

At 3.25 p.m.,

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

*Hon. J. Stopford.]*

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I would like to congratulate the Minister on giving such an amount of information at this stage, but there is one thing about which I am rather doubtful. He did not tell us how far it is intended to go with this Appeal Board with regard to transfers and promotions. It appears to me that it will be likely to counteract the work of the Commissioner of Police if he is liable to have all his transfers and promotions appealed against.

The HOME SECRETARY: I never mentioned transfers. I said promotions up to and including the rank of senior sergeants. Only what was agreed upon at the conference and stated in the Press has been included in the Bill.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed.

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

The resolution was agreed to.

#### FIRST READING.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*) presented the Bill, and moved—

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

Question put and passed.

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

### WEIGHTS AND MEASURES BILL.

#### COMMITTEE.

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

Clauses 1 to 3, both inclusive, agreed to.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I beg to move the insertion of the following new clause to follow clause 3:—

“This Act shall operate in such districts or localities as may from time to time be proclaimed by the Governor in Council.”

I notice that the Minister has included something of the same kind in clause 15. The point is that this is going to be difficult in operation, as it will take an army of inspectors to get round if the districts are all brought under the Act at the one time. It has previously only been applicable to certain districts.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The Act is applicable now to every district in Queensland.

Mr. MOORE: It is not enforced. If it is prescribed by Order in Council, it has to be put into force.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Formerly the inspection of weights and measures was controlled by the local authorities. We cut that out and took charge ourselves.

Mr. MOORE: And did not that Act make provision for the gazetting of districts by Order in Council? There are districts in Queensland which are not under the operation of the Act, or rather, if they are, the Act is not enforced.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: They must be very far away.

Mr. MOORE: I refer to districts quite close in. It appears to me that it would be far better to allow the Governor in Council to include districts as inspectors are avail-

[*Mr. Moore.*

able. I notice that later on the Minister proposes to impose a penalty upon any man who uses or has in his possession any weighing instrument or measuring instrument the subject of a [4.30 p.m.] notification under the repealed Acts or this Act, the period of grace allowed being in the first case thirty days and in the other case three months. I quite understand that it is reasonable to enforce the provisions of this measure with regard to the declared weights of packages and so on, but with regard to weighing machines it would be far better if the provisions of the old law were adhered to.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *MacKay*): I cannot accept the hon. member's amendment. It limits the scope of the Bill and would confine the operations of the measure. As a matter of fact, on the second reading we assented to the principle that the Bill should apply to the whole State; yet the hon. member proposes now to limit it to districts gazetted from time to time by Order in Council. The Act comes into operation so soon as assent is given to it, but clause 15 contains certain provisions which will give us time to put some of its sections into operation. With the exception of the cases referred to in that clause, the whole of the Act applies. It is only a consolidating Act, after all.

Proposed new clause (*Mr. Moore*) negatived.

Clauses 4 to 7, both inclusive, agreed to.

Clause 8—“*The stone, hundredweight, and ton; bushel of standard weight*”—

Mr. KING (*Logan*): I beg to move the following amendment:—

“On line 32, page 5, after the word ‘peas’ where it first occurs, insert the word—  
‘tares.’”

Experts tell me that in the early part of the year quite a large quantity of tares is imported from Tasmania. It is used as green manure, and, if it is included, it will complete the list.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *MacKay*): I regret that I cannot accept the amendment moved by the deputy leader of the Opposition. These matters were gone into very fully with the Department of Agriculture when setting out the products contained in this clause. If the hon. gentleman will look at clause 23, he will find that it reads—

“All grain, agricultural, and vegetable seeds, mill by-products of grain, hay, straw, chaff, and concentrated or prepared stock foods, shall be sold by standard weight and not by measure.”

That covers the point raised by the hon. gentleman.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Then why specify the others?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Apparently the Department of Agriculture had good reason for setting them out. I am here to state reasons for the Bill, and not to state the reasons why an amendment should be accepted. That is for hon. members opposite.

Hon. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): I am perfectly certain—if the Minister will forgive me for saying so—that the hon. gentle-

man is in a dilemma about this clause and does not know exactly what to say.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I know what to do about it—I am going to oppose the amendment.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman is proceeding along the line of least resistance. He had a very worried look when he tried to explain the reason for the clause.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It will be a long time before the hon. gentleman will be able to worry me.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I should be very sorry to distress the hon. gentleman. I asked a very pertinent question as to why it is necessary to specify wheat, rye, beans, peas, and cowpeas, and why the tares should be excluded.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Is the hon. gentleman suggesting that the whole lot be excluded?

HON. W. H. BARNES: No; I am not responsible for the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I am not responsible for the amendment.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman forgets that, as the Minister administering the Bill and trying to pilot it through, he is responsible for giving reasons for not accepting any reasonable amendment. It rests upon the Minister to give a valid reason for not accepting the amendment.

Amendment (*Mr. King*) negatived.

Clause 8 agreed to.

Clauses 9 to 14, both inclusive, agreed to.

Clause 15—*Stamping, weighing, and measuring instruments*—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*): I ask the Committee to negative this clause with a view to inserting the following new clause—

“(1.) The Governor in Council may from time to time, by notification published in the ‘Gazette,’ direct that every or any class of—

(a) Weighing instrument,

(b) Measuring instrument, shall be adjusted, verified, and stamped by an inspector.

“Any such notification may, if deemed expedient, be limited in operation so as to relate only to weighing instruments and measuring instruments located within any defined part of Queensland.

“Thereupon it shall be the duty of the inspector to adjust, verify, and stamp every weighing instrument and measuring instrument to which such notification relates, when and so often as in his opinion it is necessary so to do: and for so doing the fees prescribed shall be payable.

“Every person who, after the expiration of three months from the date of such notification, uses or has in his possession any weighing instrument or measuring instrument to which such notification relates, not so stamped, shall for a first offence be liable to a penalty not exceeding ten pounds, and for a second or subsequent offence to a penalty not exceeding twenty pounds.

“(2.) Every notification made by the Governor in Council under section twenty-

one of the repealed Acts and in force at the date of the passing of this Act shall, until superseded by a notification under subsection one hereof, remain in full force and effect, and shall be deemed to be a notification under subsection one hereof.

“Every person who, after the expiration of thirty days after the date of the passing of this Act, uses or has in his possession any weighing instrument or measuring instrument, to which any notification made under the said section twenty-one of the repealed Acts relates, not so stamped, shall for a first offence be liable to a penalty not exceeding ten pounds, and for a second or subsequent offence to a penalty not exceeding twenty pounds.”

Clause 15 negatived.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I now beg to move the insertion of the new clause which I have just read.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I would like a little information from the Minister as regards this new clause. I can quite understand that, if a person is in possession of and is using an unstamped weighing or measuring instrument, he should be subject to the penalty prescribed, but if this unfortunate person happens to have an old weighing instrument in his possession which is not being used, then he should not be liable to the penalty. A person would not require to have such an instrument stamped, as it would be of no benefit to him. Why should he then be placed in such an unfortunate position? If he had the instrument in his possession and was using it, the Government would be quite within their rights in recovering the penalty from him. The Minister might give some explanation as to whether a person will be liable to the penalty merely because an old unstamped instrument is found on his premises.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*): The hon. member for Aubigny will notice that in the first subclause of the new clause provision is made directing that weighing and measuring instruments “shall be adjusted, verified, and stamped by an inspector.” That limits the operation of the Bill to certain weighing instruments. Then the paragraph in respect of which he asks the information says—

“Every person who, after the expiration of three months, uses or has in his possession—

That, of course, covers certain conditions stipulated in this measure. For instance, in a district where such notification applies, at the end of a given period those concerned are expected to have complied with the notification and to have come into conformity with the Act. The position under the existing Act and under this Bill is that where any scales or measuring instruments have been condemned by the inspector they are supposed to be destroyed or brought into conformity with the Act. Any person who does not comply with the notification is assumed to be violating the Act.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): Will the Act apply only to people selling produce or goods or to any person possessing a measuring instrument? So far as I can see, it will apply to every individual who owns a pair of scales.

*Mr. Moore.]*

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It will apply to all persons who use scales or measuring instruments for the purpose of carrying on a trade.

Mr. MOORE: It does not say so.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: If the hon. member will look at clause 37 he will see this provision—

“(1.) No prosecution for any offence against this Act shall be instituted without the authority of the chief inspector.

“(2.) Any such prosecution may be instituted within six months after knowledge of the commission of such offence first came to the inspector.”

Mr. MOORE: That is so. An order may be made by the chief inspector to destroy such weighing machines, and if they are found later in the possession of the party, it is considered that he has committed a breach of the Act; but there is nothing to show that that applies only to persons who are selling goods. A person in the country may use scales for his own use without selling the goods that he weighs.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Why does he weigh them?

Mr. MOORE: To see how much his returns are to the acre. He is possibly in possession of scales that are suitable for his purposes. He is not selling the goods weighed, but merely uses the scales about his farm. He comes under this Act, and if he does not destroy scales that may be slightly defective, he is liable to a penalty. If that limitation applied only to persons trading, I would have no objection—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: No inspector may deal with persons using scales for their own private use.

Mr. MOORE: It does not say that anywhere in this Bill. There is no limitation whatsoever. It refers to all weights and measures.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I think this matter ought to be cleared up. The new clause puts it very clearly that—

“Every person who . . . uses or has in his possession any weighing instrument or measuring instrument.”

What does it mean by having the instrument in his possession? The definition of “weighing instrument” reads—

“Any weighbridge, scales, scale beam, balance, spring balance, steelyard, weighing machine or other instrument for weighing: The term includes the weights belonging thereto.”

That refers to all weights and measures. That is one of the things that should be cleared up. Later on it will be seen that I intend to move an amendment which covers the trouble by stipulating that the scales are to be used for trading purposes. If a man has in his possession a weighing machine of any kind that has not been passed by an inspector, even if he does not use it in connection with trade, he is liable to a heavy penalty, and, if he persists in keeping it, he is liable to a higher penalty for a second offence.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): Clause 19 reads—

“Any inspector may at all reasonable times—

(a) Enter any house, building, premises, or place whatsoever, or stop any vehicle, and there inspect all

[*Mr. Moore.*

weights, measures, and weighing instruments and measuring instruments of every kind.”

An inspector can enter any private home in Queensland, and if he finds any weighing instrument or measuring instrument not properly adjusted, a prosecution may follow. The Minister should make it clear so that there will be no trouble in that direction.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I have already made it clear. The amendment suggested in clause 19 by the hon. member for Dalby covers it.

Mr. MORGAN: If that amendment is accepted, that is all we desire, as that will make it quite clear.

New clause (*Mr. Smith*) agreed to.

Clause 16—“*Special provisions as to weighing instruments*”—agreed to.

Clause 17—“*Weighing instrument for produce*”—agreed to.

At 4.55 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES resumed the chair.

Clause 18—“*Chief Inspector may order weights, etc., to be sent in for testing, etc.*”—

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I beg to move the following amendment:—

“On lines 24 to 26, page 8, omit the words—

‘And such owner or occupier shall bear the expense of forwarding and delivering and return of such articles,’

with a view to inserting the words—

‘The expense of forwarding and delivery and return of such articles shall be borne by the chief inspector.’”

The clause as it stands penalises the person engaged in trade who is unfortunate enough to live in a town where an inspector is not located. He must send his weighing machine down to the nearest inspector, and he must pay the freight on the machine and weights not only to the inspector but also back again. Why should there be this discrimination?

The CHAIRMAN: The amendment, I am sorry to say, is out of order, as it proposes to impose an additional charge upon the Consolidated Revenue not provided for in His Excellency’s message.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): Instances have come under my notice recently of where traders have had to pay the freight on machines which they have had to send to an inspector to be tested. The difficulty referred to by the hon. member for Murilla may be got over by having a central place where certain weights and measures could be delivered. If that were done, every person in Queensland would be treated alike. That is the system that was adopted some years ago in the place I come from.

Clause 18 agreed to.

Clause 19—“*Inspectors may enter shops, etc., and examine balances, etc.*”—

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I beg to move the following amendment:—

“On line 34, page 8, after the word ‘kind,’ insert the words—

‘which are used for trading purposes.’”

The clause will then read—

“Enter any house, building, premises,

or place whatsoever, or stop any vehicle, and there inspect all weights, measures, and weighing instruments and measuring instruments of every kind which are used for trading purposes."

We have to define trading purposes. I think the amendment is absolutely necessary, as we are told that the measure is to have general application to the whole of the State.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *MacKay*): I propose to accept the amendment, with the addition of the words—

"pursuant to any contract or proposed contract."

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I am willing to withdraw my amendment and allow the Minister to move it in the form he suggests.

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

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *MacKay*): I beg to move the following amendment:—

"On line 34, page 8, after the word 'kind,' insert the words—

'which are used for trading purposes pursuant to any contract or proposed contract.'

The purpose of the Act, which is very clear, is to secure just and standard weights and measures, and it is necessary for that purpose to have wide and far-reaching powers. Many people use scales which may be a check on traders supplying goods. Where scales are kept for use in that way, or where housewives keep scales to check the weight of goods sold to them, of course our inspectors would not inspect them.

[5 p.m.]

Amendment (*Mr. Smith*) agreed to.

Clause 19, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 20 to 31, both inclusive, agreed to.

Clause 32—"Using weights and measures not authorised"—

Mr. NOTT (*Stanley*): I beg to move the following amendment:—

"On line 28, page 13, omit the words— 'uses or' "

with a view to inserting after the word "possession" in the same line the words— "and uses."

The clause then will read—

"Any person who for the purposes of any contract has in his possession and uses any weight or measure or weighing instrument or measuring instrument—"

In this case the amendment to my mind makes it somewhat more clear that the person who has the instrument in his possession shall not be liable unless he also uses it. I hope that the Minister will consider the alteration.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *MacKay*): I do not propose to accept the amendment. We know the impossibility in all cases of proving the use of an instrument, and I think it is better to leave the clause as it reads—

"Any person who for the purposes of any contract uses or has in his possession any weight or measure or weighing instrument or measuring instrument—"

Take, for example, the case of a man who has a set of weights under the counter and

certain other weights which he keeps on the counter. The onus of proof that he used the set under the counter would be on us if the amendment were accepted. Why should a man keep another set of incorrect weights in his possession at all? We have provided in this Bill that no person shall use or have in his possession weights or measures for contract purposes unless they have been stamped under the Act. It is necessary to retain the clause, otherwise opportunity would be given for evasion of the Act.

Mr. MOORE (*Lubigny*): This clause does not say that a man is not to have scales in his possession. It says that any persons who use scales shall be liable. He need not have scales at all. Take the railway weighbridges.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: They are subject to this provision.

Mr. MOORE: They are used for contract purposes, and the farmer who sells his produce over them, if they are out of order, is liable to a penalty. The clause says—

"Any person who for the purposes of any contract uses or has in his possession any weight or measure or weighing instrument or measuring instrument—

(iv.) Which has become defective in consequence of wear or accident. . . . shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding £10."

I am talking about what usually happens. The farmer usually sells his produce over a railway weighbridge, and if the weighbridge is out of order or defective, then he is to be liable to a penalty of £10. He is to be liable to that penalty when he uses Government property or any other property. He does not know whether the weighbridge is defective or not, and uses it in perfectly good faith for selling his produce. We know that railway weighbridges become defective through stones jamming in them, and then, if an individual uses them when they are defective, he is to be liable to a penalty.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You cannot "put that over" the Committee.

Mr. MOORE: It is not a question of "putting it over" the Committee, it is a question of reading plain English.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The clause reads—

"Any person who for the purposes of any contract uses or has in his possession any weight or measure or weighing instrument or measuring instrument—

(i.) Other than such as has been compared and stamped under this Act . . . shall be liable to a penalty. . . ."

That means that if he uses or has in his possession weights that have not been stamped, he shall be liable to a penalty.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. gentleman must read paragraph (iv.). How is the farmer to know whether the instrument has been restamped?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He knows perfectly well.

Mr. MOORE: I would like to know how he is going to know. The Commissioner for Railways will tell the hon. gentleman how faulty the railway weighbridges become. The individual using them, has no idea that they are faulty through accident, or through wear and tear, and he goes on in good faith, and because he uses them for contract purposes, he renders himself liable to a penalty of £10.

*Mr. Moore.*]

You cannot read the first paragraph of the clause without taking the whole meaning of the clause. The farmer's produce might go to the State Produce Agency.

Mr. HARTLEY: It might go to Barnes and Company.

Mr. MOORE: This Bill applies to the whole of Queensland, and we know that a considerable amount of produce is sold over the railway weighbridges, and the farmers will have no means of protecting themselves. It is an absurdity to impose such a penalty.

Mr. FOLEY: He is not liable if the scales are defective.

Mr. MOORE: Because he uses those scales he renders himself liable to a penalty if they are defective. The clause is perfectly plain.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The amendment does not deal with what the hon. member is talking about. The clause imposes a penalty upon a man who uses or has in his possession any weight or measure that has not been stamped.

Mr. MOORE: The amendment seeks to delete the words "uses or" because the hon. member for Stanley desires to exempt a person from getting into such an extraordinary position.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The hon. member wants to allow him to have in his possession weights which may not be correct. If the amendment were carried, it would be permissible for a grocer to keep a set of deficient weights under the counter.

Mr. MOORE: No; if his scales are wrong, he is liable to the penalty. The unfortunate part is that in the case I have quoted the man renders himself liable to a penalty merely because the instruments are out of order.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): As the hon. member for Aubigny just stated, even the State Produce Agency might find itself in a very awkward position. The State Produce Agency—and probably this applies to every produce firm in the city—does not weigh the produce consigned to it, but accepts the weights of the railway or municipal weighbridges. The weight tickets are handed over to the buyer or sender, and are usually issued in duplicate or triplicate.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The Railway Department keep a large staff to see that their weighbridges are correct.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Weighbridges do get out of order.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: They should not be allowed to get out of order.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The point I want to make is that it might be that the State Produce Agency—I am not using the name in any offensive sense—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It might be Barnes and Company.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Yes; I said I was not using the name in any offensive sense—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Why not use the name of your own firm?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I rose to point out what might happen. It is quite right, as the Minister suggests, that Barnes and Company, Limited, might put over the weighbridge and invoice goods at the weights recorded, and they might be wrong. I wish

[*Mr. Moore.*

to repeat that the produce firms in Brisbane, so far as I know, do not use their own weighbridges. They only use their own scales if a person buys a single bag from the store. What happens when a truck of produce is sold at the Roma Street Railway Market shed? The buyer always avails himself of the right to reweigh the goods, and they are always reweighed. A buyer does not buy on the weight of the railway station but on the actual weight received. I pointed out in relation to another matter—and quite possibly the public are not conscious of this fact—that lucerne chaff trucked at Forest Hill might on arriving at Brisbane two days later show a shrinkage in weight, and it is quite within the bounds of possibility that any firm under this Bill might find themselves in an awkward position through no fault of their own. The Minister referred very properly to people who might have deficient weights under the counter.

I say that the man who sells by wrong weights has a right to be gaoled. No member has a right to get on his feet and assist the man who is doing a wrong thing; but while trying to do the best thing, do not let us in our anxiety do the wrong thing. I think the amendment moved by the hon. member for Stanley is a very proper one. I am sorry that the Minister, who has had such a nice easy passage with his Bill, should have lost his temper a moment ago. If he is like the Premier, he will soon become a convert along those lines.

Amendment (*Mr. Nott*) negatived.

Mr. NOTT (*Stanley*): I beg to move the following amendment:—

"On line 41, page 13, after the word 'pounds,' insert the words—

'Provided that in any prosecution for a contravention of this section it shall be a sufficient defence if it is proved that the weight or measure or weighing instrument or measuring instrument had within twelve months prior to the offence been compared and stamped under this Act and that the offence was not knowingly committed.'

I think that that is only a reasonable safeguard, and I am seeking to have it inserted so that it will protect those who are liable to prosecution through no fault of their own. Quite recently and for a number of years, when shipping produce to Brisbane, it has been a very uncommon thing to find the railway weights at any of the railway stations from which I am in the habit of railing goods to Brisbane agree with the Brisbane weights. It may be argued that in many cases pilfering on the railways may have caused this, but I do not think that has any bearing when cotton is concerned. I know of quite a number of shipments of cotton from Teogoolawah to the ginnyery at Whin-stances where there has not been one single agreement in the weights. I hope the Minister will accept this safeguarding proviso, and so prevent people who are not blame-worthy from being penalised. I am very disappointed that he did not accept my other amendment, as the one seemed related to the other.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (*Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Mackay*): I do not propose to accept this amendment. It is only a means of achieving the object that was intended in the other amendment. This is one of the most important clauses in the

Bill. It deals with the provision of correct weights and standards. Had the amendment that has just been defeated been carried, it would have enabled people to keep in their possession weights that were not up to standard. It is now proposed that it should be an adequate safeguard if the weights have been stamped within the last twelve months. Where the intention to defraud exists—and we know these things take place, because the department has a most interesting array of very ingenious contrivances intended to defraud the public in connection with weights and measure—it is only right that the person who has such an intention to defraud should be penalised.

Quite a large amount of mechanical skill has been used by people who seek to defraud the public in that way. Those using weighing instruments regularly know very well whether they are correct or not. They know whether an accident has taken place that renders them unfit for use or not, and all the arguments of the hon. member for Wynnun and others is just so much sophistry which has the effect of clouding the issue but does not affect me in any way whatever. The clause is a perfectly equitable and a perfectly just one, and it is one which no honest trader has any need to fear in any way whatsoever. It is in accordance with the Acts in operation in Victoria and New South Wales, and has been found effective in administration.

Various references have been made in the course of the debate to railway weighbridges, and the subtle suggestion has been conveyed in the speeches that the railway measuring instruments are at fault. Of course, they can be subject to error just the same as those of anyone else, but the Commissioner for Railways employs experts to look after his scales, and he deals with them very effectively. I do not propose to accept the amendment.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I object to the insinuation of the Minister that there was a subtle suggestion against the Railway Department in what has been said in support of this and the other amendments. There was nothing of the sort. If the Secretary for Public Works will have a conversation with the Commissioner for Railways, the Commissioner will tell him of the difficulty he has in keeping the weighbridges at country stations in effective order. Gravel and pebbles and all sorts of things get into the machines and put them out of order. What we want to provide is that any individual who uses these scales in good faith shall not be liable to a prosecution.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: If he can show that he has used them in good faith, he will not be prosecuted.

Mr. BARBER (*Bundaberg*): I would like to know from the Minister whether there is anything in the Bill which will make it possible for the Railway Department to take action against shippers where fraud is committed in cases where contracts are entered into to carry goods at the rate of so many bags per ton, as is done in connection with the carriage of sugar. I had a good deal of experience in this connection some years ago, and I am not too sure that to some extent the business is not carried on to-day. That is to say, the Railway Department contracted with a sugar-mill to carry its sugar at the rate of 10 bags to the ton, and I have seen scores of instances where the department has been defrauded in the matter of

freight. In connection with one mill in particular, it was a rare thing to find the bags of their No. 1 sugar containing less than 2½ cwt. In scores of instances, in 10-ton shipments, it was found that many bags contained over 3 cwt.; yet they were being carried by the Railway Department at the rate of 2 cwt. per bag.

At 5.25 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN left the chair, reported progress, and asked leave to sit again.

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

The House adjourned at 5.30 p.m.