

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER 1924

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WEDNESDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER, 1924.

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt from His Excellency the Governor of messages conveying His Excellency's assent to the following Bills:—

Police Acts Amendment Bill and
Auctioneers and Commission Agents Act
Amendment Bill.

QUESTIONS.

DAWSON VALLEY IRRIGATION SCHEME—COST OF HAULAGE FROM RANNES TO CASTLE CREEK.

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

“What was the total cost to the Irrigation Commissioner for the haulage of material, workmen, etc., from Rannes to Castle Creek, to 30th June last, inclusive of—

(a) Cost of motors, labour, and maintenance?

(b) Cost of vehicles of all descriptions?

(c) Cost of labour and maintenance?

(d) Cost of horses, if any?

(e) Cost of horse team service?

(f) Cost of horse feed, motor oil tyres, petrol, etc.?

(g) Any other costs pertaining to the service?”

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

“£8,006, including capital cost of motor lorries.”

WORKMEN'S RAILWAY FARES BETWEEN MELBOURNE STREET AND SALISBURY.

Mr. KING (*Logan*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

“What were the fares paid prior to the recent increase and what are the present fares paid in respect of first and second class and workmen's fares, respectively, between Melbourne Street and Salisbury?”

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

“The increase at Salisbury, the same as elsewhere, is 7½ per cent., with a minimum increase of 1d.”

INSTALLATION OF HEATING AND COOKING APPLIANCES, BRISBANE SICK CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*) asked the Home Secretary—

“Will he, on receipt of same, lay upon the table of the House the reply given by the Brisbane Sick Children's Hospital Committee to his request with reference to the heating and cooking apparatus in the kitchen of the Brisbane Sick Children's Hospital?”

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

“Yes.”

SUGGESTED CONTINUANCE OF BRITISH EMPIRE EXHIBITION.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*) asked the Premier—

“In view of the possibility of the British Empire Exhibition being extended into 1925, will he allocate a definite time in the near future to permit of a discussion as to the advantages of Australia's continuance therein, and the improvements that might reasonably be introduced in the display of Queensland's productions?”

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

“Opportunities to discuss the subject will arise during the session without allocating a special time for it.”

ALLEGED ADULTERATION OF BRISBANE MILK SUPPLY.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*) asked the Home Secretary—

“In reference to the serious allegations that hundreds of gallons of water were being added daily to Brisbane's milk supply drawn from outside districts, as reported in the Press of Friday, 12th September, will he furnish the following information as applying, respectively, to—(a) Cold milk vendor's carts; (b) farmers vendors' carts distributing fresh or hot milk—

1. The number of samples of milk taken by inspectors for the twelve months ended 30th June, 1924?

2. How many of such samples were found to contain added water?

3. How many prosecutions were made?

4. The number of convictions?”

HON. M. J. KIRWAN (*Brisbane*) replied—

“(a) and (b). Information not available.

“1. 259.

“2. Thirty-three.

“3. Twenty-seven.

“4. Twenty-five.”

OIL-WELL DRILLING PLANT SOLD BY GOVERNMENT TO LANDER OIL COMPANY.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*) asked the Secretary for Mines—

“1. What quantity of oil-well drilling plant has been sold by the Government to the Lander Oil Company?

“2. What was the selling price?

“3. What was the cost of such drilling plant to the Government?”

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones, *Paddington*) replied—

“The total expenditure on plant is £8,042. The total amount received for plant after being dismantled is £1,634. Portion was sold to Lander Oil Company for £700.”

LANDER OIL COMPANY'S BORE AT ORALLO.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*) asked the Secretary for Mines—

“1. Has the Lander Oil Company (Australia), Limited, completed the first bore at Orallo?

“2. If so, what oil, if any, has been found?”

“3. If any samples have been taken, what was the quantity analysed, if any, and the result of such analysis?”

“4. What was the date or dates when the samples were taken?”

“5. Were they taken under Government supervision?”

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. A. J. Jones, *Paddington*) replied—

“1. and 2. Operations at the first bore are not completed. The bore has not yet been tested for oil or gas.

“I would ask the hon. member to repeat Questions 3, 4, and 5 for tomorrow, as the information is being obtained.”

HELIDON STATE QUARRY AND TREASURY BUILDINGS.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*), for Mr. LOGAN (*Lockyer*), asked the Secretary for Public Works—

“1. What number of men are at present employed at the Helidon State Quarry?”

“2. Is all the stone required for the new Treasury Buildings being supplied by the Helidon State Quarry?”

“3. If not, from what other source is the stone required for the Treasury Buildings being supplied?”

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

“1. Twenty-five.

“2. All stone except porphyry for base course is being supplied from the State Quarry.

“3. Porphyry for base course has been supplied from the Windsor Porphyry Quarry.”

PAPERS.

The following papers were laid on the table, and ordered to be printed:—

An alteration and variation which was published in the “Government Gazette” of 6th September, 1924, of the Fruit and Vegetable Growing and Packing Regulations under the Fruit Cases Acts.

An addition, as published in the “Government Gazette” of the 6th September, 1924, to the First Schedule of the Fruit and Vegetable Growing and Packing Regulations under the Fruit Cases Acts.

PROPOSED MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

CONFLICT WITH STANDING ORDER No. 307.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to report that I have received the following letter:—

“Parliament House,
“16th September, 1924.

“Dear Mr. Bertram.—In accordance with Standing Order No. 137, I beg to inform you that it is my intention (on Wednesday, 17th instant) to move—
‘That this House do now adjourn.’

“My reason for moving this motion is that I desire to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance, as follows:—

“The present position of the Upper

Burnett and Callide Land Settlement scheme, under the following headings:—

“(a) The urgent necessity for the supply of wire netting for the protection of crops and pests.

“(b) The unsympathetic treatment of applications for financial assistance for improvements, stock, machinery, etc.

“(c) The apparent lack of desire on the part of the Government to push on with the promised railway construction programme.

“(d) Unnecessary delay in establishment of State schools.

“(e) Delay in making a start with the promised establishment of butter factories.

“(f) Generally, the unsympathetic administration of the Agricultural Bank Act, the Upper Burnett and Callide Land Settlement Act, and other Acts affecting the welfare of this settlement.

“Yours respectfully,

“(Sgd.) BERNARD H. CORSER.

“The Honourable the Speaker,

“Legislative Assembly,

“Brisbane.”

If the hon. member will look at the fourth paragraph of Standing Order 307 he will see that it reads—

“On the days so allotted for the business of Supply no motion, other than a motion declared to be ‘Formal,’ shall be taken until after the consideration of Supply, and no motion for adjournment under Standing Order No. 137 shall be entertained.”

Under those circumstances I cannot allow the hon. member to move his proposed motion.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The Government saved again.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Hon. members have sixteen days in which to discuss the Estimates dealing with the matter.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—NINTH ALLOTTED DAY.

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

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND STOCK.
CHIEF OFFICE.

Question stated—“That £64,607 be granted for ‘Department of Agriculture and Stock—Chief Office.’”

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): Provision is made in the Estimates for three instructors and two assistant instructors in agriculture. I do not know the exact duties of those gentlemen, but perhaps the Minister will be able to explain later on. Is it necessary to have instructors? What instruction do they give?

There is a reduction of £100 in the vote “Bursaries at Agricultural High School and College.” There should be an increase in a vote like that, and the Government should very seriously consider whether it is not possible to increase the vote next year. We are maintaining bursaries in connection with other forms of education, and why should we cut out bursaries in connection with agricultural education? If the Government are going to reduce the number of bursaries in

connection with agricultural education, it shows that they are getting pretty hard up. This is an item on which I will not say anything more at present, as I shall have an opportunity of referring to it later on.

I notice that provision is made on the Estimates for cotton experts, including a specialist at £1,250 per annum. Whether the services of these advisers are continued or not, they made a very bad business of the cotton industry last year.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. DEACON: Any ordinary “cocky” could have given better advice so far as ratoon cotton was concerned than these advisers. If the Government had accepted the advice tendered by hon. members on this side, they would have saved themselves unnecessary criticism, and the industry would be on a better footing to-day.

Mr. PETERSON: We gave the Government that advice for nothing, too.

Mr. DEACON: I want now to refer to the State stallions. When speaking in relation to this matter last session, the Secretary for Agriculture stated that the Government had purchased these stallions because of the failure of private enterprise to attend to horse-breeding. The experience of the Government in the meantime has proved that those remarks were most uncalled for. The hon. gentleman now knows a little of the difficulties and expense connected with those stallions and the difficulty of getting foals under certain circumstances. I hope that he thoroughly appreciates the position. He is now shifting the stallions out of the districts where they were last year. That is quite contrary to practice. Private owners always gave the owners of mares which missed some concession the next year. The first question the owner of a mare always asked was whether the owner of a stallion was coming back the next year. If no assurance was given in that respect, he did not get many mares. The Government insisted on cash payments in advance at pretty much the same figure that private owners charged, and they shifted their stallions out of the districts they were in without making any concessions to the owners of mares which missed. When the Minister comes to review the whole position, I hope that he will reflect upon his statement that the purchase of these stallions by the Government was due to the failure of private enterprise. The keeping of stallions and horse-breeding is not an altogether profitable venture. It is a hobby more than a business enterprise. If regard was made for the profits, very few people would engage in it. Some breeders may make something out of it if they are careful, but, if they are not careful, they get into the same position as the Government have done and show a heavy loss at the end of the year. I cannot make any suggestions to the Minister whereby the return can be improved, and he must make up his mind to face a dead loss in this enterprise year after year. The Government stallions must cost much more to keep and run than if they were the property of a private owner.

The experiments the department have been carrying on in connection with the wheat industry and the work of the officials of the department to improve our wheat is something they deserve praise for. I had

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the opportunity of observing these officials carrying out those experiments, and I can honestly say that they are doing good work for the industry. Wherever possible the Government should extend their work in this direction, for it is bound to bring in a large indirect revenue to the State. Whatever the venture costs it is no loss to the State. These experimental plots are carefully watched, and a great deal of interest is taken in them by the people of the district concerned. We have experimental plots in the Allora district, and the people of the district have admired the careful manner in which everything is done, and all concerned appreciate the work of the department in that direction. I hope the idea will be extended. We see no maize experimental plots. A great deal can be done in that direction, and it cannot be done by anybody but the Government. I recommend an extension of this system of experimental plots. Times are hard and the Government are wasting much money in other directions, but I think it would have been wiser to keep the Department of Agriculture and Stock working to its fullest capacity rather than cut down its operations.

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*): I regret that no provision has been made in the Estimates to compensate those cotton-growers who obeyed the law and tore up their crops of ratoon cotton. Whatever may have been the merits of the argument for ratoon cotton, we cannot get away from the fact that the Government are now contemplating the introduction of a measure to legalise the growing of ratoon cotton. I therefore think we have every right to ask the Secretary for Agriculture to let us know at this juncture whether it is intended to compensate the growers of ratoon cotton who obeyed the law and destroyed their crops last season.

The amount of £1,250 was paid to what was known last year as the Cotton Adviser. As the hon. member for Cunningham pointed out, the State has failed to receive commensurate value for that expenditure, but what is much more serious, through the advice of that expert, hundreds of settlers in my district have been ruined and robbed of the whole of their anticipated takings for a period of twelve months. Although, in many cases, the Government have to be guided by experts, men of this description should not be employed. Should the views of any so-called expert turn out to be incorrect, I think the Government should send that gentleman about his business. I have read a very interesting book by Mr. Henry Ford, the great motor-car manufacturer, in which, dealing with experts, he indicates that immediately one of his employees poses as an expert he either sacks him or puts him back to the bench or a machine or to some menial work. That is the idea of such an eminent authority as Mr. Ford—to sack everyone who poses as an expert. Our adviser in the cotton business was Mr. Daniel Jones—

Mr. WARREN: And the Government sacked him.

Mr. PETERSON: Mr. Jones proved right to the hilt that ratoon cotton is legal tender and can be sold in other parts of the world. Against the advice of the ratoonists and Mr. Daniel Jones, the Government persisted in employing so-called experts, who have ruined so many of our settlers in various parts of Queensland. The growers of Central Queensland and elsewhere were not satisfied with

the advice tendered to the Government with regard to ratoon cotton, and they subscribed to a fund—and I gave my little mite towards it—to send their own adviser, Mr. Daniel Jones, to England to ascertain whether any market existed for ratoon cotton or otherwise. It is a matter of history now that Mr. Daniel Jones went over to the other side and found that we could place all the ratoon cotton it was possible to produce in Queensland at a favourable price to the growers. The other day, in Melbourne, we had Mr. Bond, of Bonds Limited, the silk hosiery people, stating at a convention, at which the Secretary for Agriculture was present, that his spinners could detect no difference between ratoon cotton and plant cotton.

The HOME SECRETARY: Could not the machines tell the difference?

Mr. PETERSON: Mr. Bond said his spinners found ratoon cotton quite satisfactory.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He is not prepared to pay the same price for ratoon cotton.

Mr. PETERSON: We are not asking for the same price. I am with the hon. gentleman there. All we are asking for is the right to grow that which we can grow in Queensland and for which we can find a market. Mr. Bond was so satisfied with ratoon cotton for the purpose of manufacturing artificial silk that he imported a large quantity from New Caledonia, as it could not be purchased in the Commonwealth on account of the ban placed on that class of cotton. By importing cotton from New Caledonia when we already had a similar class of cotton here which was not permitted to be sold, we sent many thousands of pounds out of the State.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do you think the Federal Government ought to permit that?

Mr. PETERSON: We should first purge ourselves of our own sins before going to the Federal Government. The Home Secretary has a very large cotton-growing district in his electorate—one of the best parts of Queensland—and he knows the feeling there in connection with this matter. If Bonds Limited are prepared to purchase ratoon cotton, is not that sufficient reason for us to say that the expert advice given to the Government in the past has been wrong, and that something should be done in the direction of not continuing that kind of advice in the future?

The HOME SECRETARY: Was not the ban placed on ratoon cotton to permit of the establishment of an overseas trade?

Mr. PETERSON: I am not going to impute any motive about that. I trust that the Minister will accede to the requests of the District Council of Agriculture for Central Queensland when they apply for a reimbursement of the expenses of Mr. Daniel Jones.

Mr. HARTLEY: Do you think the hon. member for Wynnum ought to grow cotton in the "Godderough" islands and import it into Queensland?

Mr. PETERSON: It is news to me that the hon. member for Wynnum is growing cotton. I thought he was engaged in the selling of maize, etc. In any case, I am not concerned about what the hon. member for Wynnum does. He will have to obey the law and what he does will, I am sure, be

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within the pale of the law. I hope the Minister, in his reply, will give us some indication as to whether his department is prepared to reimburse Mr. Daniel Jones for the expenses of his trip overseas. Early in the session I asked the Minister to allot a certain amount of money to allow Mr. Jones to visit the continent of Europe to try and find further markets for ratoon cotton. We all hope that we shall soon hear the last of this ratoon cotton trouble. It has caused a good deal of discussion in the Chamber, and I trust the Minister will make provision in the Bill which is to be introduced to compensate those growers who obeyed the law. They should certainly receive a little more than those who disobeyed the law. I trust that, as a result of the answers the hon. gentleman gives, we shall have in Queensland a peaceful and contented lot of cotton-growers. There is no question that cotton-growing can be made a success in Queensland. I know it can be made a success in Central Queensland, and, if given reasonable assistance by Government departments, we can build up an industry that will be second to none in the State. Even the pastoral industry will take second place to it if it receives the encouragement which it richly deserves. I feel sure the Minister will realise that he has made a mistake, and I look forward with a certain amount of confidence to every consideration being given to those growers who obeyed the law, whether that consideration is in the form of compensation and in the direction of finding markets. To make cotton-growing a success in Queensland it is necessary that both sections should unite, not for the purpose of exploiting one another, but for the purpose of building up the primary industries in Queensland. In doing that I feel confident that we shall all earn the approbation not only of the cotton-growers but of the whole of the people of Queensland.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): I would like, first of all, to refer to a subject which over and over again has come up for discussion since this Government came into office. We are being asked to discuss the Estimates of various departments before we get the reports tabled. We are nearly always asked to discuss the Estimates of the departments with only the stale reports of last year [10.30 p.m.] before us. We have not got near the end of the session yet, and we have a good many Bills on the business-sheet; and the question suggests itself as to why there is all this frantic endeavour to get the Estimates through before we obtain the reports on the various departments. Can it be wondered at that hon. members are apt to attach a sinister significance to this procedure?

I would like to draw attention to the great reduction which has taken place in the vote under discussion this year, as compared with the amount set down last year. Last year the appropriation was £201,448; this year it is £155,096, or a reduction of over £46,000. It almost looks as if the Treasurer's endeavours at economy were limited to using the pruning knife upon the Department of Agriculture. A cursory glance through the appropriation for last year and that of this year for the various departments seems to indicate that the pruning knife is being used more severely in regard to this department than in any other. Possibly the mental efforts of the Minister in connection with the cotton industry have almost exhausted him, and he cannot

see any avenue for further activity on the part of the department. Queensland stands out pre-eminently as the one Australian State in which there is room for expansion in tropical and subtropical production. I have some figures taken from last year's "Commonwealth Year Book" indicating the imports into Australia from tropical and subtropical countries. Unfortunately there is no way of discriminating between the importations of raw products and manufactured articles, mineral oils, and so on. Still, at the same time, the bold fact remains that Australia imported from tropical and subtropical countries goods to the value of over £14,500,000. It seems to me to be a fair field for investigation as to how much of the money spent on the importation of raw vegetable products can be retained in Australia. We know that vast sums are sent out every year for such articles as rice, coffee, spices, fibres, and so on; yet the Department of Agriculture in Queensland, where there is more scope for enterprise of that kind than in any other State in the Commonwealth, so far as I can discover has no intention of prosecuting investigations in that direction. Since this Government took office I have often pointed out the need for experimentation in this regard. I have shown that there are other tropical products besides sugar for which Queensland is eminently adapted; yet we have no reference in the report to any activities of the department in this direction. I have always contended that we should have a tropical experimental farm which would go into the question of the production of the different articles we are importing to such a large extent from other countries, and determine what the cost of production would be in Australia, and place Queensland in a position to approach the Commonwealth Government and say: "There are certain articles for which a great deal of Australian money is being sent to other countries, which articles can be grown in Queensland, but we require protection to enable us to compete against the lower-paid labour in those countries."

At 10.34 a.m.,

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. G. Pollock, *Gregory*) took the chair.

Mr. SWAYNE: There is nothing now being done in connection with the encouragement of tropical agriculture apart from sugar. I think it is desirable to experiment in this direction and see whether we cannot encourage these primary industries just in the same way as we encourage ordinary agriculture. This department should be in a position to point out those industries which lend themselves more particularly to Queensland's conditions and which, with a certain amount of protection, can be prosecuted successfully, perhaps not only in Queensland but also in other parts of Australia, provided they are given sufficient protection. It would then be a question for the Australian people to determine whether, for the sake of keeping a certain amount of money in their midst, the protection is worth it—not only for the sake of the extra production but also for the sake of keeping money in Australia that we are now sending to other countries. There is a great field for experimentation in that regard, and Queensland stands out as being the State which possesses large areas particularly adapted to tropical products. Evidently, the activities of the Minister are so engaged in the cotton industry that he has not time for enterprises

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in the avenues I have indicated, but I submit that it is about time that he should see if something cannot be done to investigate these matters and ascertain whether some of the large sums we have to send to the other countries for various commodities cannot be kept in Australia. Just as the sugar industry has been annually worth £7,000,000 or £8,000,000 to Australia, so there are many other industries which, perhaps to a less extent, may be made the means of retaining money within our boundaries. Over £14,000,000 is going out of Australia in payment for imports from tropical and sub-tropical countries.

Let me take one industry which, at the present time, seems to be largely in a state of flux. The banana industry is seriously attacked by disease in Queensland and in some parts of New South Wales. It has been said that if the duty on imported bananas were removed, Fiji could supply the large demand which exists in Australia for this nutritious fruit; but in this morning's "Courier" I find a report of an interview with a visitor to Queensland, showing that Fiji is no better off than Australia with respect to disease—in fact, I find at the very top of this article a statement that the Fijian bananas are subject to a worse pest than bunchy top. Later on in the article, however, is this significant remark—

"While, on the other hand, Fiji would benefit considerably by the price paid for bananas."

That remark is made in reference to the proposed abolition of the Australian duty on Fijian bananas and the consequent possible expansion of importations from Fiji. They recognise the advantage to be gained. Why should not we engage more completely in this trade? We know that in the northern portions of Queensland there are large areas of tropical scrub with splendid soil and a moist climate and otherwise desirable conditions for the cultivation of bananas as well as for sugar, but at present there is not scope for the expansion of this crop. It seems to me that scope for development lies there. We have no report from the department, however, nor do we know what it has done in the last twelve months. Apparently nothing has been done to encourage production in this particular direction. It shows a lack of enterprise—a lack of initiative. We have not even any indication of what has been done to combat the ravages of diseases or to keep the pests in control.

From time to time I have advocated the substitution of artificial grasses for our natural grasses. At the present time the cattle industry is finding it difficult to hold its own in the markets of the world, consequently that industry is not as prosperous as it might be. It has always seemed to me that there are many districts in which the natural grasses could be profitably replaced by artificial grasses for the purpose of fattening stock; yet year after year goes by and we get no advice or information from the department in that regard. The department could obtain information as to whether our inferior coastal grasses could be replaced by artificial grasses, what would be the cost, and what would be the growing capacity per acre if such a thing were done. Nothing of that kind has been done by the department. It simply plods along in the old stereotyped way. It is only in connection with the cotton industry that any advice or information has

been sought by the department, but as that has been dealt with by the hon. member for Normanby, I do not propose to labour the question. In view of the terrible mess that the Minister has made of the cotton industry in prohibiting the growing of ratoon cotton on the advice of his experts, it seems to me that it would be a good thing to cut out some of these experts. If the department had appointed Mr. Daniel Jones on an adequate salary and had been guided by his advice instead of the advice of its imported experts, a very large sum indeed would have been saved to the cotton-producers and to Queensland. There is no paper that you can pick up which does not emphasise the great mistake that was made in placing a ban on ratoon cotton. The "Industrial Australian and Mining Standard" in an article entitled, "The Cotton Growing Industry," says—

"Mr. Bond (Messrs. A. Bond and Co., Ltd., Sydney) spoke favourably of ratoon cotton, and gave instances where spinners employed by his own firm were unable to distinguish between ratoon and annual cottons—even between ratoon and 'A' grade annuals. This firm last year had bought 400,000 lb. of ratoon cotton from New Caledonia, and found it rather better than 'A' grade. He had been unable to discover that it was particularly subject to attacks from insect pests."

That was the report of a conference of State representatives and others interested in the cotton industry which was held in Melbourne, and was presided over by the Minister for Home and Territories, Senator Pearce. The same journal, in an article entitled, "Queensland's Largest Cotton Field," quotes Mr. McConnell as saying—

"If cotton is to be made profitable and interesting to growers, the 'one year' ratoon is the only hope of success."

That was pointed out at the very beginning by hon. members on this side, and I think the results show that the only persons in this Chamber who possess a practical knowledge of agriculture are those sitting in opposition. It is because of the extreme party attitude that is adopted by hon. members opposite that the utterances of hon. members on this side are not given very much credence, which is most unfortunate for Queensland. Everything that has been said in connection with the cotton industry by hon. members on this side has been proved to be justified, as is shown by the huge mistake which was made by the Government. Their action caused great discouragement to a most promising industry.

The hon. member for Fitzroy spoke of the way that the farmers were being hit up on all sides. His point of view, however, was limited to the middleman. This question of the middleman rests largely with the farmer himself. He can deal with it through co-operative effort to a great extent. We have legislation, a great deal of which was placed on the statute-book by the previous Government, which will enable him to deal with the middleman if he desires. I would like to point out that a tax has been made on the farmer in other quarters. For instance, we have a heavy capitalisation which is placed on any scheme designed for his benefit. Hon. members know the intolerable burden that has been placed on the shoulders of the settlers on the irrigation scheme at Inkerman because of the blind obedience to party fads by the Government. Even after writing off and debiting to the general community a

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large amount of the cost, on which the producers in that area will have to find interest and maintenance to an excessive amount, we know that the capitalisation of that scheme has been largely increased owing to the slavish adherence by the Government to the day-labour system. We know further that, owing to the alteration in the franchise on which the elections for shire councils are held, power has been taken away from the farmer to say whether the money is to be borrowed on his security or not; and there is a grave risk of irresponsible people being elected on those bodies and so raising the rates that they may reach a confiscatory level. All those burdens have been placed on the farmer by this Government. The hon. member for Fitzroy has therefore to look for reasons for his complaint about hitting up the farmer to the actions of his own party.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*): I regret that the Premier has not thought fit to give hon. members an opportunity of discussing such an important matter as the British Empire Exhibition and the part Queensland played in it, because, in my judgment, the value cannot be over-estimated of displaying the products of Australia and the various avocations which settlers may engage in if they come here to the millions of people who are visiting that exhibition. It seems to me that one is left to find for himself an opportunity of speaking on this matter, and probably this vote presents that opportunity.

This exhibition is a unique event in the history of the Empire. Never before has such an opportunity presented itself for every portion of the Empire to display its productions and activities. As Australia has been committed to a sum of over £300,000 already, of which Queensland has contributed quite a substantial proportion, it occurred to me that it would be of more than passing interest to the community to hear what is transpiring in this particular direction. When one sees the millions of people who are trooping to this great display, most of whom find their way into the Australian pavilion, he recognises that there is in that display a tremendous opportunity to educate the people of Great Britain and also visitors from other parts of the Dominions as to the importance of Australia. In many directions we hear criticism launched with regard to our failure to advertise our country in the way it should have been advertised; but here is an opportunity presented second to none. An atmosphere has been created to concentrate attention upon Empire products. One important feature that struck me was the thousands of school children who are taken to this exhibition every day, and who are given an opportunity, under the direction of their teachers, to study the various potentialities of the different parts of the Empire.

The general conception of the Australian pavilion was good. Whoever designed that pavilion and arranged for its layout certainly had some broad view in mind which was good. The pavilion was intended originally to be divided into sections, and in each section it was proposed to display one of Australia's primary products in such a manner that a visitor could see exactly how that product was cultivated and the conditions surrounding the settler engaged in such production. Unfortunately, in the execution of that original plan a lot of unfortunate episodes were allowed to creep in.

Dealing first with the pavilion itself, it covers, as is well known, a large area and occupies a most important position. In the general display, it and the Canadian pavilion really form the centre of this great exhibition activity. The comparison of the exterior of the Australian and Canadian pavilions rather gives Canada an advantage over Australia, and in two or three directions this is very apparent. In the first place, the approach to the Australian pavilion is by means of wooden steps, whereas that to the Canadian pavilion is by concrete steps, creating an atmosphere of greater stability. At the top of the staircase in the Canadian pavilion reclining lions give an air of dignity to the display which is absent in the Australian pavilion. Again, at night time, when the exhibition is a blaze of light, the Australian pavilion, unfortunately, is in darkness, there being no outside lighting effect, whereas the Canadian pavilion is emblazoned in such a manner that it may be seen all over the exhibition, and the name "Canada" is thrown out in such relief that it may be seen no matter where one may be in the exhibition grounds.

Inside of the Australian pavilion there is something that causes one to think that a mistake has been made in not permitting each State to retain its own display separate from that of the other States. All the displays of the various States are under the one Commonwealth banner, and this procedure has not enabled the individuality peculiar to each State to become apparent, nor has it caused a desire on the part of each State's representatives to excel the representatives of other States in that competition which is so desirable if the displays are to be made worthy of the occasion. One sees the displays mixed up in such a way that the climatic effects and the conditions under which the settlers live are lost in rather an unfortunate degree. To see a Tasmanian exhibit put right alongside a Queensland tropical exhibit is unfortunate. The would-be settler probably gathers the opinion that the conditions appertaining to each of these products are similar, whereas, when 2,000 miles separate these two States, it is obvious that the conditions of production and living are emphatically different. The result is that the individuality of the States and the competition that would otherwise be engendered are entirely lost, and it really resolves itself into the result that what is every man's business turns out to be no man's business. That is really what strikes one when making a survey of the interior of the Australian exhibit. The mistakes that have been made in the interior of the building are quite serious. That is to say, there are evidences that certain influences have been brought to bear to interfere with the general and original design.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would ask the hon. member to connect his remarks with the question before the Committee, which is, "That £64,507 be granted for 'Chief Office, Department of Agriculture.'" The hon. member will notice that in the vote for "Miscellaneous Services," in the Chief Secretary's Department, there is an item "Expenses of British Empire Exhibition, £6,000." The amount voted last year for this purpose was £10,000. When that vote was before the Committee, a discussion on the whole question of the British Empire Exhibition would have been in order. I hope the

hon. member will now connect his remarks with the vote before the Committee.

Mr. **ELPHINSTONE**: My difficulty was to find an opportunity of having a general discussion on this subject, as it seems to me to be of sufficient importance. I therefore addressed a question on this point to the Premier, and his reply was that innumerable opportunities would present themselves for a discussion on this matter.

The **CHAIRMAN**: The hon. member will have an opportunity of discussing the question when the Resolutions from the Committee of Supply are before the House.

Mr. **ELPHINSTONE**: I intend to deal with the agricultural products of Queensland as applying to this exhibition, and therefore will probably bring myself within your ruling, Mr. Pollock. The illustration that I intended to give was in regard to the Australian sugar exhibit. I understand that we sent over something like 1,000 sticks of sugar-cane of very prepossessing appearance as a standing example of what can be done in the growth of sugar-cane in Queensland. One section of the pavilion was set aside originally to display in an attractive manner how sugar-cane is grown, and the various processes of manufacture to which the cane is subjected. Unfortunately, the exhibits which had been sent over were mainly found in the basement of the Australian pavilion and never saw the light of day. The section that was given over to this sugar exhibit was mainly—certainly the whole front—taken up by MacRobertson's display of Australian-made lollies, which entirely obliterated the Queensland sugar exhibit. The back walls were just decorated with a few pictures showing how sugar-cane is grown, and the general display of sugar-growing in Queensland was lost entirely by this display of a manufacturer's exhibit in the form of Australian-made lollies which, to my mind, had no significance whatever, and did not assist us at all in the primary object for which this Exhibition was established.

Again, in regard to the raw cotton display: that is another opportunity that presented itself of bringing forcibly before the would-be settlers the opportunities to grow cotton which Queensland presented. But unfortunately the original design was entirely cut out, and we simply had a painted background showing what a cotton field was supposed to look like, with a heap of ginned cotton in the foreground. Unfortunately no provision was made to protect the cotton from dust, and it was gradually becoming covered with a brown and black mantle which entirely obliterated the good appearance of that cotton. In that regard, too, great opportunities were lost of bringing forcibly before the attention of visitors exactly what Queensland can do in that important direction. Then again, in connection with pineapples—another very important production in Queensland—there was absolutely no reference whatever in this important exhibition to the growth of pineapples in Australia. All that I could discover was one of our ordinary departmental pictures showing a pineapple field. Pineapples now play, and probably in the future will play, an even more important part in production here, and surely an opportunity was lost of bringing before the people of England how pineapples are grown and the method of marketing them. It is remarkable how

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few people on the other side of the world know how pineapples are actually grown. Strange as it may appear, some people seem to have the idea that they grow on trees. There we had a great opportunity of appealing to the imagination of the people and of enhancing our displays, had we availed ourselves of that opportunity.

Mr. **DASH**: Such an exhibit would not do much harm in the southern States.

Mr. **ELPHINSTONE**: That may be. Speaking generally, the displays were most unattractive, and did not bear comparison with those from New Zealand, Canada, and other parts of the Dominions. My object in raising these points is that, when we recognise that Australia needs advertising, and this wonderful opportunity has been presented to us for remedying the defect, it is rather a pity that greater advantage was not taken of the chance given, because it may be many years before it comes again. If [11 a.m.] it is the intention, as probably it will be, to keep the exhibition open for a second year, it seems to me that the opportunity should be taken advantage of to see in what directions our display can be improved, so that Australia, and Queensland in particular, may benefit therefrom.

Another extraordinary thing that struck me in comparison with other parts was that no literature was available to visitors to the Australian exhibits. Surely it would have been advantageous and advisable to let those people who thought it necessary in their interests to visit our display take away with them some data in regard to our productions and other information which would be of value to them. Those who visited the Canadian pavilion were all furnished with some important documents, which they took away as a lasting impression of their visit to the Canadian exhibit. With us there was absolutely no literature that I was able to discover, and it seemed to me to be a pity that opportunity was not taken to distribute literature and give the visitors an opportunity of studying in their homes the conditions surrounding the various forms of production here.

I do not intend to let this opportunity pass without making a passing reference to the position of Mr. Mobsby in England. I believe he was sent to England by the Department of Agriculture to look after our interests in the Australian pavilion, and he is certainly doing his best under most trying circumstances. Had there been a separate Queensland display in which our exhibits would have been under the control of Queensland officers, I am quite certain that we would have got a very much greater advantage from the exhibition than has ensued, and Mr. Mobsby's services would have been very much more to the fore than has been possible under existing circumstances. Whatever shortcomings the exhibition may have disclosed, as far as our own officers are concerned, and Mr. Mobsby in particular, it gives me great pleasure to bear testimony to the fact that they have done their utmost to make the Queensland exhibits as attractive as possible.

Mr. **HARTLEY (Fitzroy)**: I am rather struck with the remarks of the hon. member for Oxley in regard to the British Empire Exhibition. He says that we should take a pride in our country and in our country's

products and seek to develop them. I understood that, when the products were displayed, the Department of Agriculture took full advantage of the opportunity to advertise the products of Queensland and also the manufacture of the implements with which we cultivate those products. The lecture of the hon. member for Oxley would have been more effective to my mind if it had not appeared that the exhibition in itself failed to impress him, as evidenced by his own attitude. We ought to encourage in every possible way the raising of our own products by the use of machinery manufactured here. Considering the efforts made and the money expended by the Department of Agriculture, the hon. member's advertisement does not induce me to believe that the Empire exhibition has been of much value to him in giving him a pride in this country and a pride in our own products, because I noticed in the "Courier" of yesterday this advertisement—

"Elphinstones. German Bosch magnetos, stocked in all types. A certificate of origin and efficiency with each one. These magnetos are supreme."

That is an advertisement of magnetos from Germany, and this advertisement declares they "are supreme."

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Does Australia make magnetos?

Mr. HARTLEY: If he expects this Government to advertise Queensland products in the British Empire Exhibition, he should encourage their production here. Here is another advertisement—

"Elphinstones. Service station for both American and German Bosch magnetos. If you require parts or repairs, come to the factory representatives."

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Go on! I like this advertisement. (Laughter.)

Mr. HARTLEY: There is the point. If this British Empire Exhibition is worth anything, surely to God it is better to develop and encourage the use of Australian machinery, if it can be done, than to get machinery from the old country, where this exhibition was established at such a great cost to advertise Empire products and keep trade within the Empire.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Do you know the difference between a pineapple and a magneto? (Laughter.)

Mr. HARTLEY: Yes, and I know the difference between a hypocrite and a humbug.

Mr. COSTELLO (*Carnarvon*): We are dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture, under which agriculture is developed in Queensland. When we look through the various Estimates it is very significant to see that there is almost stagnation in Queensland at the present time. All through the votes there is nothing but stagnation in evidence. The only thing there is an attempt made to boom is the cotton industry, which has been an unfortunate industry to the settlers in Queensland so far. It is all very well to talk about advertising the products of the Commonwealth in England and in other parts of the world. Let me read a comparative statement with reference to land settlement in Queensland, which is rather startling. I think it is only right that we should face these problems right here

and come to some solution in regard to the stagnation which exists—

Comparative Statement of Land Occupied in Queensland.

| Year. | Area. | Increase in Eight Years. |
|------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| | Acres. | Acres. |
| 1906 | 265,381,856 | |
| 1914 | 358,331,163 | 92,949,307 |
| 1922 | 328,044,542 | *30,286,621 |

* Decrease.

With the high prices of commodities which ruled during the War, and which have continued since then, one would have thought there would have been a big increase in the area of land occupied, but, instead of that, there was a decrease of 30,000,000 acres of land occupied during the last eight years. It is not much of an advertisement for Queensland when our friends abroad turn up the statistics of the Department of Agriculture, and find out that there has been such a big decrease in regard to the occupation of land and production in the State.

I am prepared to give credit where credit is due. There is no doubt that the field assistants who are conducting the experimental plots in the wheatgrowing portion of Queensland have done exceptionally good work. We find that those officers are receiving low salaries. The whole of the vote for that purpose is only about £1,400 for the year. Those officers have done a great deal, and they could do a great deal more if the amount was increased by £1,000. It is very important to find out which are the best rust-resisting types of wheat. We have to grow wheat at certain times with a very low rainfall. That reminds me that we passed the Closer Settlement Acts Amendment Bill last year, giving the Secretary for Public Lands discretion and control in regard to the commodities grown by the producers.

I think that that power was intended to apply more particularly to certain lands at Goondiwindi and Roma, with the idea of encouraging wheat production. It is no use for us to put new men on land in the hope that they will increase the wheat production of this State unless some advice is given to them, and unless our field experts have the opportunity of gathering and imparting the information which is necessary to help them to succeed. I think it is a very good thing to encourage these experiments in wheat, and no doubt the time is coming when the State will see its way clear to paying a bonus on all exportable wheat produced in the State over and above our own requirements.

We have a very slight decrease in the amount required for the Fruit Branch. Probably this decrease is due to the fact that we have lost the services of the Chief Instructor in Fruit Culture. That gentleman's services were secured for us from a Southern State, but he could not see his way to stay with us, and so we have lost him. An interesting item is the salary of the Fruit Packing and Marketing Instructor. He was also a man from the South, and a very good man, too. The District Council of the Fruit Growers' Society is to be congratulated upon having brought influence to bear on the Council of Agriculture in the direction of the appointment of Mr. Rowlands. He has revolutionised the packing of fruit in Queensland and thus dealt effectively with a matter

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which was needing some attention for many years. I am glad that we have retained that gentleman's services, and that we have increased his annual allowance. He is not overpaid for the services he gives to the community in regard to the packing and marketing of fruit.

There is also a decrease in the vote for the Science Branch; nevertheless, we must give the Department of Agriculture the credit of having endeavoured during the last few years to deal effectively with most pests, especially those affecting the fruit industry. Entomologists were hardly known a few years ago, but we now have three or four of them. Up to the present they have not been able to achieve such a great success as we hoped, and I trust the department will not endeavour to limit the expenditure on this branch. Too much Government money is invested in the fruitgrowing industry for us to treat this matter lightly. I regret that there is a falling off in the amount which we are asked to vote this year.

That brings me to the Stock Branch, in which salaries are required for two instructors in sheep and wool. The total amount on the Estimates for these two experts is £765. That means that we are spending only £765 in trying to improve the quality and production of our wool and in the eradication of pests. Looking up the statistics I find that for the eight years ended in 1914 the increase in our sheep numbered 8,243,481, whilst for the eight years ended in 1922 the increase was 5,488,846, or a decrease as compared with the first period of 2,750,000 sheep in round figures. I think the Minister himself will admit that the greatest decrease in our flocks has occurred through the dingo and the fly rather than through drought. Of course, it is not through this department alone that we assist to combat the dingo, because the Department of Public Lands gives certain assistance in respect of wire netting, but more serious attention should be given to coping with the fly. At present it is a very serious pest, and it is increasing. Some people are going out of sheep simply because they cannot cope with the blowfly pest, and those who have had anything to do with breeding ewes know the big losses that occur. Yet only £765 is being spent in combating its ravages, although I am glad to see that a considerable amount of work is done, and the present amount of expenditure is better than nothing. On the present values of sheep and wool, the falling off in the increase of our flocks to which I have referred means a loss to the State of about £2,000,000 sterling.

Mr. DASH: Do you blame the Labour Government for that?

Mr. COSTELLO: Of course I blame the Labour Government for that. Apparently the hon. member has not sufficient intelligence, judging from his interjection, to see that we must blame the Administration for not dealing effectively with the industry on which, above all others, we are dependent. Wool is the only thing that Queensland is exporting to any extent, yet the Government have protected it to such an extent that there has been a falling-off in the increase in our flocks annually, and we are losing £2,000,000 in hard cash this year as a consequence. I trust the Government will give this matter consideration in future Estimates, and that the sheep man will not

be neglected. It is all very well to say that he is a big man and can look after his own industry. So he can, but it is obligatory on the Government to remember that there are many small men, and in any case they should help the sheep man just as much as any other man. They employ experts in the Department of Agriculture who are protecting the country by their efforts, and it is regrettable that, because those efforts have not been greater, there is a reduction in the value of the sheep industry of Queensland this year of over £2,000,000 in hard cash.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I want to enter my protest against the department not having been able to produce the report at the time when these Estimates were being discussed. It is difficult for us to offer effective criticism unless we have the figures pertaining to the year under discussion.

With reference to the Council of Agriculture, I am one of those who think that, although the organisation of the primary producers has not been as successful, so far as results go, as was hoped, nevertheless a great deal of spade work has been done.

Although we have not received any very great benefits from the Council of Agriculture in respect of stabilisation of prices, yet I feel sure that in time to come that body will prove to be of great assistance to the producers of this State. Certain alterations are necessary in the Primary Producers' Organisation Act. When the Bill was first introduced it was very crude indeed, and the Opposition were successful in amending it almost beyond recognition. We proposed a great number of necessary amendments, some of which were accepted and some of which were rejected by the Minister who had charge of the Bill; but the Bill left the Chamber a very much better enactment than would otherwise have been the case if our amendments had not been accepted. Time has proved that many of the amendments which were rejected by the Minister are absolutely necessary to make the working of the Council of Agriculture much more effective than it is to-day. Legislation should be introduced during this session to enable the Council to be reorganised on a commodity basis. At the present time the organisation is not effective, and there is no possibility of the Council being successful until we allow those growing a certain commodity to have full control over the marketing of that commodity. Look at the great success that has been achieved by the sugar-growers. That industry was thoroughly organised, and those engaged in the industry obtained control over the commodity, with the result that those engaged in the industry are obtaining a fair reward for their services, whilst the people of Australia are certainly not being asked to pay an exorbitant price for their sugar.

Unfortunately that is not the position in connection with many other industries of this State. The most peculiar feature about the farming community is that a great number of farmers who are producing butter may complain about the high price charged for sugar, and yet would have no fault to find with any increase in the price of butter. On the other hand, those engaged in the production of sugar may complain about the high price of flour, simply because they are not engaged in the production of wheat, or they may complain about the high price of

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butter because their activities do not extend in that direction. The producers generally do not study the interests of producers growing some other commodity; and until we allow those producing a certain commodity to have full control over matters affecting that commodity, we are not going to have the producers placed in the same position that the sugar-growers are in. Until the producers are placed in the same position with regard to the stabilisation of prices, they are not going to get a fair remuneration for the work they perform. It has been stated that we are not opening up sufficient land for agricultural purposes, but I am of the opinion that in many instances we are over-producing in Queensland, with the result that the prices affecting those commodities are very low, and those engaged in such industries are not receiving a fair reward for their labour. Under such circumstances we have either got to reduce the price of the commodities we produce, or else we have to find markets in other parts of the world, and until we do that those engaged in the production of those commodities will not receive a fair reward for their services.

I think the figures I am about to quote dealing with the exportation from Australia and the consumption in Australia of certain commodities are new to hon. members. Last year we exported from Australia 343,339,735 lb. of meat, and we consumed 933,124,239 lb. Those figures show that three times more meat was consumed in Australia than was exported. Unfortunately we find that, whilst we are able to export meat from Australia, the prices are fixed by markets overseas. If we had only sufficient meat for our own requirements—that is the position in which the sugar-growers are placed in connection with their commodity—we could control our own markets, but because we produce more than is necessary for local requirements we are compelled to export overseas, with the result that the prices ruling overseas form the bases for prices in our home markets. That should not be. Our local markets should be our best markets, and we should be so protected as not to be compelled to sell at a loss here. The manufacturers of Australia are protected by a high tariff, and the manufacturers overseas cannot land their manufactures in Australia unless they pay very high duties which protect the Australian manufacturer from the cheap labour in other parts of the world, and thus enable him to receive a fair price for the articles that he produces for the use of the people of this country. The labourer is protected by the Arbitration Court. Throughout Australia he receives a remuneration which the Court considers adequate for the work performed, with the result that he receives a decent wage for the work he does. The only person who is not protected is the man producing the foodstuffs. He must accept the ruling market values, and, if the values recede in other parts of the world where cheap food is produced by coloured labour, then the price of the commodity goes down proportionately in Australia. We have no protection from the cheap labour producing such commodities in other parts of the world. If we cannot stabilise the prices of our local markets, then the producer is not going to come into his own and is not going to get a fair return for his labour. We have stabilised the sugar industry. I notice that last year we exported 5,127 tons of sugar, and we consumed 226,242 tons. We only exported a very small

quantity of sugar; but the point I want to make is this: The fact that we exported did not affect the price of sugar in Australia. The people of Australia had to pay the same price for their sugar as if we had had no surplus for exportation. This coming year there may be a surplus of 25,000 tons, more or less, of sugar, but the fact that we have a surplus over local consumption is not going to have any detrimental effect on sugar prices in Australia. I would like to see every other industry in that position. Why should the price of meat in Australia be influenced by the prices ruling in other parts of the world, where, perhaps, the meat is produced by cheap coloured labour? Last year we exported 31,510,272 bushels of wheat, and we consumed 42,000,000 bushels. The price of wheat in Australia is definitely fixed by the price that is ruling in Mark Lane, London. Last year we exported 73,571,151 lb. of butter, and we consumed 126,484,171 lb. Those figures show that we consumed very nearly twice as much butter in Australia as was exported, yet the butter producers in Australia are losing money to-day by producing that necessary article of food. It will be recognised that is a condition of affairs that should not exist. When all is said and done, the importance of the producing industries is greater than the industrial centres.

Mr. FARRELL: What do you suggest as a remedy?

Mr. MORGAN: The stabilisation of prices on the home market. The butter industry should be regulated and controlled by those engaged in it. The price of butter should be stabilised over a period, just as the price of sugar has been stabilised. It might not be necessary to have the price of butter fixed for too long a period. The producer should have the power to regulate the prices of butter, cheese, wheat, bacon, and similar products so that the home prices would be favourable to those engaged in the industry. Through that not being done, a section of the community is being sweated, whilst another section is receiving necessary articles at a price lower than it costs to produce. That is not a state of affairs which should operate from an Australian point of view. I find that 5,454,466 lb. cheese were exported while 17,855,106 lb. were consumed [11.30 a.m.] in Australia. We exported 1,871,414 lb. of hams and bacon, while no less a quantity than 52,482,942 lb. was consumed in Australia. Those figures show again that our home consumption is greater than the export overseas. I am not complaining about the prices ruling for ham and bacon at the present time, as they are at a profitable level; but there are times of the year when the prices drop to such an extent that the producer loses in producing the pig. It is apparent that the producers are not going to get much benefit from the organisation of the agricultural industry. The present organisation does not produce results from the point of view of prices. I admit that the Council of Agriculture has done a great deal of organising work, and that, as a result, the farmers are better organised to-day than at any previous period of the State's history. I believe that the Council of Agriculture will eventually prove a success, but several factors are operating at the present moment which are militating against that success being achieved. In my opinion one of the chief reforms necessary

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is that the chairman should not be a politician. An amending Act should be introduced immediately to enable the Council of Agriculture to elect its own chairman.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I should be very pleased to be relieved of the duties.

Mr. MORGAN: I understand that what the Minister says is correct. Hon. members on this side of the Chamber have always contended that the position of chairman should not be filled by the Secretary for Agriculture, no matter what party may be in power. I am still of the opinion that it is a mistake for the Secretary for Agriculture for the time being to be the head of a body which is supposed to be non-political. The hon. member for Fitzroy deplored the fact that the Council was not political, and said it would never be a success unless it was. Once the Council becomes more political than it is, it will cease to exist altogether. I am afraid that the Director of the Council of Agriculture is introducing a little too much politics into the Council. I am also a little afraid that "The Producer," the official organ of the Council, is introducing a little too much politics into its columns. If this organisation is proved to be an organisation of the Government for the purpose of winning seats in Parliament, it will soon cease to exist altogether. That is one reason why the Council has not made the progress that it should have made. A large number of farmers have stood out of the organisation until they were convinced that it was being conducted on non-political lines. That feeling may be decreasing, but until "The Producer" and the officials desist from introducing politics, or from entering into political arguments with various politicians, no matter what their views may be, the primary producers will suspect that the organisation is not an altogether non-political one. I hope that it will eventually be proved that the organisation is not political, when it will do the good it was originally intended it should do for those engaged in primary production.

There are several other matters I would like to touch upon in order to secure some information. An amount of £5,000 was placed on the Estimates last year as an advance for railway freights on starving stock. I would like to know from the Secretary for Agriculture what amount of money was spent from that vote. I would also like to know what amount of money was granted to farmers from the vote of £30,000 that appeared on the last Estimates for relief on account of the drought. We have not yet heard from the Minister what that amount was. It is necessary for the hon. gentleman to let this Committee know just what was granted for relief purposes. When we get to another vote I shall have the opportunity of referring to another most important matter, and I shall reserve my other remarks until then.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Yanango*): I wish to add a few words to the debate in connection with this all-important vote. The Department of Agriculture is a department upon which depends the making or marring of Queensland. This hon. members who have travelled over this State realise that it possesses the greatest possibilities of any State within the Commonwealth. Certainly its possibilities in agriculture are the greatest. When we consider the products that can be produced from our soils, we must realise how essential it is for the Government to give

the keenest consideration to this subject. In my opinion the Secretary for Agriculture is not doing his duty in connection with this State when he allows this vote to be decreased. It must be clear to anyone who considers the question at all that it is necessary year by year in the early developmental stages of agriculture that the vote of the Department of Agriculture and Stock should be increased so that greater assistance may be given to the development of those industries from which practically the whole wealth of the State is derived.

Several things have been discussed on this vote which are of great interest, not only to the agriculturist but to everyone in Queensland, and we might say to everyone in Australia. One was in connection with the exhibit which was sent to the Wembley Exhibition, and which was fully discussed by the hon. member for Oxley. The hon. member went into details, and instanced mistakes that had been made. I hope the Department of Agriculture will benefit by those mistakes and by the criticism of the hon. member. If we are going to advertise the State and its products on the other side of the world, which is certainly essential—particularly from an export point of view—we require all the assistance and advice that it is possible to get.

In connection with the Primary Producers' Organisation Act which we have had working in Queensland for some considerable time, I am one who believes that very much greater work could have been done by that organisation had the Secretary for Agriculture taken notice of the suggestions given by the Country party when the Bill was going through the House. It was stated definitely from this side of the Chamber that the measure could not possibly work successfully unless it was founded on a commodity basis, each industry interesting itself in its own products and endeavouring to organise that industry.

When the measure was going through the House in 1922 I made these remarks—

"I am endeavouring to show that the producers of this State require to be careful in connection with this matter, and I would suggest to the Secretary for Agriculture that the sectional organisations in existence at the present time should be taken in as organisations in connection with this scheme. My reason for suggesting that is because, after all, when you bring the maizegrowers, the sugarcrowers, the dairymen, and other sections of the agricultural industry together you find that their interests are not identical."

There were many other references on similar lines from this side of the Chamber. Had the Government taken notice of our remarks, instead of allowing a party feeling to prevail, we would have been in a very much better position to-day. One great drawback of the organisation is that it has not direct representatives from the different industries. The people who are producing the wealth of this State from the dairying industry would be in a much better position if their organisation were brought into one body and if the interests of each factory had representation. One must realise how very careful any Minister must be when dealing with the agricultural pursuits of the State, particularly in the matter of organisation. It must be realised that,

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as we bring quantities of land under agriculture, particularly small areas, so we shall increase the production of our different agricultural products. To do this we must find the money and must give attention to the marketing of our products. We must give more attention than we have in the past to see that the distributing of these products from the producer to the consumer is given better supervision and consideration.

From the years of experience I have had in connection with co-operative organisations in the State I am satisfied that the Council of Agriculture will eventually have to get back to what the dairymen and men in other industries asked for when the Council of Agriculture came into existence. The Council of Agriculture will have to lay the foundations of different distributing companies so that the products of the State will be handled with less expense to the consuming population than is now the case. That is the only means of doing it. This method of obtaining the control of things quickly may be all right for a time, but eventually we shall have to go back and lay the foundation of distributing companies handled by the producers on the one hand and by the consuming population on the other.

In connection with that matter, Mr. Pollock, you will remember the solid fight that the Country party put up from this side of the House. The hon. member for Burnett moved on 22nd July, 1923—

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

It will be remembered that amendments were moved from the other side of the House, purely political, simply at cross purposes with the hon. member's motion. I believe that, as representatives of the people, we should not introduce party questions into such matters. The question is too big for the introduction of party matters. Surely we are big enough to rise above that sort of thing and assist the primary producers of this State in the way of handling their products from the producers to the consuming public. Instead of obstructing our endeavours, Labour representatives should do everything in their power to see that the organisations of the industrial worker also work along co-operative lines. They should see that the worker gets products with as little leakage of expense as possible between the producer and consumer. That is the only method by which we shall achieve success.

I shall say a few words in connection with the cotton question which you indicated, Mr. Pollock, might be dealt with on this vote. I ask the Secretary for Agriculture to consider carefully the question of lifting his hand entirely from the cotton-growers and of giving them an opportunity of getting down to a basis of producing cotton by methods which will be in the best interests of the State. That is the only means by which we can possibly make a success of cotton-growing. It is all very well for experts to say you must do this and you must not do that. The farmer himself is practically the expert, and he has sufficient common sense in his own

interests and in the interests of the State, to do what is best for the industry. Eventually we shall have to get back to that position. We have to realise that the farmers are the men who are going to grow the cotton and, if they are hampered too much, they will not grow it at all. Therefore the Minister will do well to realise that the time has arrived to lift the ban on ratoon cotton as well as all other restrictions, if the cotton industry is to be saved to Queensland. It is pitiable to listen to men who have lost hundreds of pounds through the ban on ratoon cotton.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You are always squealing.

Mr. EDWARDS: The hon. gentleman himself is very often squealing about different matters. In my district one man had £500 worth of ratoon cotton ripe on the bushes and the men available for picking it, but, when permission was asked to market it, he was turned down, although the expert opinion was that that cotton was equally as good as the plant cotton that he was picking. The result was that he had to open his fence and turn his cattle in.

Mr. DASH: What stopped him from picking the cotton?

Mr. EDWARDS: It was ratoon cotton. That man was a tremendous loser and not only that, but it prevented men from getting work because, when they had finished picking the plant cotton, they had to leave the district. I hope the Minister will take notice of these things, and I hope that, as a result of his experience, he will cut politics out of all matters concerning our primary industries and will allow them to go ahead as they should go ahead.

The high cost of transport is also retarding the development of our primary industries, and I want to say to the Secretary for Agriculture that the freights at present charged are not fair. The hon. gentleman, in his capacity as Secretary for Agriculture, should have used all the influence he could possibly bring to bear to prevent the freight on primary products being increased quite recently. It is absolutely wrong to increase the freight on primary products at the present time, seeing that the primary producers are struggling after years of drought.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: How would you view the question of making the railways free altogether?

Mr. EDWARDS: If the Government go on in the way they are going, they will have to run the railway free directly.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. EDWARDS: I hope the Minister will use his influence in that direction, because the present freights charged press very harshly indeed on the primary producers.

I want to say something in connection with the relief that was given to the producers during the last financial year. I believe that the Minister did all he possibly could to see that the farmers who were struggling got some assistance, and from the applications that were made to him he knows of the pitiful condition some of the producers were in through no fault of their own. I hope the Minister will consider the question of avoiding harsh treatment in connection with the repayment of the advances that were made. One can realise that the calls on these people for the money they may

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obtain from their crops this year—the first they have had since the drought—will be very many indeed, and I hope the Minister will extend the payments over a number of years. I do not think, unless in an exceptionally hard case, that men should get the relief for nothing, but the Minister should be lenient in the matter of repayments. No one knows better than I do the difficulties that crop up in connection with the development of the land.

There is another matter that should receive very great consideration at the hands of the Government. That is the development of the by-products in connection with the dairying industry. Up to the present time we have done very little in connection with the by-products of milk. I hope the Council of Agriculture, as well as the Department of Agriculture, will go deeply into this matter and see whether greater assistance cannot be given to establish secondary industries, and particularly in connection with the development of the by-products of milk. I believe that we must get down to a practical basis in connection with all our primary products. The questions that are being discussed at the present time by the Council of Agriculture and by many of the officers of the Department of Agriculture are questions that, to my knowledge, have been discussed for the last fifteen to twenty years, and it is high time we did something to build up our industries, as has been done in New Zealand.

The question of providing storage for maize is one that interests my district, and, I think, the whole of the State. The Council of Agriculture has gone into this question, and I hope that the Government will give every assistance in this direction, because I am satisfied that no pool will be of any use to the maize-growers until proper storage accommodation can be provided to hold the maize for some considerable time. During last year there was a tremendous crop of maize in Queensland, and, if the same area of land is planted during the coming season and early rains come, there will be a very large crop this year.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Are you in favour of a maize pool?

MR. EDWARDS: I have explained my position thoroughly in that regard. I am one of those who assisted to organise a voluntary maize pool in my district. I say without hesitation that, if proper storage accommodation were provided, the growers of maize in Queensland would not hesitate to form a pool. If a maize pool is formed, I hope the Council of Agriculture will see that none but business men are put in responsible positions. That is where the serious drawback in connection with all our co-operative movements comes in.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What do you mean by that? Do you mean that the farmers cannot be trusted to elect their representatives?

[12 noon]

MR. EDWARDS: If the Minister is going to have such a suspicious mind, I cannot help it. When I first started to speak I asked him not to introduce petty party politics. I think it is disgusting; I am sick of it. When speaking in 1922, I said—

“Everyone who knows anything about maize-growing and the marketing of maize in Queensland realises that there is

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no product in regard to which there is more need for assistance in the matter of storage and in marketing.”

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You did not mention anything about pools there.

MR. EDWARDS: If the Government are prepared to give the farmers every assistance they can in the way of silo storage, I think that a pool would be a splendid thing for the maize-growers in Queensland.

MR. GLEDSON: You want the Government to make the porridge and put it into their mouths as well.

MR. EDWARDS: It would do the hon. member some good if he had some maize porridge. The position of the maize industry in Queensland to-day is anything but bright, and I know that the Secretary for Agriculture realises that. Now that an improvement has taken place after years of delay, I hope the Minister and his department and the Council of Agriculture will give all the assistance possible to see that these silos are built within the State.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Are you a believer in the Council of Agriculture?

MR. EDWARDS: I am a believer in the Council of Agriculture if the Minister gets out of the chair and full control is given to the farmers. I believe that organisation is necessary in the interests of the producers.

MR. HARTLEY: You differ from the hon. member for Stanley, who spoke yesterday.

MR. EDWARDS: I cannot help that. This is an important question. The Minister has got the position fully before him. A report has been made in connection with the matter, and I understand that certain suggestions in connection with the building of silos have been made. It is up to Queensland to get every assistance possible from the Commonwealth Government to put the maize-growers on a similar footing to other producers. There is no doubt they are having a bad time at present in regard to prices. The Minister realises, I am sure, that it is necessary sometimes to carry over a quantity of maize from year to year.

Another thing which may help the maize-growers to some extent is the establishment of a factory to deal with the by-products of maize. That is a matter which requires careful and serious consideration, because it will be a big undertaking. If we could not obtain a market for the by-products to keep the wheels of the machinery going, it would be a white elephant. I asked questions about this matter in 1921, but it has not been gone deeply into at the present time.

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

MR. TAYLOR (Windsor): The vote we are considering is very important and one which should have the best attention we can possibly give it.

I suppose that this is probably the last occasion on which we shall have the present Under Secretary for Agriculture figuring in the report, and I would like to pay a compliment to Mr. Scriven for his work during the many years he has been associated with the Department of Agriculture. If he has to leave during the present year, as we have been given to understand, I am sure he will have the best wishes of the whole of the

officers of the department and of members of Parliament. (Hear, hear!) I think that he has carried out his duties effectively during the time he has held his position. (Hear, hear!)

A number of matters have been introduced during the course of the debate with regard to this Estimate. The hon. member for Nanango has referred to the position of the maize-growers throughout the State, and the necessity for adequate storage of maize being provided. I would like to sound a note of warning in this connection. In my opinion, the use of the motor-car has reduced at the very lowest computation the number of horses required in industry by 60,000, and thus decreased the use of maize as fodder. I think that the number of motor-cars which are registered in Queensland is somewhere about 30,000, and you can safely assume that each car has probably taken the place of two horses. If we are going to get good seasons for maize, such as the last season, we shall have to look abroad for markets. We have not got a sufficient market in Australia for our maize when we get a good season. During the latter part of last year, when South African maize was coming into Queensland, very little was required in our cities and towns; 75 per cent. of it was going to feed stock in the drought-stricken portions of Southern Queensland.

The matter of a factory for treating the by-products of maize requires the most careful consideration. From the information I have received, it appears that the markets for the by-products of maize are fully catered for at the present time by the factory which is operating in Melbourne. If we establish another factory in Queensland, one of them is going to fail. I give credit to those who started the factory in Melbourne, which has pioneered the industry and made a success of the venture; but we want to be very careful before we consider anything of that nature.

Mr. HARTLEY: By-and-by you will say that there are more factories in Victoria than there are in Queensland, and then you will say, "Why don't you start factories in Queensland?"

Mr. TAYLOR: I want to see factories started in Queensland when there is a hope of their being successful, but I do not want to see them started here when failure is written across the front door before they start operations.

I am keenly interested with other hon. members in the question of how the erection of silos for the storage of maize in North Queensland is going to turn out. We all hope it will be a success. If maize is to be carried over from year to year, it is absolutely necessary that there should be storage of such a nature that the depredations of the weevil can be prevented. We know how disastrous the weevil has been to maize in Queensland for many years, and the storage must be of such a nature that the weevil will be shut out. Of course, it is no use stacking maize in an ordinary shed or barn. There must be scientific storage of maize if we are to hold it satisfactorily. I have looked at a photograph of the silos in the report of the Department of Public Works. It is possible those who are responsible for building those silos have forgotten more about the matter than I know, but I do not like the practice of making silos

60 or 70 feet high. I prefer silos 20 or 25 feet high, divided into compartments to hold in each a smaller quantity of maize than a very tall silo, so that, if it should happen that some inferior maize or something else gets into one compartment, it will not depreciate the whole of the maize but only the maize in that particular compartment, and the loss will be less than if the silo were higher and bigger. However, the wisdom or otherwise of building these big silos will be demonstrated fully in the near future. Whilst I am speaking of maize, I would like to mention that thousands of bags are now being exported to London, and, if it were not for the maize which is going overseas and to the Southern States, where there has been a shortage, I do not know what the farmers would get at all. Whether the export of maize to London will prove profitable or not I do not know.

I would like to draw attention again to a matter with which I have dealt before in this Chamber. I refer to the large amount of produce which is coming into Queensland but which we should be growing here—more particularly chaff coming over the border. Thousands and thousands of tons are coming in every month, and we are sending out of the State thousands of pounds every year to pay for it. We could grow chaff, but, practically speaking, we are growing none at all.

Mr. BULCOCK: Can't you find out why?

Mr. TAYLOR: I want to find out the reason, but the fact remains that we are practically importing 98 per cent. of the oaten chaff which we are using. I honestly believe that I am not over-stating the case.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The people in the South are taking 98 per cent. of our sugar.

Mr. TAYLOR: They cannot grow sugar in the South, but we can grow chaff. If they could grow sugar in Victoria, they would not take so much of our sugar.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They can grow beet sugar in Victoria very successfully at the present price of sugar in Australia.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Maffra beet sugar factory was a white elephant for quite a number of years, but during the last twelve months a lot of money has been put into the industry to stabilise it and make it a profitable venture for the State. I should like to point out that my previous remarks regarding maize production and the competition of the motor-car with the horse do not apply to chaff, because on account of the dairying industry and of its expansion there will always be a market in Queensland for a fairly large consumption of oaten, lucerne, and wheaten chaff, although the motor-car has affected the maize grower very seriously.

Another matter which I mentioned last year or the year before was the establishment of new primary industries. I would like to hear, for instance, whether any inquiries have been made to see whether we could not establish the growing of the cocoa bean in North Queensland. I do not know whether anything has been done, but I do know that we are spending tens of thousands of pounds every year for cocoa beans imported into Australia. I think that at present they come in free because they are not produced in the Commonwealth. The confectionery industry has grown to such an enormous extent of recent years and the sugar industry, which is vital to us, is so closely affected, that the

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matter is well worth attention. Recently I had the privilege of visiting MacRobertson's factory in Melbourne, where they make sweets which are supplied practically throughout the whole of Australia, and I got some figures which are really astonishing. They are using there somewhere about 5,000 tons of Queensland sugar every year in the manufacture of their products, so that we are vitally concerned in the success of the confectionery industry in Australia, and, if we could add the production of the cocoa bean to our sugar production, we would be conferring a great benefit upon Australia and our own State in particular. The hon. member for Oxley a few minutes ago told us how the MacRobertson exhibit had been placed in a prominent position in the Australian display at Wembley Exhibition at the expense of the Queensland sugar industry. Mr. MacRobertson himself told me that he was sending 60 or 70 tons of confectionery to Wembley, and was going to put up the finest exhibit of confectionery that had ever been shown in any market in the world. I asked him whether he was exporting, and he said, "Very little." He added, however, that he was very hopeful that, as a result of his efforts at Wembley, he would be able to develop an oversea trade. These industries are so interwoven one with the other that we want to see both of them established here in Queensland.

Reference was made in the last report of the Secretary for Agriculture to the tobacco and coffee growing industries, and the statement was made that the department had shown quite a lot of activity in the matter, but there was no response at all from the growers. We recollect, of course, that some years ago the late Government endeavoured to establish the tobacco industry and had a tobacco expert, Mr. Nevill. Quite a lot of money was spent by the Government and by large land firms in endeavouring to establish it at Texas, but for some reason or other it all ended in nothing. Similar remarks apply to the coffee industry. It is unfortunate that it should be so, and if the Minister and the department could do anything to establish these industries on a sound payable basis they would be doing excellent work for Queensland and Australia as well, particularly when we consider the immense amount of tobacco which is imported every year.

With regard to the Council of Agriculture, my idea is that, if the primary producers wish to work out their salvation, co-operation on their part and efficient organisation are what are really required. When we reach the limit of local consumption and have to send goods overseas to compete with goods produced in other parts of the world, then we have to be prepared to face the world's ruling prices, but, because a position may arise as a result of which certain exported goods have to be sold at less than the cost of production, that is no reason why the price to the local consumer should be at a less rate than the cost of production. I certainly think that every effort should be made to maintain for the benefit of the local producer such a price as will give him a fair and adequate return for the labour which he has expended. Of course it is difficult to estimate the cost of production in all cases. I might have a farm on this side of the table of 100 acres, growing wheat, and the Minister might have on the other side of the table another farm of 100 acres, also growing wheat.

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At 12.20 p.m.,

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved the Chairman in the chair.

Mr. TAYLOR: If our land was of equal value and it costs us about the same price to cultivate that area, and I got the rain and the Minister did not, and I got 14 bushels to the acre and he got about 4 bushels, how are we going to arrive at a fair cost of production, when it cost the hon. gentleman as much to produce 4 bushels per acre as it cost me to produce 14 bushels? I understand there has been really no reduction in this vote.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Hear, hear!

Mr. TAYLOR: An item of £30,000 in connection with fodder for starving stock has been omitted, there is a reduction of £5,000 with respect to railway freights, and a reduction of £11,000 in connection with the Council of Agriculture. Those items fully account for any difference that may appear in the vote this year. I do not think that we can fairly and reasonably say that the vote has been cut down in any way. At the present time we are blessed with favourable seasons, and, although by and large the prices of commodities are not as satisfactory as we would like, I think that, if the efforts that are being made are honestly carried out, there will be some improvement in prices. We are not going to be always on the downward grade. It is gratifying to know that in the dairying industry increased supplies are coming to hand as compared with last month, and more particularly as compared with last year. It is only by ample protection, efficient organisation, and by cutting out all unnecessary costs that we shall be able, probably, to reduce the cost of living slightly without detrimentally affecting the standard of comfort which exists at the present time.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Bacham*): I think the Chairman of Committees made a very wise suggestion in regard to the method of dealing with the Estimates in connection with my department. Owing to the difficulty of confining oneself to the items that one would like to talk about, he suggested that there should be a general discussion on the vote for "Chief Office." That was a very common-sense suggestion, and where Standing Orders or Acts of Parliament conflict with common sense they should be altered. The suggestion was a good one, but it makes it more difficult for me to reply to all that has been said, but I shall follow the usual practice adopted by me since I have been Secretary for Agriculture, and that is to analyse carefully all that has been said by hon. members on both sides. Although under a system of party politics a lot of political capital is attempted in dealing with these subjects, many practical suggestions are made by hon. members on both sides, and I have always referred them to the officers of the department to see whether they can be put into effect. I thank hon. members on both sides of the Chamber for making those suggestions. I appreciate what has been said about the importance of agriculture, and I think that the speeches delivered by hon. members on both sides indicate that members of Parliament endorse

what the thirtieth President of the United States of America, J. A. Garfield, said about agriculture. Amongst other things, he said—

“At the head of science and art, at the head of civilisation and progress stands not militarism the science that kills, not commerce the art that accumulates wealth, but agriculture the mother of all industry, the maintenance of human life.”

I might say I never particularly sought the position of Secretary for Agriculture; I never asked the Premier to give me that position. It was not the portfolio that I wanted; but I think it is generally accepted, apart from any party feeling—indeed it is accepted in the country—that I have done something to make this a useful department. I admit that I have not done all that I would like to have done. Probably if more money had been available I would have appointed a greater number of experts—perhaps I should not have used the word “experts,” but men who would advise and deal with technical matters—particularly to deal with the destructive pests in this State. Possibly I would have been able to do more in that direction, but I think I can convince the Committee, and I certainly shall be able to convince the farmers of Queensland, that I have done something as Secretary for Agriculture during the time that I have been in charge of the department. In another month’s time I shall have been five years in charge of this department, which constitutes a record so far as length of service is concerned, and constitutes a record so far as legislation affecting that department is concerned. Five years ago there were twenty-two Acts of Parliament affecting the department, and seven of them have been amended in very important directions by me, and fourteen new Acts have been passed by me. I am quite aware that those fourteen new Acts, drastic as some of them may appear to be to those holding contrary views and to some hon. members opposite, are welcomed by the farmers. Some of the Acts deal with compulsory co-operative marketing, which is one of the burning questions of the age. In a few years’ time those who are opposed to compulsory co-operative marketing will come along as they always have done when a thing becomes an established fact, when the majority of the people realise the importance and necessity for it, and say that they always believed in such things. Just as the workers in the early days recognised that some compulsion was necessary and that some preference should be given to the people who did the organising in the industry—so will the farmers recognise—and indeed they are recognising—that some form of compulsion is very often necessary in order properly to manufacture, transport, and market the products of their labour. Some of the Acts that I have been responsible for introducing into this Parliament and having placed on the statute book may appear very drastic to those who are opposed to them, but in time they will prove a great success, and those who criticise them to-day—both newspapers and politicians—will say that they believed in them all the time. Indeed there is a notable change in the attitude of newspapers and hon. members opposed to this party with regard to fruit marketing, the establishment of pools, and compulsory co-operative marketing. The time has gone by when a small minority of farmers, or a small minority

of any class of people, should be allowed to have that freedom which encroaches on the freedom of the large majority when it comes to the question of marketing primary products or anything else. That is recognised. Queensland, I submit, in her legislation so far as the farmers are concerned, is in advance of any country in the world, and particularly in advance of any other State in Australia. There are indications that the other States are now inclined to fall into line. I remember that certain criticism was levelled when I introduced the Primary Products Pools Act, and the Primary Producers’ Organisation Act. Those Acts had their defects. I have never said that those Acts were perfect. I had the honour of introducing the Main Roads Act at the request of the then Secretary for Public Works, Mr. Theodore. I said that, while no Government would dare to repeal that Act, it would be amended and improved from time to time. I do not claim that any Bill I introduced into the House is perfect, but it is surely the duty of the Opposition to call attention to the defects. I think they will give me credit for accepting any reasonable amendment that I considered was going to improve the legislation. A number of the Acts were of an experimental nature, and would of necessity have to be amended from time to time. All legislation is of an experimental nature, otherwise there would be no necessity for Parliament to sit. If that were not so, Parliament could sit and pass all the necessary legislation and then dissolve, having done all that is possible.

When I came to my department five years ago the number of letters per month was 44,014, whereas to-day the number per month is 84,999, or just about twice the number received five years ago. In 1914-15 the total appropriation for the department was £123,757, whereas the appropriation last year from Consolidated Revenue, Trust Funds, and Loan Fund amounted to £703,000. The total number on the staff in 1914-15 was 340, and to-day the number is 484, excluding the staff of the Agricultural Bank, which has now been taken over by my department.

I appreciate very much what the hon. member for Windsor has said with reference to the Under Secretary, Mr. Scriven. I think Mr. Scriven is one of the most popular public servants in the State, and a man from whom I shall feel the wrench of parting keenly. There is a lot of the man about Mr. Scriven. He is a manly officer. Unfortunately he lives in an age when young men are expected to take control of things. Something has been said about Government by the grey heads. It is pleasing to me, as one who is getting up in years, to see that the present British Cabinet is composed of men who are mostly over the age of fifty-five years.

While the importance of the inexorable position is realised and Mr. Scriven has to retire—he has been granted extensions on several occasions amounting in the aggregate to two or three years—I personally will feel his severance with the department. I recognise that his retirement is inevitable, and that the younger men have to come along and take the place of older men. I hope that they will make an effort not only to do as well as but better than their predecessors.

Hon. W. N. Gillies.]

[12.30 p.m.]

Mr. BRAND: I hope that you will be able to get a successor within your own department.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I hope that I shall not have to go outside of the department for his successor, and I can assure hon. members that I will not do so if I can secure a suitable man from within the department. I realise that claimants for the position will be numerous, but I have been long enough in the department to know what I want, and I am going to make the very best effort to secure a man out of my department.

Amongst the numerous criticisms levelled by hon. members opposite—I cannot detail all that was said—were charges of failure made against the department and myself, and all other references that were made in regard to the department and myself. It must be admitted by anyone listening to the criticism that it has been very contradictory. One hon. member did not believe in the employment of experts in connection with the cotton industry. Some were of opinion that the cotton specialist, Mr. Wells, who is drawing a big salary, should be sent away and that a farmer should be allowed to guide the destinies of the cotton industry. On the other hand the hon. member for Carnarvon suggested that the Government should appoint more experts to deal with pests in sheep, and he emphasised the fact that the losses—he is altogether wrong there—during the last few years have been entirely due to the fact that the department has only two small salaried men as sheep experts. Taking the criticism all through there has been quite a lot of inconsistencies. That is only natural, as hon. members cannot be expected to think through the same quill in regard to criticism. If I do not reply to all the criticism that has been levelled, I hope that hon. members will not think that it was through want of courtesy on my part, because time alone would not permit of its being done.

I want to call attention to one matter in particular. The hon. member for Lockyer repeated the time-worn statement about men leaving the land and going to the city. I admit that is a very useful subject for politicians to talk about, especially politicians who represent country districts. There are many reasons for it. It is obvious that hon. members have thought that the mere citation of figures proves their contentions, but what we want to do is to examine the position and see if they do prove what was asserted. The tendency for people to leave the land for the city is a modern one that is not confined to Queensland or Australia.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: At the Science Congress sitting in Adelaide a few days ago one of the lecturers pointed out one of the causes, which is not generally recognised or referred to by politicians, is the progress of science and machinery. The politician generally said that it was part of the duty of the Secretary for Agriculture to prevent the flow of population from the country to the city, and attributed the fact to the conditions in the city being too good. I do not subscribe to that doctrine. It is not that the conditions of the city are too good but because the conditions in the country are not good enough.

Mr. BRAND: That is what we say.

[Hon. W. N. Gillies.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No. The hon. member for Lockyer—I took down his exact words and they are to be found in "Hansard"—pointed out that taxation and high wages are responsible for the unnatural tendency for people to leave the land and come to the city. There are many reasons for it. City life has many attractions, but it has no attractions for me. It has no attractions for many men who desire to go on the land, but the solution of marketing, which is not sufficiently emphasised in this Chamber, is one that will largely settle this problem. This is a matter that has not been given consideration to in the past because the farmers were not organised. The legislation that the Government have introduced of recent years to permit the farmers to organise, to pool their products, and make provision for the better marketing of their products all tends to a stabilisation of prices. Other States in the Commonwealth are also giving attention to this matter.

I wish to reply particularly to the statements of the hon. member for Lockyer in regard to land settlement. He said that land settlement was not progressing in Queensland as it ought. I will quote the latest figures available in the "Commonwealth Year Book" and they will, perhaps, help hon. members to deal with the matter. Hon. members have in the course of the debate complained of the delay in tabling departmental reports, but these reports are made available a great deal in advance of the reports of other States and the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth Statistician is a year behind in his statistics. The reason why our reports are not furnished earlier is because 70 per cent. or 80 per cent. of them have to be collected by the police and other State officers, and sometimes have to be returned two or three times before a correct return can be secured. Agricultural statistics are important, and, if the figures are to be furnished, we must wait until the State Statistician has compiled them. The latest figures in regard to land settlement in the "Commonwealth Year Book" are up to the end of 1921. The first figures are those relating to the area under crop as follows:—

| Area under Crops. | | | |
|-------------------|------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Year. | New South Wales. | Victoria. | Queensland. |
| | Acres. | Acres. | Acres. |
| 1906 .. | 2,826,657 | 3,303,586 | 559,753 |
| 1914 .. | 4,807,001 | 4,622,759 | 732,568 |
| 1921 .. | 4,445,828 | 4,530,312 | 804,507 |

These figures show that from 1914 to 1921 there was a decrease in the areas under crop in New South Wales of 7.5 per cent. as compared with 1914, a decrease in Victoria of 1.9 per cent., and an increase of 1.5 per cent. in Queensland. That just about blows out the hon. member's statements concerning land under crop.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I will now go into the question of land settlement for the benefit of the hon. member for Lockyer. After all, figures may be somewhat misleading in regard to land settlement. No Government can create or make land. The eyes of the country were picked out of Queensland before the Labour party came into power.

Mr. HARTLEY: The freehold was sold for a mere song.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is so. It was sold in many cases to allow of what is termed the opening up of the country, but it was really making the country available to the speculator and enabling that individual to make a profit out of the people who really wanted to use the land. I find that the figures in regard to land settlement for the same period are—

| Year. | New South Wales. | Victoria. | Queensland. |
|---------|------------------|------------|-------------|
| | Acres. | Acres. | Acres. |
| 1906 .. | 32,486,086 | 22,964,929 | 14,585,560 |
| 1914 .. | 39,825,380 | 24,138,965 | 16,244,541 |
| 1921 .. | 42,866,983 | 24,903,109 | 17,152,428 |

These figures show that from 1914 to 1921 there was an increase of the land under settlement in New South Wales of 7.6 per cent., an increase in Victoria of 3.1 per cent., and an increase in Queensland of 5.5 per cent.

Mr. MORGAN: You know that you have more land here to settle than in those other States, and those figures are therefore misleading.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The figures I have quoted are convincing. Politicians like the hon. member for Lockyer make out cases for themselves. I am just quoting the bare figures in reply to his assertion, and they are, in my opinion, very convincing.

At 12.40 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: As the hon. member for Windsor rightly pointed out, there is really no decrease in the vote for the Department of Agriculture. I want to say, in regard to the Council of Agriculture, that the Government first of all undertook to pay the expenses of the provisional council and, owing to the fact that the season was bad and the organisation was not complete, the Government undertook the expense for a further year. The Council of Agriculture wisely decided to oppose a levy on the people who were receiving the benefit of the Council's operations. I remember that more than one hon. member opposite said—and I agreed with it—that the organisation would never be any good until the farmers had to pay for it themselves. Anything that is worth having is worth paying for. However, the farmers were not asked to do that. The Government were prepared to subsidise a fund for five years for the purpose of the Council of Agriculture carrying out its functions, that subsidy to be to the extent of pound for pound.

That enabled us to reduce this vote by £11,000 this year, thanks to the decent season—which is the first good season Labour has experienced since coming into power in Queensland.

Mr. BRAND: Pull your left leg. (Opposition laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The laugh of the hon. member for Carnarvon always reminds me of those beautiful words of Goldsmith—

“The watch-dog's voice that bay'd the whispering wind,

And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind.”

Then drought relief was given to the extent of £30,000, railway freights for the relief of starving stock £5,000. Those items really account for the difference in the vote.

One hon. member of the Opposition—I think it was the hon. member for Nanango—suggested that I should use my influence to see that the vote of the Department of Agriculture was not cut down. No doubt the hon. member would say the same thing to the Secretary for Railways with regard to railway fares and freights—that the Secretary for Railways should use his influence to see that the vote for his department was not cut down. If he wanted a school in his electorate, the hon. member would use the same argument to the Secretary for Public Works.

We have not yet acquired the art of making money. I remember Mr. Denham, when he was Premier of this State and I introduced a deputation to him from both sides of the Chamber urging the introduction of a Main Roads Act, saying that he had not discovered any modern alchemist in Queensland—that the Government were not able to dig wealth out of the ground, but simply had to take it from one or the other processes available—land tax or income tax—otherwise they would have to borrow, and they were not prepared to do that. It remained for the Labour party to introduce the Main Roads Act, which has proved a boon to the people of Queensland.

One hon. member wanted the figures for drought relief. Drought relief was provided to the extent of £20,000 in the 1923-1924 Estimates. This was exceeded, and further provision was made to the extent of £30,782, so that the total expenditure on drought relief last year was £64,468 7s. 3d. Fodder relief was granted to 2,150 farmers, the total amount being £53,486. Personal relief was granted to 612 farmers. This was in the nature of cash to assist farmers to buy the necessary commodities for themselves and families, and the amount was £10,957. That makes the total vote. Then we have railway freights for starving stock.

Mr. HARTLEY: Do those come under the heading “Doles?”

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No. I do not think we should call them doles. That insulting term is only used to apply to the poor unfortunate wage-earner who happens to be out of work. If he and his wife and family are starving in the city through no fault of their own and they have to apply for the relief placed at their disposal by a humane Government, that insulting term is used. When the relief applies to the man on the land the term is not used.

Mr. EDWARDS: That is not fair. The farmers have to pay back the amounts.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member for Nanango has endeavoured to impress me with the necessity of looking after the man on the land. There is no necessity to do that because I have been on the land as long as the hon. member, and probably I have done more pioneering work than the hon. member. No doubt, if I go on the land again I shall do as well out of it as the hon. member.

Mr. EDWARDS: You know you have been a failure.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There is no need for the hon. member or

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his party to attempt to direct my attention to the needs of the man on the land. These advances are made to the farmers, and they are expected to pay the amount back. At the same time the Government are not unduly exacting. The farmer has twelve months in which to repay the amount, and, if he is not able to do so in that time, he will not be pressed. I have always suggested that the farmer does not want charity; he wants justice.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. EDWARDS: We agree with that.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The vote for freights for starving stock amounted to £5,000—a pretty large figure. The amount actually expended was £4,000.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. gentleman will be able to deal with that on the vote for "Miscellaneous Services."

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: In connection with the reports from the Department of Agriculture and Stock, I know that hon. members on both sides of the Chamber are anxious to get hold of the reports from the various departments before we deal with the Estimates of any particular department. The fault is not mine. I shall quote the dates when the report of the Department of Agriculture and Stock was submitted over a number of years—

1919—Report tabled 6th November, 1919.
1920—Report tabled 2nd December, 1920.
1921—Report tabled 26th October, 1921.
1922—Report tabled 11th July, 1923
(during the recess).

And the same thing applies to the last report, which was tabled during the recess. Therefore there is nothing new about the report of the Department of Agriculture and Stock being delayed until at least October. We are unable to furnish a report because the figures have not yet been received from the Government Statistician.

Reference was made by the hon. member for Windsor to maize silos, and I agree with what the hon. member said about maize products. I went fully into this matter, which, like many other things, is talked about because it sounds well to say that we should utilise our various by-products, but I maintain that, if we have no market for the product, it is no use talking about settling people on the land and opening up country. Those are all fancy phrases, but those who use them overlook the most important thing, that we must provide markets for the agriculturist after he has produced his crop. The agriculturist takes a risk as to seasons, as seasons cannot be regulated by the Government or by the agriculturist himself. He also takes a risk with regard to pests. The Government are attempting to deal with this trouble as best they can. After the agriculturist has produced his crop and has been lucky enough to get a good season and has successfully fought the pests, he has the spectacle of the bottom falling out of the market through lack of organisation. Instead, therefore, of talking about opening up country and putting people on the land, we should pay a little more attention to the more important problem of finding a market for the produce.

That brings me to that oft-quoted phrase "Cost of production." I do not say that that is not the right basis, but, like many other things, it is talked about in a loose

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kind of way without paying any attention to what the phrase means, because the cost of production, as the hon. member for Windsor emphasised, differs between farm and farm, between man and man, and from day to day. To-day a man may have a good up-to-date dairy herd and to-morrow, through some disease, he may lose half his herd. After all, whose cost of production are we going to take? That of the man with the hoe, struggling along on inferior land with the worst possible farm, or that of the man with the best up-to-date farm, the best land, the best agricultural machinery, and unlimited capital? I admit the cost of production is the right basis on which to pay farmers, and all one can do is to take the law of averages over a term of years and for a number of farmers engaged in an industry. By that means you will be able to arrive at what is called the "cost of production." We are all consumers, but unfortunately we are not all producers. Therefore it has always been my policy to look after the producer, because the consumer can look after himself. The consumer may happen to be a wealthy, idle parasite, doing no useful work at all. The word "producer" in its broadest sense applies to every man in the community who is doing any useful work either with his brains or his hands. The cost of production should be the basis of payment; and a reasonable reward for the labour of all those engaged in the agricultural or any other industry, whether they do work for themselves or work for wages, is the policy of the Labour party.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: What about "production for use and not for profit?"

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am quite prepared to discuss that question with the hon. member at the proper time, but not now. All production is for use, but, fortunately for the hon. member he belongs to that class which is able to get profits without any production at all.

I agree that the question of maize silos is one of the very greatest importance to the maizegrowers, and I was a little surprised to hear the hon. member for Nanango say that he had always been in favour of a compulsory maize pool. I apologise to him for believing that he was against the formation of the recent maize pool because he did not think there was sufficient storage facilities available for the storage of maize. However, he has assured the Committee that he has always been in favour of a compulsory maize pool.

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

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I admit that, if a compulsory maize pool were formed, the large quantities of maize now being shipped away which was referred to by the hon. member for Windsor would be in the hands of the pool, which would be able to regulate the market and export the surplus, and by that means be able to get a better price for the maizegrower. At the present time the maizegrower is perhaps not getting the cost of production, and, if he is not going to get the cost of production next season, he is not going to grow maize at all. The farmer, like everyone else, is not in the business for the benefit of his health. He engages in the calling that pays him best, and, if the sugar-growing is more profitable than maizegrowing and he

can get a sugar farm, he will grow sugarcane. In order to put the maize-growing industry on a proper footing it is necessary to establish grain-handling facilities and maize silos in all the maize-growing districts. We have one in the north of Queensland that is going to be a success. It will be a success because the area is isolated and because the Atherton district is the most prolific maize-growing centre in Australia. The maize-handling and dry storage scheme there will enable maize to be brought to a central depot, properly classified, dried and stored, and the farmer will then be able to get an advance from the Maize Pool Board. In that way he will get the fullest possible reward for his labour. The scheme will not be complete until the whole of the maize-growers in Australia form such pools and have storage accommodation provided for them. That brings me to the question of the Commonwealth doing something to assist in the establishment of maize silos throughout Australia.

Mr. MORGAN: Will that northern maize stand transport?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Most of it will. The Atherton maize got a bad reputation because in the early days the Chinese were large growers of maize. As is well known, a large number of the Chinese are unscrupulous, and they put maize on the market in a very bad condition, but now the quality is good. There is nothing new about maize silos. When I was in Melbourne recently I approached the Commonwealth Treasurer and asked him to extend to the Queensland maize-growers the facilities that his Government had extended to the wheat-growers of Western Australia, South Australia, and New South Wales. Dr. Earle Page said that, if the Queensland producers could formulate a workable scheme that would benefit the maize-growers of the whole of Australia, he would be justified in favourably considering such a scheme and in granting some financial assistance. What I would suggest is that the Commonwealth make available, through the State, money to enable the growers to establish maize-handling schemes in Queensland—probably one in Brisbane to deal with the maize grown on the Downs, and one in the Burnett, and then have a maize pool for the whole of the State—then follow that up with an agitation in the South. After all, our pools are of no use unless they are followed up by pools in the southern States. This has been brought home to us in regard to butter, fruit, and in regard to everything else. We are up against Section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution, which provides that free trade shall exist between the States. My own opinion is that that section of the Constitution does not apply, the High Court ruling notwithstanding. I do not think the framers of the Federal Constitution ever intended that the primary producers of the different States should suffer. Section 92 was originally intended to apply to customs duties only; but the various High Court rulings make it impossible for the State of Queensland to make effective a pool system to give protection to the primary producers of this State.

That brings me to the question of the stabilisation of the prices of dairy produce. There has been a good deal of criticism and some political capital made out of the efforts of the Council of Agriculture to get

the Commonwealth Government to agree to an Act to make it possible for the dairy farmers of the Commonwealth to regulate local prices, and deal with interstate sales and with the exportable surplus. It might be pointed out by me that the criticisms that have been made in this Chamber with regard to that particular matter have not been altogether fair, because the State has done all it could. The Premier of Queensland has wired to the Commonwealth Prime Minister telling him that the Queensland Government were behind the move of the Council of Agriculture for the stabilisation of dairy products. We are consistent in that.

Mr. MORGAN: Were any conditions attached to that wire?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No condition at all. We simply stated that we were behind the scheme. I put the scheme before the Premier the day he arrived back from England, and I said we were quite justified in agreeing to the suggestion of the Council of Agriculture to ask the Commonwealth Government to give assistance to the scheme. I am very sorry that it is not the policy of the Prime Minister or the policy of his party to allow farmers to have such control.

Mr. MORGAN: They are bringing in a Bill to-day.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I saw the Prime Minister in Melbourne the night before I left, and he promised me that a Bill would be introduced, but he said he wanted to look very carefully into it to see what powers it conferred. I understand that the Bill largely is on the lines of the New Zealand Act, which deals with the exportable surplus. That Act has accomplished a great deal, but the primary producers of Australia expected a great deal more from the Prime Minister. They expected him to give power to the producers themselves to regulate prices in regard to interstate sales. He is not prepared to do that, and, if time permitted I would give my views with regard to the proposal for an excise and bounty, with which I entirely disagree.

Mr. MORGAN: You won't give us that power in Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You have got that power now. The power that the farmers in Queensland have is practically unlimited. I received a request from the butter factories—which request I am going to grant—to enable a butter pool to be established in this State.

Mr. MORGAN: The Commissioner of Prices will not allow them to fix a price.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: As regards the Commissioner of Prices keeping prices down as suggested by an hon. member yesterday, I would ask what is the attitude of the Prime Minister? The Prime Minister has set himself against this scheme because he says it involves price-fixing. The leader of the Opposition and members of the Country party should use their influence with the Prime Minister and his party to induce him and his Government to give the butter farmers of Australia what they have asked for in this regard.

Mr. MOORE: Are the butter factories or the butter producers going to have a vote on the butter pool?

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The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The request made to me is that the co-operative factories, who really represent the butter producers of this State, should be given the vote. The arguments used were that the time is so limited that the butter factories should be allowed to determine the question of the formation of a compulsory pool instead of the individual farmers. They also feared the danger that obtained in regard to the formation of a maize pool. I have dealt with the question of the stabilisation of dairy produce. I have also referred to the modern tendency, which the Opposition would like to ascribe to this Government, for the people to leave the land and come to the cities. I might mention

[2 p.m.] that at a Science Congress dealing with this matter one of the delegates in dealing with this modern tendency which is evident in every country pointed out a further reason why the change has taken place, and it is a very logical one. He said that, owing to the scientific growth in plant and machinery, the people on the land—perhaps not so much in this country as in other countries—are able to produce a great deal more by the adoption of scientific methods. The requirements of the people are met so far as primary products are concerned by a lesser number of employees because of the use of machinery and the application of science. That postulates that people will continue to aggregate in the cities, and also bears out the argument which I have often used that, notwithstanding the desire of many farmers to secure cheap labour, it is in the interests of the farmers that the workers in the city should be well paid. After all, the best market for the Australian farmer is the Australian workers. Of course, higher prices could sometimes be obtained in other parts of the world. We are told that we should get London parity; but, when that does not suit, increased prices are claimed. I have never advocated London parity or any other parity. I say that the Australian farmers should get the cost of production. Just as the farmers should receive a fair return, so should the workers in the cities be well paid. The Labour party are not responsible for the tendency of people to come from the country into the cities. The Labour Government have done more during the last eight or nine years in Queensland to improve the life of the man on the land than previous Governments did, and he is more prosperous to-day, in spite of the droughts and market fluctuations and other things over which we have no control. We have done more to improve the conditions of the man on the land—the man who is commonly called the backbone of the country—and to make him more prosperous and contented and to make things better for his wife and children than they have ever been before in any other State.

The sugar industry has been mentioned in connection with the question of stabilisation of dairy products, and that industry affords a very good illustration in that respect; but prices in the sugar industry were not stabilised and could not be stabilised by the Queensland Government alone. It could only be done by co-operation with the Commonwealth Government, and that applies to all our Australian industries in Queensland. We can only stabilise prices within the State if the other States do likewise. We might fix the price

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of wheat grown here, seeing that we do not produce enough for our own requirements, but under the Federal Constitution we cannot prevent any other State from sending cheap wheat into Queensland. If it had not been for the co-operation of the Commonwealth Government, we could not have stabilised the price of sugar. I want to make a brief reference to that. It does not come under this vote, but it is of great importance to us that the present control of the sugar industry not only gives the Australian consumer the cheapest and best sugar in the world, but it protects absolutely every individual employed in the industry.

The Arbitration Court—for years we fought to get it for the workers—protected the worker; the cane price legislation promulgated by this Government protected the interests of the farmer; the Sugar Acquisition Act—condemned by the party sitting opposite—enabled us to obtain the raw sugar at a payable price and provide for the refining and marketing of the sugar under agreement with the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, and to fix the price to the consumers in the capital cities of Australia at a figure which generally compares favourably with the prices paid by consumers in other parts of the world, even though they eat black-grown sugar. I say that that system is good, and I endeavoured to impress on every member of the Federal Parliament and of the Cabinet when I was in Melbourne, that there is an absolute necessity to extend it for at least ten years. I do not say that we should lay it down that the price should be fixed for ten years because that might not be fair, but the price should be fixed on the cost of production, and a tribunal might very well be set up under the agreement for the fixing of the price of sugar for a period—it might be three years or five years. The system of control is so complete and satisfactory and so consistent with the policy of a White Australia that everyone—irrespective of politics—as a Queenslander and an Australian should urge its continuance. I hope that the small section who are so favourably disposed to the Colonial Sugar Refining Company will not try to draw a red herring across the trail by talking about tariff protection. Tariff protection only protects one section. The present system protects the consumer, the wage-earner, the canecutter, the mill hand, the farmer, the raw sugar manufacturer, the refiner, and the general public.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We ask that the Commonwealth Government shall assist us likewise in stabilising the great dairying industry. I believe that in a few years Queensland will be the leading dairying State. We have more land capable of growing artificial grasses or producing cream or milk than any of the other States. The other States have the industry well established, whereas we are really only just making a start. When I tell hon. members that the value of the industry in 1914 was £2,200,000 and this year £5,000,000, I think they will agree that the dairying industry is going ahead. But it cannot continue to go ahead nor can it be placed on a sound footing unless some system is adopted whereby speculation in the product of the farmer can be stopped and the producer and consumer can be brought together. That can be done in my opinion only by a pooling

system whereby the butter-producing States of the Commonwealth—Queensland, New South Wales, and Victoria—will agree to come together with the Commonwealth under Federal legislation and supply the local market at a reasonable price. And no honest man, whether he be worker or idler, can expect any article produced by the farmer at less than the cost of production. If he does, he is an advocate for cheap labour, and this party do not stand for that. We have asked the Commonwealth Government, through the Council of Agriculture, to give approval to the scheme, but I am sorry to say that the policy does not meet with the views of the Prime Minister. He is prepared to meet us, perhaps, halfway, and give us an Act to deal with the exportable surplus, but, as I have already said, the best market for the Australian producer is the Australian market, and therefore the control of the Australian market is more important than the control of export, even though that is a very important matter. What is the attitude of the Prime Minister? He refuses to agree to our scheme because he says it means price-fixing. Every hon. member on the other side says that this is a price-fixing party, but at the same time he wants us to fix the price to the farmer on the basis of the cost of production. I have no objection to price-fixing so long as it recognises the cost of production, but I believe that if the price of anything is fixed by anybody, it should be fixed by the person who has that article to sell. He should at least have a say in it. If the wage of the worker is fixed by any one party, it should be by the person who has his labour to sell, and if the price of the farmer's produce is fixed by anybody, it should be done by the farmer who has that produce to sell. The representatives of the dairy industry offered to agree with the Prime Minister that he should set up a tribunal representative of the consumers and the producers and the Government to fix the price from time to time, based on the cost of production. He was not prepared to do it.

Then they suggested that the price might be fixed on the exportable value of the butter. The Prime Minister was not prepared to do that, but he was prepared to introduce a Bill—I understand it is to be introduced to-day or to-morrow in the Federal Parliament—setting up a board of producers who will control exports. That is a very important thing, because nearly every exportable article from Australia has suffered because of the carelessness in connection with exports. The Massey Government in New Zealand recognised that, and during the last few years they have passed two Acts, one dealing with the export of meat and the other dealing with the export of butter, and that legislation has been so successful that the good name of New Zealand in connection with meat, lambs, bacon, pork, and butter will be maintained. It would have been a good thing for Australia if such a board had been set up many years ago before we suffered in the matter of our exports. I am going to deal with that phase of the question in connection with the Cotton Bill to be introduced in the near future, and I shall endeavour to show the absolute necessity for seeing that nothing but the best is exported from Australia, because our good name has suffered on account of almost everything we have exported from this country, with the exception

of merino wool, of which we produce the best in the world and for which there is an unlimited demand. Where we have had to compete with such butter as Danish butter and New Zealand butter, we have suffered because of the carelessness in export. The Prime Minister will have accomplished something if he places in the hands of an intelligent board a piece of machinery that will enable him to see that exports are properly marked and only the best exported.

Mr. MORGAN: He is going to prevent blending. That is a very important thing.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That bears out my contention that it is important that all articles exported from Australia should be properly graded, properly branded, and sold in an honest way. You cannot hoodwink or deceive the consumers all the time. You may be able to deceive them for a time, but, if they cannot get a good article, they will go elsewhere for it. I think that the thanks of every dairy farmer in Queensland are due to the new Federal member for Capricornia, Mr. Forde, for the way he has acted in connection with butter stabilisation. (Opposition laughter.)

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Mr. Forde has done good work not only on the floor of the House but with his own party. Members of the Federal Labour party representing industrial centres, particularly in these times of difficulties, have to look after the affairs of men who have families to care for. For the life of me I cannot understand how a man can live and pay rent, water rates, lighting, etc., and rear a big family on the basic wage. Members representing industrial centres where the workers have to watch every item of the family budget are very naturally suspicious about any legislation that may be brought in that is going to increase the cost of living. I give them credit for that. That is their job. Mr. Forde has been able to demonstrate to his party that the dairy farmer is a worker in every sense of the word, and works all the hours God made and seven days a week. He has been able to make out a case to show that the dairy farmers are entitled to a fair and reasonable price—not the price that would be charged by a middleman—he has been able to convince his party to agree to a policy that will bring the farmers and consumers together without unduly overcharging the consumers, and giving the farmer a reasonable reward for his labour. I think that every dairy farmer throughout Australia owes Mr. Forde a debt of gratitude, and it is a pity that some of the other Queensland Federal members have not followed the same example and endeavoured to bring about the adoption of a stabilisation scheme. Had the Nationalist Federal members and the Nationalist members of the Queensland, New South Wales, and Victorian Parliaments and the members representing the farming districts in those Parliaments done the same yeoman work as Mr. Forde has done, I am satisfied the Bruce-Page combination would not have dared to turn down the proposal.

Just one or two words in regard to the Council of Agriculture. Of course, it would not do for the Opposition to admit that the advice given them by the "Producers' Review" in Toowoomba two years ago—for the

Country party to get right behind the scheme—was correct, and to admit for once in their lifetime that the Labour party had done something for the good of Queensland in establishing the Council. It would have been a statesmanlike attitude for the Country party to have adopted if they had said, "We have been opposed to you all along; we don't believe in high wages; we believe in low wages, land speculation, and all that sort of thing, but for once you have done something for the benefit of the farmer and the man on the land." Instead of doing that, they have not only criticised the Council of Agriculture in this Chamber, but they have gone through the country whispering and trying to do all they could to injure the movement to organise the farmers.

Mr. MORGAN: That is not true.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Before the farmers could do anything they had to organise. They had to organise not as sectional bodies but as one body. The small parochial idea went around that it was not to the interests of the fruitgrower to organise with the sugar-grower, that it was not in the interests of the sugar-grower to organise with the dairyman, and so on. The need for the organisation of the whole of the men on the land into one body and not sectional bodies was always stressed by me. The whole of their interests are closely allied. For instance, the more workers there are employed in the sugar industry the more butter they will consume. So it operates right through. Every farmer should be joined up in one national organisation to fight for the well-being of the farming community, not only in this State but throughout Australia. That was the first step, and after that step had been taken and the farmers were joined up in one organisation—and our anticipation that in the course of time the Australian Sugar Producers' Association, the United Cane Growers' Association, and the Southern Queensland Fruit Growers' Society will merge into the Council of Agriculture have been realised—the time would arrive when that complete organisation must be organised on a commodity basis. The Government did that in regard to the wheat industry before they organised the farmers at all. We decided that the farmers should have a good market for their wheat. We did the same thing last year in regard to the fruitgrower. We realised that it was necessary that the fruit-growers should not only market their own fruit, but set up special legislation so that they might do so. The same thing must apply to all other industries. The maize-growers, the dairy farmers, and the sugar-growers must have their commodity boards, as I mentioned a while ago. That is a natural corollary to the organisation of the farmers. But the complete organisation of the farmers should take place first. The Government gave them two years to organise. They found the money to enable the farmers to organise. The total amount paid by the Queensland Government to enable them to do so was—

| | £ | s. | d. |
|-----------|-----|---------|-----|
| 1921-1922 | ... | 2,120 | 2 5 |
| 1922-1923 | ... | 26,361 | 2 0 |
| 1923-1924 | ... | 32,500 | 0 0 |
| Total | ... | £60,981 | 4 5 |

These figures show that the Government provided sufficient money to enable the farmers

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to organise because they recognised that the farmers were on a somewhat different footing to the wage-earners and public servants—those who work for wages and salaries. The problems of those who work for wages and salaries are not so great as those of the farmers. The farmers have problems to solve, and they are the most difficult individuals under the sun to organise. That is because they have not got the time to mix with their fellow men, as the people in the cities do, in order to exchange ideas. They are isolated on their farms, which makes it difficult to organise them. That is why they are exploited by the middlemen, who calls them "the backbone of the country" when it suits him. We recognised that it was necessary to give the farmers machinery to enable them to organise, together with Acts of Parliament, and we provided £60,000 odd for the purposes of paying organisers to go round and assist them to organise.

With regard to the scheme of sectional marketing, the Opposition have endeavoured to make a good deal of capital out of this, and during my absence in the South they introduced a deputation to the Premier asking for the industry to be organised on a commodity basis. There is nothing new about that idea. As I have said, that has already been done with wheat, sugar, and fruit. In order to show that the Council of Agriculture recognise this idea, and that I recognised it when I discussed it with nineteen farmer representatives, I shall quote a few extracts. It must be realised that human nature cannot be changed in one decade. What concerns the sugar-grower concerns the fruit-grower, and vice versa. While there must be a central organisation to speak on behalf of the farmers of Queensland, the industries themselves must be organised on a commodity basis, and we have taken steps to do this. To show that that action is not based on the deputation which waited on the Premier, or on recent Opposition propaganda, I point out that on the 5th March of this year the "Daily Mail" made a statement regarding organisation on an industrial basis.

Mr. MORGAN: Four days after our meeting.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There is no connection at all there. I can go further back and relate my own advocacy of organisation on a commodity basis. On 8th March, 1924, "The Queensland Producer" made a statement with regard to reorganisation on an industry basis.

On 28th February, 1924, proposals regarding reorganisation were submitted orally by the Director at the Council meeting. The Council resolved that proposals should be submitted in writing for consideration at the May meeting of the Council.

On 25th May, 1924, proposals were considered at a meeting of the Council, but in view of the drastic change involved, and having regard to the fact that this was the last meeting for the financial year, it was resolved that the matter be referred to the incoming Council in July.

On 24th July, 1924, there was a meeting of the Council of Agriculture. Five methods of reorganisation were submitted, and they were given considerable consideration, but were deferred until the September meeting.

I hold in my hand a page from the "Queensland Producer" of 10th September,

1924, dealing with the "Queensland Producers' Reorganisation Scheme." It says—

"It will be remembered that on the occasion of its July meeting the Council after fully considering five alternative schemes for the reorganisation of the Queensland Producers' Association, decided to remit the matter to the administrative committee for the purpose of framing proposals having for their object organisation on a commodity basis, while at the same time making provision for the retention of district councils."

And I might mention that that is one of the difficulties. Some people believe that the district councils should cease to function, and that it is a disability or obstacle in the way of organising on a commodity basis. The district council may operate where sugar is grown, where fruit is grown, or probably where dairying is carried on. If we want to organise on a commodity basis, some people say it is necessary to abolish the district councils altogether. That is not acceptable, and I do not think it is wise. I think it is preferable that the district councils should continue to function in a modified way. The article continues—

"The matter was fully considered by the administrative committee and automatically came before the Council for consideration at its meeting held on 4th September. The provisions of the scheme were considered by the Council in detail, and eventually it was amended in the following particulars:—

Clause 1—Substitution of nineteen district councils in lieu of seventeen.

(Note.—This of course entailed consequential alteration throughout certain other clauses.)

Clause 2—Suggestions amended to provide for constitution of district councils as follows:—

| | | | | |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Dairying | ... | ... | ... | 6 |
| Grain and fodder | ... | ... | ... | 4 |
| Sugar | ... | ... | ... | 4 |
| Fruit | ... | ... | ... | 2 |
| Cotton | ... | ... | ... | 2 |
| Poultry | ... | ... | ... | 1." |

There is no occasion to read any more of that. That is sufficient proof that the Council itself has been quite alive to the necessity of organising both on a district and a commodity basis.

With regard to the notice of motion given by the hon. member for Mirani—which is largely fireworks—I would point out that there is no occasion for him to move that motion. The Council of Agriculture can organise on a commodity basis without any alteration of the law. The law anticipated that this phase of organisation must take place in the course of time, and the Act provides that organisation of industry can take place on a commodity basis. I have no doubt that, when the hon. member gets the opportunity, he will deal with this question, but I tell him now that there is no occasion for him to move that motion. There is no occasion to alter the law to give effect to the scheme. The Council of Agriculture has been advocating for months past for organisation on a commodity basis.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: He wants the credit.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is something like the story I heard of a very big man with a very small wife. When she got into a temper she used to get a whip and give him a hiding, and one of his neighbours said to him one day, "Why do you allow such a small, insignificant woman to flog you?" He said, "It pleases her and it does not hurt me." (Laughter.) If it pleases the Opposition to endeavour to claim credit for this scheme, it certainly does not hurt me.

Mr. MORGAN: Why all these tears?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There are no tears. I am rather gloating over my success! If it pleases the Opposition, it certainly does not hurt me, and it certainly does not carry much weight in the country.

Before I sit down I want to say a few words about cotton.

The CHAIRMAN: I told hon. members that they could discuss the cotton vote together with the present vote. Those who took advantage of that privilege cannot speak on the cotton vote. But those who have spoken to the main vote and not on cotton will be at liberty to speak on cotton when that vote is under consideration.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The cotton question looms largely in the public eye at the present time, and therefore you gave permission to hon. members, if they chose to take advantage of it, to talk all round the compass, so to speak, on this vote. All that I intend to do is to speak on this vote. If there is any specific question raised on other votes, I shall of course be pleased to give all the information available. I notice that the hon. member for Burnett has given notice of a question for to-morrow, which is rather in keeping with the hon. member's general attitude of criticising by asking questions. However, I shall deal with the question now. I want to deal with an aspect of the cotton question that is generally overlooked by our critics. Let me emphasise again that there was no cotton industry in Queensland until the Government adopted a wise cotton policy and guaranteed the farmers a price that was unheard of before, and which induced thousands of people in Queensland to put idle land into use. I said in Melbourne that land that had been utilised by wallabies and kangaroos ever since Captain Cook sailed under the shadows of Bellenden Ker had been put into use, and for the first time was put under crop.

Mr. MORGAN: He never did that.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, he did in an old ship called the "Endeavour." Land that has been lying idle to our knowledge for 150 years for the first time was brought into use and put under cultivation because the Queensland Government had sufficient vision to guarantee a price to induce farmers to grow cotton. That was completely overlooked by those people who talk about political interference and about experts destroying the industry. There was no industry at all until this Government adopted a policy that brought the industry into existence. The total value of the cotton crop in 1919 was less than £1,000, whereas last year, notwithstanding the drought, the cotton crop of Queensland—due to our policy alone—was worth about £300,000. (Hear, hear!) That should be kept in mind, and, having guaranteed a price for

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the cotton, it became an obligation on the Government to see that that cotton was ginned and sold at a profit.

The farmers themselves made no attempt to establish ginneries, and we had no alternative but to establish another State enterprise in the shape of State ginneries or to make an agreement with the

[2.30 p.m.] British Australian Cotton Association for the ginning of the cotton.

But we had a further obligation than that. Having guaranteed the farmers a price, we had an obligation to the taxpayer to see that the cotton was properly and efficiently marketed. We had to make arrangements to market the cotton so that the taxpayer was not put to too great a loss. The taxpayer up to to-day will be called upon to find £69,000, which amounts to about 10 per cent. of the cotton crop and a bonus of 10 per cent. to the cotton-growers of Queensland. It is only right that the people of Queensland should understand that there would be no cotton industry in Queensland to-day if the State Government had not guaranteed that price, and, having guaranteed that price, there was an obligation to the taxpayers to see that the cotton was ginned and properly marketed. That was the justification for following the advice of the British Cotton Spinners, and whether it was bad advice or not remains to be seen. I had a conversation with the Prime Minister in Melbourne, and I might mention by the way that the Commonwealth Government have definitely declined to recognise ratoon cotton. They say that they will not guarantee ratoon cotton under any circumstances—neither will we—but they will allow the growers to grow it under certain conditions. The Prime Minister told me that all the information he was able to collect in the old country was against ratoon cotton. He said, "The question of whether your action in 1923 was right or whether it is right in 1924, can only be proved by experience." I agree with him. The Government are now allowing ratoon cotton to be grown under certain conditions, but there will be no guarantee in regard to it, and the ratoon stalks will have to be destroyed in accordance with the provisions of the Act. There will be no guarantee to growers of ratoon cotton, but there will be a guarantee to growers of plant cotton of the best quality.

Somebody has said something about Mr. Bond. Mr. Bond, who is the only spinner of cotton in Australia, was present at the All Australian Cotton Conference. He went out of his way to make a special plea for ratoon cotton, but, when I put the definite question to him as to whether he was prepared to allow the Queensland Government to substitute ratoon cotton for plant cotton in regard to his requirements he said, "Certainly not." Yet he had the cast-iron cheek and the brazen effrontery to say that ratoon cotton was equally as good as plant cotton.

Mr. HARTLEY: He was knocked out on that.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He was definitely knocked out. If ratoon cotton is as good as plant cotton, why does he not say, "I will give you the same price for it." He knows that ratoon cotton is not as good as plant cotton. Generally speaking, it is recognised throughout the cotton growing world that ratoon cotton is not as good as plant cotton, and that was one reason for our banning of ratoon cotton.

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I want to call the attention of the cotton experts on the other side to the fact that Mr. Bond admitted, in reply to a question from Mr. Evans or some other person, that the cotton he was spinning was low counts—16s. to 20s.—and I am sure hon. members opposite know as much about that as I do. Low counts will not show the irregularities of staple which higher counts would show. People who understand the business know that. Mr. Bond admits that he is only spinning a cotton of that quality for certain work, and that it would be unfit for other classes of work. Mr. Daniel Jones made the statement that Mr. Bond was prepared to take all the ratoon cotton he could get and pay the same price as for plant cotton, but, when we called for tenders, Mr. Bond was not prepared to give the same price for ratoon cotton as for plant cotton. I do not blame him, because he is wise enough to know that annual cotton is superior to ratoon cotton.

Mr. SIZER: Did he not make an offer of a flat rate for the whole of the cotton in Queensland?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Not that I know of. If the hon. member can bring proof of that, I will give him credit for the statement.

Just one more word about cotton. We are all told that we should follow the advice of the farmers, but the Government, when they guaranteed a price, knew that the industry would be expanding, and they did the best they could by getting the very best advice from the countries where cotton was grown. They communicated with the Department of Agriculture in Washington and, on their recommendation, selected Mr. Wells. Some hon. member on the other side suggested that we could have got him at a lower salary, but we took him at his own offer, and I believe he is doing his job, although he does not claim to be an expert. He is called the cotton specialist or the cotton advisor, and he is advising the Government to the best of his ability. I think I am justified in saying that the recent decision of the Government to allow farmers to grow ratoon cotton has not been taken on the advice of Mr. Wells or Mr. Evans. Both of them condemn ratoon cotton. The time will come—the Prime Minister has said that the time may come—when cotton gets back to its normal price, when it will be found that ratoon cotton cannot be grown in Queensland. I hope that they are wrong and that we shall be able to continue to grow it. I know quite well that we can grow it and sell it now when the price is high—nobody can deny that. But what we do say is that ratoon cotton must not be allowed to damage the good name of Australia, and that there is a greater danger of pests attacking it than of attacking plant cotton. I think it was the hon. member for Cunningham who declared that they could not grow cotton on the Darling Downs. I asked him why, and he said, "Because wages are too high." That will be the next cry, of course. When the value of cotton goes down, when the existing world's shortage disappears and the guarantee comes to an end—because so far as I am concerned it is going to come to an end in 1926—and when the farmer has to gin his own cotton and market it himself, then we shall have the cry for cheap labour, and be told that the farmer cannot afford to pay high wages and grow ratoons. I shall not be very proud of

the advice I gave to the Queensland Government to put the cotton industry on a sound footing if in a few years' time the industry dwindles and dies. We grew cotton forty years ago, and also during the American civil war, when prices were high.

Mr. MORGAN: What killed it?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Low prices. The farmers have got to learn to grow good cotton. No Government are going to continue to guarantee any crop indefinitely. Anybody who says that any industry should be kept in swaddling clothes cannot know what is good for Australia. The farmer has to recognise that in two years' time he has to grow a cotton that will enable him to pay a decent wage to the man who picks it and at the same time permit him to compete in the world's market. If he is going to do that, he has got to produce the best cotton. One of the delegates at the Australian Cotton Conference—a cotton grower from Grafton—said, "I do not grow ratoon, and I hope I never shall. The slogan of the cotton grower should be 'the best is not too good.'" And that is my opinion with regard to cotton and everything else we produce in Australia.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I must not allow myself to be drawn into the cotton controversy with the Minister, who has the advantage of unlimited time whilst we are limited to twenty-five minutes in which to deal with the whole of the departmental vote. Therefore I am going to confine my remarks to the question before the House. I am not going to agree to the Minister's statement that he is not able to present the report of his department, because he is waiting for statistical returns from the Commonwealth.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I did not say that.

Mr. CORSER: The Minister said that the latest figures from the Commonwealth were not available, and therefore he was waiting.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I made a comparison. I said that the Commonwealth was twelve months behind the times.

Mr. CORSER: I have here the booklet on "Australian Statistics," in which are shown the 1923-1924 figures—showing that the booklet is right up to date. That was placed in the hands of every hon. member during this last week, and, if the hon. gentleman had read it, he would have found that the figures on the various pages go up to the 30th June last.

Mr. HARTLEY: The hon. member is wrong. Those statistics are for the year 1923.

Mr. CORSER: No, they are for the financial year 1923-1924. The Minister has to some extent agreed with the hon. member for Windsor in his comparisons and statements. He agreed with the hon. member in his criticism of this department.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: For a start, he is a very decent man.

Mr. CORSER: That is right. That is more than we can sometimes say of the Minister. The Minister in dealing with this vote agrees with the statements by the hon. member for Windsor, yet in the country the people are told of what the middleman would do, how they would rob the farmers, and take for their livelihood something which they had not earned, and take it from the mouths of the mothers and children of those

on the land. Those are the statements made outside, yet in this Chamber, when the Minister wants some proof or some support of the wisdom of his actions and his administration he is proud to get up and say, "The hon. member for Windsor agrees with me." In fairness to the hon. member for Windsor, the next time the Minister and his colleagues go into country districts they should say that the policy of the hon. member for Windsor and the policy of the Labour party are the same to a great extent.

The Minister says that the maize producers to-day are not enjoying the cost of production. That is to say, they are not obtaining a sufficient return to pay them for the cost of production. He is quite right in that statement; but why should he as a Minister and why should the Government place these maizegrowers up against the possibility of an industrial award?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Why did the hon. gentleman not support the proposal to form a maize pool?

Mr. CORSER: The hon. gentleman does not know how I voted on that question. I am not going to be drawn off my argument to deal with something that is a business matter concerning my farm. When the Industrial Arbitration Act was being amended in the direction of bringing rural workers under the Act we pointed out that, if the primary producers were able to obtain the full return for their labour, there would be no objection to compelling them to pay increased wages under an award. We are not against that.

Mr. HARTLEY: Yes, you are.

Mr. CORSER: The Minister agrees that the maizegrowers are not receiving even the cost of production, yet outside evidence is being collected on the question of bringing maizegrowers under an award. We do not find the Government or the journals associated with the Government so determined to get that evidence to-day. If we look for the reason, we shall find that very recently the "Daily Standard" and the "Railway Advocate" opposed the Government in their determination to give the farmers an opportunity of defending their case through the Council of Agriculture. An article appeared in the "Daily Standard" on 1st May last, which was reproduced in the "Railway Advocate" of the 10th May, which says—

"A matter of serious importance, not only to the members of the union directly concerned (the Australian Workers' Union), but to every unionist in this State and to the Labour movement generally, is that of the Council of Agriculture, primarily a Labour Government creation, in its declared intention of fighting in the Arbitration Court the rural workers' claim lodged by the Australian Workers' Union."

Since that challenge appeared in the "Standard," and was commented on by that journal, and since that article has been reprinted in the "Railway Advocate" the Government have adopted a lukewarm policy in regard to the collection of evidence. Are the Government to receive credit from both sections? Are they to play the game for the Australian Workers' Union or the game for the farmers? They cannot be on both sides.

Mr. COSTELLO: They cannot serve two masters.

Mr. Corser.]

Mr. CORSER: If they are going to support their masters, the Australian Workers' Union, they cannot serve their supposed master, the farmer. We, as representatives of the country and producing interests, claim that the Government are doing a serious injustice to both sections because they are not playing the game.

Mr. HARTLEY: Why don't you play the game yourself?

Mr. CORSER: The Emu Park Convention of the Labour party dictated the policy that the Arbitration Act should be amended so that it would include all workers, which included rural workers. Hon. members opposite have signed that platform, although they are not game to refer to it at the present time. What is the use of the Secretary for Agriculture saying that the Government are serious in their desire to assist the rural worker out of his trouble when at the same time he admits that he is not receiving what it costs to produce his produce?

The hon. gentleman dealt at some length with the stabilisation scheme of the Council of Agriculture, and he also dealt with that body. He insinuated that hon. members on this side opposed the Primary Producers' Organisation Act.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CORSER: What is the hon. gentleman's proof of that statement?

Mr. HARTLEY: "Hansard."

Mr. CORSER: "Hansard" does not support that statement. I will quote from "Hansard" to show that my statement is correct. During the debate on the Bill in 1922 the whole of the Country party supported it.

Mr. HARTLEY: They said it was a Bolshevistic scheme.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member for Dalby said it was socialism.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. member for Dalby did not say that it was socialism. He said that the Council of Agriculture with a Minister of a socialistic Government as its chairman would probably savour of socialism.

Mr. HARTLEY: You said it was a Ku Klux Klan.

Mr. CORSER: I said before the Government went to the country that, if the electors entrusted the government of the country to hon. members on this side of the Chamber, they would amend the Act to make it one under which farmers could organise for their own benefit and that we would remove its socialistic tendencies and its confiscatory provisions. I did not seek the vote of any person pretending to be a supporter of the Opposition when he was really a member of the Government party. Such a person I called a political Ku Klux Klan.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order! Order! The hon. member is not speaking to the vote.

Mr. CORSER: I am not going to be drawn off the Council of Agriculture by the interjections of hon. members opposite. To show whether the Opposition supported this measure or not I would point out that seventeen useful amendments proposed from this side of the Chamber were accepted by the Government out of twenty-one that we proposed. One of the amendments which the Government did not accept was one proposing that the Secretary for Agriculture should not be

chairman of the Council of Agriculture. Let me read what I said in supporting the Bill in 1922—

"I am going to support the Bill. At the same time, I have not much time for the attacks by the Premier on the Country party when he visited country centres to launch the scheme. The Bill is not quite in conformity in detail with the scheme the Premier outlined. Nobody can cavil at the good things he claimed the measure would provide, and within its four walls we must look for the possibility of securing those good things to the primary producer. One great trouble is that the Bill limits the co-ordination or effort to the State, and that it does not give to the primary producers of Queensland the opportunity of becoming part of an organisation which is essential in their interests—an organisation which can extend itself throughout the Commonwealth and so bring the interests of the various industries together. Until that comes about we cannot get the best results in Australia in any of our rural industries."

We find those statements have been borne out. Even the Secretary for Agriculture himself said to-day that the primary producers, including the maizegrowers, should be combined throughout the whole length of the Commonwealth. I think the hon. gentleman will agree that he made that statement to-day. I made my reference in 1922, and it may be found on page 26 of "Hansard" of that year.

I am dealing with the Secretary for Agriculture's unfair and untrue statement that we were against the Primary Producers' Organisation Act. The only evidence the hon. gentleman has given is not that the fact appears in "Hansard" but that the Opposition went about whispering. We are not whisperers. I never whisper. I make my statements plainly here, and, if anybody is in the Chamber, he can generally hear them. I vote the way I think, and that is more than many hon. members opposite can say. To continue my extract of 1922—

"To-day we have in the different States people in the same industry working against each other's interests, fighting each other in various markets, whereas we should have an organisation combining industrially all the interests of the producer of a particular commodity right throughout Australia."

The other assertion made by the Secretary for Agriculture was that he claimed that the Country party were trying to get the benefit of the suggestion that we should organise industrially instead of by the present method of organising in districts. The hon. gentleman quoted certain extracts from the 1924 journals of the Council of Agriculture to bear out that contention. The hon. gentleman endeavours to prove that he and his associates, either in the Legislative Council or in this Chamber, were the first to mention this matter. In 1922—not 1924—I was responsible for making this statement in this Chamber, and this refers to the very matter that the Secretary for Agriculture claims the Labour party had invented in 1924. "Hansard" reports me as saying—

"The scheme which is advocated with no small degree of success by the Country

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party is the development of sectional interests, so that those in an industry shall control the industry in which they are interested. That is the best control. It is no good for a maize farmer to try and control the butter interests and it is no good constituting a board of men and saying to them, 'You are to control the butter industry,' when they might be fruit, maize, cotton, or timber men, or pig raisers."

That is the second statement in which I have to contradict the Secretary for Agriculture. The hon. gentleman said further that the Opposition claimed that one section is opposed to the other. We have never said that. Our words are clear—that the industries are best controlled by those who are engaged in those industries. I think that is a fair explanation of the position we have taken up. We secured seventeen amendments, and we only lost three or four amendments in the whole Bill. We have not been against the Bill, but we have supported it, and tried to make it what the Premier promised it would be when he launched it.

The Secretary for Agriculture made further statements with regard to the butter stabilisation scheme. What the Opposition have always opposed is the political propaganda of the Government and their friends in regard to the stabilisation scheme. That has in no way assisted the farmer. We have at all times condemned the Government and their friends for their action in drawing a political herring across the trail, and they now tell us that we made the scheme a political one. We have supported the scheme. Our leader has communicated that support to the proper authorities. Our Parliamentary Secretary has communicated that support to representatives in the Federal Parliament, so how can it be said that we have been against it? What we have said is that the Government are not and have not been sincere in their suggestion that they would like the Federal Government to allow the butter producer to fix a price for his own commodity. We say that the Government are not sincere in saying that they would support such a scheme. The Minister knows that he would not support a proposal to allow the butter producers to fix the price of their own commodity. Why pretend to the farmers, or why do their journals pretend, that they are supporting such a policy? Would the hon. gentleman give to the canegrower the right to fix the price for his cane? Would he give the beef man that right? If so, there is nothing to prevent the Government from doing it. The Commonwealth Government have not granted that right now. What they have refused is to have any interference between the States. They have agreed to give certain powers in respect of the exportable commodity, but within Australia they are throwing the onus on the States, so it is for the Minister to do what he considers best in the interests of the industry. During the last two or three years we have heard a considerable amount of talk about the organisation of industry and very little from it. If the Minister wants to develop agriculture, he must not only talk about organisation but must give to the directors in the various sub-departments of the Department of Agriculture full control of their sub-departments and some place in the agricultural movement to enable

them to proceed along right lines and secure the position that their titles entitle them to. I believe that, as well as organisation of industry, we should have the assistance of practical experts and develop our industries from those pivots. We should give to these directors full control and sufficient money to carry out their ideas in the interests of each branch of agriculture. Without touching on the cotton industry, I will say that, if any agriculturist wants an illustration of what can be done in that regard, he need only watch the experiments of Colonel Evans and Mr. Wells in their Durango cotton plots. They have selected seeds from the very best growths and propagated, as stud breeders would do, from the very best, so that in future we can be sure of a plant that will give increased production and every year have an opportunity of securing better seed which will give better results. The same should obtain in all our industries. We should give the experts an opportunity to carry out experiments and carry out the work that they are entitled to carry out.

The Minister claims that we were supporting and do support the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. There are not many members here who are supporters of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, but we do remember that the hon. gentleman gave the control of cotton in Queensland to the British-Australian Cotton Growers' Association because they have Government preference in the industry as against the grower.

I notice that the Mulgeldie farm is to be abolished. The State farms at Monal, Callide Valley, and Upper Burnett are to be continued. All three of these are in the Burnett electorate, which shows what an important electorate it is.

[3 p.m.] They are not abandoning them all; they are only closing one of them down. The Minister some time ago stated that in conformity with a promise made in this Chamber he was carrying out ratoon experiments at Monal and Melton. That may have been a misquotation of what he said, but the statement was made in the Press with very big headlines. I defy the Minister to deny it. Up to the present time he has not denied that these experiments were not carried out, and that there was no ratoon cotton grown in 1923 or 1924 at either Mulgeldie or Monal. He said that, in accordance with promises made, he was carrying out experiments at Monal and Melton. The result of those experiments is not known. Up to the present time there has not been one pound of ratoon cotton grown at either Mulgeldie or Monal, so the promise made to the Committee has not been fulfilled.

The next statement I have here is taken from "Smith's Weekly"—

"WHY QUEENSLAND GETS GOOD SETTLERS.
"ASK GILLIES, ACTING PREMIER.

"Three weeks ago 'Smith's' told the story of Alexis Savoroff, and pointed out that such a desirable immigrant ought to be given a fighting chance.

"As the Commonwealth Government had failed to assist him, 'Smith's' Brisbane office advised Savoroff to see the Queensland Government.

"He did. This is how Mr. Gillies, the Acting Premier, treated him. . . .

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"He gave Mr. Gillies a list of his machinery, and the prices he required. His tractor he priced at £1,000, and mentioned that if he could sell this his financial problem would be solved.

"The Acting Premier thought for a moment, then phoned the Country Roads Board and asked them if they could buy the tractor."

This evidently did not come off—

"Next day, because the matter had not been yet fixed, the Acting Premier took the salesmanship responsibilities on himself and commenced negotiations which would probably result in the Government getting an efficient piece of machinery at a profitable price and Savoroff being equipped with funds necessary to establish a very desirable family on the land."

There are families in my district who, on arriving to select, have a corn-sheller, a sulky, and a few other things, and if they want £25 from the State Advances Corporation, they have to mortgage the few goods they have—

"As an example of efficiency, direct methods, and abolition of red tape this little character-study of Theodore's understudy is a shining example for the rest of the States. The only encouragement required by Mr. Gillies was the knowledge that he was getting a desirable settler for Queensland. The whole business so dazed Savoroff, who has had experience of other Governments, that he took the first train for his farm near Ipswich to arrange for its transfer, and to inform his creditors of the miracle which was, thanks to the Acting Premier and 'Smith's Weekly,' being performed in Brisbane."

Mr. PETERSON: A cheap advertisement.

Mr. CORSER: This department is now handling the finances of the settlers, and we are dealing with the matter on this vote. We have complaints from settlers in the Upper Burnett and Callide Valleys and other parts of Queensland about the treatment which is being meted out and the want of funds. Even from the regulations placed on the table yesterday—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must keep to the vote.

Mr. CORSER: The Minister says that this matter comes under the administration of the department. Although under the Act £1,700 was provided for each settler, we find that the regulations will not allow more than an advance of £500 for taking over the indebtedness of a farm. The Government do this by regulation. When the Bill went through the House the Government said that £1,700 was to be advanced, while the old Tory Government only advanced £1,200.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member has exhausted the time allowed by the Standing Orders.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): In opening his speech the Secretary for Agriculture spoke in terms of courtesy of the criticism of hon. members on this side of the Chamber, but towards the close of his remarks he displayed his usual attributes when addressing

[*Mr. Corser.*

hon. members. After blaming the Opposition for all sorts of things that they never even contemplated, and after blaming the Federal Government for not giving the State Government the assistance which they asked for, he concluded his speech in his usual manner.

I regard this department as one of the most important that we can mention, and, if there is one branch to which I would like to give a meed of praise, it is the Pure Seeds Branch. The officer in charge of it is an enthusiast, and the only complaint he has to make is that he does not get enough time to do all the work he would like to do. If farmers only realised the importance of this question and spent more time on it, and in getting the assistance of the experts, it would be greatly to their advantage. I certainly support the vote for this branch because it seems to be so efficient and so quick and the work is done for the benefit of the people. With reference to the stock foods activity of the branch, it is remarkable that, although when the Act was going through the House it was alleged that an enormous amount of rubbishy food was being sold, now it is found that practically all the samples taken are up to the requirements of the law. Everyone must admit that it is desirable that precautions should be taken to see that stock foods are what they are represented to be; but it is gratifying to know that, notwithstanding what was said when the measure was before us, all those which have been checked seem to be above the required specification.

One of the most important matters with which we have to deal on this vote is the Council of Agriculture. In last year's report of the Director of Agriculture—we have not got this year's yet—we have an indication of the importance which the Government attach to the usefulness of this Council. Under the heading of "Agricultural Council" it is stated—

"Activities in connection with the Council, and standing committees attached thereto, have absorbed an appreciable amount of time during the year. Probably the most important recommendations made through this office were those relating to an amalgamation of existing Acts governing advances to settlers and the liberalisation of advances to persons engaged in primary production."

Of course the Council of Agriculture has plenty to do, but the report distinctly states that the most important work done throughout the whole year was the amalgamation of existing Acts governing advances to settlers and recommendations thereon. And, as showing to what extent the Government to-day consider the importance of this measure, although the Act was passed last session it was not gazetted until the first day of the present month. Apparently the most important recommendations made through the office were those enabling the recommendations and provisions of the Agricultural Bank Act and other Acts to be carried out in a more effective manner, but we find that, after all these recommendations and the talk about the increased amount that was to be allowed, the farmer is limited to £500—less than half the amount allowed before the Act was passed.

Surely, too, we must come to the conclusion that the report is hardly fair to the

Council of Agriculture. I recognise that the Council has done a great deal of very useful work, but I recognise also that it could be improved to a tremendous extent.

I am not going to talk about any methods of improvement. The Minister has endeavoured to point out that such methods as have been suggested by us have been in his mind ever since the scheme was started. When the Primary Producers' Organisation Act was going through this Chamber, hon. members on this side pointed out that the most effective and economical way of carrying out the scheme would be to organise on an industry basis rather than on a district basis. We pointed out that industries like the sugar industry and part of the dairying industry were fully organised, and other industries were partly organised, and the opportunity was there to carry on those organisations with considerably less expense than by organising afresh. The Minister refused to accept any amendment in that direction, and after two years of experience he has come to the conclusion that the only satisfactory way in which the organisation can be carried on for the benefit of the farmers is on an industry basis, and now his chief endeavour appears to be to prove that the Director of Agriculture was not influenced by the Opposition.

The Minister said that he considered compulsory co-operation was necessary, and, although it was not advocated by a certain section to-day, it would be found to be successful in the future. That is quite possible, but the scheme of compulsory co-operation has to be improved by electing efficient managing bodies before any lasting success can be achieved. I quite believe that compulsory co-operation will become more efficient when those handling the various commodities have had sufficient experience to be able to handle them in a more effective way. At the present time no one can say that the various compulsory co-operation schemes have been a brilliant success. Insufficient information is given to the producer affected. I quite sympathise with the Minister from some points of view. I quite agree with him in his remarks on the Wheat Pool. We are in a peculiar position. We do not grow enough wheat for our requirements, and it is merely a question of holding on to it and distributing it to the mills throughout the year. It is absolutely senseless for the Wheat Pool to spend the producers' money on silly, stupid advertisements advocating the continuance of the pool. The farmers realise the benefits of the pool quite well, and we do not want to have money spent on such advertisements. I have an advertisement here which was published in Saturday's issue of the "Toowoomba Chronicle" pointing out the benefits of the pool. The whole of the expense of this advertising campaign has to come out of the levies or charges on the wheat producers, and it is quite unnecessary to go in for such an expensive campaign. This sort of advertising does not induce the farmers to vote for a pool; it only raises issues of contention. In this advertisement certain pre-pooling years are taken, in which the price paid was—

| | | | | Price per Bushel. | |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-------------------|----|
| | | | | s. d. | |
| 1912 | ... | ... | ... | 3 | 1 |
| 1913 | ... | ... | ... | 2 | 9½ |
| 1914 | ... | ... | ... | 3 | 5 |

That is compared with the price for three pooling years—

| | | | | Per Bushel. | |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-------------|----|
| | | | | s. d. | |
| 1921 | ... | ... | ... | 8 | 0 |
| 1922 | ... | ... | ... | 5 | 0 |
| 1923 | ... | ... | ... | 5 | 7½ |

What is the sense in a Board conducted by farmers going in for propaganda of this sort? They have taken the three years in which wheat was cheapest in Queensland, and they have taken the cheapest months in the whole of the year and averaged the price on that. The "Agricultural Journal" publishes a price list every month showing the various prices of wheat throughout the various areas. There is a discrepancy in the price per bushel as quoted by the Wheat Board and the price given by the "Agricultural Journal." The figures show—

| | | | | PRICE PER BUSHEL. | |
|-------|-------|--------------|-------------------------|-------------------|--|
| Year. | | Wheat Board. | "Agricultural Journal." | | |
| | | s. d. | s. d. | | |
| 1912 | | 3 1 | 4 0 | | |
| 1913 | | 2 9½ | 3 8 | | |
| 1914 | | 3 5 | 3 10 | | |

The Wheat Pool Board omits to make any reference to any years since the pool has been in operation, but the "Agricultural Journal" gives these figures for those years—

| | | | | Price per Bushel. | |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-------------------|---|
| | | | | s. d. | |
| 1915 | ... | ... | ... | 7 | 7 |
| 1916 | ... | ... | ... | 5 | 6 |
| 1917 | ... | ... | ... | 3 | 8 |
| 1918 | ... | ... | ... | 6 | 0 |
| 1919 | ... | ... | ... | 5 | 3 |

The farmers are not so silly as to be misled by advertisements of this sort, and they are more likely to prejudice the vote on the pool than assist it. The farmers do not want to be misled by stupid propaganda of that sort. The farmers are likely to adopt the attitude that, if it is necessary to resort to tactics such as these to get a vote for the pool, then it is not worth while going on with it. The policy is a wrong one, and the pool is making a serious mistake in pursuing it. They have also sent around circulars making personal attacks on individuals. There is nothing to recommend that course. If the pool has been successful, there is no need for tactics of this sort to be resorted to. It is only by telling the truth that the farmers can be appealed to, otherwise an adverse vote may result. The Secretary for Agriculture stated that "cost of production" is a loose phrase. Very likely it is a loose phrase, and he often uses another loose phrase—"production for use and not for profit." In my opinion the cost of production cannot be taken as a basis, since all farmers have not similar classes of land and climatic conditions. If the price based on production is high, it will encourage people to go in for a certain industry in a portion of the State which is perhaps not suitable for it. The only way to set a sufficient and effective average cost is to see that the producer gets a return for his produce commensurate with the cost of production in districts suitable for successful operation. It is no use saying that the producer should get a price commensurate with the cost of production no

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matter how inefficient his methods, or how unsuitable his land may be. It would be absolutely impossible to fix such a price. The Minister went on to say that the consumer could look after himself, and that was why he always carefully looked after the interests of the producer. What was the object, then, of the Government appointing a Commissioner for Prices and still continuing that office?

Mr. HARTLEY: I do not think the Minister said that.

Mr. MOORE: I took it down. The extraordinary thing to me is that the sympathy of the Government and the Minister is only apparent when prices are low. As soon as prices commence to rise, we shall find that the sympathy apparent now is not with the producer at all. The Secretary for Agriculture spoke about the farmer being allowed to fix his own price for butter, maize, and other produce grown by him. How is it that this is exactly the same Minister whose Cabinet—apparently he did not have sufficient influence, and the sympathy of the Government then did not allow them to adopt the principle now enunciated by the Minister—fixed the price of butter at a rate below the cost of production? It is only, as I have said, when prices come down to a level which has not been reached for years that we hear of the sympathy of the Minister. In 1915 the Commissioner for Prices fixed the price of butter at 196s. when the export value was 220s. 8d.; in 1916 the price of butter was fixed at 140s., when its export value ranged from 170s. to 180s.; and in 1920 the price was fixed at 238s., when the export value was 274s. The Dairymen's Association estimated the loss of butter factories during the August quarter of 1920 at £8,000 per week, while the total losses of co-operative factories were set down at £500,000. That was the time when prices were fairly high. Now, when we come to the time when prices are so exceedingly low that it is almost impossible for the men engaged in the industries to carry on, the Minister comes forward with all sorts of sympathy, and says that these men should be allowed to fix their prices.

The Secretary for Agriculture said that the good name of Queensland products had been affected to a great extent by reason of the faulty articles that were sent overseas. The hon. gentleman is certainly justified in his remarks, but what really happened was that those concerned found it more profitable to send second and third class products than to send first-class products. At the time when pools and contracts were first made for sending products to the British Government during the war time, the producers found it far more profitable to send second and third grade articles than to send first. Consequently the factories got into the habit of making poorer class stuff, and it has taken a long time to get out of this habit. It has also taken Queensland a long time to restore the credit that she lost.

There is another item of very vital importance. I understand the cold storage rate has been increased in just the same proportion as railway freights—that is, by 15 per cent. At present the extra freight of every ton of butter within 100 miles of Brisbane is £1 a ton, and now the rates of cold storage have been increased 15 per cent. This means a very heavy charge

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on a section of the community that the Minister admits can scarcely bear the present charges. If, as the Premier said, there was any reason for raising railway freights—and I do not agree that there was—it is quite unnecessary to add 15 per cent. to the cold storage rates. It is not the wish of the producer to store his produce. That is forced upon him. Quantities of goods have to be held owing to the shipping difficulty, and also because it is not desired to overload the London market and cause a glut. To my mind this 15 per cent. imposition is unfair.

Various pools have been in operation, and the Secretary for Agriculture did not say much as to their success or otherwise. I have already mentioned the wheat pool, which is growing more efficient with experience. I am not at all sure that the cheese pool is as wise or equitable as it might be. I do not think it is right to keep the local prices high and have a very high levy to equalise the low export price. To my mind it would be fairer to the people of Queensland if the prices were made more equal. It is unwise to keep the price of cheese up to 1s. 1d. in Queensland when the export price is about 7d., and then to make a levy of 4½d. or 5d. a lb. on the cheese sold in Queensland to equalise the low price for which it is sold overseas, with the result that Southern cheese floods our local market. It would be better to equalise the two prices, and thus increase the consumption of a valuable item of food and give the people of Queensland the opportunity of securing this wholesome food at a price which would help the Queensland producers instead of the Southern ones. When someone concerned investigated such matters he was told that it did not matter if the price was high, that it did not interfere with the consumption of the product. It is a bad principle to make unduly heavy levies on locally-sold commodities to equalise the export price. I understand the same principle is adopted in other pools, and it is advocated by some people to a greater extent. I consider the principle is wrong. We should advocate greater efficiency in handling products and co-operative marketing so that some of the cost may be cut out. In connection with that we have a huge Co-operative Federation already functioning on the other side of the world which has been remarkably successful.

Mr. HARTLEY: Why cannot you get a co-operative marketing scheme under the Primary Producers' Organisation Act?

Mr. MOORE: There is no occasion to establish another when there is one already there, in which New Zealand, South Africa, and Australia already are joined. It is there functioning and doing wonderful work, but it is not doing all the good it might because of the prejudice of some individuals who apparently do not want to support this federation on the other side of the world.

Mr. HARTLEY: Why cannot you get the dairy companies throughout Queensland to sell through the Co-operative Federation on the other side of the world?

Mr. MOORE: The only thing I can tell you is that they think they can get a better deal through some other organisation. These people are not actuated by any political motives. Their desire is to sell their products in the best and cheapest manner and to get

the best price. If they think they can get better prices by selling through private agents, they will do so. To my mind the principle is not a sound one without adequate trial. We have a co-operative agency there, but we cannot tell what it will do until it gets adequate support. Until the directors of the various companies give them adequate support it is impossible to tell whether it will be a success or a failure.

Mr. HARTLEY: You are not dependent on their support. You can organise outside them.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. member does not understand the position in the different industries in Queensland.

There is only one other question I wish to deal with, and that is in regard to the Egg Pool. I understand the Government have guaranteed this Egg Pool £10,000. From September to January they made what they call progress payments, which were considerably under the market value at that time. Up to the present no further payments have been made. It is a most difficult thing for poultry farmers, who as a rule are not always in a large way of business and require their money reasonably quickly, to be kept waiting seven or eighth months for the balance of their payments. In many instances the poultry farmers have been kept waiting six months after selling their eggs, whereas if they took their eggs to a private agent, they would get their cheques the same day or the next day. When they send their eggs to the Egg Pool they should receive the same consideration. Although Queensland has an Egg Pool, the week before last it had the distinction of having the lowest price for eggs of any State in Australia. That seems a remarkable result. I suppose the expenses are rather high when you are only dealing with one commodity and then only with a portion of that commodity. It is unfair that the producers should be compelled to sell their eggs through a pool and then be kept waiting for their money. It is absolutely wrong in principle, and the poultry farmers are practically being pushed out of business through financial difficulties. If we are going to have a pool, it is the duty of the Government to see the pool is run efficiently, and producers who are compelled to sell through it given the same opportunity of getting their money to carry on as if they sold through the ordinary sources of trade. A number of men have complained to me. I have received letters from individuals from Bundaberg downwards asking what I would recommend to enable them to evade the Act because they are placed in such an unfortunate position. I have replied that they must obey the law. I am prepared to admit that some of the poultry men are able to carry on satisfactorily, but a large number are not, and it is up to the Government to see that this organisation is carried on in an efficient manner. The poultry people should have the ordinary private citizen's right of freedom if they are not going to get any advantage through being compulsorily forced into these pools. I am not going to say that compulsion will not be a good thing in the end, but in the meantime, through inefficient management, a large number of these people have been placed in an awkward position, and the Government should be very careful as to how far they go in the matter of compulsion. In all these cases they should look into the question of the rights of individuals and see

whether they are going to be placed in a better position by compulsion as against voluntary co-operation. To my mind, voluntary co-operation can be made effective, and it has been made effective in cases where it has been tried.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Miran*): I am one of those members who complain about having to discuss this department without the report. The Minister did not give us any good reason why we should have to do so. It is impossible to do justice in discussing the votes unless we have up-to-date information supplied by the reports. The Minister said that the departmental figures were not ready,

but we have six Bills on the business-sheet, and there are other Bills to be introduced, and we are told the House will not be likely to rise before the end of October, and as there is plenty of other business to consider besides the Estimates, we could hold them over and then there would be ample time to get the departmental reports before we are called upon to discuss the Estimates of those departments. I notice that the Minister gave credit to the Government for all the prosperity that has accrued to the agricultural industry since they have been in power. The chief agricultural industry is the sugar industry, and the greatest factor in the prosperity of the sugar industry has been the action of the Commonwealth Government. The prosperity of any industry depends largely on the price obtained for the product, and the price we have got for our sugar was solely in the power of the Commonwealth Government. If we have to thank any Government for the prosperity of the industry, it is the Commonwealth Government. The best friend we had was Mr. Hughes, whose Government fixed the price at £30 6s. 8d. a ton. The Minister claimed that agricultural production had increased under the administration of this Government. Up to 1916 the planting or sowing of the crops was mostly done under previous Governments. In 1916 the effect of this Government's administration had not become perceptible—the decline of production under their rule was not felt until then. In that year I find from the "A B C of Queensland Statistics" that there were 235,241 acres under the plough. In 1922, after a period of six years, the acreage under plough had gone down to 863,755 acres, or a decrease of 21,466 acres. What is the use of the hon. gentleman saying otherwise. Agriculture has gone back under the rule of the present Government.

The Minister had something to say about the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. That does not concern anybody on this side of the Chamber, but I would point out that hon. members opposite have handed over the control of the sugar industry to that company, so far as refining and financing it is concerned. If anybody believes in the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, it is apparently the present Queensland Government. Furthermore, as showing their leaning towards big combines, I would like to refer to what they have done in the cotton industry.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must keep to the vote.

Mr. SWAYNE: I am confining my remarks to the vote. I want to show how the whole of the activities of the Government have

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been in the direction of placing the cotton industry in the hands of a big company. That may be perfectly justifiable, but at the same time the mere fact shows that it does not become the Government to talk about other people being the supporters of combines and big companies. So far as we can judge by their actions—and only by their actions can we judge them—there has been a tendency for the Government to place the primary producers in the hands of big companies.

Mr BULCOCK (*Burcoo*): Although I was not aware of the arrangement whereby the whole of the debate on this department, including the cotton industry, would be taken on the vote for the Chief Office—

The CHAIRMAN: The cotton industry may be discussed on the Chief Office as well as the administration of the department.

Mr. BULCOCK: The agricultural industry seems to me to be one of the most important questions we have to discuss. Every other vote in these Estimates seems to fade into comparatively less importance beside this vote, which really means the prosperity or otherwise which must necessarily surround the conditions of the people. The more one sees of the State of Queensland and the more one realises its potentialities, the more one realises the importance of agricultural pursuits, and the more one is forced to the conclusion that we are only on the verge of agricultural knowledge and development. So far as agricultural problems are concerned it is necessary for the State to adopt more scientific action and pursue a more vigorous policy than has been adopted in the past. I was very interested to read the other day in an American journal of a Commission which had been appointed to inquire into all the phases of agricultural life in the United States. It was a Federal Commission with very wide powers of investigation and recommendation, and they came to certain conclusions which, in view of the present position of agriculture in our State, are more or less illuminating. The point I want to make is that every one of their recommendations is represented in Queensland in the activities of the Labour Government as they have been developed between 1915 and the present time.

They recommended, for instance, the adaptation of the banking system to the peculiar credit needs of the rural industry. A good deal of discussion has surrounded that question in our own Parliament and State, and it is obvious that a system of rural credits is being strongly but surely evolved from the conditions of things which existed before this Government took over the reins of office. If ever there was an industry which was left to the tender mercies of haphazard enterprise, with all the shortcomings of disorganisation, it was the agricultural industry up to 1915; but since 1915 there has been a steady and at times rapid inclination to do something which previous Governments were not prepared to do in Queensland, and which anti-Labour Governments in other States could not do on account of the influences surrounding them. We may say that our present credits system is a bad system, but it is obvious that something is being undertaken, and I believe that the time is not far distant when we shall have to establish rural credits in such a way that

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the farming community will enjoy the security of tenure and occupancy which is ordinarily extended by means of banking to other industrial pursuits.

It is remarkable the small amount of money that goes back to the farmer in the way of loan in comparison with the amount of money that goes in the furtherance of the secondary industries of the various States. The farmer, who produces all the wealth, gets in the final analysis about 15 per cent. of that creation returned to him in the form of a loan, and 85 per cent. of it is invested in secondary industries.

Mr. KELSO: Not in Queensland.

Mr. BULCOCK: I am speaking of the whole of the Commonwealth. That is one of the reasons why agriculture is not making the progress that it should make. The money gained from agriculture should be reinvested in agricultural pursuits and activities, which would mean salvation not only to the individual but for the community also. The second recommendation that was made was a reduction in freight rates. When we come to compare the American freight rates with our own, we can well see why they should ask for some reduction in that regard. Then it is suggested that the adoption of a uniform, accurate, and practical grade for all our commodities and the adoption of a uniform standard would lead to better marketing facilities. Our own experience has been that we have suffered in that direction in the past. We find that this Commission has very little to teach us, because what it proposes has already been initiated in our own State, and there is every prospect of it being put into successful operation in the near future. I see that the Council of Agriculture through their activities have decided that they will introduce a system of farm book-keeping. That is one of the recommendations of the Commission that I am quoting. A proper system of book-keeping will show the relative costs of production on a farm unit basis. That is a thing that we have been desiring for a long time, but it has not yet come. Again, I think Queensland is going to lead the way in that direction, and lay down a foundation for a proper system of book-keeping so far as farm records are concerned. We have also been prepared to do the things that scientists say we should do. The fifth recommendation by this Commission is the practical and scientific investigation of farm and rural problems. The Labour party in Queensland have created the machinery that will allow of the scientific investigation of problems that arise from time to time so far as marketing and diseases and other incidental rural problems are concerned.

Mr. KELSO: Do the other States not do that?

Mr. BULCOCK: The hon. gentleman knows that the other States have been looking to Queensland for some considerable time. Only last year the farmers in conference at Tamworth, New South Wales, passed a resolution asking the Government to introduce the legislation that had been introduced by the Secretary for Agriculture in Queensland. (Hear, hear!) I know that many Southern States have made inquiries concerning our legislation.

Mr. KELSO: The cotton industry, for instance.

Mr. BULCOCK: That matter will be dealt with later on. The hon. gentleman possibly knows quite a lot about cotton from his experience gained by growing it on the Nundah flats.

Mr. KELSO: There are no flats in Nundah.

Mr. BULCOCK: The final recommendation of the Commission is provision for better roads for the transport of the commodities the farmer has produced. These are the things on which this American Commission says agriculture depends. It says that if those things could be done, together with the betterment of the communal village life on the farm, agriculture could be placed on a firm, equitable, and sound footing. If that is all they can recommend, we have already begun to traverse that road. We know their recommendations, and we know that those things must be done, and we are doing those things, and we shall probably continue to do those things, and Queensland, as a result of the activities in that direction, is rapidly emerging as one of the chief agricultural States of the Commonwealth. Hon. members opposite may say what they like, but since 1915 the Government have discharged a distinct duty to the community, by reason of the fact that the Government have done all in their power to provide better facilities for the man on the land by opening up new avenues of production that were not exploited when this Government took office.

It is obvious that no Government can afford to neglect the man on the land, more particularly as it is noticeable that in other parts of the world the Labour and Farmers' parties are beginning to realise that they have an identity of interests, and that the commodities produced by the latter should flow through untrammelled channels from the producer to the consumer without being exploited by others who utilise the products of the farmer for the exploitation of the farmer and consumer. The objection of hon. members opposite to the activities of this Government in the direction of doing something for the man on the land is probably due to the fact that, although in the final analysis that may take some considerable time, the distance between the producer and the consumer might be considerably lessened to the advantage of both. That is why we get such a vast range of objections to the legislation we have brought forward.

Some question has been raised about the organisation of the farmers on a commodity basis, and it was suggested that the Government had stolen the thunder of the Country party—if ever they had any thunder—and that the Secretary for Agriculture had merely enunciated the principles laid down somewhere in the early part of the present century by hon. members of the Country party. I would like to read for their benefit from an article published in the "Australian Farming Journal" of 16th May, 1924, upon the conference of the Secretaries of Agriculture—

"Of the four Ministerial representatives, while Mr. Chaffey as chairman, showed a commendable grasp of most of the subjects submitted for discussion, there can be little doubt but that Mr. Gillies, who is acting as Premier of Queensland, with the almost certain reversion to the position on Mr. Theodore's retirement from State politics, dominated the conference with his force-

ful personality. Into some of the resolutions he infused a spirit of definiteness and progressiveness that was previously lacking, and there was no doubting his overmastering desire to see the other States adopt the State-assisted policy of organising the farmers on a commodity basis."

Mr. KELSO: How long did it take you to find that out?

Mr. BULCOCK: The Secretary for Agriculture has gone further afield than Queensland, and has shown that he is prepared to carry what Queensland has done to the other States and the Secretaries for Agriculture there, so that they may benefit from the legislation passed by Queensland in the interests of the farmers.

I made reference to the scientific progress which was necessary to the progress of agriculture of the State. One of the chief problems that presents itself to me is the need for sound agricultural surveys in the various areas which the Government propose to open up for agricultural pursuits. Hon. members had a pretty good example of that when the Parliamentary party visited the Dawson and Callide irrigation settlements a short time ago. Most of us had gone to the trouble of looking up the classification of the soil, the varieties of the soil, the mechanical texture, and so forth, and, when we arrived there, we found that in very few cases did the map of the classification of the soils coincide with the soils we found there. There has been too loose an idea of agricultural surveys for the purpose of founding communities. The time has arrived when it has become necessary to do something in the direction of securing more accurate surveys to show at a glance what land is available for specific classes of crops. If that information was available, we would know what proportion of that land could be prepared for crops, and its relative productivity in an average season. This information would be definitely advantageous to the producers in so far as the volume of production is concerned, as by having a full and sound knowledge of the output they would know what they could sell, and thus do away with the periodic gluts and periods of under-consumption within the State.

Hon. members opposite have a habit of talking of over-production. They say "Don't produce this, don't produce that and that, because, if you do, you will be producing too much." The question is not one of producing too much. With a community such as we have, where some members of the community may be starving, nobody can suggest that we produce too much. It is not a question of over-production but of under-consumption. That is a trouble that can only be remedied by a proper understanding of the agricultural phases of our life and by a more equitable distribution of the foodstuffs that we are capable of producing.

There is another question, which is more particularly related to the health of the community, and that is of the individual who is a dairyman, and who may wish to have his herd tested for tuberculosis. He may make application to the Department of Agriculture and Stock, and the services of a veterinary surgeon will be placed at his disposal to see whether or not he has tuberculosis in his herd. It is the practice

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of the Department of Agriculture and Stock to encourage dairymen to submit their herds to these tests. But if there is one individual householder who has a cow which he keeps for milking purposes and who desires to have his cow tested for tuberculosis, he will be told when he makes application that, owing to the time it takes to carry out the test on one particular cow, the test cannot be carried out. I think some scheme should be devised whereby men with individual cows, who are milking those cows for the feeding of their children and families, should be enabled to take their cows to depots to have them tested. I am confident that if such tests for tuberculosis were made, it would be found that the range of tuberculosis in house cows was equal, proportionately speaking, to the range in any ordinary herd of dairy cows supplying milk for consumption in towns. I believe it is necessary for every cow that is supplying milk to be tested for tuberculosis, and I hope the Minister will give some consideration to this suggestion so that these individual cows may be brought to central depots and there tested for the purpose of determining whether they have tuberculosis or not.

A lot of discussion has taken place on the Council of Agriculture on this vote, and I am pleased to see that the amount of the subsidy to the Council of Agriculture has been reduced by £11,000. I would like to see a greater reduction, and I shall give my reason for that assertion. I maintain that no organisation worthy of the name can live unless on its own strength and vitality. I do not believe that an organisation should be fostered by this State to such an extent that it will collapse as soon as the big grant is withdrawn. I believe that an organisation worth anything to the people of the State or to those for whom it is functioning should have to stand on its merits. I take it this is the first of a number of successive decreases of the amount of subsidy to the Council of Agriculture, and the sooner it becomes self-supporting in every respect the better for all members of the community. When all is said and done, if it is right continually and incessantly to subsidise the Council of Agriculture, it is just as right to subsidise every union in the land.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Hear, hear!

MR. BULCOCK: When the hon. member for Nanango was speaking, he said "Let the cotton industry stand on its own feet." I cannot quite understand what the hon. member meant. It is obvious that the State must control some of the phases of cotton activity so long as the guarantee is going to prevail.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Hear, hear!

MR. BULCOCK: If the hon. member suggests that the guarantee should be wiped out of existence, then the State has no further justification for interfering with the cotton industry in any way unless it can be shown that it is necessary for certain *bonâ fide* reasons of public policy to interfere in the conduct of the industry. Generally speaking, it is not necessary for the State to interfere with an industry unless the State has some interest at stake. In this case the taxpayers' interests are at stake, and the Government must prescribe the

regulations necessary to safeguard the interests of the taxpayers. When the interests of the taxpayers are adequately safeguarded, over and above that the cotton industry must be given an opportunity to expand.

I want to say a word or two about some of these so-called cotton experts. We were guided by these cotton experts, and we said, "There shall be no ratoon cotton." I am not yet convinced that cotton should be ratooned, but I say from what I have seen of cotton-growing that it is impossible to grow plant cotton in all parts of Queensland. Either the industry has to perish or ratoon cotton has to be grown. That is the conclusion I have come to. The experts told us that ratoon cotton should not be allowed to be grown. We accepted their dictum, and we went into the question at considerable length, but only one side of the question was presented to us. That is what I am kicking against. Only the experts' side was presented to us, and many of them are violently opposed to the growing of ratoon cotton. There was no possibility of hearing the other side of the question. The Secretary for Agriculture told us this afternoon that the experts in the Department of Agriculture are opposed to the growing of ratoon cotton. If that is so, they cannot consistently be employed any longer, because they are not in sympathy with the policy of the department. The best experience that we can get is the experience that we purchase in our own State, no matter what the cost may be. Mr. Daniel Jones has done more for the cotton industry than anybody else—everybody is prepared to admit that. The probabilities are that we were too much guided by expert opinion and did not take enough notice of the sound practical opinion of a gentleman who has spent the best part of his life in the cotton industry. I am saying that, not because I have any axe to grind, but because I was one of those who opposed Mr. Jones and his attitude on ratoon cotton. I think it is going to be better for the State if we take less notice of the experts and more notice of the men who have had practical experience.

MR. W. COOPER: He is not a spinner.

MR. BULCOCK: We have thrown away twelve months of valuable time so far as cotton is concerned, and we have destroyed valuable crops. That is the position, and we cannot get away from that position.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: What about compensation?

MR. BULCOCK: Never mind about compensation. We have to start off afresh, and I hope that in the future we shall be guided more by common sense and be fully satisfied before definitely committing ourselves to a policy which in the final analysis is proved to be wrong. The same position obtains in regard to Gatton College. The other day the Government appointed a new staff, and not one of them was a Queenslander. Why cannot we give Queenslanders a chance? That is what makes people think. Why cannot we appoint people in our own State, who have knowledge and experience? Never mind the man with academic degrees. The man with academic degrees has led us into the wilderness in regard to cotton. Give us practical men to help our agricultural industries along, and we will be safe. (Hear, hear!)

[Mr. Bulcock.]

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): I take it that no man in this Chamber will deny the importance of the agricultural industry. If it were not for our agricultural industry, we as Queenslanders would quickly go into oblivion, and our clear duty is to do all that is possible to develop the vast resources of this land. No man would dream

[4 p.m.] of saying that the country can be developed unless the people are devoted to the soil—to the tillage of it and to the producing of all that it can and should produce. All hon. members agree that the industry is of paramount importance. Like the hon. member who has just resumed his seat, I am emphatically of opinion that in any appointments which may be made from time to time in the Department of Agriculture and any other department we should give first thought to men of our own training, who may merit appointment to positions which become vacant by the retirement of public officers. We are informed that the Under Secretary for Agriculture will shortly retire, and I would emphasise the importance of one of our own men who has graduated in the service of the State receiving the appointment. Unless we recognise merit in our own service we are not going to get the best results from the men who already are in our employ. The higher positions should be open to every man in the service, and it should be laid down as a rule by the Government that such positions are open to those who qualify themselves and show that they are worthy of confidence.

The Minister dealt with various matters connected with his department. However much I may disagree with him, I admit that he has a deep love and reverence for the agriculturists and zeal for his department; but it is to be doubted whether all the good work that he seeks to claim credit for has been done. He told us what had been done by the department. He stated that fourteen new Acts of Parliament had been passed in connection with the department since he became Minister. He pointed out that much of the legislation was of a drastic nature, and referred to some of the compulsory provisions. He told us about the increase of expenditure and the increase in the staff, and he emphasised the point that there was an increase of something like 2 per cent. in the area under agricultural production. He made a comparison between this State and New South Wales and Victoria, but it is not much to our credit that, with all the opportunities afforded us and the vast areas of land in Queensland, we have only increased the area under agricultural production by 2 per cent. in that time. It is no use making comparisons with what other States have accomplished in that direction.

The hon. gentleman failed to indicate the nature of much of the drastic legislation and the effect which it has had upon us. Although a great amount of money has been spent and hon. members opposite glory in it, I think it is only a burden on the taxpayers. What is the need for the huge expenditure that has taken place? Of course, some hon. members opposite may not consider it to be very great, and I do not know that the special amounts, totalling approximately £70,000, are excessive, and one would not grudge such a sum being spent on agriculture were it not that I am certainly of opinion that it is impossible to show clearly any good result from it. A good deal

of displacement has taken place, a good deal of discouragement has been placed upon the people, and, so far as we can discover, things have not been stabilised materially, and one still feels that the Secretary for Agriculture has held a lot in reserve. Going back to 1915, we know that he spoke very differently from the opinions he has expressed now. One must come to the conclusion that there is reformation in his mind to-day. In 1915, when the country was very much disturbed over some of the actions of the Government, during the debate on the acquisition of butter the hon. gentleman stood solidly for the action of the Government and appealed to the people to support them and their decision to acquire the butter at 196s. per cwt.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Have you nothing better than 1915 to refer to?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: If the hon. gentleman has changed his mind, it is for him to indicate it. At any rate, at that time when Mr. Stevens, the late member for Rosewood, moved for a return showing the particulars of the Government's butter transactions, the present Secretary for Agriculture spoke in the following terms:—

“I do not care whether the hon. member objects to it or not. It is a wonder that they did not tell this House that the price fixed by this Government as the wholesale price of butter was £3 13s. higher than the highest average price for the last eight years. In fact, the price fixed by the Board is the highest price on record in Queensland.”

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There is nothing wrong with that. It is a very good record.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The hon. gentleman proceeded to say—

“It is a wonder that those people are not honest or patriotic enough to tell this House that the price fixed by the Board appointed by this Government is £3 13s. higher than the highest average price for the last eight years. I have the figures for the last eight years. I have the figures from the Agricultural Department going back for eight years, and taking the highest month—not the real average, but the highest individual price—I find that the average wholesale price of butter is 125s. That is taking the highest price obtained in each of these eight years.

“Mr. Vowles: What was the cost of producing it?

“Mr. GILLES: The cost of production has not gone up in the same proportion. The price fixed by the Board is 73s. per cwt., or 8d. per lb. higher than the highest average price for the last eight years.

“I do not believe, under normal conditions, in fixing prices by proclamation—I say it is unsound and unscientific—but I refuse to believe that the dairy farmer of Queensland is less patriotic than any other farmer or producer in this State. I am going to quote what one of the soldiers at the Dardanelles said in regard to this question of fixing prices.”

Mr. DASH: Who said that?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The present Secretary for Agriculture.

Mr. G. P. Barnes.]

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is very sound. I am rather proud of that speech.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: There are certain reservations in the speech. If the hon. gentleman was not prepared to allow the producer the full return for his labour at that time, is he now prepared to allow the producer the full return for his labour, or has he a desire to limit and prevent him from getting that full value?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. gentleman knows that on that occasion it was the middleman who was being dealt with, and not the farmer.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: At that time charges were raised against middlemen, but a complete answer to that was that nearly all the butter in Queensland was controlled by the co-operative societies themselves, and the middlemen were not in it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: When the Government took control they limited the price, and at that very time they protected the middlemen in Melbourne. They sold them butter at 13s. 4d. per cwt. less than the value of that butter in Melbourne. They showed considerable respect at that time to the middlemen in Melbourne. When the hon. gentleman makes reference to middlemen it leads one to remind him of the occasion when the Government showed great respect to the middlemen in Melbourne. During the same speech the present Secretary for Agriculture went on to say—

"I want to show hon. members on the other side who have contributed to this debate, who, to our knowledge, are amongst the greatest advocates of low wages, that we know that many workers could not afford to buy butter even at 19s. as fixed by the Government."

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Perfectly true.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: He continues—

"Therefore, if the price of butter had been fixed at a higher price by the Government it naturally follows, as Mr. Hughes pointed out when introducing the war tax proposals—if men with low wages are to be taxed it means that the whole wage system of Australia has to be revised."

Although we have the hon. gentleman stating to-day that the farmers should get all they possibly can out of what they produce, yet we know that a certain position might arise at any moment, and the Minister might be up against the carrying out of what to-day he professes to be the first and foremost desire in his mind, and that is to give the individual farmer the full value of what he produces.

I want to make a few remarks in connection with various pools, more especially as the people in my district are deeply interested in this matter. The Minister made certain remarks in connection with the formation of pools, but I am not quite sure whether he is right in his remarks. In speaking of compulsory pools he asked if 95 per cent. of the farmers or producers of a certain commodity desired a pool, why they should be disturbed by the other 5 per cent. He asked why they should not be brought into line. That is an extremely generous way of putting it—if 95 per cent

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favour doing a certain thing, then it should be done. The trouble is that the ratio is not quite like that. The people in my district are extremely agitated on this matter. I have had sent to me by one of the local producers' associations in the Warwick district a letter to this effect—

"Under the Primary Producers' Pools Act before a pool can be formed it is necessary that a poll be taken and a 75 per cent. majority obtained thereat. It has come to the knowledge of my association that a movement is on foot to have the required majority reduced from 75 per cent. to 50 per cent. My association is of the opinion that such an alteration would not be in the interests of primary producers, and so it respectfully solicits your support in opposing any such alteration.

"Yours faithfully,

"S. W. C. Morris,

"Hon. Secretary,

"Gladfield Local Producers' Association."

I have taken the earliest opportunity of bringing the request of the Gladfield Local Producers' Association before this Chamber. Similar requests have been made by other Local Producers' Associations, and I trust that they will result in the Minister giving some attention to and respecting the wishes of those bodies. As a result of that attention, I hope the hon. gentleman will show that he is not prepared to hand over every spark of liberty that those men possess.

I would like to draw attention to some of the propaganda that has been going on in advocacy of the pools—the leader of the Opposition also made reference to this matter. I notice by the Warwick "Daily News" the other day that the Wheat Pool, in urging their case for continuance, made statements which cannot be borne out by facts. The statement was made that in 1912-13 the price of wheat was 3s. 1d. per bushel; in 1913, 2s. 9½d.; and in 1914, 3s. 5d. I cannot get any confirmation of those figures. I have turned to the "Agricultural Journal," and I find that the following prices were paid:—

| | Price per bushel. | | |
|------|-------------------|----|---------|
| | s. | d. | s. d. |
| 1912 | 3 | 7½ | to 5 6 |
| 1913 | 3 | 6 | to 4 1 |
| 1914 | 3 | 3 | to 4 6 |
| 1915 | 5 | 4 | to 8 9 |
| 1916 | 5 | 4 | to 8 9 |
| 1917 | 2 | 3 | to 4 10 |
| 1918 | 4 | 0 | to 7 9 |
| 1919 | 4 | 6 | to 5 9 |
| 1920 | 7 | 6 | to 11 0 |

It is as well that these figures should appear side by side with the figures contained in the propaganda which has been issued by the Wheat Pool.

Mr. W. COOPER (Rosewood): I regret the reduction in this vote. Those hon. members who have taken a keen interest in primary production in Queensland realise that the money asked for in this vote for the advancement of agriculture is not by any means adequate. Hon. members opposite have been condemning the Secretary for Agriculture and the administration of the department generally, and they also claim that sufficient funds have not been placed at the disposal of the Minister for carrying out the work of

the department in the manner in which it should be carried out. On several occasions we have noticed that a great scream has gone up from hon. members opposite accusing the Government of reckless expenditure and reckless finance.

At 4.20 p.m.,

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

Mr. W. COOPER: It appears to me to be such an inconsistent attitude for hon. members opposite to take up. On the one hand they accuse the Government of being spend-thrifts, and on the other they say we are voting insufficient money for the work of this important department.

We find that up to 1915 Tory Governments did practically nothing so far as helping the Department of Agriculture and Stock by great expenditure was concerned. Not only that, but they attempted in every direction to hamper those who were employed in the primary industries. They put all kinds of impediments in the way of primary producers who were endeavouring to get their products to market. They never attempted, as our Government have done, to establish a system by which the farmer is able to get his products to market in a simple and effective way.

Mr. KELSO: It took you eight years to get a move on.

Mr. W. COOPER: If it took us eight years to get a move on, we were at least 1,000 per cent. quicker in getting that move on than were hon. members opposite. It took them sixty years to get a move on.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: And they did not get a move on then.

Mr. W. COOPER: If it had been left to them to get a move on, they would have been standing still all the time and would not yet be out of the Garden of Eden. The present Government have given the best advice to farmers by employing experts. I heard the hon. member for Barcoo condemn experts to-day. I am not going to take up that attitude, because we depend upon experts. We have depended on experts all our lives, it does not matter whether it be in medicine, accountancy, agriculture, or in blacksmithing, and if any hon. member wants advice in that particular trade I am prepared to give it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Without any charge.

Mr. W. COOPER: Yes, free gratis, because after all, I am philanthropist enough to give hon. members opposite any advice which I know would be to their betterment.

Mr. KELSO: About wire-pulling?

Mr. W. COOPER: The hon. member talks about wire-pulling. I know of some other pulling that I would not accuse them of. The great difficulty with the man on the land to-day is that he was compelled in the past to acquire land under a system brought about by hon. members opposite—the freehold system. There is no doubt that his great difficulties have been caused by the fact that he has paid too much for his land. Anyone who knows anything about land at all knows perfectly well that land is only worth what it will produce. If a farmer has to pay more for his land than it will produce, then he must get into a condition where he

cannot carry on. We have, too, a system of banking in Queensland which is detrimental to the man on the land.

I am not going to say that the corporation banks have taken up the best attitude towards the unfortunate farmer who is trying to eke out an existence on the land. During every period of drought, when distress comes along and these financiers cannot get their pound of flesh out of the man who is the greatest Empire-builder in the State, they are prepared to squeeze him off his land and drive him into the city. In the 1915 election I advocated a policy of rural credits to enable the farmer, after he had sent his produce to market, to receive 75 per cent. of the value, so that he might be able to carry on. We know perfectly well that when the farmer sends his stuff down to Brisbane, unless he sends it to a produce agent who is in a position to advance him money, very often he has to wait a certain time before his products are sold. Very few farmers in Queensland—more particularly small farmers—are in such a position that they can wait any length of time for the price of their produce. There should be established a system of rural credits to enable the farmer to receive 75 per cent. of the approximate value of his products as soon as he sends them to market, and then, when the products are sold, he could receive the amount realised over and above that which he has already received. If that were done, the Government would be on the safe side. This system of rural credits will be introduced in the near future. It must be introduced, because under a Labour Government the farmer has been educated up to a system by which he will be able to organise and control his own industry and thereby get the full reward of his labour. I have advocated both inside and outside this Chamber that every man, whether he labours with a shovel or whether he is a farmer, is an industrialist and should receive the full reward of his industry. If that is done, very few men will leave the primary producing industries. We have to-day men who claim that the farmer should get something different from anyone else. I do not think he should. I think that the farmer should be treated in exactly the same way as other men. The unfortunate thing is that the farmer has to contend with the elements, which no other industry has to do. He has to depend on a good season to produce sufficient to make his farm a payable proposition. While this great squeal has gone up from members opposite and from the Press that men are leaving the land and coming to the city, there is such a thing as producing too much and thereby reducing prices. All over-production reduces prices. Over-production of labour will reduce the price that you have to pay for labour. We have fixed a price for the man who labours, and it is necessary—I have always advocated this—to fix the price the farmer shall receive for his produce so that he may get the full reward of his industry. Yet we find hon. members opposite from 1918 up to the present time opposing price-fixing by this Government. At the same time you find the primary producers going down to the Federal Government and asking them to stabilise rural industries in the Commonwealth. We have men opposite who represent the Nationalist party and the Country party claiming to be the friends of these men and advocating better conditions for them,

and at the same time they advocate a policy of no price-fixing, so that they may be enabled to exploit the farmers, as they have done in the past.

[4.30 p.m.]

The Government have done something to educate the children in rural districts by establishing rural schools, and this is part and parcel of the subject of the education which comes under this vote.

Mr. KERR: No.

Mr. W. COOPER: We have established an Agricultural College, and are endeavouring to find a certain amount of money for the education, in the scientific processes of farming and agriculture generally, of those who have been neglected in the past.

Mr. KELSO: Who started the first Agricultural College?

Mr. W. COOPER: I think that Adam was the first man who started an agricultural college.

Mr. KELSO: In Queensland?

Mr. W. COOPER: It would have been far better if the Liberal Government had never started the Agricultural College at Gatton, considering the small amount of good it has done.

Mr. KELSO: You are following on with it, anyhow.

Mr. W. COOPER: No, we have changed the policy at Gatton College, and have practically turned it into an educational college.

Mr. KELSO: When did you do that?

Mr. W. COOPER: We have done it recently. We discovered the mistakes that the Liberal Government had made, and, after all, a man who never makes a mistake never does anything. The present Government have endeavoured to provide in the Gatton Agricultural College a better system of education for those in rural industries than was ever attempted before in the history of Queensland. Some men say, "This is all right, but there are a lot of highly-paid servants here." If that is so, we also have a lot of highly-paid servants in the Department of Public Instruction. The Agricultural College at Gatton is not directly revenue-producing, but it is revenue-producing indirectly, because it is educating the people in the rural districts. It would be just as well for some hon. members opposite to take a course there. They would then be able to come here and speak with authority on some of the subjects they have mentioned to-day.

Mr. KELSO: Have you taken a course there?

Mr. W. COOPER: No, there was no necessity for me to do so; I was born an agriculturist. (Laughter.) At all events, we have done something in the direction of attempting to produce a better type of horse in Queensland. The Government have purchased a number of highly-bred stallions of the Clydesdale type for the purpose of producing a better class of draught stock. I am not altogether in accord with the system, because, if I had my way, I would—as I have advocated before—set apart one of our State stations for the purpose of breeding horses and distributing them all over the State, practically giving them to various settlers, so that we might improve the breed. I do not know whether it would be a more payable proposition than to breed cattle. Certainly

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for the first two or three years it would not be revenue-producing—perhaps it would never be revenue-producing—but at the same time it would be a better paying proposition indirectly. The same principle might be applied to the production of a better class of dairy cattle, for throughout the State numbers of farmers have herds which are not payable. They do not make money because they are endeavouring to dairy from inferior classes of cattle. We have men in Queensland dairying with Herefords—

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Getting milk from the horn? (Laughter.)

Mr. W. COOPER: Getting milk that would not produce butter. If the Government thought it was a payable proposition—and I think it would be—they might start the breeding of dairy bulls or cows for the purpose of distributing them all over the State and giving the farmers something that would increase the production of their herds. I certainly do agree that it is better to breed dairy cattle of the beef type, because any that were not fitted for use as pure-breds might be sold, whereas the purely dairy cattle such as Jerseys and Ayrshires are of a small type, and would not be saleable for the price we would be able to get for Short-horns or Herefords. I think the Government would be well advised to take such a scheme into consideration, because the dairy industry is going to be one of the most important in Queensland. I shall endeavour to tell hon. members what is now taking place. We have hundreds—I can safely say thousands—of farmers who are growing lucerne, which is fed primarily to horses. Within the next ten years horses will be things of the past on account of the advent of the motor-car and motor lorry.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: No.

Mr. W. COOPER: I say that the hon. member cannot be thinking if he says "No." To-day you can see hundreds and hundreds of motor-cars in this very city where there were formerly hundreds and hundreds of horses. If the hon. member does not believe in the motor industry, why is he embarked in it? Within the next ten years there will be more motor lorries in Queensland than there are horses to-day. Horses are going out—you can see it day by day—the farmer is adopting traction engines and motor traction for ploughing, and a motor-car does not eat lucerne whilst horses do, so that the lucerne farmer must go out of that branch of the industry in the near future.

Mr. MOORE: Why are the big firms in the South going back to horses?

Mr. W. COOPER: If they are, it is because of the excessive prices which are being charged for motor-cars and motor-car accessories. I predict that within the next ten years the motor-car and the traction engine and the motor lorry will take the place of the horse for traction purposes. Consequently the farmer who to-day is producing lucerne and hay for fodder for horses must go out of business, and he will be compelled to go into the dairying industry, and we as a Government and the people of Queensland must look forward to a greater advance in the dairying industry than has ever taken place before.

Mr. NOTT: Why are the American farmers giving up the tractors and going in for horses to-day when they can obtain petrol at 10d. a gallon?

Mr. W. COOPER: That is a statement the hon. gentleman cannot back up.

Mr. NOTT: Yes, I can.

Mr. W. COOPER: It is just one of those wild statements that is usually made by hon. members opposite. I must congratulate the Minister on his very excellent attitude in endeavouring in the past to bring about a better condition for those engaged in agricultural industries. We have heard a lot to-day in connection with his attitude on the cotton question. We had the hon. member for Barcoo eulogising Mr. Daniel Jones for what he has done for the cotton industry, but it must be remembered that the hon. member for Barcoo, Mr. Bulcock, was on the Agricultural Committee that advised the Minister to place an embargo upon ratoon cotton.

Mr. KELSO: Another split in the party.

Mr. W. COOPER. To-day we have the Cabinet deciding to remove the ban on ratoon cotton. We had Mr. Daniel Jones advertising himself in the "Courier" and stating that ratoon cotton was equal to the best annual cotton.

Mr. KELSO: He has proved it.

Mr. W. COOPER: He has not proved it. I have followed very closely the statements that were made by cotton experts and spinners in England, and not one has ever said, so far as I have been able to learn, that ratoon cotton is as good as annual cotton. We have to realise that Queensland embarked on this new cotton industry only recently, and the Government stipulated the price they were prepared to pay for annual cotton. The Government did not for one moment force anyone to grow cotton. They merely intimated that, if the people were prepared to grow annual cotton, they were prepared to pay 5½d. per lb. for it. They never advised the people to grow ratoon cotton, for which they had stipulated no price. In the Central district they have large areas of ratoon cotton, which they claim can be grown more profitably than the annual cotton, but perhaps in the future we shall see those gentlemen who have grown ratoon cotton come wailing and crying to the Minister and asking him to pay exactly the same price for ratoon cotton that is guaranteed for annual cotton. I support the Minister's attitude in saying, "We will not pay the same, because we are not sure if we can dispose of the ratoon cotton at all in Great Britain." How many times in this Chamber have we been told that we must produce the best article for sale in the old country? We have not been able to sell our beef because of the condition it was in when it was exported, and we have not been able to sell our fruit because of the condition in which we sent it overseas; and now hon. members opposite want to carry on that same bad policy and spoil the Queensland cotton market by sending an inferior class of cotton overseas.

Mr. KELSO: They cannot tell the difference.

Mr. W. COOPER: Mr. Cooper—

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

Question put and passed.

CHEMICAL LABORATORY.

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

"That £4,009 be granted for 'Chemical Laboratory.'"

Mr. NOTT (*Stanley*): There was practically an understanding at the inception of the Agricultural College when Mr. Brünrich was appointed Agricultural Chemist that his salary would be increased after the College had got into working order. Quite a decade has passed since that appointment was made, and since then this officer has been removed to Brisbane, and he is now head of the laboratory here. In him we have a head of that College of whom Queensland might well be proud, and I am certain that, if the opportunity was given, a great deal of good could be done in the College. A man of the attainments of Mr. Brünrich is inadequately paid at £600 a year. Some of the work performed by him some years ago entailed a lot of routine work. Later on much of the work he was engaged on was suspended and the results pigeonholed in order that some detail work, which was decided by the then Minister to be more important, should be performed. Amongst this work that was pigeonholed was some original research work on prussic acid poisoning. Later on, when Dr. Maxwell arrived, the then Secretary for Agriculture granted him access to the work that had been performed by Mr. Brünrich, and an endeavour was made by Dr. Maxwell to obtain credit for certain work performed by Mr. Brünrich, and it was only after a protracted controversy that Mr. Brünrich received credit for the work. There was a good deal of other research work going on at that time which, if completed, would have been of considerable benefit to Queensland. Unfortunately there was no definite policy then of working with a definite object in view. A man might be working for six, twelve, or eighteen months, or even three or four years, on scientific investigation before good results accrue, and a layman not understanding this work is likely to get impatient. In the past, and no doubt at the present time, Ministers have looked upon other matters as being of more importance than the research which was engaged in and which was not showing great immediate results. Consequently they consider that the work is not of the importance to Queensland that it really is. I am quite certain that much good work could be done if the officers in this branch were given an opportunity to work out over an extended time certain agricultural problems that occur from time to time.

I also regret that more use is not made of the agricultural chemical laboratory in regard to investigations of various agricultural difficulties connected not only with the soil but with many plants that are grown in parts of Queensland. A good deal of research work may be done in regard to finding out the food values of various natural grasses and edible shrubs, of which very little is known at the present time.

In addition to the amount that we see on the Estimates, I should be very pleased if a special amount were put on this vote and earmarked for special research work. I am only hoping that the Secretary for Agriculture will see at the very first opportunity

Mr. Nott.]

that the services of some of these officers, who have very high professional attainments, are recognised to a very much greater extent than they now are. Comparing their £500 or £600 a year with the wages earned by unskilled labour now, I think everybody will agree that the amount paid to the professional officer is altogether out of proportion to the services rendered. In the case of these professional men they have not merely to serve an apprenticeship for a few years. They certainly do go through a course of training for a number of years and receive diplomas and certificates, but in many cases theirs is a life-long study, and year in and year out it is their business to keep up-to-date in their profession, and they do so. For that reason their services ought to be of very much greater value to the State than is apparently the case when we see the amounts these officers of the Department of Agriculture are receiving, ranging from £600 per annum paid to the head of the branch downwards.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I support the request of the hon. member for Stanley who knows what he is talking about. The hon. member practised himself as an agricultural chemist for some time, and, having gone through the necessary study and secured his qualifications, he knows the amount of study entailed if one is to become a competent analytical chemist. I trust the Secretary for Agriculture will bear in mind the necessity for rewarding men who are qualified agricultural chemists.

At 4.55 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. CORSER: I am not going to say that we are looking for increased expenditure in every department, but when we have a man with the attainments of the gentleman who is head of the chemical laboratory, we should be prepared to remunerate him adequately if we wish to retain his services. We should not allow his services to be secured by people in the South, as has been the case with other senior officers in Queensland in the past.

Mr. HARTLEY: What does he do for his money?

Mr. CORSER: He is the chief analytical chemist of the Department of Agriculture.

Mr. HARTLEY: I know that, but what practical value do we get from him?

Mr. NOTT: He is not given an opportunity to prove his worth.

Mr. CORSER: We secure a great commercial value from our chemical laboratory. Through chemical analyses we can secure a knowledge of soil values, of what properties the soil possesses, and what it is necessary to add to the soil to make it productive for a particular crop, thereby saving primary producers very many years of practical investigation. All these things are of the greatest value. It may be asked what value the country receives from these agricultural chemists, but the possibilities of securing value are there, and the unfortunate part is that the analytical chemist cannot go out and canvass for business.

Mr. HARTLEY: It is very hard for a man outside to make a decent living at agricultural chemistry. There are plenty of men with high degrees going about looking for a job.

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Mr. CORSER: If the agriculturist were given an opportunity of acquiring an elementary knowledge of how to ascertain the contents of his soil by analysis, it would add interest to his occupation.

Mr. HARTLEY: If the agricultural chemist were to make a chemical survey of the various sections of the country, it would be of some value.

Mr. CORSER: That certainly would be most valuable. Some ten or twelve years ago the Agricultural Chemist was handed twenty samples of soil from the Upper Burnett. His analyses stand to-day, and are a guide to the settlers in that district. If settlers were encouraged to send along samples of soil for analysis and were educated as to the value of certain constituents in the soil, as to what plant foods are necessary for the production of a certain crop, and also what is taken out of the soil by a particular crop, it would be an interesting side to their occupation. If that were done, they would realise the value of a rotation of crops, and would not go in for growing one crop year after year on the same piece of ground with one class of cultivation, as is commonly done to-day.

Mr. HARTLEY: The question is would they appreciate the value of the analysis?

Mr. CORSER: An elementary education in this regard would be of great value to them in after life.

Mr. HARTLEY: If the Analytical Chemist were to combine an educational course in analytical chemistry with his other duties, I agree there would be something in it.

Mr. CORSER: I agree that the department might extend the operation of this chemical laboratory, and perhaps launch out into a scheme for imparting such information as the hon. member for Fitzroy suggests. If the information was imparted to the farmers, it would certainly be of much more value. I support the hon. member for Stanley, who knows what he is talking about; and I hope this officer will receive the consideration that is essential, and that we shall get the full benefit of the knowledge that is locked up in our chemical laboratory.

Question put and passed.

[5 p.m.]

COTTON INDUSTRY.

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

“That £16,314 be granted for ‘Cotton Industry.’”

This is the first occasion on which a vote appears on these Estimates under the heading of “Cotton Industry.”

Mr. MOORE (*Abingay*): I have not much to say in connection with the cotton industry because the question has been pretty well thrashed out. The matter I wish to refer to is the penalising of those individuals who kept the law and the subsidising of the men who broke it. To my mind, that was an absolutely untenable and unjust position for the Government to take up. We have had reports from the various inspectors and reports published in the Press. There is one case in particular which I read about a little time ago, where Mr. E. J. McConnell, of Marshlands, neglected to pick a crop of cotton that had been valued at £10,000 because he would have been breaking the law

by so doing. He offered it to individuals if they would pick it, but no one would take it on because they would have been breaking the law. A lot of people who had prospects of a good crop were practically ruined, while others who broke the law are being paid for their cotton. The Cotton Industry Act, which we passed last session, imposed a heavy penalty upon anyone who did not destroy his ratoon cotton. Anyone who failed to destroy his ratoon cotton was to be branded as a criminal and subjected to a heavy fine; but that provision was altered when the Bill was in Committee in that goal was eliminated. A large number of individuals refused to take the Act passed by Parliament as serious. Many people endeavoured to root out their ratoon crops, but others neglected to do so. Some of them kept their crop in order, but they were afraid to harvest it, and they got nothing out of it. There were other individuals who openly defied the Government, and harvested their crop in contravention of the law. Then, when the critical period came and agitation was strong, the Government agreed that the people who had broken the law should be allowed to harvest their ratoon cotton and sell it at the market price, although at the time the Act was passed ratoon cotton was described as not being legal tender. No Government can justly subsidise individuals who break the law and at the same time penalise those who obey it. That is a position no Government should stand for. It is the duty of the Government to find out the number of farmers who destroyed their ratoon cotton and compensate them, as other people are going to be allowed to make a profit by having broken the law. Personally, I have the fullest sympathy for those people who are being penalised in this way. Their case was put before the Government by Opposition members, and also published in the Press. Inspections were made of many of the growing crops, and it was shown that, if the growers were allowed to pick and market the ratoon cotton they would have received a good return, and there would have been a great deal of money brought into the State. The Government waited too late before they took any action, and the people who defied the law by reaping their crop and taking the risk have gained the benefit, while those who destroyed their ratoon cotton have been penalised. Under those conditions I feel that an injustice has been done, and I propose to move a reduction in this vote of £1, as a protest against the action of the Government with respect to the cotton industry. To my mind, it is a miscarriage of justice, and there is no justification for it. The whole principle is bad. If the Government had stood out till the end, I could understand their saying that no compensation should be paid and that everybody should be placed on the same basis; but in the position as it stands to-day the farmers who respected the law have every right to demand compensation from the Government who allowed others openly to flout it. I therefore move—

“ That the vote be reduced by £1.”

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): I support the amendment of the leader of the Opposition. The Government threatened imprisonment for a term of years and a fine of £100 as a punishment of persons who did not do certain things, but they allowed others to flout the law openly, and now, when they have gone back on their decision, it is only

the most careful men who obeyed the law who are not going to be compensated. The people who defied the Government and disobeyed the law are allowed to harvest their ratoon cotton and so reap an advantage. That is not ordinary justice. Those who respected the Government's decision deserve compensation. I say that any good Government—any honest Government—would stand up to their obligations. The Government pretend to be the best Government that Queensland has ever had. They claim to be always good and virtuous, but here is a case where they have passed a law and allowed it to be broken, but, nevertheless, compensate those who broke it whilst those who obeyed it are at a financial disadvantage. If the Government allow that sort of thing to occur, they show just what they stand for.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I did not expect that the Government would allow any law passed by them to be openly disobeyed and then compensate those who broke it, but that is the case of those cotton growers who have been allowed to harvest their ratoon cotton. The Government passed an Act which made it a punishable offence for anyone to grow ratoon cotton, but, instead of enforcing that provision, they allowed some people to flout the law, and not only to do that but also to be the richer by doing it. On the other hand, law-abiding citizens, including a great number of people in my electorate, obeyed the law, and have suffered in their pockets in consequence.

A great number of them were unable to get any cotton during the last season. The rain came late, and those who ratooned were able to get a picking in those parts of the State where they did not obey the law. Where the people obeyed the law they received no return for their endeavour to obtain plant cotton, and, instead of the Government compensating those people and encouraging them to remain law-abiding citizens, they did exactly the opposite and compensated those who broke the law. That is like the case of a criminal who, after being sentenced by the judge, is allowed to go scot free, while the poor unfortunate person who was injured has to suffer. I do not say that the breaking of the law in connection with the ratoon question was a criminal offence. I believe that the law made it a criminal offence; but the Government were ill-advised in the first instance in introducing legislation on that point. Some people may be guilty of breaking the law of the land and thus be made criminals according to the law, but they may not be actually criminals. That is the position in connection with ratoon cotton growing. It is peculiar how the Government have backed down on this matter. On almost every occasion when they are faced by a number of people who desire to have the law altered or who are determined to flout the law they immediately back down. If an individual had broken this law, perhaps he would have been convicted and heavily fined, if not imprisoned; but, because a number of people decided to break the law, the Government were not game enough to enforce it. I consider that those who obeyed the law should receive compensation in some form or other—more especially those who obtained no return whatever for the trouble and work they had put in on their cotton fields. I approve of the Government allowing the ratoon growers to pick their cotton, but they made a fatal blunder in the first instance

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in placing a ban on ratoon cotton. They have now backed down, and are allowing the ratoonist to get a return for his labour. If the Government wish to treat the law-abiding citizens as they should be treated, they should recompense them for obeying the law. That would certainly be some incentive to the people to obey the law of the land in the future. Unfortunately there are many laws on our statute-book that are not being obeyed to-day, and, if the people thought that they could break the law with impunity, it would become the general practice throughout Queensland for people to break the law and defy the Government and those who are endeavouring to enforce the Acts of Parliament. The Government have disclosed serious signs of weakness on this cotton question. I hope that the amendment will be carried, because I recognise—and I think all hon. members recognise—that the persons who obeyed the law of the land should get some compensation, more especially when it is discovered that the Government blundered. That is really what has happened with respect to ratoon cotton. The Government blundered badly by placing on the statute-book a law to prohibit the growing of ratoon cotton, and they have openly admitted that they blundered by withdrawing the restriction on ratoon cotton. The least the Government can now do is to compensate those growers who suffered by their mistake.

Mr. HARTLEY: They did not agree to it.

Mr. MORGAN: The Government admitted their mistake by withdrawing the embargo.

Mr. HARTLEY: The Government only gave the growers an opportunity to harvest ratoon cotton and prove their case.

Mr. MORGAN: The Government admitted it straight out.

Mr. HARTLEY: They have not.

Mr. MORGAN: If not, they have been forced to do something which they did not desire to do, and which in their opinion is injurious to Queensland. If that is the case, they are committing a more serious blunder, because no Government should do something simply because a large number of people desire that they should do so. The hon. member for Fitzroy said, by way of interjection, that the Government have not admitted they made a mistake. Why, then, are they allowing ratoon cotton to be picked and sold?

Mr. HARTLEY: They are allowing the supporters of ratoon cotton to prove their case.

Mr. MORGAN: It is no good the hon. member for Fitzroy apologising for the action of the Government in that way. Mr. Daniel Jones took home sufficient ratoon cotton, which was grown not this year but last year, in order to prove their case.

Mr. HARTLEY: There is no guarantee that it was ratoon cotton.

Mr. MORGAN: If the hon. member for Fitzroy is endeavouring to throw suspicion on the cotton that Mr. Jones took home with him and wishes hon. members to infer that it was not ratoon, then it bears out our contention that no one can tell the difference between ratoon and plant cotton.

Mr. HARTLEY: Why, then, did Mr. Jones not get an order for about 10,000 bales from those spinners who use ratoon cotton?

[*Mr. Morgan.*

Mr. MORGAN: We do not possess 10,000 bales of ratoon cotton. Before the Government made it a criminal offence to grow ratoon cotton they should have gone to the same trouble on behalf of the growers that Mr. Jones has gone. If they had done that, the growing of ratoon cotton would not have been made a criminal offence. Under the circumstances, those growers who obeyed the Government and destroyed their ratoon crops should be reimbursed from Consolidated Revenue.

Mr. HARTLEY: How much do you think is involved?

Mr. MORGAN: I do not know.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: And you don't care.

Mr. MORGAN: I do not care, if it is right, because money should not enter a question of doing what is right and just even though the amount involved amounts to £10,000, £20,000, or £100,000. The principle is not affected by the amount. If these people destroyed their crops in obedience to the law, then they should be compensated just the same as the people in Western Australia who were forced to destroy their cattle owing to the rinderpest outbreak in that locality were compensated. The Federal Government did not take the question of money into consideration in granting that compensation. It was a question of stamping out a deadly pest. In the same way, this should be a matter of right or wrong. It is certainly not right that people should be brought into a state of insolvency owing to a wrong action on the part of the Government. If the Government had some undertaking in which one worker or a number of workers were injured by a mistake of the Government, it would not be a matter of whether there was one worker or one thousand workers injured, all would have a right to receive compensation. If it was right to compensate one, it would be right to compensate a thousand. In this case it is right to give compensation to everyone concerned who suffered loss by obeying the laws of Queensland.

Mr. HARTLEY: Will you consider this? Supposing that, by allowing ratoon cotton you depreciated the value of annual cotton by 2d. a lb., would you pay compensation to the growers of the annual cotton?

Mr. MORGAN: That has not been proved. The very moment it is proved that ratoon cotton will reduce the value of annual cotton the hon. member will have a case to present to Parliament for consideration; but up to the present time it has not been proved.

Mr. HARTLEY: Oh, yes, it has. You have not read Mr. Jones's report.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MORGAN: It is not proved that ratoon cotton can be distinguished from plant cotton. We have been told that, if ratoon cotton is put through the same machine with plant cotton, the machine can distinguish the difference between them; but whether that is true or not remains to be seen. Experts have been tested—men who know their business—and they have been asked to pick out ratoon from plant cotton, and they have failed.

Mr. HARTLEY: You know very well that a machine will reject ratoon cotton, if that cotton is put in with annual cotton.

Mr. MORGAN: I would like to ask the hon. member, if good long staple plant cotton were put into a machine along with poor staple plant cotton, would not the machine also tell the difference? Of course it would. But, if good long staple ratoon cotton were put into the machine along with good long staple plant cotton, the machine could not tell the difference, because the staples would be practically of the same length. The same thing applies to wool. If you put properly grown wool alongside wool that has suffered from a dry spell and is broken, no doubt the machine will tell the difference. We have classers to class the wool, and certain classes are put up and made into different materials, according to the quality.

Mr. HARTLEY: There are too many "ifs" in that proposition.

Mr. MORGAN: The same thing applies to cotton. I had one illustration in my electorate with respect to the grading of cotton. One man retained about 2 acres of ratoon cotton for experimental purposes. He ploughed the balance out, and planted about

10 acres of plant cotton. Later, when sending away the plant cotton, he included the cotton from the 2 acres of ratoon, and, when he received his returns, he received the same value for each type of cotton. Those concerned were unable to tell the difference.

Mr. HARTLEY: What year was that?

Mr. MORGAN: This year.

Mr. HARTLEY: Did Mr. Daniel Jones tell you that?

Mr. MORGAN: No. Mr. Jones knows nothing about it. It is on record. The produce of these 2 acres was sent to the cotton ginners at Dalby. There was a grader at work there, and that man received 5d. per lb. for his cotton.

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.