

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER 1924

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy



QUEENSLAND PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

Legislative Assembly.

SECOND SESSION OF THE TWENTY-THIRD PARLIAMENT

APPOINTED TO MEET

AT BRISBANE ON THE TWENTY-NINTH DAY OF JULY, IN THE FIFTEENTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE V., IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1924.

[VOLUME 2 OF 1924.]

THURSDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER, 1924.

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

QUESTIONS.

SAMPLES TAKEN FROM LANDER OIL COMPANY'S BORE AT ORALLO.

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

"In regard to the Lander Oil Company (Australia), Limited, and its first bore at Orallo—

(1.) Have any samples been taken, what was the quantity analysed, if any, and the result of such analysis?

(2.) What was the date or dates when the samples were taken?

(3.) Were they taken under Government supervision?"

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

"1, 2, and 3. On 21st January, 1924, first samples obtained by the treatment of the scum on the mud fluid, submitted by the manager from about 2,000 feet, consisted of 33 per cent. benzine or petrol and 10 per cent. lubricating oil.

"On 7th February, 1924, samples of scum on mud fluid from 2,100 feet were taken by the Deputy Chief Government Geologist, and yielded 1.23 per cent. to 1.67 per cent. thick oil.

"On 7th March, 1924, sample of scum on mud fluid from 2,140 feet was taken by Deputy Chief Government Geologist, and yielded 0.08 per cent. thick reddish-brown oil.

"In June, 1924, samples from 2,630 feet and 2,640 feet were bottled by the manager, and were found to consist of 50 per cent. carbon tetrachloride solutions of non-volatile oil similar to that previously obtained from Orallo samples.

"On 21st June, 1924, sample of scum on mud fluid was taken by the manager in the presence of the Deputy Chief Go-

vernment Geologist, and yielded 0.049 per cent. oil.

"On 21st June, 1924, sample of scum on mud fluid from 2,640 feet was taken by the Deputy Chief Government Geologist, and yielded 0.263 per cent. light-coloured waxy oil.

"On 22nd June, 1924, sample of dried scum on mud fluid from 2,640 feet was taken by the Deputy Chief Government Geologist, and yielded 0.195 per cent. light-coloured waxy oil."

REQUEST FROM RATOON COTTON GROWERS FOR COMPENSATION.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

"1. Has he received a request for compensation from those cotton-growers who destroyed their ratoon cotton in accordance with the provisions of the Cotton Industry Act of 1923?

"2. What rate per lb. has been advanced by the Government for ratoon cotton not so destroyed—contrary to the provisions of that Act?

"3. Does he consider it just or reasonable that growers should suffer serious damage through the blunders of the Government in their cotton legislation?

"4. Is it not true that those who destroyed their ratoon cotton are in a worse position than those who defied the Government in this regard?

"5. On what grounds does he justify his refusal to meet the demands of the ratoon growers for compensation?"

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

"1 to 5. It is not the practice in any part of the British Empire to compensate people for obeying the laws, notwithstanding that some persons may secure a benefit and escape punishment by disobeying them. It is not my intention to ask the taxpayers, who are now finding a large sum to encourage cotton-growing, to pay compensation as suggested by the honourable gentleman."

MEETINGS OF UNEMPLOYED AND INSTRUCTIONS TO POLICE.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*) asked the Home Secretary—

"1. Is he aware that meetings of unemployed are held at the Labour Bureau each morning, when there are anything from 150 to 250 persons present?"

"2. By whose directions are the police in regular attendance at such meetings, and have special instructions been given to these police on duty at such meetings?"

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

"1. No.

"2. It is the duty of the police to be present at gatherings of the nature mentioned. No special instructions have been given to the police."

EXPENDITURE ON BARALABA-CASTLE CREEK RAILWAY AND GOGANGO DEVIATION.

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

"1. What is the estimated cost of construction of the Baralaba-Castle Creek Railway?"

"2. When does he expect this railway to be completed?"

"3. What amount has been expended to 30th June last in connection with the Gogango deviation work?"

"4. How many men were employed at the Gogango deviation in May, 1923, and how many men were employed there on 30th June, 1924?"

"5. When is this work expected to be completed?"

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

"1. £326,000.

"2. It depends upon the amount of money made available each year for the work.

"3. £21,989.

"4. For May, 1923, 45 men; on 30th June, 1924, 71 men.

"5. See answer to No. 2."

WIRELESS BROADCASTING IN QUEENSLAND.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) asked the Chief Secretary—

"1. Has the Government applied for or been granted a license for a wireless broadcasting station for Queensland?"

"2. If so, in formulating any wireless scheme, will he endeavour to have special consideration given to the requirements of people living in country districts where the ordinary news, services, and recreational facilities are lacking?"

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

"1. The Government has applied for a license for a wireless broadcasting station for Queensland.

"2. Yes, so far as the Commonwealth Telegraphy Regulations will permit."

"GOLDEN CASSET" AND "BUCKLY'S CHANCE" SYNDICATE TICKET

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*), without notice, asked the Hon. W. H. Barnes—

"1. Has his attention been drawn to the remarks of Mr. W. S. Noble, in reply to the statement made by him?"

"2. Would he furnish the House with particulars?"

Hon. W. H. BARNES (*Hynnum*) replied—

"1. Yes.

"2. In reply to this question I will read a letter I have received from Mr. F. T. Albury—

"Edward street,

"Charleville, 7th September, 1924.

"To Mr. W. H. Barnes, M.L.A.

"Dear Sir.—In reading the 'Daily Mail' I notice your questions concerning the administration of the 'Golden Casket' re transposing of number, and such a thing is possible. It arouses a suspicion that all is not fair and square with all the Government and Press supervision. Anything is likely to happen concerning the prizes.

"The reason I take the liberty of writing to you is this: In Casket No. 94 I had a ticket and called it 'Buckly's Chance.'

"On opening my paper I saw at the head of the column that 'Buckly's Chance' drew second prize. I naturally thought that I would read my name as the lucky winner of a £1,000, but I found a Mrs. O'Reilly was the fortunate person. Of course, it might have been a coincidence that two persons would select the same name for their tickets. My ticket was in the thirty-eight thousands. Mrs. O'Reilly's in the fifty-seven thousands. But if it is possible to transpose the number for £50, it is possible to do the same for a thousand. The ticket butts should show if there was two 'Buckly's Chance' syndicates.

"I would be pleased if you could make inquiries.

"Thanking you for same.

"I remain,

"Yours faithfully,

"(Sgd.) F. T. ALBURY."

I lay on the table of the House the original letter and a copy.

PAPER.

The following paper was laid on the table, and ordered to be printed:—

Forty-eighth Report of the Secretary for Public Instruction for the year 1923.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS.

POSTPONEMENT OF PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS.

The PREMIER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*), by leave, without notice, moved—

"That so much of the Sessional Order of 30th July last be suspended for this day as to enable Supply to be taken at the present sitting and private business on Friday, 19th instant."

Question put and passed.

SOUTH BRISBANE-KYOGLE-GRAFTON RAILWAY AGREEMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Larcombe, *Keppel*): I beg to move—

“That the House will, this day, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to Approve, Ratify, and Confirm an Agreement made between the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia and the Premiers of the States of New South Wales and Queensland, relating to the construction of the South Brisbane-Kyogle-Grafton Railway, and for other incidental purposes.”

Question put and passed.

CITY OF SOUTH BRISBANE IMPROVEMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN (*Brisbane*): I beg to move—

“That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to Authorise the Council of the City of South Brisbane to take Property for the purpose of Enlarging, Extending, and Widening Roads and otherwise Improving the said City, and for other purposes, and for dealing with property so taken and for other purposes.”

Question put and passed.

SOUTH BRISBANE-KYOGLE-GRAFTON RAILWAY AGREEMENT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Dunstan, Gympie, one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, in the chair.*)

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Larcombe, *Keppel*): I beg to move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to approve, ratify, and confirm an agreement made between the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia and the Premiers of the States of New South Wales and Queensland, relating to the construction of the South Brisbane-Kyogle-Grafton Railway, and for other incidental purposes.”

Question put and passed.

The House resumed.

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

FIRST READING.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Larcombe, *Keppel*) presented the Bill, and moved—

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

Question put and passed.

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

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—TENTH ALLOTTED DAY.

(*Mr. Dunstan, Gympie, Temporary Chairman, in the chair.*)

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

COTTON INDUSTRY.

Question stated—

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

on which the following amendment had been moved by Mr. Moore (*Aubigny*)—

“That the amount be reduced by £1.”

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I wish to support the amendment, particularly as a protest against the methods adopted by the Government in administering the Cotton Industry Act which was passed last session. A point which requires ventilation in this Chamber is that the Government are still persisting in their policy of depreciating ratoon cotton. Although they have given way to a certain extent and now propose to lift the ban from ratoon cotton, they still maintain their position of depreciating the only possible cotton that can be grown with every success in Queensland to-day.

Throughout the whole of the proceedings connected with the cotton industry the Government have practised the policy of oppression and intimidation, and that policy has reacted on the cotton-growers of Queensland. One must remember that the Cotton Industry Act itself is of a pernicious nature, and, when the measure went through this Chamber, members of the Opposition took the opportunity of pointing out to the Secretary for Agriculture what would be the result of such legislation. Those results have come home to roost, yet to-day the Government are still failing to do the right thing by the cotton farmer of Queensland. In addition to the initial wrong, they are perpetuating the evil, and refuse to compensate the men who carried out their unfortunate law. To put the position in a nutshell, certain legislation went through this Chamber, and certain farmers decided that they would not carry out that legislation. The result is that they are getting a price for the product that they grew unlawfully. On the other hand, the farmers who carried out the legislation are in a most unfortunate position to-day. Their rents are behind, and some have had to leave their properties, and probably will never get over the trouble, irrespective of the fact that the Government now propose to lift the ban.

One man has been frequently mentioned, Mr. Daniel Jones, who has been unmercifully handled by this Government. Yet that gentleman has done more for the cotton industry and the cotton farmer of Queensland than has any other man in Australia. Fortunately, against adverse conditions, Mr. Daniel Jones has come out on top. He went to England as the representative of the ratoon cotton growers of Queensland, and he has established a market for ratoon cotton. In view of the excellent work performed by Mr. Jones, I think the Minister should not hesitate to give an undertaking that in establishing a market for ratoon cotton in England—a work of national importance—the Government will stand behind his efforts and pay all the

Mr. Kerr.

expenses incurred by him in finding a market for ratoon cotton.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: With other people's money.

Mr. KERR: The Government have paid experts to visit England. Did they not pay the expenses to the British Empire Exhibition of the Secretary for Mines? All these expenses have to be borne by the rate-payers, and, when it comes to this important matter of improving the cotton industry, why should not the Government pay the expenses of an expert? It is only a reasonable proposition. If the Minister refuses, it means a further liability to the growers who undertook to pay the expenses of Mr. Daniel Jones. A man cannot travel over to England and visit the cotton manufacturing centres without incurring a lot of expense. Anyone can see that the relief which has been given to the cotton-growers in connection with the growing of ratoon cotton in a number of instances has come too late. The farmers have had a very gruelling time indeed, and we have to remember that they are only beginning their battle. They have the very large questions of ginning and marketing to overcome. These two factors have to be tackled by the farmers themselves, and that fight means a good deal of expense. I hope the Minister will take these two factors into consideration when dealing with this question.

I understand that last month a letter was sent from the Executive of the Central Queensland Cotton Growers' Union to the Department of Agriculture and Stock, which is very interesting to members of Parliament, and we are entitled to know the reply sent. Rather than get the reply by definite question in the House, the Minister might take the opportunity on these Estimates of reading the reply he sent in response to this letter, which reads—

"At a meeting of my executive, held on 12th instant, the following resolution was carried:—

'That the union point out to the Government the inequitable position forced upon these growers, who abided by the law and destroyed their ratoon crops, and demands that they be compensated for the loss of their produce.'

"In forwarding this to you as directed, I have also to advise that the executive was guided in its consideration of the matter by the following:—

1. That growers had repeatedly asked for relief from the operations of the ban during the progress of one of the most severe droughts on record and this had been refused.

2. The Government were warned that very considerable distress would inevitably follow upon the insistence on the ban.

3. The conditions governing the partial removal of the ban recognised the principle of paying compensation to growers in respect of immature cotton they would have to be compelled to destroy at the end of the time allowed for picking (16th June).

4. The subsequent removal of the ban by the Government established the validity of the contention of growers that its imposition in the first instance was fundamentally wrong, and calculated to inflict immeasurable damage and loss.

[Mr. Kerr.

5. The growers who benefit most as a net result of the imposition of the ban are those who defied the law when the Government ordered the eradication of all ratoon cotton. This is a most undesirable feature, which amounts to placing a premium upon law breaking.

6. The union, in making this demand, is not asking for sympathy so much as for bare justice.

"I have also to point out that in many cases the operation of the ban resulted in growers getting in arrears with their land rents, and the Crown had in consequence inflicted the 10 per cent. penalty."

The farmers are being attacked all round on this cotton question. They are unable to pay their rents, and generally they have an accumulation of liabilities through the administration of the Cotton Industry Act. The Government can at this stage collate information as to the crops which have been destroyed, and at least give those men who carried out the law an opportunity equal to that of the men who broke the law. I am not making this request only on behalf of the farmers in Central Queensland, because in my electorate the growers can produce 1,000,000 lb. weight of cotton annually, and they have had to destroy their crops.

Mr. HARTLEY: Have they destroyed 1,000,000 lb?

Mr. KERR: When the Bill was going through this House I pointed out that my electorate many years ago was capable of growing many thousand pounds weight of cotton, and to-day it is capable of growing 1,000,000 lb. of cotton.

Mr. HARTLEY: And now you want the Government to compensate them because they did not grow it?

Mr. KERR: The hon. member is talking through his hat as usual. I want those men who destroyed their crops to get compensation.

Mr. HARTLEY: Did they destroy 1,000,000 lb. weight in your electorate?

Mr. KERR: I am not asking for compensation for something that is unborn. I am asking for compensation for something that was born and killed by this Government.

Mr. HYNES: The only cotton in your electorate is in the mattresses.

Mr. KERR: Yes, and the only cotton I can see is in the hon. member's head. The protest of the Opposition should be listened to on this occasion. We were denied a hearing in connection with the renewal of the loans in the old country, and we were previously denied a hearing in connection with the ratoon cotton question. Perhaps the Government will not now deny us a hearing in our desire to do the right thing. There is a clear-cut issue as to what should be done by an honest Government—that is, to compensate those who carried out the law, and not give an advantage to those who broke the law. We are coming to an evil time unless the Government are prepared to do the right thing, and there can be no doubt as to what is the right thing to do in this regard.

Mr. PETERSON (Normanby): I would like to know from the Minister what he expects the result of this year's cotton crop will be. Last year he prognosticated that we would have a crop worth £1,000,000. I do

not think we shall come anywhere near that mark. One of the reasons why we shall not come near it is owing to the legislation passed last session, which has been most disastrous, not only to the finances of the State, but also to the settlers themselves. In a circular which I have received this morning from the Dawson Valley Butter Factory, of which I happen to be a small shareholder, it is stated that, in view of the fact that large numbers of the cotton growers are going out of cotton growing and concentrating their attention on dairying, they expect to have a better year next year than they had in the past year. There is a reason for that. At the beginning of the cotton campaign a good many people were desirous of going on the land to grow cotton. They were led to believe that they were going to make fortunes in a very short space of time. Unfortunately a certain set of circumstances has compelled the settlers to reconsider their position, and instead of the Minister being able to show that we are going to have an increased acreage under cultivation and a bigger yield in the coming season, we are going to have a smaller yield than there was last year. I am very sorry for that, because like other hon. members I have been hoping that Queensland would become pre-eminent as a cotton-growing State, and that the cotton industry would put even the pastoral industry into the shade. In answering a question this morning the Secretary for Agriculture said that the fact that the general public were called upon to pay a subsidy to the cotton growers was the reason why the Government could not pay compensation to those who had obeyed the law. Probably if we were working on broad common-sense lines that argument would stand, but here is the position: The Government last session passed a law, under which certain penalties were inflicted on settlers who disobeyed the law. We find from a report in the "Courier" of 16th April last that the Secretary for Agriculture made this statement—

"The Cabinet upon full consideration, and particularly in view of the serious outbreak of the pink boll worm in this State, has decided to enforce the law concerning ratoon cotton, and to insist on the immediate destruction of all ratoon and stand-over cotton bushes. Action will be taken to give effect to this decision."

Quite a large number of settlers went by this statement of the Minister, and in view of the threat that it contained, they deliberately destroyed their ratoon crops, and in doing so obeyed the law. It has been held out here that it is no special virtue to obey the law, but it seems to be a virtue to disobey it in this way—that provision is being made to take over the ratoon cotton crops of those who disobeyed the law. There is no intention on the part of the Government to stand by those selectors who obeyed the law. What a pass we have come to! Quite apart from party turmoil, bitterness, or personalities we can fairly appeal to the Minister and the Government at this juncture to give these settlers a fair and square go. We are asking for nothing out of the way, yet we are told that these people cannot be compensated because the rest of the State has subscribed to the subsidy. Are the cotton growers the only people who receive subsidies? For example, has not the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company been subsidised? Has not Chillagoe been subsidised? Have we not an

Unemployment Insurance Fund which is subsidised by the Government? (Government interruption.) If any industry or any set of men ought to be subsidised, it is these men who go out into the backblocks to live in bark huts and kerosene-tin shanties under the conditions that we know they face. Nevertheless there are men on the other side who pose as Labour men who deliberately support a Government who have deprived those workers of the means of earning a living. All I can say is that these settlers will never forget the trying twelve months through which they have gone—trying as a result of the action of the Government. Boiled down, what are the facts? They are [10.30 a.m.] that these men obeyed the law and that another set of men disobeyed the law; and those who disobeyed it are to be partly compensated whilst those who stood by the Minister and observed his law are told that they have been sponging on the State, and that they have been subsidised, and they are to get nothing.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Who do you say used the word "sponging"?

Mr. PETERSON: I do not say that anybody has used the word, but the fact remains that the hint about subsidy has been so strong that the suggestion is that these farmers have been practically bolstered up by the Government. The Minister knows as well as I do that that charge cannot be levelled against them, because they have had to put up with a considerable amount of trouble in the production of the crop.

One other reason why I urge on the Minister the necessity for seriously reconsidering his decision is a letter which was published in the "Courier" of 26th April last. Mr. Daniel Jones had left Queensland en route to England, and after making investigations in the Southern States he wrote this, amongst other things—

"With regard to the markets for ratoon cotton, my investigations in the South conclusively prove that had growers the ability to place their ratoon cotton on the Australian market—"

Mark you, not the English market—

"all now in Queensland could be sold at a good profit, equal to that paid for annual. The New South Wales spinners—Messrs. Bond, Limited—who at present have two large cotton mills in operation, and are still adding to their spinning capacity, are well satisfied with Queensland-grown ratoon cotton after tests in their own mills. A Hobart woollen manufacturing company mentioned that it had failed to get a supply of China or Indian cotton, and is negotiating with English dealers for the article. Recent Press reports mention that a large cargo of cotton is due to arrive from overseas shortly. This is a significant commentary on the situation, viz., that on the one hand ratoon cotton in Queensland is being destroyed, due to supposed inferiority and non-legal tender, when we are importing for our Commonwealth cotton manufacturing industries an inferior article, for which spinners are compelled to pay as much or more than our growers expect for their ratoon-grown crops."

That is a statement which has not been challenged, and it shows conclusively that, had the growers been allowed to sell their

Mr. Peterson.]

ratoon cotton as they have asked to be permitted to do over and over again during the past twelve months, they need not have disposed of it in England or in any other part of the world, but could have disposed of it in our own Commonwealth of Australia. The Minister visited Melbourne and took part in the Cotton Conference, where no doubt he was able to hear some splendid arguments pro and con on the ratoon cotton question. One paragraph in the report of the proceedings of that conference which struck me forcibly was the report of a speech by a gentleman who is directly concerned in the industry in Australia—Mr. Bond. He is not a shareholder in the British-Australian Cotton Growers' Association, nor is he interested in Lancashire spinning. He is directly interested in a huge industry in New South Wales, known as Bond and Company, Limited. I quote from the "Courier" of Friday, 5th September, 1924, to show that his spinners could not tell the difference between ratoon and annual cotton—

"Mr. Bond (of Bond and Company, Limited, Sydney) spoke favourably of ratoon cotton,—"

Mr. HARTLEY: He would not purchase it when this Government offered it to him.

Mr. PETERSON:

"and gave instances where spinners employed by his own firm were unable to distinguish between ratoon and annual cottons, or even between ratoon and 'A' grade annuals."

The spinners who ran the cotton through the machines could not tell the difference between plant and ratoon cotton. It is not a question for the individual, but what the spinners find when spinning the cotton. Mr. Bond's evidence ought to be worth something. All along he has been in favour of ratoon-grown cotton, and therefore I contend that the case on behalf of the ratoonists is unanswerable, and that they should be compensated for the destruction of their ratoon cotton. Mr. Bond is further reported to have said—

"His firm last year bought 400,000 lb. of ratoon cotton from New Caledonia. . ."

Just imagine this firm of Bond and Company, Limited, operating in Australia, and being compelled to go to New Caledonia to buy 400,000 lb. of ratoon cotton, when we had it here rotting in the fields of Queensland, and the settlers were sorely in need of money to pay their grocers and their butchers! You need not take my word for it; those are Mr. Bond's own words on that particular matter, and what he says is absolutely true. He is further reported to have said—

"His firm last year 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."

Mr. Bond has several large areas of cotton under cultivation in my electorate.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What variety?

Mr. PETERSON: He did not stipulate the variety, neither did the hon. gentleman stipulate any variety when he removed the ban on ratoon cotton. This is a new stunt now—"What variety?". The hon. gentleman knows perfectly well that, because of the shortage of Durango seed, the farmers have

not been able to obtain the proper seed and thus grow the proper cotton. Inferior seed has been supplied—seed from droughty crops, and pinched seed that had gone through the gin and had then been sent to the farmer. How were they to grow first-class cotton under those circumstances? It was impossible. The genesis of the whole trouble, if there was any trouble, is that the producers have not been supplied with the proper class of seed.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Where do you suggest we should have got the seed?

Mr. PETERSON: I am not arguing that the hon. gentleman should have got the seed when he could not get it. He cannot make the seed when he cannot get it; but do not blame the settlers and charge them with being dirty farmers, idlers, and loafers, when they cannot get good seed, like some hon. gentleman has done.

Mr. HARTLEY: Who said that?

Mr. PETERSON: If the hon. gentleman will look up "Hansard," he will ascertain who said it.

Mr. HARTLEY: I did not say that.

Mr. PETERSON: I do not know whether the hon. gentleman altered it, but I heard him say it.

Mr. HARTLEY: I say it is untrue.

Mr. PETERSON: If the hon. gentleman will come into the library, I will show where he referred to the settlers as "lazy farmers." Is that sufficient for the hon. gentleman?

Mr. HARTLEY: That is different from saying that they are "dirty farmers."

Mr. PETERSON: The hon. gentleman called them "slovenly farmers." What is the difference between "slovenly" and "dirty"? I would like some enlightenment on that point. I do not wish to weary the Committee any further beyond saying that it cannot be disputed that those who have supported the ratoonists have made out a good case. When we were told that ratoon cotton was not legal tender we were thrown on our own resources to prove that it was. We received no assistance from the Government in our endeavour to prove it, but we have proved that ratoon cotton is legal tender, consequently the ratoonists have succeeded on both issues, and in any ordinary court of law costs would be given in favour of the plaintiff on the whole question, and I now ask the Government to grant costs or compensation to the growers.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I am certainly going to support the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition. I contend that the actions of the Government have been responsible for a setback for a number of years in the cotton industry. The Minister now is attempting to hide his errors behind quite a lot of excuses, but he has not been able to convince one grower that the Government have not been guilty, not only of a serious wrong, but of taking the advice of everybody else but the grower. The case of everybody but the grower in connection with the cotton industry has received the consideration of the Secretary for Agriculture and the Government. If there is one thing that Labour pretends to be proud of in connection with the industrial movement

[*Mr. Peterson.*]

throughout Australia, it is that they recognise that those in the industry should have some say in its control. The history of the hon. gentleman is that he has collected evidence from every point of view which tended to place a ban on the growth of ratoon cotton to the detriment of the grower, but he did not collect any evidence with regard to its value or the market for it. To-day I asked the Secretary for Agriculture some questions with regard to the industry which he evaded. I want to know if he had been approached, and, if so, what amount of consideration had been given to those people who had been losers owing to the action of the Government, what he proposed to do.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You wanted some general information.

Mr. CORSER: I wanted some information, and that is one thing hon. members cannot get from the hon. gentleman.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There is nothing that you stand more in need of.

Mr. CORSER: There is nothing that the hon. gentleman needs more, because for the whole of the year he and his agents have access to the Press. He places his name on every report and statement in an endeavour to frame a case and to paint the picture in accordance with his political ideals in his determination to place the ban on ratoon cotton against the wishes and interests of the growers. The hon. gentleman has access to the Press throughout the year, and, when we come here and ask for information, what does he say? In answer to my question this morning he said it was not the practice in any part of the British Empire to compensate people for obeying the laws.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is quite true. You cannot state a case where that is not so.

Mr. CORSER: That is not the question.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is the question.

Mr. CORSER: In every part of the British Empire as well as in our own State, whenever people are compelled to destroy stock or property of value it is recognised as a sound constitutional principle that compensation should be paid. If the Government or their experts enter a dairy farm in an endeavour to find out whether pests or diseases exist there and have to kill any beasts that are found to be diseased, compensation is always paid if those beasts are valuable.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CORSER: Our own laws in regard to the cotton industry provide that, if pests are discovered on a farm and the destruction of the crop is ordered, compensation must be paid. Here we have a valuable product—a product that the world requires—and the Minister, against the desires and protests of the growers, places a ban upon and orders the destruction of all ratoon cotton under a penalty of a fine of £1,000 or imprisonment. The Minister has now to admit that ratoon cotton is a commodity of value and that it is marketable. We find also that there are people who are prepared to purchase it; and, when the people who were compelled to destroy this product of value ask the Minister for some compensation, he practically refuses to grant it. He has not the political bigness to give a direct answer, but says

that people in the British Empire are not compensated for obeying the laws, notwithstanding the fact that some persons may secure a benefit and escape punishment by disobeying the law. He added that it was not his intention to ask the taxpayers who were now finding a large sum of money to encourage cotton growing to pay compensation as I suggested. That suggestion was not mine; it was the suggestion of the growers in the State. This is the first occasion that the Minister has recognised the taxpayer. He himself has taken all the credit of the cotton guarantee when he knew that, if a guarantee has to be paid at all, the people of Australia who receive benefit by encouraging the growth of cotton are called upon to pay it under an agreement between the Federal Government and the States.

Mr. GLEDSON: The Federal agreement was a bit belated.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What was your father doing there?

Mr. CORSER: He advocated ratoon, and fought for ratoon. He has been a big battler for the settlers of Queensland in breaking down these enemies of the farmer—the Secretary for Agriculture and the Government behind that Minister in this matter.

So bitter was the Secretary for Agriculture that when, Doctor Bancroft, an eminent scientist, in my own district, propagated certain hybrid cottons and sent specimens to the Department of Agriculture and Stock to discover their value, he met with disfavour at the hands of this Government. The Rockhampton "Morning Bulletin" of 19th July, 1924, states—

"Some time ago, Doctor T. L. Bancroft, of Eidsvold, furnished supplies of hybrid cottons bred by crossing Eureka and Durango, Durango and Egyptian, and Sea Island and Durango, to the Queensland Department of Agriculture, together with an article outlining his views on the problem of breeding and establishing a cotton in Queensland that would be acclimatised to our conditions, and therefore more likely to withstand them than would the imported varieties. He also intimated that it was his intention to distribute seed from the plants among the Agricultural Departments of Australia and also the Institute of Science and Industry, and requested that the paper be printed in the 'Agricultural Journal.' The article was returned to him as also were the samples, with the intimation that the department does not favour cross-breeding of cotton! . . .

"Doctor Bancroft then sent both the article and the samples to the editor of 'The Cotton Farmer and Dairyman' (Captain F. Rhodes) explaining the position, who at once sent the samples to the Imperial Institute, South Kensington, London."

The Imperial Institute examined the samples, determined their commercial value, and rendered a satisfactory report. They did not make any charge for the investigation.

That Institute proved the great value of this hybrid cotton and charged nothing for the research involved. Hon. members will notice the difference between the action of

Mr. Corser.]

the two bodies, and the desire on the part of the Royal Colonial Institute to assist the cotton industry.

When the Secretary for Agriculture appealed for advice on the cotton question the Central Queensland District Council placed their case before the hon. gentleman. I shall read a copy of their minute—

“This District Council places on record its protest against the decision of the Government to legislate against the ratooning of cotton under systematic method, as we hold the view that the demand for such legislation is by restricted interests, and is not conducive to the expansion of an industry which, given sympathetic administration, gives promise of becoming magnified by its Empire importance.”

To show how narrow the Secretary for Agriculture was and how bitter he was against ratoon cotton, these Central Queensland growers placed this in their minute—

“Further, this District Council, from a close observation of the facts leading up to this decision and having regard to the report of its representatives attending the conference on the 15th August, 1923, embracing comments on the conduct of the Minister for Agriculture and the Director of the Council of Agriculture thereat, is of opinion that, for reasons appended hereto, a Royal Commission of Inquiry is desirable and—

1. Despite the weight of evidence clearly favouring ratooning the interests of the farmers of Queensland have been sacrificed in the interests of a dictatorial combine.”

The unfortunate thing about the whole of this ratoon business was the determination of the Secretary for Agriculture, when collecting his information, to be led by Mr. Crompton Wood, and the hon. gentleman's strong antagonism towards the ratoon cotton growers of the State. That is what we complain about. I have here a letter from a cotton-grower regarding this phase. The Secretary for Agriculture stated yesterday that two or three days ago Messrs. Bond and Company made a statement—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Do not misquote me. I did not say two or three days ago. I said I asked the question at the conference recently.

Mr. CORSER: In Melbourne recently the Minister had an opportunity of inspecting the arguments and of questioning Bond and Company. Why did he not take it on then? In July last the State Governor of New South Wales attended a dinner which was given after an inspection of the hosiery factory of Messrs. Bond and Company, and after the dinner Mr. J. T. N. Conover, director of the company, said—

“They spun their own cotton, but regretted they could not buy Australian grown cotton. He thought there must be some agreement between the Australian Cotton Growers' Association and the English buyers, through which they were charged more than the market price at Liverpool. They had at least to guarantee a price as high as that in Liverpool.”

For ratoon cotton! What did the grower get? According to an advertisement of the Queensland Government published in the “Australian Cotton Grower,” printed in

[Mr. Corser.

Sydney, the grower received from 2d. to 3d. per lb. for ratoon cotton. The Queensland Government placed with McDonnell and East, Limited, Brisbane, an amount of that cotton, represented by them to be condemned cotton and which they claimed was not legal tender. Mr. Daniel Jones secured an amount of this cotton—this cotton which was condemned by the Government as not being legal tender and as being valueless and for which the farmer was receiving from 2d. to 3d. per lb.—placed it amongst buyers in Great Britain, and secured a very good report to the effect that this ratoon cotton was a desirable and marketable quality, which proves conclusively that the growers who received from 2d. a lb. to 3d. a lb. for the cotton sold by the Government to McDonnell and East, Limited, were entitled to a far higher price. This amendment has reference to the unfortunate individual who was not allowed to get his 3d.—was not allowed to get even his 2d.—for this cotton. Take as an instance the experience of Mr. McConnell, who grew cotton in the Burnett electorate to the extent of 1,000 acres a year for two years.

Mr. DASH: Under the share-farming system.

Mr. CORSER: It was under a system in which he spent more money than he got out of it and paid wages all along. He had a very good crop of ratoon cotton, and he was told that he would have to destroy it. He therefore turned his cattle into the ratoon cotton and his 1,000 acres of seed cotton did not produce a crop that paid him. I have here a letter from a farmer which proves absolutely the correctness of the statements made by members of the Opposition to-day. This letter, which is dated 13th September, 1924, says—

“Cannot something be done to ventilate this grievance of the cotton-grower in regard to the ignoring of their claims for compensation for property—in the shape of a cotton crop—destroyed by order of the Government—an order which is now tacitly admitted to have been a departmental blunder.

“Growers in 1923 were possessed of plantations of cotton plants, well established in the ground and perfectly healthy.

“Plants which would have borne a good crop of sound commercial cotton, the proceeds of the sale of which would have given the owner sufficient money to provide food and clothing for himself and family and other necessary expenses. And now, owing to the small return from the 1924 annual crop, there are hundreds of us as hard up as ever man was in the world.”

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: That is funny.

Mr. CORSER: It is not funny; it is serious. It is a tragedy, and the position is brought about by the Government. We told the Minister what would happen. We pointed out the mistake he was making.

“And we are brought to this distressing state of poverty by the Government of our State, which under threat of fine or imprisonment forced us to destroy that of our property which was of vital value.

“It hardly seems possible that any Ministry could be guilty of a crime of this description, and treat those on whom they have forced calamity with such

utter disregard and callousness. We are all intently watching and hoping for relief, and each Press report of the procedure of the State Parliament is eagerly scanned. But so far we have watched and hoped in vain. Unfortunately this blundering edict will have a farther reaching effect than is generally thought, because, owing to the grower being without capital, he is unable to employ labour, and consequently will not be able to plant as much annual cotton as he would have done under more favourable circumstances.

"May I ask you to try and do something to alleviate this distress amongst growers, through no fault of their own.

"I am making this request to you because of the admirable stand you always take for the man on the land, and for which we farmers are extremely grateful.

"I am enclosing a cutting from the 'Cotton Farmer and Dairyman,' which explains the position very clearly.

"I am also enclosing a brief statement of my own case."

Mr. HARTLEY: Who signed that?

Mr. CORSER: A cotton-grower signed it. I will put the letter on the table, but I am not going to mention a person's name without his request.

Mr. HARTLEY: Was it written in the "Courier" office?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Is that an anonymous letter?

Mr. CORSER: It is not an anonymous letter; it is signed by a cotton-grower.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You must lay it on the table.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. gentleman must not say "must;" I have already said that I would lay it on the table, but I am not going to give a man's name without being requested by him to do so. I am prepared to place on the table any evidence which I use, but that is what the Minister cannot do to prove his statements. Here is something more—

"HOW THE ACT HAS AFFECTED ME.

"At the end of 1923 harvest, I had 64 acres of growing plants, 44 acres of which were on a new burn. The felling of the scrub had cost £66. The remaining 20 acres had cost £1 per acre for ploughing—a total outlay of £86.

"The cost of seed planting and subsequent cultivation would be additional to this.

"The net sum received for cotton harvested from the above acreage—owing to bad season—was £135.

"These 64 acres were destroyed in obedience to the law, and a further 57 acres were prepared and planted three times, and from this area I have now harvested three bales of cotton, value £23.

"This is my total income for a year's absolute hard work; in fact, the period is longer, as I shall not get anything more until January, 1925, at least, and I started preparations for present crop in July, 1923."

The bell indicated that the first portion of the hon. member's time allowed under the Standing Orders had expired.

Mr. CORSER: I will take the balance of my time later on.

[11 a.m.]

Mr. CARTER (*Port Curtis*): Although many people have studied the question and tried to realise the importance of the cotton industry to the State, it is very difficult for those who have not traversed our various cotton-growing areas to realise the great importance the industry will be to the State. I look forward to the cotton industry being the greatest primary asset of the State of Queensland in the future. My ardour is not at all damped by the difficulties which have attended the production of cotton in Queensland. The cotton industry is in its infancy, and the growing of cotton is something we have to learn all about. I recollect the trouble which the growers of sugar had to establish that industry, and I believe the State will never repay the debt of gratitude which it owes to some of those who went into the sugar industry and helped to establish it. The same thing may be said of cotton. I think it will become a very great industry, and therefore I consider that the Government were on very safe ground when they set out to try to establish it on sound lines. I am not out of sympathy with the man who wants to grow ratoon cotton, because I have watched the industry for three or four years, and I think that the man who asked for the right to ratoon his cotton on safeguarded lines was taking a sound stand and knew what he was talking about.

Mr. EDWARDS: Why did you say he should not be allowed to ratoon it?

Mr. CARTER: I have never said so. However, I am prepared to take my share of responsibility for the Act, although I hold those views personally. What I do deplore is that influences outside and inside this Chamber should use this question for party political purposes and try to create an impression in the minds of the people that the Government are insincere.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: There is no doubt about it.

Mr. CARTER: There is no doubt that they were sincere in endeavouring to establish the industry and in bringing in the Bill which they believed necessary for that purpose.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: That is not a very sound stand.

Mr. CARTER: My stand is quite sound. I can sympathise with the attitude of hon. members opposite who represent cotton-growing areas, and who, having heard the complaint of the farmers and the reasons why they should be allowed to ratoon, get up from pure motives and make remarks in favour of ratooning; but I have no sympathy with gentlemen both inside and outside the Chamber who try to create a wrong impression in the minds of the public, and who have never been interested in the industry and who have never grown or are likely to grow as much cotton as would satisfactorily plug the ears of a mosquito. Nobody in this Chamber admires Mr. Daniel Jones and the efforts he has made to establish the industry more than I do. He has been the veteran of the industry, and the State can never repay the debt of gratitude it owes to him. But, although I believe that he does know something of the growing of cotton, I am satisfied that he did not know all about

Mr. Carter.]

the value of cotton for manufacturing purposes, because as late as 1920 he not only proposed to ratoon cotton but also proposed to establish tree cotton in between the Sea Hill and other varieties of plant cotton. He suggested that cotton should be planted and grown as ratoons for two or three years, when the tree cotton could come into use and the plants be grubbed out. I know that I am not saying anything derogatory to Mr. Jones in saying that, and I thought it was a wise suggestion at that time, yet anybody in this Chamber who has advocated the growing of tree cotton knows that it is not a wise proposition.

Mr. CORSER: I have some with me which was grown on bushes seventeen years old, and which are still good.

Mr. CARTER: I am quite prepared to admit that the so-called cotton experts may have a great deal of knowledge of the growing of cotton outside this continent under entirely different climatic conditions, but that remark may have applied also to sugar experts. Sugar-growers in other countries might have been quite unsuccessful under our conditions and in our climate, and although am not prepared to accept the cotton expert at his own valuation, I am prepared to give him the credit of knowing something about it in the place he came from. But I do think it is possible for experts from somewhere else to mislead the growers here. I have known some experts in my district tell the farmers to plant close and other experts have told them to plant wide apart. We have to realise that the plant has to be grown in this State according to the season of the year. If we have a dry season, we ought to plant as much as possible on more fertile or fruitful soil, and then we may plant close. If we are sure of a wet season, we can plant on actual sand and wide apart, so that the experts are not on sound ground when they lay down general rules. I believe that the Government were actuated by the highest and best of motives when they brought in the Bill—with the provisions of which I did not entirely agree—and the very fact that it is proposed to amend that measure of last year to permit of ratooning is in itself evidence that with more experience their opinion has changed.

A great deal has been said about the compensation of growers of ratoon cotton. I represent a cotton-growing area the same as some hon. members on the other side of the Chamber. In my district there has been no trouble about ratoon cotton, because it is not a burning political question. It is true that Captain Rhodes, who never grew an inch of cotton in his life, and another gentleman from the Rockhampton Chamber of Commerce came into my district and tried to create some trouble.

Mr. KELSO: He uses his common sense.

Mr. CARTER: Evidently his brand of common sense is similar to that of the hon. member for Nundah—not of much general value. (Opposition interruption.) However, the people came into my district and were laughed out of it by the farmers, with the exception of one or two who, as cotton-growers, are the joke of the district. I have received only two requests to approach the Minister asking for compensation for farmers for having grubbed out their plants. I do not think that any common-sense man can in dead earnest ask that somebody should be compensated for obeying the law. We might

as well say that in the dairying industry a farmer who persisted in milking his cows in a dirty yard, or separating his cream in a dirty separating house, or carrying his cream in dirty cans to the market should be compensated because he loses thereby. The dairying industry is hedged round with all sorts of restrictions because it is the desire of the Government to put on the market a clean wholesome butter and to increase the value of the Queensland product. That is the object of hedging round the dairying industry with all kinds of restrictions—more restrictions than are thrown round the cotton industry. We realise the necessity for safeguarding the good clean dairy farmer against the dirty dairy farmer. In all industries there are good and bad men. There are good and bad farmers, clean and dirty farmers. Because a man is a farmer it does not follow that he is without faults, and, unfortunately, the good farmer may suffer because of what the bad farmer does. So we have hedged the dairying industry round with safeguards to protect the good man against the bad one, and I believe that in bringing in the Cotton Industry Bill the Government were actuated by a similar motive, and I cannot for the life of me see why a man who has obeyed the law should make any complaint about it. It is true that those who disobeyed the law had the opportunity of gathering their ratoon cotton and selling it at their own risk—a thing I sympathise with, because I am not out of sympathy with ratooning.

Mr. MOORE: Sympathy will not buy bread and butter.

Mr. CARTER: All the talk by the leader of the Opposition will not buy bread and butter for anybody he represents. The hon. gentleman's speech may have been in sympathy with those who are making so much noise about this question, but all that talk is not going to buy bread and butter for those people. I am satisfied that the Government have tried, and are trying, to establish an industry which will buy bread and butter, and they will be successful if the industry is properly safeguarded and those people are assisted. I trust, therefore, that we shall not have so much talk about this matter, which I think is raised for purely party political purposes and for the purpose of advertising those who are making the statements, and in an endeavour to create a feeling against the Government, who are sincerely honest in their intentions.

Mr. KELSO: Do the farmers in your district desire the right to grow ratoon cotton?

Mr. CARTER: There has been no noise about it in my district. They all accepted the Cotton Industry Act in the right spirit, with the exception of one or two men who have gone in for ratooning. Those one or two are the most indifferent cotton-growers in my electorate. One farmer in my electorate, who is supposed to be the best cotton-grower there, was hostile to the banning of ratoon cotton, but he said that under no circumstances would he grow anything but seed cotton. This man is a most successful cotton farmer, and on every occasion he has grown seed cotton. He is a careful, good farmer, who tills his soil well, watches his opportunity, and cultivates and cleans his crop. Although a believer in the right to produce ratoon cotton, he is not one of those "urgers" who are only urging this matter for party political purposes.

{Mr. Carter.

Another matter that I desire to touch upon is in connection with various Local Producers' Associations and District Councils that have sprung up under the Primary Producers' Organisation Act. I have noticed that in some parts of Queensland, particularly in the area around Rockhampton—apparently because of the influence of the Rockhampton Chamber of Commerce—there are a number of those bodies who are trying to dip into politics. When the Primary Producers' Organisation Act was introduced it was made a non-political measure. (Opposition laughter.) Had the Government set out in the same way as would hon. members opposite, we would have had a very powerful political instrument in that organisation, but at the same time a very wrong instrument. What is happening? We have members in those bodies—they are not all farmers—who are out of sympathy with the Primary Producers' Organisation Act, out of sympathy with the movement, and out of sympathy with those who are trying to better the conditions of the farmer generally, and who are butting in and trying to use those organisations for political purposes. This time last year I had a letter from a District Council in Rockhampton, asking me to explain why I had voted in a certain way. That body was a non-political body, and they did not get any reply from me. Any man who likes to get up in my electorate, or any of the members of District Councils outside who like to get up in my electorate and ask me a question of that character will get a reasonable answer, because I am not ashamed of the way that I vote in this Chamber.

Mr. MOORE: What reply did the hon. gentleman give to the Licensed Victuallers' Association? (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. CARTER: What reply did you give?

Mr. MOORE: I did not give any reply at all.

Mr. CARTER: Yes, you have replied.

Mr. MOORE: I did not.

Mr. CARTER: I have given no reply to the Licensed Victuallers' Association because they have not asked me any question. Those bodies established under the Primary Producers' Organisation Act have in some instances been overstepping the mark. Some members of those bodies that are supposed to be non-political are not only trying to turn them into political machines but they are actually trying to shove out the farmers who are not in sympathy with bringing political action into that sphere, and therefore the Minister should take some steps to try and protect the honest and straightforward farmers in those organisations from the machinations of outside bodies who are trying to turn them into political machines.

Mr. NOTT (*Stanley*): I desire to support the amendment moved by the leader of the Opposition. I am pleased to see that the Government are paying considerably better salaries to those concerned in this branch than they are paying in other branches of the department. It seems rather strange that the Government should have made a serious blunder in that branch which is controlled by highly paid experts. It might appear to those listening to this debate and to a number of people reading the published reports in the various newspapers that the ban on ratoon cotton was instituted on the advice of these experts, but I believe that

the experts we have in Queensland had absolutely nothing to do with the ban on ratoon cotton, and that the people who are responsible for what I might call gross Government stupidity with the cotton legislation are the Government themselves. The experts were engaged after the policy had been adopted.

It is not my intention to go over the ground that has been so ably covered by the hon. member for Burnett, the hon. member for Normanby, and the hon. member for Enoggera. Those hon. gentlemen have stated the case direct from the growers. It has been stated by hon. members opposite that the quality of ratoon cotton has not been proved to be equal to that of plant cotton, and these hon. members have stated that Mr. Daniel Jones was unable to sell ratoon cotton in England. There may be a very patent reason why ratoon cotton equal to selected plant cotton in Queensland has not been forthcoming. Many men have marketed a considerable amount of ratoon cotton as plant cotton, and have received the best price for that cotton, and many men who had good ratoon cotton did not desire to make that fact known because they were afraid that they would not be able to market it at all, consequently the amount of ratoon cotton from which Mr. Daniel Jones had to select his samples was very limited. I know of the case of one farmer who planted cotton one year and then applied to the British-Australian Cotton-growers' Association for seed for the following year. He received the seed, but, as the plot of cotton that he was about to plough out looked so well, he thought he would leave it and ratoon it, and he decided to hand his seed over to the next-door farmer—there was only a barbed wire fence between them—and the next-door farmer planted that seed. Later on they both picked their cotton, and they both sent it to the Whinstanes Ginnery, and the man who sent the ratoon cotton received 5½d. per lb., whereas the man who sent plant cotton received only 5d. per lb. When the hon. member for Normanby was speaking he mentioned that Mr. Bond, of Messrs. Bonds Limited, had certain areas of ratoon cotton in his electorate, and the Secretary for Agriculture interjected, "What variety?" The Secretary for Agriculture also asked what should be done in regard to this.

Before inaugurating the cotton industry the hon. gentleman should have obtained the sound advice of experts from other parts of the world, and one of the first things he should have done was to establish farms throughout Queensland to test the various varieties of cotton and find out the different types of cotton that were required for the various districts. If that had been done, the trouble that has been experienced for some considerable time in regard to mixed seed would not have been heard of.

The fact has been stressed by the leader and many hon. members of the Opposition that a number of the Acts that have been passed are being altered in principle by the regulations which are subsequently issued. That is one phase of the Cotton Industry Act which is worthy of consideration. If hon. members look back some hundreds of years of the history of Great Britain, they will find that one of the greatest objections that the people in those days had was to being governed by regulations. The regulations in those days were

Mr. Nott.]

certainly issued by the King. That system gradually grew until the time of King Henry VIII., when government by regulation was obliterated. In Queensland we have a supposedly democratic Government passing Acts of Parliament and then incorporating different principles in the regulations which are issued under them to assist in their administration. The action of the Secretary for Agriculture and the Government generally in the administration of the cotton industry has been almost to wipe it out and prevent any chance of the industry being developed in Queensland. But for the embargo on ratoon I am satisfied that well over £1,000,000 worth of cotton would have been exported from Queensland this year, and that a tremendous amount would have been exported next year. Owing to the ban on ratoon cotton the people are afraid to grow more cotton, and they have been growing it long enough to discover that plant cotton cannot be grown successfully as a commercial proposition. The Government are solely responsible for the failure of the industry. There was a chance recently, on account of the high prices offering for cotton, of obtaining a tremendous amount of capital from overseas for the development of the industry in this State. Perhaps the high prices will not last, but there is a danger that this capital has been diverted to other countries. The development of the cotton industry is going ahead by leaps and bounds in other countries. In Uganda, in Central Africa, alone, £3,000,000 were paid in wages to harvest the cotton crop last year. The development of the industry in other countries might have the effect, owing to the administration of the industry by the Government of those countries, of reaping the benefit of the high prices, and the danger is that by the time the error is rectified here it will be too late for the growers in this State to take advantage of those prices. The administration of the Cotton Industry Act goes to show that the Country party recognised a considerable time ago that it would be disastrous for the Secretary for Agriculture, by virtue of his office, to be also chairman of the Council of Agriculture. The absolute and definite proof of that contention has been the administration of the cotton legislation in this State.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I will not take up much of the time of the Committee in dealing with this matter, because no doubt we shall have a full-dress debate on the cotton question again when the Bill of which I gave notice this morning comes before the House. We shall then have the whole discussion over again. My colleague, the Secretary for Railways, was right when he compared hon. members opposite with the dog that is mentioned in the Reverend C. H. Spurgeon's book entitled "John Ploughman's Talks." Amongst other things that book deals with the dog of a farmer named Tompkins. He said that the dog howled all the time he was on the chain, and when he was taken off the chain he was perfectly miserable. (Laughter.) The hon. members of the Opposition condemned the action of the Government in putting the ban on ratoon cotton and now they are whining, howling, and squealing because the Government have decided, rightly or wrongly, to remove that ban.

Mr. CORSER: They are complaining about your not paying compensation.

[*Mr. Nott.*]

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Who is going to pay the compensation? Those very hon. members who are now advocating the payment of compensation are complaining bitterly all the time about the high taxation. If compensation has to be paid, someone has got to pay that compensation.

Mr. CORSER: And someone is being asked to lose money owing to the ban on ratoon cotton.

Mr. KERR: All you are asked to do is to do a fair thing.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: As I have told hon. members that, if the fund shows a profit after the guarantee which is now being shared by the Commonwealth and the State of Queensland is paid, and a majority of the farmers are prepared to allow the Government to utilise those profits in the payment of compensation instead of paying the balance back to the cotton-growers, I am prepared to consider it.

Mr. CORSER: That profit belongs to the growers. It is their own money.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: As I have told the hon. member for Burnett before, he cannot restrain himself owing to his bad manners and bad political breeding when another hon. member is speaking. (Government laughter.) I have told the hon. member already that I have no intention of recommending to the Government that the taxpayers should find the money to compensate people whose loss in many cases is imaginary. The facts are that, when the Prime Minister of Australia recognised that the cotton industry was going to be a big thing in this country, he asked certain things to be done before he would agree to undertake to pay any bounty or share in the guarantee that the Queensland Government were progressive enough to offer—a guarantee of a price to the farmers that was unheard of before in the history of the State.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Government of Queensland took a risk by offering that guarantee before the Prime Minister would agree to anything at all. He said that before he did so the Queensland Government must get the advice of the people who had to buy our cotton. The Tory party are always talking about the man who buys. They have declared right through the ages that the man who buys labour should be the only man to have a say in determining what that labour should receive.

Mr. FRY: You are talking a lot of rot.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They opposed arbitration and proclaimed from the house-top that the man who paid for the labour should be the only one to have a say in what that labour should receive. They said that the workers had no right to organise and form a union, or to appeal for arbitration so as to fix the price of their labour.

Mr. FRY: That is a misstatement.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Tory journals also emphasised that fact.

Mr. FRY: That is not true, and you know it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Although hon. members opposite are not game to say that to-day, still that is their attitude, and their antagonism to arbitration is shown at every turn. Recognising that the buyers of cotton—the men who pay the piper should call the tune—should be consulted, the Prime Minister—very wisely in my opinion—decided to invite some representatives of the cotton-spinners of Great Britain to come to this country.

The Queensland Government were asked to share the cost of that delegation. Whether the delegation was composed of the best men who could be selected, and whether the advice given by them was sound [11.30 a.m.] advice at the time, is another matter. The Prime Minister of the Commonwealth invited this delegation to ascertain how best this industry could be started, what varieties of cotton were most favoured, and the general policy to be carried out to produce a variety and quality that would bring a high price and insure that the Government would not lose too large a sum under the guarantee.

That delegation came to Queensland, and offered advice to the Queensland Government. The Premier of Queensland believed that the statement made by Mr. Crompton Wood, the chairman of the delegation, was important and convincing. He realised that that gentleman spoke as the guest of the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth, and on behalf of the cotton-spinners on the other side of the world, and the Premier believed that the advice tendered must be accepted. Mr. Crompton Wood pointed out that ratoon cotton was not as good as plant cotton. He said that in a country like Australia, where white-labour conditions prevailed, we could only make a permanent success of the industry if we produced the best cotton. He pointed out that it cost more to produce inferior cotton, and that it costs more to pick 1 lb. of ratoon cotton than it does to pick 1 lb. of plant cotton because there is a greater weight of seed in the ratoon cotton, and seed is not worth very much at present.

Whether Mr. Crompton Wood's advice was sound or not I am quite convinced that, so far as the market is concerned, he did not anticipate the rise in price that has taken place. Two factors are conveniently overlooked by those people who talk about the Government having changed their view. After all, it is the strong man who can change if he finds he is wrong. I said at the time that the Cotton Industry Act was experimental legislation, that we were taking the course of "safety first," and, if our course was found to be wrong, it only meant a delay of twelve months; and twelve months in the establishment of a great industry that is going to last centuries is not very much. The Tory Government had been in power for very many years, and not an ounce of cotton was grown in this State in all that time. Why did they not do something to encourage this important industry? It remained for a Labour Government to embrace the opportunity and evolve a scheme that has placed thousands of acres of land under cultivation and has set many farmers in a satisfactory condition.

Mr. CORSER: The price of the world's cotton made that possible.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member who interjects is one of

the most unreasonable and inconsistent men in this Chamber. At the Biggenden Show last year there were over fifty motor-cars, whereas in the previous years there were not more than one or two. The improvement was due to the cotton industry, which gave the farmers a chance. It is a fact that in 1919 the total crop for Queensland was worth less than £1,000, and since, by the action of the Government, we have produced new wealth to the State to the value of nearly £750,000, and that notwithstanding the drought and adverse seasons.

I am not going into the question of ratoon, because that will be dealt with fully when I am bringing in the Bill to remove the embargo and to lay down the conditions under which ratoon cotton shall be grown.

Replying to the statement regarding Mr. Daniel Jones, who has been greatly exploited, when I was in Melbourne a large deputation waited on the Prime Minister to ask him to share in the expenses incurred by Mr. Daniel Jones in visiting England. When the question was raised by the Central Queensland District Council of Agriculture before Mr. Jones went away, I made it quite clear that I would not recognise the report of Mr. Daniel Jones. I said that the Premier was going to England, that Mr. Jones was biased in favour of ratoon, and that he would not have the facilities that would be available to the Premier and the Agents-General on the other side for collecting information regarding the possibilities of marketing ratoon cotton. I said that I would not be guided by Mr. Daniel Jones, nor would I undertake to bear a share of his expenses.

At 11.35 a.m.,

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

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Mr. Daniel Jones has not shown, nor has his report shown, that he can secure an unlimited market, or even that he can secure a market for 10,000 or 20,000 bales of ratoon cotton. And, after all, what are 10,000 or 20,000 bales of ratoon cotton? Only a drop in the ocean when we consider the world's requirements of 20,000,000 bales.

Mr. NOTT: It would mean success to many of our farmers.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Not if we cannot even get a market for 10,000 bales of ratoon cotton. If Mr. Jones got an assurance from the cotton manufacturers of Great Britain that they would take 10,000 bales of ratoon cotton, he would have done something; but that is not so.

OPPOSITION interjections.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: If Mr. Jones got an assurance that the cotton manufacturers would buy 5,000, 10,000, or 20,000 bales of ratoon cotton at payable prices, I would say that he had accomplished something for the people of Queensland and that he was entitled to come to the Government and ask for a proportion of his expenses to be paid by the Government. He has not done that.

Mr. NOTT: What utter nonsense! (Opposition interjections.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask hon. members not to interrupt any other hon.

Hon. W. N. Gillies.]

member when speaking. I have already asked hon. members to observe that ruling, and I hope they will listen to my request.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Thank you, Mr. Pollock, for your timely rebuke.

Mr. FRY: You deserved it, too.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: One would almost imagine that—

OPPOSITION interjections.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: One would imagine that hon. members opposite would have the good manners to listen to the statement I have to make, especially when I am trying to reply to some of the unfair criticism advanced by hon. members opposite.

Mr. CORSER: You are unfair.

The CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member for Burnett does not obey my call to order, I shall take other steps to deal with him.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Briefly, what is the position with regard to ratoon cotton? One hon. gentleman made the statement yesterday that ratoon cotton is the only cotton that can be grown successfully in this State. If that is the position, I am very sorry that I took the responsibility of advising the Queensland Government to guarantee 5d. per lb. to the growers of seed cotton. I am satisfied that annual cotton must be grown if we are to compete with the American production when the market becomes normal, and also if we are to compete with other countries which employ cheap labour and produce large quantities of low-grade cotton. If we cannot produce the best cotton—and it is admitted in all quarters that annual cotton is the best variety—Queensland may be unable to compete with the cotton-growing countries of the world when the market becomes normal. It is a well-known fact that, since there has been a shortage of cotton, the spinners are prepared to take anything at all, but that position will be changed when the cotton market once more becomes normal. I want hon. members to remember that and to remember that their speeches which appear in "Hansard" will be taken up and used against them when that time comes. Rightly

or wrongly, the Queensland Government have decided that ratoon cotton may be grown in the future, but first ratoon only, and under certain definite conditions. Those definite conditions are for the protection of the ratepayers who find the guarantee, and for the protection of the great bulk of cotton-growers who desire to grow only the very best annual cotton.

The best Indian cotton, which Messrs. Wolstenholme and Holland inform us is quite comparable to Queensland ratoon, has the following value:—

	Per lb.	
	d.	d.
15th May, 1923 ...	8.5	to 10.5
7th March, 1924 ...	11.2	to 13.7
Showing a gain of ...	2.9	to 3.2

Threepence a lb. for lint is worth almost 1d. a lb. for raw cotton, and 1d. a lb. might be the difference between the success and the absolute failure of the industry. Even with those prices I do not think the industry during normal seasons will be able to extend as I want it to extend and to carry on under white-labour conditions and under a White Australia policy.

Mr. FARRELL: And with decent wages.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: And, as the hon. member for Rockhampton interjects, with decent wages. I do not want any industry carried on in this country under the sweating conditions that operated under Tory Governments. It was an old Tory argument that the sugar industry could not be carried on without black labour. I want the cotton industry to be carried on by white labour, under White Australia conditions, and that can only be the case while prices remain high. If our industry is to continue to exist when the cotton production of the world again becomes normal, we must produce the very best article. Rightly or wrongly we have agreed to remove the embargo on ratoon cotton, and we are allowing the farmers to grow, harvest, and market that cotton separately from those who grow annual cotton. Let me quote some figures to show hon. members the small percentage of farmers who have wanted to grow ratoon cotton during the last two years. The figures for 1923 are—

	Annual Cotton.	Ratoon Cotton.	Total.
Quantity received at ginnery	11,373,950 lb.	395,552 lb.	11,769,502 lb.
Number of growers	7,927	356	8,283
Advances to farmers	£259,455	£4,944	£264,399

The total ratoon cotton grown in that year amounted to a little over 3 per cent. That should satisfy hon. members that this great noise about ratoon cotton does not represent the wishes or the aspirations or the ideals

of a great majority of the cotton-growers of this State. It only represents the wishes of a small section of the cotton-growers.

The figures for 1924 to date are—

	Annual Cotton.	Ratoon Cotton.	Total.
Quantity received at ginnery	14,010,486 lb.	51,983 lb.	14,062,469 lb.
Number of growers	7,273	78	7,351
Advances to farmers	£291,058	£649	£291,707

The figures for 1924 are not yet complete, as the growers have not completed harvesting and the cotton has not all been ginned.

Therefore we do not know what the final figures will be. That shows that all this talk about the rights of the cotton-growers

[Hon W. N. Gillies.

sinks into insignificance when we come to consider the claims and rights and privileges of the great body of the growers of annual cotton in Queensland numbering, as I say, 7,273. It is our duty to protect those 7,273 growers. Those who want to grow ratoon cotton will be allowed to do so. Ratoon cotton at the present time can command a decent price. We all admit that; we all admit that the seasons, the shortage of cotton, and the high price ruling in the English market to-day have played into the hands of those who want to grow ratoon cotton; but, as the Prime Minister said to me shortly before I left Melbourne, time will show whether the Queensland Government were right in 1923 in banning ratoon cotton or are right now in 1924 in allowing ratoon cotton to be grown. The Queensland Government have decided that they will allow those who want to grow ratoon cotton to grow it on clearly defined conditions, which I will explain when the Bill is before the House. I sincerely hope that the price of cotton will remain sufficiently high to enable the growers of ratoon cotton, as well as the growers of plant cotton, to make a success of the industry.

I deplore again the fact that so much political capital has been made out of the matter, because it is admitted by almost every fair-minded man in the country that the Government acted *bonâ fide*. I want to say, in reply to a statement made by one of the speakers this morning, that the "so-called experts," as he termed them, had nothing whatever to do with the ban on ratoon cotton. A perusal of my second reading speech when introducing the Cotton Industry Bill last session will reveal the fact that two separate reports were received from Mr. Wells and Colonel Evans strongly advocating the banning of ratoon cotton. However, as I have said, the Government have decided to remove that ban, and the growers will have to take the responsibility. Ratoon cotton was banned, not only because of the inferiority generally of ratoon cotton, but because of the more important fact that the growing of ratoon cotton will jeopardise the success of the growing of annual cotton because of its tendency to spread disease. I am not going to say any more now except to read a cablegram which was received by Senator Pearce when the conference was sitting in Melbourne, and hon. members can draw their own inference from it. When that Cotton Conference was in progress Mr. Bond in his speech declared that his spinners could not tell the difference between annual and ratoon cotton. I interjected, "Is Mr. Bond prepared to cancel his contract for the purchase of annual cotton in Queensland and give us the same price for ratoon?" He replied, as a business man would reply, "Why should I?" That is the real test.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I asked "If you say that ratoon cotton is as good as annual cotton, why not pay the same price?" He said he was unable to do so.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Mr. Bond said that there was not the slightest doubt that during last season hundreds of thousands of pounds of ratoon cotton were sent to the gineries as plant cotton. When he made this statement someone on the other side of the table—I think

one of the Queensland delegates—said, "There is not the slightest doubt about it." A few minutes later Senator Pearce read this cable from the High Commissioner, and I leave it to hon. members to draw their own deductions—

"Cotton Corporation advised Lancashire requirements not less than one and three-sixteenths staple, strong grade and colour stop Shorter staple weaker fibre difficult to sell stop They state 1922 crop satisfactory but 1923 poor, which has prejudiced reputation gained by 1922 crop stop Very important that general level be kept up to standard best 1922 crop."

Hon. members can draw their own deductions about the statement that ratoon cotton was sent in as annual cotton and whether it affected the general question as disclosed by the cable from the High Commissioner. Rightly or wrongly, the Government have decided to allow those growers who want to grow ratoon cotton to grow it. If they say they can get a market for it without any guarantee and undertake to keep it separate from annual cotton, gin it separately, and destroy the stalks every other year so as to destroy pests, they are going to get their wish. Time alone will show whether that decision is wise or not.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): I should not have risen to speak on this amendment had it not been for the speech just delivered by the hon. gentleman. We all know that very often through his ignorance of agriculture he places himself in an impossible position, and then, when the Opposition criticise him, he becomes abusive. For instance, I think he likened the Opposition to a howling dog on a chain.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I quoted Mr. Spurgeon.

Mr. SWAYNE: I really do not think that sort of thing hurts the Opposition. I think it hurts the hon. gentleman more. If ever we were justified in the action that was taken by our leader yesterday when he moved a reduction in this vote, it is by the fact the hon. gentleman gave notice this morning of a Bill to amend the very legislation which has brought about this position.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That Bill was mentioned in the Governor's Speech.

Mr. SWAYNE: What are the facts? The cotton industry lately has presented a splendid opportunity to Queensland—not owing to any action on the part of the Government but owing to the world's market—to place under cultivation a large area of land. There is a great opportunity for Queensland with its large area, but all that the Government have done has been to try and mar that opportunity. (Government dissent.) We know that the banning of ratoon cotton struck the industry a most deadly blow. There are districts in my electorate where the settlers were prepared to go in for cotton-growing until they heard that they were not to be allowed to ratoon. The moment that was made known they pulled out at once. In the Central district and similar districts in Queensland where the rainfall is unreliable and there is no knowing what the season is going to be, we know what an advantage it is to have a crop in the ground and not have to depend on seed germinating.

Mr. Swayne.]

We know how often it happens that after we sow the seed it does not germinate. The advantage of a ratoon crop is that no matter what the season may turn out to be we have a crop in the ground with the roots established. In the sugar industry many people contend that ratoons are the most profitable crop, and I am quite sure it is the same in the cotton industry. The prejudice against ratooning arose through ignorance. People looked upon ratoon cotton as synonymous with a stand-over crop—a crop allowed to remain unpruned and to bear again. We know that the true meaning of ratooning is that the plant is cut off at the ground and a fresh growth takes place from the roots. The Minister did not understand that when he lent himself to the foolish action of banning ratoon cotton.

I do not think the figures the Minister gave us in support of his action are worth the paper they are written on. We know that any amount of ratoon cotton was sent in as seed cotton. I think he said that last year only 3 per cent. of the cotton grown in Queensland was ratoon cotton. The hon. gentleman has no means of knowing that. When coming from Rockhampton I was told on most reliable authority that a grower up there sold £500 worth of cotton, £400 worth of which was ratoon cotton and £100 worth plant cotton. If he had obeyed the law at the time and cut out the ratoon cotton, he would only have had £100 worth of cotton; but, through gathering the ratoon cotton and breaking the law at that time he had £500 worth of cotton, and it all went in as seed cotton. That has been happening. Seed cotton was grown on some areas, and on adjoining areas ratoon cotton was grown. The seed cotton came to naught and there was no crop, and the ratoon cotton has been sent in. The Minister has not the slightest knowledge of what proportion of ratoon cotton came in. It is no use the hon. gentleman trying to minimise the advantage of ratoon cotton. He has told us that only a very small percentage of the cotton grown was ratoon cotton. I say, on the other hand, that we are right in stating that a large percentage was ratoon cotton. The Minister also said that only a small percentage of the growers are in favour of ratoon cotton. I think that is wrong. If the banning of ratoon cotton was right, why should he now alter the legislation on the subject? The mere fact that he is altering the legislation by bringing in a Bill to make legal what previous legislation made illegal is in itself a most important admission. The Opposition would not be worthy of their name if they allowed such a gross misstatement as that to go without noticing it. Furthermore, it will be remembered that we pointed out over and over again exactly what would happen. With regard to the Minister's disparaging remarks about Mr. Daniel Jones, everything said by that gentleman has been borne out by fact, and the only pity is that the Minister did not take Mr. Jones's advice. While I am on this subject, I would like to say that the Minister is very much exercised as to where the money is to come from to remunerate those who have suffered this loss through obeying the law. I do not know where the money is to come from, but I certainly hold that those people who have suffered heavy loss through being law-abiding and trying to do what is right—trying to do what the hon. gentleman said they should do—and who it has been subsequently proved have

been misled by the hon. gentleman and his department, should be remunerated. I think they have a just claim for remuneration. But what the hon. gentleman is doing is to legislate to remunerate people who broke the law, and under the circumstances I do not say he is wrong in doing so. If people who broke the law are to be rewarded, much more should those be recompensed who were injured by obeying the law. Everything that has been said by hon. members on this side on the question of ratooning has been borne out, and the legislation which is to be introduced to undo what the Government did before on the subject is an admission that the Government were quite wrong all through.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): I intend to oppose the amendment to reduce the vote by £1 on account of the Government's policy in relation to ratoon cotton. The leader of the Opposition has attempted to censure the Government, but he should have praised the Government for having revived an industry which under the administration of gentlemen of his own political creed languished and practically died out. It was not until after this Government came in that there was even the remotest possibility of growing cotton in Queensland. The attempt to grow it with cheap black labour by former Governments had failed. It was not until this Government introduced a sound system of guarantees, and made provision for ginning and marketing the crop in Queensland that it became at all possible to grow cotton to any advantage. Seeing that the Government have spent so much money in subsidising the industry to put it on a good foundation—for that practically is what it means—I am astonished at the remarks of the hon. member for Normanby, who derided the Government for subsidising 1,100 electors in his own electorate in connection with the Mount Morgan Company.

Mr. BRAND: He did not do anything of the sort.

Mr. HARTLEY: The hon. member derided the Government because of their attitude towards the Mount Morgan Company, and their action in keeping the mine going by a system of rebate subsidy, which enabled the company to keep those men in work. The Government assistance to the Mount Morgan Company is no different in principle from the Government assistance which has been given to the cotton-grower. I hope the hon. member for Normanby will explain why he has derided the Government for their system of keeping the Mount Morgan Company's mines in operation and at the same time wanting them to boost the cotton-growers in his electorate.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: He did not say that.

Mr. HARTLEY: There are two big factors which we must consider in studying this cotton question—two insuperable barriers, to my mind, against ever allowing ratoon cotton to be grown in any quantity in Queensland. The first of those considerations is that, as compared with annual cotton, it has a lower index lint value, and therefore a lower price value. The second consideration is that owing to the extra cost of harvesting ratoon cotton and the greater quantity of ratoon cotton which must be harvested per acre to get the same weight, the growing of ratoon cotton will eventually lead to a cry for cheap labour. In other

[*Mr. Swayne.*]

words, I say without any hesitation that, if a policy of growing more and more ratoon cotton is pursued, then, on account of the necessity to harvest a bigger quantity per acre for the same weight and also the lower value, it will mean that a cry will very soon arise for cheap labour. There are only two ways in which cheap labour can be obtained for harvesting that ratoon cotton. One way is that we should break down the White Australia policy—which is inconceivable. The other—which is not inconceivable; I have heard farmers of the persuasion of hon. members opposite more than once advocate it—is the introduction of child labour into the cotton fields. That, no Labour Government could ever contemplate.

[12 noon.]

I am going to prove my statement as to values with figures as I get further advanced with my argument, but there is another consideration which appeals to me. If we talk about compensating the man who has destroyed his annual cotton plants because he was not allowed to ratoon them because of the provisions of the Cotton Industry Act, what are we going to do to compensate the man who might suffer if we allow ratooning? There is a difference of 2d. per lb. in the price for seed cotton between annual and ratoon varieties. In other words, the grower of annual cotton will get 2d. a lb. more. Suppose that because ratoon cotton is allowed to come into the market—according to his statement just now, the hon. member for Mirani knows a man who sent in £500 worth of cotton including a great deal of ratoon cotton (he did not know how much)—and that by mixing ratoon and plant cottons the value of the cotton is depreciated by 2d. a lb., who is going to compensate the great number of growers of annual cotton? That is the question I would like hon. members opposite to answer. The figures quoted by the Minister this morning show that the percentage of annual cotton growers to all growers of cotton is somewhere in the vicinity of 85 per cent. or 90 per cent. By the dishonest practices which the hon. member for Mirani eulogised or instanced here this morning in mixing ratoon cotton with the annual cotton crop, it is possible for the Queensland crop to be depreciated to the extent of 2d. a lb. Who is going to compensate the grower of annual cotton then? I am quite satisfied that, when the growers of annual cotton realise the danger with which they are threatened because people are allowed to grow ratoon cotton, they will wake up and make a very clean sweep of ratoon cotton and of the Cotton Farmers' Union and of the "Queensland Cotton Grower and Dairyman" newspaper. They have not quite seen it yet, but the first time a grower sends down a first-class crop of annual cotton and by some error in the ginneries ratoon cotton is going through at the same time and the company averages the price and sends him back 3d. when he expected 5½d. a lb., he will wake up and we shall not hear any more about ratoon cotton.

Let me just review how this ratoon cotton agitation began. It commenced merely because a number of men, particularly in the Central District, realised the possibility of making a "scoop" in cotton culture. They were not really farmers, or most of them were not—they were not agricultural farmers, anyhow—but they saw that

this was a good "get-rich-quick" method of getting a cheap crop with very little expenditure. So they put in their cotton and allowed it to go. The biggest offender in this respect was Mr. McDonald, the President of the Central District Council of the Primary Producers' Organisation.

Mr. BRAND: The President of the Cotton Growers' Union.

Mr. HARTLEY: Yes. Of something like 150 acres of ratoon cotton in the Rockhampton and Wowan district Mr. McDonald was responsible for 60 acres. He put in those 60 acres expecting that he would be able to let it run along from year to year, and that by a share system which he had with some of the smaller settlers round about he would get half the return. But it practically ran away from him, and it was very difficult for him to get men to care for and harvest the crop, and it was a few men like him who practically started the agitation, and then, backed up by Captain Rhodes—a one-time harbour master—

Mr. BRAND: He is a good man.

Mr. HARTLEY: I suppose he is a good man at ploughing the sea, but I have never known him to plough anything else except perhaps the farmers' pockets—a good sea captain and a very shrewd chap at managing to get along. He was a participator in this agitation, and he took over the "Queensland Cotton Grower and Dairyman"—a nice little thing if anybody wanted it; but the thing was to get people to want it. You cannot get people to buy your paper unless you can do something. So he jumped whole-souled into the ratoon cotton agitation. Some hon. member has said that, as secretary of the Cotton Growers' Union, he gets no salary. He does not need a salary, because one of the terms of membership of the union is a subscription to the cotton-growers' paper. (Opposition interjections.) That is practically Captain Rhodes's salary.

Mr. BRAND interjected.

Mr. HARTLEY: I have met the hon. member in a few campaigns, and I hope to meet him in a few more, because I think that so long as he is on the other side the Rockhampton, Fitzroy, and other Central District seats are pretty safe.

Now I want to quote a few facts about ratoon cotton to prove my statement that it is a crop of a lower value than annual cotton. They are contained in some replies I got from the Department of Agriculture and the Cotton Specialist on 27th June, 1924. First let me say that we have heard something about the cotton-graders. Hon. members opposite say they have no experience or training, but this is what the Cotton Specialist says—

"Referring to our conversation of Wednesday morning, I would state that the cotton-graders at the various gins for this season are, with two exceptions, trained woolclassers, having been trained at the Technical College, and also have had commercial work in classing wool since graduating from school. One of the remaining men is from Lancashire, where he was connected with the cotton trade. He graded cotton last year at Whinstanes, so that this is his second year's experience with Queensland cotton. The remaining man is a graduate of Gatton College and along with the rest of the cotton-graders

Mr. Hartley.]

went through a two months' course of intense training in grading cotton under Mr. Gudge, the Government Cotton Classifier, before being posted to a gin to grade the commercial crop."

I believe that the Government are now taking even greater precautions to see that the cotton graders are thoroughly trained both on the technical and the practical side.

This is the data secured from adjacent fields of ratooned and annual cotton in the following districts:—

	Lint Index.	No. of Bolls per lb.
Upper Tent Hill—Lockyer Valley—		
Annual cotton	7-30	66
Cultivated stand-over	5-34	78
Laidley—		
Annual cotton	8-04	67
Neglected stand-over	4-90	115
Stockyard Creek—		
Annual cotton	7-10	65
Properly ratooned and well cultivated all season for Government test	5-30	93
Jooro (on Rannes Line)—		
Annual cotton	7-40	65-5
Stand-over on clean scrub land	6-75	83

The above figures show that in some instances it required twenty-eight, and even forty-eight, more bolls to make a pound of ratoon cotton than annual cotton.

Mr. MOORE: In one instance the cotton was neglected stand-over.

Mr. HARTLEY: That is practically ratoon cotton.

Mr. MOORE: No. The hon. gentleman is attempting to mislead the Committee.

Mr. HARTLEY: No, even the very best sample of ratoon at Stockyard Creek had twenty-eight bolls per lb. more than annual. Taking those four stations we have the irrefutable evidence that it is a bad proposition to grow ratoon cotton when it is possible to grow annual cotton. If it takes so many more bolls to make a pound of ratoon cotton than annual cotton, what is that going to mean when the Arbitration Court fixes the price for picking ratoon cotton? It will mean that there will have to be an increased price for picking ratoon cotton, because the bolls are smaller and a greater number will have to be picked to make a pound of cotton than will be the case with annual cotton. Either that will have to be done, or, as hon. members are quite well aware, the school children will be asked to go into the cotton fields. I have heard hon. members opposite and farmers advocate more than once that the school holidays at mid-winter should be extended or altered so as to coincide with the picking season in the cotton industry, so that the school children can go into the fields to pick cotton. That is the danger that is behind the ratoon cotton question.

Mr. BRAND: The hon. gentleman is behind a cheap-labour Government.

Mr. MAXWELL: Wage reducers.

Mr. HARTLEY: The Government have increased wages by 40 per cent. and 60 per cent. over what the hon. gentleman's Government ever paid.

Mr. ROBERTS: What year do the figures that you have quoted relate to?

[Mr. Hartley.

Mr. HARTLEY: That is not shown, but I obtained them this year from the Cotton Specialist.

Mr. BRAND: In actual practice they are of no value.

Mr. KELSO: Did the hon. gentleman get them from an expert?

Mr. HARTLEY: The area of ratoon cotton in 1923-1924 around Rockhampton, where all this agitation originated, was 332 acres, and up to date, according to the growers who are registered, it is proposed to cultivate 567 acres of ratoon cotton. When you consider the whole question of cotton-growing, you will find that it is only a very small proportion of the growers who desire to grow ratoon. When the hon. member for Normanby was speaking on a former occasion, I stated that the ratoon method of growing was welcomed by the slovenly farmer, and that is what I say now. It is only the slovenly man who wants to put his seed in the ground and let it rip, and chance what sort of a crop he will get each year. Under the Government regulations I am quite satisfied that it is going to cost just as much to grow ratoon cotton properly as it is going to cost to grow annual cotton.

Mr. BRAND: What does the hon. gentleman mean by "slovenly farmers?"

Mr. HARTLEY: The farmer who will simply put his cotton seed in the ground and chance what is going to be the result of it. He will not bother to run his harrow or scuffler through it, or bother about cultivating. Last year the hon. member for Burnett quoted a comparison made by the Dalma Local Producers' Association in connection with the cost of producing 10 acres of seed and ratoon cotton. I am quoting the figures he gave from "Hansard," volume CXLII., page 1602. His figures were absolutely silly, because certain items of expenditure charged in the case of plant cotton were not charged in the case of ratoon cotton when they should have been charged. In connection with plant cotton the hon. member quoted—

"Falling scrub at £1 15s. per acre, £17 10s.

"Stacking and burning timber, 15s. per acre, £7 10s."

There is a total cost of £25 there. Those items do not appear as a charge against the cost of growing ratoon cotton. The hon. member pointed out that the cost of planting 10 acres of seed cotton is £75 10s. 3d., and the cost of planting 10 acres of ratoon cotton only £40 6s., but he does not include any expenditure for clearing in the case of ratoon cotton. Have the farmers not to fell the scrub, clear it, and burn it off when growing ratoon cotton? How can the hon. gentleman justify figures like those?

Mr. BRAND: You do not plant ratoon cotton.

Mr. HARTLEY: Have you not to plant it the first time, or does God send it down from the sky? When you grow ratoon cotton you must take into consideration the initial cost in preparing the land for the first planting that will become ratoon. He also charged against the planting of seed cotton the items—

	£	s.	d.
Plain wire	1	16	0
Wire	13	19	0
Erection of fence	1	19	0

A total of £17 14 0

but omitted to do so in connection with ratoon cotton. Why not charge part of this cost against the cost of growing ratoon cotton? The items are an absolute fraud, and the figures are not worth twopence. The figures that I have received from the Department of Agriculture show that the cost of properly cultivating a 10-acre patch of ratoon cotton is going to be within 6s. of the cost of cultivating the same acreage of annual cotton. If those figures are considered by the public outside, and by the farmers in particular, they will realise that no advantage lies in the growing of ratoon cotton, and I do not think that the farmers will thank hon. members opposite for the very bad advertisement they have been giving them this morning.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): The hon. member for Fitzroy has adopted an absolutely wrong and absurd idea in connection with the cotton industry. He attempted to demonstrate that it costs just as much to grow ratoon as plant cotton. As a matter of fact, the figures of the hon. member for Burnett, which he attempted to discredit, are absolutely correct and reasonable. The fences that he alluded to are already there, and their cost appears in the original estimate for plant cotton. It is only after the cotton has been planted that it becomes ratoon cotton.

Mr. HARTLEY: Why not charge the cost in the second year as well?

Mr. WARREN: To be exact, the cost would need to be charged a second time, but the hon. member is taking up a wrong stand completely, because no statement has ever been made from this side of the Chamber that ratoon cotton is cultivated because of its cheapness. We say that the farmer is not able to grow plant cotton, and that it is far better to have ratoon than no cotton. That is the stand we have taken up. It is not a question of whether plant cotton is not absolutely the best. We candidly admit that ratoon is not the best, but we say that the climatic conditions will not permit of plant cotton being grown. The hon. member for Fitzroy appears to be grasping at things which are not the principal factors in the industry. If we have found by practical experience extending over a period of three or four years that plant cotton is a failure, and that better returns are secured in some districts from ratoon cotton, we are perfectly justified in our action in asking the Minister to remove the ban on ratoon. It is the only proper course for him to adopt. Hon. members on this side would like to see the very best cotton grown, but if the growers are confined to plant cotton, we do not believe we are going to have any at all. There has been a lot of talk about slovenly farmers. What sort of a farmer would the hon. member for Fitzroy make? I do not believe that he could farm a racehorse. No hon. member should cast aspersions on the farmer for the position he finds himself in to-day.

Mr. HARTLEY: Who could not farm a racehorse?

Mr. WARREN: The hon. member could not.

Mr. HARTLEY: I will work alongside you on a farm any time you like.

Mr. WARREN: I will take the hon. member on any time he likes.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. WARREN: The hon. member for Fitzroy is not justified in casting such a slur on these unfortunate men. These men have put up a big fight for their absolute rights.

Mr. HARTLEY: How much are you farming just now?

Mr. WARREN: I am farming far more than the hon. member.

Mr. HARTLEY: You are better at selling farms than farming.

Mr. WARREN: The hon. member is absolutely wrong. I own more farms than he does. I am engaged in actual farming, but the hon. member's wallaby ranch—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. WARREN: I admit that the hon. member for Fitzroy drew me off the track. I rose not so much to discuss the value of ratoon cotton as to say that the ratoon farmers have put up a straight and honest fight to achieve their ends, and it is only right that the Government should give them a fair deal and an opportunity to grow ratoon cotton.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): This morning hon. members listened to possibly one of the strangest speeches that I can remember having been delivered in this Chamber by a Secretary for Agriculture. The hon. gentleman took hon. members on this side to book for their attitude on the subject that is under discussion. He complained bitterly that only last year hon. members on this side were out-and-out advocates for giving the men who desired to grow ratoon the chance to do so.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is not so. A number of hon. members on your side, including the then leader, the hon. member for Windsor, were in favour of the legislation.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I am referring to the commendation of the hon. gentleman when he was speaking. He took us to task and said in effect, "Last year you complained that the Government would not allow ratooning, and now because they are going to allow ratooning you complain." That is an exceedingly strange attitude for the hon. gentleman to take up. He took hon. members on this side to task in one direction and commended them in another. We can quite understand the mind of the hon. gentleman in this matter, because he has, in effect, to recognise that the attitude taken up on this side of the House last year was the correct one. As the last speaker pointed out, we did not advocate that farmers should be confined exclusively to growing ratoon cotton, but we did say that, if plant cotton cannot be grown, then the Government have no right to debar people from growing ratoon cotton.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. G. P. BARNES: It is clear from the evidence that, unless we resort to conditions of that kind, the industry is going to suffer. The real trouble of the Secretary for Agriculture is in the triumph of Opposition ideas. He has had to come here and say "I am rescinding the old regulations; I am adopting the ideas which were given expression to last year by the Opposition." That, of course, is a troublesome thing for the hon. gentleman to do. Hon. members can understand how he is feeling annoyed because he

Mr. G. P. Barnes.]

has had to succumb to the superior ideas given expression to last year by the Opposition.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The exhibition of obstinacy that we have had from the hon. gentleman has, I suppose, never been excelled in this Chamber. Whilst being truly sincere, he has been extremely and as sincerely obstinate as an individual could be; but he has had to climb down, and, under the circumstances, he is to be commended on having come here and expressed himself as he has done; although it would have been better for him to have done it in a spirit which would have been more in keeping with the manner in which he expressed himself in July of this year. In replying to a deputation on 25th July last, the Secretary for Agriculture is reported to have said—

“The Government apparently now holds the view that without ratoon cotton the progress of the industry will be seriously hindered.

“This morning the Minister for Agriculture (Mr. Gillies) told a deputation from the Cotton-growers’ Conference that the Government had decided to relax certain conditions which it had been announced that the growers must accept if they were to be allowed to grow ratoon. The conditions, he stated, were only drawn up for the protection of the growers’ interest, and the industry.

“‘The policy of the Government,’ said Mr. Gillies, ‘is safety first.’

“The following conditions would have to be accepted by the growers of ratoon cotton:—

(1) All ratoon cotton growers would have to be registered or licensed.

(2) The Government would not give guarantees on ratoon cotton, although advances would be made to ratoon growers where thought fit.

(3) The mixing of ratoon with plant cotton would be considered an offence against pest precautions, and it and other offences against the new Act would be punishable by deregistration of the grower.

(4) The seed would be controlled.

“The Government on all the evidence before it, and in view of the fact that Queensland is a different country to most cotton-growing countries, has thought it best to do this.

“‘You all, of course, know that the Government has not been asleep on the matter,’ said Mr. Gillies in opening up the main matter. ‘The Government has decided, and I think we might be able to settle this matter in the right way before we leave this room. That is, if you, as the growers’ representatives, are willing to accept the safeguards of the industry which I have put before you.’”

That was a very commendable determination to come to, and hon. members on this side of the Chamber are heart and soul in congratulating the Secretary for Agriculture on having decided to give the ratoon cotton-growers a chance. That is all that we wanted. It is very satisfactory to know to-day that the men who are engaged in the cotton-growing industry and who desire to ratoon—in fact who cannot do anything else—are to have that opportunity.

[Mr. G. P. Barnes.

[12.30 p.m.]

Mr. HARTLEY: Then the hon. member will want to extend school holidays so that the children can go out and pick the cotton.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: That is a very foolish statement. The other day I had a conversation with a man who lives in my district, who is a most ardent supporter of the Government, and this is the tribute he paid to the Government. He said, “I have just met a man who is down and out, and who is practically in a starving condition due to the fact that he went in for cotton in the north of Queensland. He succeeded in the first year, and then the Government came along with the demand that ratoon cotton should be destroyed. He complied with that request, and to-day he is simply carrying his ‘bluey.’ He is down and out.” That is a kind of holiday hon. members on this side of the House do not wish to give to people, but that is the kind of holiday many a man is having forced upon him to-day in consequence of the obstinacy of the Government in this matter, and particularly in consequence of the obstinacy of the Secretary for Agriculture.

Government interjections.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I am not going to say for one moment that the hon. gentleman is not perfectly sincere. I think it is right to encourage our people to grow the very best crop they possibly can, but, when we know the circumstances and have had evidence that the only chance of growing cotton in some areas is by cultivating ratoon, then the attitude of the Government seems absolutely absurd.

I find that, as far back as 1920, according to a report by Mr. Daniel Jones, this very question of ratooning was considered by the Government and an understanding was arrived at. In his report Mr. Jones says—

“H. Johnston specially visited Australia for the purpose of inquiring into the practicability of commercial cotton production. From his and other investigations various conclusions were come to, viz.:—

1. Cotton can be easily grown in Australia and of excellent quality. The doubt, however, remained whether it can be made to pay.

2. If cotton must be planted each year the cost of labour for so doing will be such that, excepting a few favoured spots, cotton-growing cannot be made to pay.

3. In general practice, the only possible way open is by ratooning, viz.:—Allowing the cotton plants to bear cotton for three or four years so that the grower can get his annual crop for that period without replanting.”

All that kind of thing was known to the Government in 1920. They have been in close contact with authorities, and have consulted those authorities. They have been in possession of that kind of evidence, yet we had that drastic legislation last year which banned ratoon and practically brought to ruin many of our men engaged in the cotton-growing industry. I maintain that injury is still being done. It is true the Minister has climbed down and the Government have climbed down, but the grace with which that has been done is not commendable. The

industry is still being injured, and the injury is being perpetuated because the Minister still depreciates the growing of ratoon cotton. The hon. gentleman knows in his own heart and mind that, unless certain growers cultivate ratoon cotton, they cannot grow cotton at all.

Mr. KELSO: That is why we have so few growing cotton.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: That is so. Take my own district. The Warwick district was one of the earliest districts to advocate the growing of cotton. I myself took the matter up six or seven years ago, and in company with Mr. Daniel Jones I addressed meetings. We induced about twenty-six farmers to put small areas under cultivation. The great bulk came to grief because on the Downs our seasons are too short and we never know when we are done with frost. The other day I spoke to some of those farmers to see if they had lost faith, as I was very annoyed at myself for having induced them to undertake a bad venture. One of them said to me, "Although ratoon has been banned no other cotton can be successfully grown in this district except during some very exceptional years."

Mr. CARTER: Do you think cotton plants will stand heavy frosts?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Yes. Frosts are in evidence everywhere. I am very glad the Minister is going to allow ratoon. It is going to be a very difficult battle to remedy the wrong done, because it happened at the most critical moment of our experience with cotton. The way in which the Cotton Industry Act was administered gave such a check to cotton-growing that it will be many a long day before the industry will recover. However, it is better to have this reform now than never. I trust that the cotton industry, which bade fair to rival many of our other industries, will yet come to the fore and reach a stage of prosperity which will help to make Queensland the wonderful State we hope it will be.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I understand that the hon. member for Fitzroy went to some trouble to try and disprove some figures given by me with regard to the cost of the production of cotton.

Mr. HARTLEY: And I succeeded.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I also disproved them.

Mr. CORSER: That must be in the hon. gentleman's own mind. I did not hear anything about it. The hon. gentleman evidently has the privilege of interjecting from the table—a privilege that we do not get. The hon. member for Fitzroy complained that my figures were not correct. I shall refer him to the growers themselves.

Mr. HARTLEY: I did not say any such thing.

Mr. CORSER: You claimed that they were not correct.

Mr. HARTLEY: I claimed that they were not a right comparison as between plant cotton and ratoon cotton.

Mr. CORSER: That is somewhat different. I gave those figures as figures compiled by certain Local Producers' Associations and Cotton Growers' Associations; I did not give them as my own compilation; I stated the authority.

Mr. HARTLEY: You said that it cost £50 an acre for ratoon cotton as against £75 for seed cotton.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. CORSER: I said that certain associations and individuals had compiled and printed this information, and it was from that printed information that I was quoting. I did not pretend that they were my own figures.

Mr. HARTLEY: Do you repudiate them?

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. CORSER: I do not say they are wrong, but, if they are wrong, let the hon. member repudiate them among the cotton-growers who compiled them.

Mr. HARTLEY: You are shifting your ground now.

Mr. CORSER: I am not shifting any responsibility. I quoted certain sets of figures which I claim are right, and which I said were compiled by the people whose names I gave and by the associations I quoted.

Mr. HARTLEY: I say they are wrong.

Mr. CORSER: If they are wrong, go to the associations mentioned and tell them they are wrong; but do not stand up here and say that the member for Burnett gave wrong information.

Mr. HARTLEY: You are only £25 an acre out.

Mr. CORSER: If there is anything wrong with the compilation made by these farmers, it is that they did not debit the cost of fencing to the cost of the crop.

Mr. HARTLEY: What crop?

Mr. CORSER: The hon. member must not say that the hon. member for Burnett has made a wrong compilation, when "Hansard" clearly shows that the information I gave to the Committee was compiled by various associations.

Mr. HARTLEY: Have a look at "Hansard" and see.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member for Fitzroy to cease his interjections. The hon. member will have another opportunity of making a speech.

Mr. CORSER: I wanted to correct him.

Mr. HARTLEY: You did not correct me.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to obey my call to order. Other hon. members have done so, and I hope the hon. member also will obey my call.

Mr. HARTLEY: I rise to a point of order.

The CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order.

Mr. HARTLEY: I rise to a point of order. My point of order is that, if a member makes an incorrect statement about a statement I have made, then I am entitled to correct it.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is not in order in interjecting.

Mr. CORSER: It is within my privilege to correct the hon. member and put him right.

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

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): Some questions have arisen during the debate that call for

Mr. Vowles.]

special attention. When cotton was being reviewed for the first time and legislation was being passed, members of the Opposition, not being obsessed with opinions which had been forced upon them by members of delegations who had personal interests and reasons for getting the Government to adopt a certain line of action, said that the time would arrive when the Government would realise that general consideration should be given to all sections of the community, and more particularly to those who were engaged in cotton growing at the time the delegation came to Queensland. It is a funny thing that in the history of amending legislation in Queensland, more particularly in recent years, invariably the amendments which are being brought forward are amendments which the Opposition attempted to force on the Government but which for some reason were not accepted. Times without number amendments are brought forward in regard to subject-matters that we have discussed here, and the very principles that we have asked to be embodied in our State law and which have been refused have eventually become the law. I need only go back to the historical Land Act Amendment Act of 1920. If you look over succeeding events, you will find that a warning was held out that certain results would follow. When cotton was first discussed in our Legislature we were all novices at the business. No doubt we were in the same position as the Government and had to be guided as far as possible by expert opinion, but we all felt that members of the Government—more particularly the Minister—had been living in an atmosphere which to a certain extent was tainted in favour of a delegation which had certain interests to serve, and that anything that was brought forward by that delegation required mature consideration before we made it the law.

The hon. member for Stanley made a very fine speech on the subject of cotton. He issued warnings, and pointed out how some consideration should have been given at that stage to the subject of ratoon cotton. The amendment has been moved as a protest against the action of the Government in penalising a certain section of the producers who observed the law, and who consequently are going to suffer, while those who did not observe the law are going to benefit. The various speakers I have listened to appeared to be rather parochial in their remarks, and to argue the cotton question from a local point of view, and no doubt we are apt to regard these matters from what we see personally in our own districts.

I quite agree with some of the remarks which were made by the hon. member for Fitzroy. The condition which he described in tropical or almost tropical districts such as Rockhampton are very different to the conditions in Western Queensland or on the Northern Downs, as the seasons are more certain and there is a possibility almost every year of having a sufficient rainfall to germinate the seed; but the conditions in that locality may be very different to those obtaining in other centres. The history of cotton-growing on the Northern Downs is that in a normal season cotton-growing is going to succeed.

It has been a competition in the prolific season we have had between cotton growing and the growth of pests, and we cannot take it as a normal one. Unfortunately,

[Mr. Vowles.

there is always more or less uncertainty in regard to the seasons. Even if the grower was assured of getting the necessary rain at the start for the germination of the seed, the necessary later rains might not be forthcoming, and the plants might not mature. For these reasons it is necessary, once the ratoon plants have been established, to allow the grower to continue that system if he desires, and permit him to get whatever return he can from the crop. The growers have been placed in a very unfortunate position through the banning of ratoon cotton. I know of an instance where a man had up to 70 acres under ratoon cotton. He observed the law and ploughed it out, although it was very much against the grain to destroy the whole result of his labour. He said to me, "I am compelled by the law to get rid of a crop which I and the members of my family have grown, and which on account of late rains and late germination has not been a success. It would be a success the next season, but I am compelled to dig it up." I said, "You have to obey the law, old chap, and the only thing is to take it as a sport." He has ploughed the crop out, and there is a possibility that he will not get anything at all for the work he and his family have done on that area.

The question has been raised as to whether a man should be penalised for defying the law and whether those who observe the law should profit by their action. I listened to the hon. member for Fitzroy, who drew an analogy between the cotton-grower who had observed the law and the man who had not, and he made a contrast between the man who produced bad cotton and the one who produced good cotton.

Mr. HARTLEY: I did not do that.

Mr. VOWLES: At any rate, it was an hon. member on the opposite side. If we refer to legislation which deals with diseases in stock, we find that where the Department of Agriculture has ordered the destruction of diseased cattle under the authority of the Diseases in Stock Act, and it is subsequently found that the department has made a mistake, the unfortunate owner receives compensation from a fund created for that purpose. The Government have realised and admitted that a mistake has been made in the action they have taken against the growing of ratoon cotton. It should be recognised also that some of the growers have suffered pecuniary losses, and we say that under the circumstances compensation should be given to them.

I went the other day with the Secretary for Public Lands and his party to the Dawson Valley, where cotton growing is being carried on, and where irrigation will be applied on a large scale. It is very necessary that there should be effective supervision in regard to the crops which are grown. I have seen places cultivated and abandoned and then overgrown with pests, which become a menace to the surrounding crops unless proper supervision is given. I am not merely referring to the bad farmer; I am thinking of the clean farmer. In the case to which I alluded the farmer got no return from the work of himself and his family for six months, and the only prospect he had was in the succeeding season. If he had let the crop go to ruin, I would have had no sympathy for him; but the fact that he kept it clean and did

the best possible under the circumstances should entitle him to more consideration than to be asked to destroy the whole of the crop, which was the only means he had of financing himself during the year.

I do not regard the amendment altogether as a vote of censure against the Government. I regard it more as a very strong suggestion from the Opposition to the Government that, when they are bringing in the Supplementary Estimates dealing with this department, provision should be made for the settlers who have destroyed their ratoon crops, so that they will not be altogether losers through an Act of Parliament which was of an experimental nature, and which has turned out to be detrimental to the interests of the growers.

A remark was made by one hon. member that it had been stated that ratoon cotton coming from Queensland would not be accepted by certain mills. From the evidence of the Central Queensland growers and Mr. Daniel Jones, it appears that the public have laboured under a delusion with regard to ratoon cotton. It has been proved by the sales of ratoon cotton which was sent to England that it is possible to get a much higher price for ratoon cotton than was anticipated. It was previously stated that ratoon cotton was not legal tender. The only objection, therefore, that can be urged against ratoon cotton-growers is that it is a harbour for pests. To get over that difficulty, the growers said they were prepared to cut down the plants, but the Department of Agriculture compelled them to exterminate the ratoon plants, and thus deprived them in many cases of the opportunity of earning a livelihood.

I think I shall not be giving anything away when I refer to Messrs. McDonnell and East, who it is generally understood were prepared to accept every pound of ratoon cotton grown here at a fair price, not for the purpose of trading in cotton as merchandise, but for using it in connection with upholstery, for the stuffing of pillows, mattresses, and in connection with the manufacture of furniture generally. I say that a Government who will allow the destruction of a product which was going to be marketable—a product which is something new from a revenue-producing point of view—are not doing their duty to Queensland and to our producers generally.

For these reasons I am supporting the amendment which has been moved by the hon. member for Aubigny. I trust that hon. members will not look on this as a party matter or as political propaganda. What affects me in my electorate affects hon. members opposite in their electorates—that argument applies all round.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*): I am going to support the amendment of the leader of the Opposition, and I wish to say a few words to explain why I do so. Surely it should not be necessary in a British community to ask that those who obey the law should have the same privileges as those who disobey the law; but the circumstances in this case are such that our request is practically

[2 p.m.] tantamount to that. We are asking that the cotton-growers who destroyed their crops at the behest of the Government should not be victimised whilst those who defied the Government and grew ratoon cotton are allowed to reap a benefit. Notwithstanding that the Govern-

ment issued threats and that they were untainted in their criticism of these men and of Mr. Daniel Jones, they have climbed down and allowed those who defied them to sell their cotton. Here they are to-day jingling the money in their pockets and enjoying luxury whilst those who obeyed the law have no money in their pockets, are without a crop, are suffering hardship and privation, are going without the necessities of life and getting behind with their rent, on which the Government impose a fine of 10 per cent. because they cannot pay up in time. It is unusual in a British community and in a British Parliament for members of the Opposition to be compelled to ask the Government to mete out British fair play to citizens of the State. I am forced to the conclusion that the Government are not meting out British fair play but Bolshevik domination. There was no need for the Minister to indulge in a burst of bad temper and endeavour to prove his case by abuse and quoting figures which are unreliable, to say the best of them. All the evidence we have shows that they are not reliable, yet the hon. gentleman quotes the figures knowing in his own mind that men who have sent down ratoon cotton have received plant cotton prices, and that those people are included amongst the successful plant cotton-growers. Those figures are unreliable, yet he put them forward in defence of his case. He also argued, because there were fifty motor-cars at the Biggenden show this year as compared with two last year, that the farmers are prosperous.

I ask the Minister, in the first place, how many motor-cars were owned by cotton-growers, and, secondly, whether they were bought out of the profits derived from cotton-growing. Let me show how foolish that analogy is. When the Government came into power in 1915 there were two motor-cars owned by the State, and in 1918-19 they owned forty-nine, yet they were crying out that they were hard up.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. FRY: No sane Minister would quote the number of motor-cars to show the profitable nature of an industry, yet we have the Minister stating that and quoting unreliable figures, and relying upon general abuse to defend his case. The Government are at their wits' end to know what to do. I give them this credit, that they have been the catspaw of the big financial concerns. It has been said that they obtained election funds from those concerns.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is a mean contemptible statement.

Mr. FRY: It is not. The Government obtained funds from the breweries, and, if they will take funds from one source, they will take money from another.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That statement is worthy of the hon. gentleman.

Mr. FRY: I try to speak the truth, which the hon. gentleman does not. When the Whinstanes Ginnery was opened I was present, and there was praise on all sides for Mr. Daniel Jones, as the man who had laid the successful foundation of the cotton industry in Queensland. It was even thought that the King should be requested to confer some mark of national acknowledgment on Mr. Daniel Jones for his great services. Then the spinners come along and the Government

Mr. Fry.]

and the Minister, acting as the dancing doll for the spinners, applaud the experts who ridiculed Mr. Daniel Jones. On the one hand the Minister says, "Hear, hear!" and on the other hand, he says "Boo!" just according to how the wind is blowing. So far as I can see, he does not know where he is. He has no sound opinion on this matter. He is being pulled from one side to the other just as he interprets public opinion. If Mr. Daniel Jones is not the man that he was acclaimed to be before the experts came along, and if he has been dethroned—as he has been or as the Minister thinks he has been—and the Minister has come into the arena and become the champion, why does he now abuse Mr. Daniel Jones and ask him to find a market for 10,000 or 20,000 bales of ratoon cotton?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is a reasonable request.

Mr. FRY: The Government first of all claimed that nature could not produce the same quality article twice from the same plant. They claimed that the second crop could not be as good as the first. They claimed that plant cotton was the best, and that ratoon cotton did not come up to that standard.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Government still say that.

Mr. FRY: The Government claim that nature could not produce the same quality crop from the same plants on two successive occasions. Mr. Daniel Jones said that was wrong, and he has proved it to be wrong, and then the Minister shifted his ground and said that the second crop encouraged the pink boll worm, and, after there had been a big splash in the pan and it was proved that the young tender plant was more favourable to the encouragement of the pink boll worm, the Minister dropped that and got on to something else. His next plea was that the staple of ratoon cotton was shorter than the staple of annual cotton, and he started to talk about some sort of cells and that sort of thing. He said that what human beings could not determine a machine created by a human being could determine. The hon. gentleman said that, although an analysis could not determine the difference between ratoon and plant cotton, a cold, unsympathetic feelingless machine could. That is against all reason. In the first place, nature is denied the ability to reproduce itself correctly a second time, and on the other hand the possibility of expert analysis determining the difference between ratoon and plant cotton is also denied. It is a lot of bosh. The Secretary for Agriculture is being swayed in his opinion like a reed in a wind and is looking to see where he is going to get the most political kudos from. He now hopes that his defence that he is not going to use the taxpayers' moneys to compensate these people will save him. That cannot save him, as any sensible man knows. If the Government could use the taxpayers' money for joy rides, motor-cars—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. FRY: I say that the money of the taxpayer is concerned, and that the Government did not hesitate to use it in those directions. The growers of ratoon cotton who acted like good law-abiding citizens and destroyed their crops when the order of the Government was issued are to be the losers thereby, but the men who turned round and

said to the Government, "We will not destroy our crops; we will fight you to the bitter end, and throw our whole weight and votes against you," are to be allowed to harvest their ratoon cotton and benefit from its sale. Are we to sit idly by and see men who disobeyed the law going around with their money jingling in their pockets, and on the other hand see those men who obeyed the law go hungry and be in want? That is not British justice, as I understand it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Why don't you say "Australian justice?" Are you not an Australian?

Mr. FRY: Yes, but if this is a sample of "Australian justice," God save Australia from the outliner of its justice. The Australian might hit hard, but he tries to be fair, and he is not going to see an opponent sat upon without defending him and his cause. The position as I see it is wrong and untenable. Even the hon. member for Port Curtis tried to get the Government out of the hole they are in by drawing an analogy between the dairying and cotton industries. The difference between the two industries is this: The dairying industry provides milk for consumption and within twenty-four hours it goes right into the system; but before cotton is manufactured into the finished article it has to go through a long process of preparation and cleansing and never enters the system. There is no analogy between the two industries.

Mr. CARTER: You are posing as a humourist—not as an authority.

Mr. FRY: A man cannot help being a humourist when hon. members opposite make such humorous statements. The repetition of their speeches would be humorous entertainment in itself. Their own statements are sufficient to induce hon. members to vote for the amendment. When I am called upon to cast my vote I am not going to cast the vote in favour of the Government doing something which is wrong, and which they must know is wrong.

Why is all this bitterness hurled against Mr. Daniel Jones? Is it because the Secretary for Agriculture is afraid? We have the two gladiators in the field—the Secretary for Agriculture and Mr. Daniel Jones—Mr. Jones is fighting a lone hand—a single man up against the spinners' organisations and the Government, and he has won all along the line—so much so that the Government are forced to bring in an amending Bill to accede to his ideas. On the other hand, we have the Secretary for Agriculture, backed by the strong force of the Government and all the arguments they can bring forth, backed by journals, the spinners and experts. Yet on an occasion like this he is not able to reply effectively to Mr. Daniel Jones—the man who is fighting alone. Why cannot the Minister and the Government bring forward a case which will confound this man? Because he is fighting a fight that is right. He is fighting for the man who was penalised because he obeyed the law. As the Secretary for Agriculture said at the opening of the Whinestanes Ginney, Mr. Daniel Jones is fighting the fight of the cotton industry of Queensland, but some strange influence has evidently since changed his opinion.

Another aspect of the question is that of the consumers—the people who have to wear the clothing made from the cotton. I am

[Mr. Fry.]

not too sure as to the purpose of the British Australian Cotton Growers' Association, with all its plantations in various parts of the world—in some cases raising cotton by black labour. They have tremendous crops coming along, and they may be using the Queensland Government as a lever to get cotton at a better price in other parts of the world. I do not know. It may be that the British Australian Cotton Growers' Association is a part of the great British Cotton Growing Association operating in other parts of the world, and I am not too sure that the Secretary for Agriculture has not fallen to them. We have to look at these things and see what is behind them. If ratoon is as durable and suitable as plant cotton, and can be produced at a lower cost, thus enabling the wage-earners and consumers to secure clothing cheaper, I shall support the ratoon cotton growers. As I pointed out previously in my speeches, every time the Government put up an excuse for not growing ratoon cotton it was knocked down, and the Government had to climb down. I shall cast my vote to-day in favour of the reduction of the vote by £1 as a protest against the Government not recognising the claims of those who obeyed the law, and as a protest against the Government smiling complaisantly upon those who disobeyed it.

Question—That £16,313 only (*Mr. Moore's amendment*) be granted—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 24.	
Mr. Barnes, G. P.	Mr. King
„ Barnes, W. H.	„ Logan
„ Bell	„ Maxwell
„ Brand	„ Moore
„ Clayton	„ Morgan
„ Corser	„ Nott
„ Costello	„ Peterson
„ Deacon	„ Roberts
„ Edwards	„ Swayne
„ Fry	„ Taylor
„ Kelso	„ Vowles
„ Kerr	„ Warren

Tellers: Mr. Brand and Mr. Fry.

NOES, 33.	
Mr. Barber	Mr. Hanson
„ Bedford	„ Hartley
„ Bertram	„ Hyne
„ Brennan	„ Kirwan
„ Bruce	„ Land
„ Bulcock	„ Larcombe
„ Carter	„ McCormack
„ Collins	„ McLachlan
„ Conroy	„ Mullan
„ Cooper, F. A.	„ Riordan
„ Dash	„ Ryan
„ Dunstan	„ Smith
„ Farrell	„ Theodore
„ Ferricks	„ Weir
„ Foley	„ Winstanley
„ Gillies	„ Wright
„ Gledson	

Tellers: Mr. Hanson and Mr. Wright.

PAIHS.	
AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Petrie	Mr. Payne
„ Appel	„ Wilson

Resolved in the negative.

Original question stated—

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

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): The Minister has claimed that he brought in certain legislation dealing with this particular industry on the advice of experts, yet he tells us in this Chamber that he asked the Premier, when

he was leaving for the Motherland, to look into the matter of the cotton marketing problem on the other side.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He did so.

Mr. CORSER: From what I can gather, when the Premier got to the other side he addressed the cotton interests there. He did not go there and listen to an address from them.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He did more than that.

Mr. CORSER: The Minister sent a cable to him telling him of the troubles and pests here, and he is reported to have said that the pink boll worm would settle the ratoon cotton industry in Australia at the present time.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I did not say that.

Mr. CORSER: I did not say that the hon. gentleman said it. I am telling him what the Premier said.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You know what the Premier meant by that.

Mr. CORSER: I know what he meant by it. What he did was to mention something which had damaged the industry. I do not say that he meant to do that, as I do not think he is a man of that calibre, nevertheless he damaged the cotton industry to a great degree. A special meeting of the Executive took place to insist on the ban being placed on the growing of ratoon cotton because of the pink boll worm. Instead of dealing with it in an expert way—the only way it could be dealt with successfully—the Minister dealt with it in a political sense. He had a special Cabinet meeting so as to draw the attention of people outside to the vermin which are likely to attack our cotton industry. I think it would have been far better for the hon. gentleman to have dealt with the matter through the officers of his department, because this special Cabinet meeting did not do any good. I have here the “Cotton Farmer” of 1st July last, which contains a letter from the Local Producers' Association at Lawson, via Wondai, which was received at the meeting of the provisional executive of the Queensland Cotton Growers' Union. The report states—

“It was resolved that this executive deplores the statement made by the Premier, Mr. Theodore, in his speech before the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, which reads—

In some cases the growers have had to pay for adult labour while child labour is equally efficient.

Where a man has been able to employ his own family, the cost (of cotton production) will work out at about half the figures shown.

“The Union regards this as equivalent to an endorsement of the employment of Australian woman and child labour as an essential to providing cheap cotton for Manchester, in competition with black labour, as this Union believes that with the removal of existing harassing conditions the production of cotton in Australia will ensure a competency for a family based on one man's labour.

“It was resolved that the general secretary make a Press statement regarding the one made by Mr. Gillies while

Mr. Corser.]

in Sydney and published in the 'Queensland Producer,' in which he extolled the efficacy of the Queensland Producers' Association in obtaining redress for farmers; and to challenge him to indicate one instance where cotton-growers, appealing through this organisation, have been able to obtain redress for their wrongs and grievances."

We see that the hon. gentleman has been condemned by the growers themselves for his lack of interest not only in the industry generally but in regard to their side of the industry. His work has been right along in the interest of one thing, and that is what has hampered the industry so much and what has hampered those on both sides of the House who are prepared to assist it. The hon. gentleman was also able to tell us that the hon. member for Oxley had gone home with the intention of inquiring into these things. He condemns hon.

[2.30 p.m.] members on this side and points to the leader of the Nationalist section, the hon. member for Windsor, as being with him in his determination to place a ban on ratoon cotton. But what do we find in regard to the visit of the hon. member for Oxley to the other side? We find that the hon. member addressed the Oldham Chamber of Commerce, which afterwards decided to put certain restrictions on certain classes of cotton. Evidently he went over there to tell them things, although the Minister told us that he went home with the special idea of finding out something about the matter.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I did not say that.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. gentleman says he did not say it. Let me quote from the hon. gentleman's remarks in "Hansard" of this year—

"I might mention that, when the Cotton Industry Bill was before the House last year, it was supported by the leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Oxley. The latter gentleman went to the old country with the one intention of finding out all about ratoon cotton, and has cabled out to say that the ratoon cotton embargo should be maintained, and he has not changed his view with regard to that."

The Minister has contradicted my statement, but there is the extract from "Hansard" of this session to prove that I am right. Apparently the hon. gentleman does not know what he said. The Minister has held up the hon. member for Oxley and the Premier as men who went home to England to make inquiries, but our evidence is that they both addressed Chambers of Commerce and other interests over there and told them something and came back still of the same mind.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You are quite wrong.

Mr. CORSER: The Minister was so annoyed this morning when I attempted to interject that I had to go outside for fear I would be put out of the Chamber by the Chairman's orders, and I hope my speech will not be a series of interjections in which I will get in a few words now and again. We all have our points of view, and my views are the views of the growers themselves, and my interests are those of the growers. As a

[Mr. Corser.

grower, I ought to have some practical knowledge of the industry.

Mr. DASH: I thought you had a pear farm.

Mr. CORSER: I have no pear on my farm, and, if the hon. member wishes to know, I have a very fair sample of cotton there. So I think I have every right to speak as a grower. What I did say was that I was very pleased that the growers of Queensland asked the Premier to withhold any evidence with regard to cotton until he had heard their views, and I remarked that it did look more hopeful, because during the last few months, under the administration of the Secretary for Agriculture, the growers have not got much information, and it was very pleasing to note that the Premier took that advice, with the result that all the determinations of the Secretary for Agriculture were thrown aside and a conference was called at which he was able to tell them that certain decisions had been broken down and that some alteration was likely to take place.

Mr. HARTLEY: Can the hon. member tell me why in the figures quoted by him the cost of preparing the land was £25 less in the one case than in the other?

Mr. CORSER: If the hon. member wants any further evidence, he can see in "Hansard" the names of the growers in the Central District who compiled those figures. They were collected on their behalf, they were quoted on their behalf, and they are correct.

Mr. HARTLEY: The hon. gentleman repudiated those figures this morning.

Mr. CORSER: I did not; I want to correct that impression in the mind of the hon. gentleman. I corrected nothing, because I claimed there was nothing to correct. I hope later the hon. member will read for his information what I said. Mr. G. E. McDonald, Chairman of the Central Queensland District Council of Agriculture, is reported thus—

"Mr. McDonald stated that the deputation, in protesting against such a suggestion, in view of the present parlous position of the growers, emphasised that the Minister's extreme sympathy with the British-Australian Cotton Association was unjustifiable, and in support quoted the report of the company's auditor, dated 9th November last, which anticipated a profit of £75,653 on the current season's operations and on a trading turnover of £178,333."

He does not think it is a fair thing for the Minister to have so much interest in finding out the good things enjoyed by the companies when the growers have been so hard hit. The report continues—

"As this huge profit of 42½ per cent. was expected from the industry at this end some idea would be given of what was developing with the full cognisance of Mr. Gillies under the Government's sheltering arm."

Mr. FARRELL: What is the use of quoting rubbish like that? The hon. gentleman knows that a dividend has not yet been declared.

Mr. CORSER: This gentleman represented the Queensland growers and was selected by the Council of Agriculture. That is the statement of a practical man, and it is not

rubbish. The hon. gentleman does not like it because he knows that if he had done the right thing he would have voted with the Opposition in favour of reducing this vote by £1, and he is endeavouring to explain away his action and the action of his Government by terming the statement made by a growers' representative "rubbish."

Mr. FARRELL: God forbid that I should cover vote with you.

Mr. CORSER: For our sake, I hope God will forbid it. (Laughter.) If it did occur, we would look at ourselves and wonder what had gone wrong. This industry does not hinge on the one question of ratoon; it has received a serious set-back by the agreement that has been made with the British-Australian Cotton Association. The Association in its prospectus clearly shows that the agreement with the Government means a considerable amount to them. This agreement provides that the Association shall have the right to our seed free for 1922, at £1 per ton in 1923, and at £1 10s. per ton in 1924, which indicates not only a serious blunder on the part of the Government but a serious loss to the growers. The profits that will be made by the British-Australian Cotton Association out of that seed should have gone into the pockets of the growers. There are no experts who will say that it is not a fair thing for the growers to receive a full return for their industry.

Mr. HYNES: To whom else could they have sold it?

Mr. CORSER: They had the markets of the world to sell it to. Markets were available during the time that the industry was tied up by this agreement.

Mr. HYNES: The hon. gentleman knows it is not practical to sell it to the markets of the world.

Mr. CORSER: I know it is practical. The Association took the seed from the farmers, and during the drought period, when the farmers were having a trying time and wanted food for their starving stock, they had to pay the State Produce Agency £5 per ton for this seed that the Association had obtained for nothing in 1922 and for £1 per ton in 1923.

Mr. CLAYTON: They had to pay £7 12s. 6d. a ton for it.

Mr. CORSER: The agreement which is included in the prospectus of the British-Australian Cotton Association clearly shows that they obtained the seed for nothing in 1922.

Is there any reason why we should not exercise this opportunity to protest against the continuation of that sort of thing by the Government? The Opposition have repeatedly said that, whilst they are bound to ratify agreements, whether they be agreements with oil companies, cotton associations, or otherwise, they claim the right as a party to have some say on the floor of this Chamber in seeing and drawing up these agreements beforehand. The present is an illustration of how the Government rejected all the advice tendered, not only by hon. members on this side, but by the growers themselves, and made an agreement with a private company which has resulted in a very heavy burden being placed on the primary producer. We should on this occasion emphasise our protest against the action of the Government in the hope that no action further to harass

the farmer will be taken in the future. It is to be sincerely hoped that the expert advice now in the hands of the Government will be taken full advantage of even at this late date, and that attention will be paid to the scientific side of cotton-growing and the different conditions obtaining in Australia to those existing in other parts of the world. When the industry was being legislated for the Secretary for Agriculture made the statement that certain bans had been put upon the industry in America by legislation; yet we find the hon. gentleman during the recess, after saying that ratoon was not a legal tender, cabling to the United States and discovering that the information given him by hon. members on this side of the Chamber when the Bill was going through was correct, and that there was no legislation in America against ratoon cotton.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: It is not legal tender in America.

Mr. CORSER: Ratoon cotton is not a factor on the market there because the cold winters do not enable any but annual cotton to be grown. Nature provides a beautiful return from apples and such trees as can be pruned. We cannot see any depreciation in the crop in those cases, yet there has been no claim by the Government to consider the cotton-tree in any light but an annual. I do not want to trespass further on the time of the Committee, but I do want to enter this protest against the past action of the Government in entering into this agreement with the British Australian Cotton Growers' Association, and to express the hope that in future legislation, and before they make any other agreements either for the sale or purchase of the existing gineries or plants, they will listen to the suggestions that hon. members on this side as representatives of the producers have to offer.

Question put and passed.

DAIRY PRODUCE ACTS.

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

"That £16,762 be granted for 'Dairy Produce Acts.'"

Question put and passed.

DISEASES IN PLANTS ACT.

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

"That £7,054 be granted for 'Diseases in Plants Act.'"

Question put and passed.

STATE FARMS AND GARDENS.

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

"That £24,138 be granted for 'State Farms and Gardens.'"

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): We ought to have some information from the Secretary for Agriculture as to why the vote has been altered this year. For the year 1923-24 there was only one item under the heading of "Botanic Gardens" and that was for the Curator. None of the other items which appear under that heading appeared last year. Again, the provision

Hon. W. H. Barnes.]

for gardeners under the headings "Museum Gardens, Brisbane," and "Queen's Gardens, Brisbane," did not appear last year. When the Minister gets up to move a vote he should furnish such information without being asked for it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Encham*): The explanation asked for by the hon. member for Wynnum is that the Curator of the Botanic Gardens, Brisbane, has been taken from the list as Manager of a State Farm and now appears under the heading "Curator." This was in accordance with the wishes of the Public Service Commissioner. The Curator is a permanent officer, and the amount appropriated for his services is £405.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I would ask the Secretary for Agriculture to consider the advisability of placing the demonstrating stations at Melton, on the Callide Valley, and Monal Creek, in the Burnett district, under the category of State farms. We are spending in those districts about £2,500,000 or £3,000,000 on railways alone. We are opening up 5,000 farms, and sometimes we are told that there would be a greater number. Even if only 5,000 farms are opened there, it is advisable for the Minister to consider the desirability of having these two stations classified as State farms. They could help in the early breeding of stock and could give advice to the new settlers in the district, who are coming from all parts of Australia. The establishment of such farms in those districts would prove of value in demonstrating the classes of crops favourable to the district and the most suitable time for planting those crops. They would serve as an excellent demonstration to those coming to the district in search of land as well as assisting the man actually there, and they might be used by the Government as centres of experimentation for the extermination of pests which are likely to be found.

I hope the Minister will appreciate the desirability of converting these stations into State farms at an early date. They could deal with stock, horses, cattle, as well as pigs and poultry and the forms of agriculture suitable to the district. They could be used to show how those crops should be cultivated and the best time for planting and handling the crops under the new conditions.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): I would like to say a word or two in connection with the Warren State farm. That farm is of great value to the district in the direction of giving advice and of carrying out experiments with different crops, but it is lacking in one direction. There is no opportunity provided to give a practical agricultural education to the sons of farmers in the district. It is too far and it is too costly for the sons of farmers in the Central District to come down to Gattor and take a course in agriculture there, and it should be possible to arrange a scheme whereby the sons of farmers could attend the Warren State farm, which is in the midst of a good agricultural district, for a term as labourers or as part-time workmen so that they might get instruction in agriculture while they are working on the farm. I know that does not go all the way, but it would go a long way towards giving a theoretical as well as a practical farm education to a number of young fellows in and around the district. I hope the day is not far distant when we shall have an agricultural college somewhat

Hon. W. H. Barnes.

similar to the Gattor College established at the Warren State farm, but until that time arrives I would ask the Minister to give consideration to some such scheme as I have suggested.

I notice by the Estimates that we are asked to provide a sum of £970 for the Museum Gardens, Brisbane, and a sum of £500 for the Queen's Gardens, Brisbane. It seems rather strange that, in addition to supporting the Botanic Gardens, Brisbane, from State funds to the extent of over £4,000 a year, we should also be caretakers and paymasters for the Museum Gardens, Brisbane. I want to know if we have always done that, and whether it is not a fair thing that the cost of upkeep of the Museum Gardens should not be taken over by the Royal National Agricultural Society. I think they are the owners of the Museum grounds, and it would be a fair thing if some of these bodies around Brisbane maintained their own gardens and allowed some of the money now spent in that direction to be used to help the smaller places outside the metropolitan area.

I would also like to know whether it is contemplated, under the Greater Brisbane Bill, to put the control of these gardens under the Greater Brisbane Municipal Council.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): As hon. members are well aware, we have an experimental farm at Home Hill, which is trying to demonstrate to the farmers in that locality and to the people of Queensland generally that products other than sugar-cane can be grown on the Burdekin. In the month of June I had the pleasure of going over that experimental farm with the manager, Mr. C. J. Munro, and I found that outside sugar-cane he was carrying on extensive experiments in connection with the growing of cotton to ascertain the best methods of cultivation. He had four plots with varying spaces between the plants and different widths between the rows to find out at what distance apart the plants gave the best results. That is a very good idea indeed, as it is only by that method that we can ascertain the best manner in which to grow cotton. That is the kind of place where the experiments should have been carried out. We should then not have had such a long discussion as we had this morning as to whether it is the proper thing to grow raton cotton or not. At any rate, that is one of the things being carried out at the experimental farm at Home Hill. It was considered doubtful whether lucerne could be grown successfully on the Burdekin, but Mr. Munro has demonstrated that, with irrigation, lucerne can be grown there.

Then again, he has carried out experiments in connection with different kinds of sweet potatoes, and also in connection with velvet beans and soy beans and several other products under different systems of irrigation. Although the farm is not altogether self-supporting, yet I am in hopes that it can be made so in the near future and can also carry out useful experimental work. There is an area in the house paddock which at present is not under cultivation, and, in my opinion, it should be brought under cultivation. In going round the district I noticed that on many farms there were up-to-date tractors for the cultivation of the soil, but on the experimental farm we are carrying on cultivation

with the use of horses. I am one of those who believe that, if our experimental farms are to be a success, we must have the most up-to-date machinery known to man, and the State should lead the way in that direction. It is no use talking about financial stringency, and so forth. Financial stringency should not count when it means increasing production and the saving of labour. I hope that the Minister will see that in future labour-saving machinery is used at the experimental farm at Home Hill and all other experimental farms in the State, the same as on privately-owned farms.

Another thing that is being demonstrated at Home Hill is the best system of irrigation, and so far the Hawaiian system is proving the best. Under that system cane is planted in deep drills and the water is allowed to flow in a small, steady stream down the rows over the plants, and a far larger yield is obtained under that system of irrigation than under any other. If we are able to make two blades of grass, or two sticks of cane, grow where only one used to grow before, it will prove the worth of the experimental farm. I am satisfied that the farm is doing splendid work in that district in demonstrating that we can not only grow sugar-cane, but that other crops can be grown in that locality.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I would like to point out, in reply to the statement of the hon. member for Fitzroy, that the Royal National Agricultural Society neither owns nor controls the Museum or the gardens there. They are entirely under the control of the Government.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): The hon. member for Windsor is quite right. The Museum building and the Museum gardens are not the property of the National Association.

Mr. HARTLEY: Are not the grounds owned by the National Association?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No, they are the property of the Government. With regard to the criticism of the hon. member for Fitzroy, I do not see why the capital city of the State should be subsidised more than any other town in regard to the upkeep of public gardens, and, with the advent of the Greater Brisbane scheme, there is no reason why the people of the metropolitan area should not acquire the Botanic Gardens and go in for their enlargement or for the acquisition of other gardens, so that I think the suggestion of the hon. member for Fitzroy is a good one.

In regard to the remarks of the hon. member for Bowen with reference to the State farm at Inkerman, this is the latest State farm established, and, if I have my way, it will be the last to be established on those lines. There was more justification for its establishment than for the establishment of some of the others, but, generally speaking, the State farms have been a failure. They have not been supported by the

[3 p.m.] farmers, and the cost to the taxpayers in most cases has not been justified, and the money could have been better spent in other ways. That is the conclusion I have begun to arrive at. I think that the State farm at Inkerman was established on the suggestion of the present Premier with a view to demonstrating whether it was possible and profitable to grow other

crops than sugar-cane within the irrigation areas. In that respect it has been justified. Further than that, I think I may say that the loss on the Inkerman State farm is proportionately less than that on any other State farm; that is to say, the revenue is greater in proportion to the expenditure than on the others, owing to the fact that it is growing sugar-cane, which just now is bringing a good price. Last year the expenditure was £2943 and the revenue £1,823, or an excess of expenditure over revenue of only £1,120. Of that revenue, £1,752 was realised from the sale of sugar-cane and the balance of £71 from the sale of other products. That is fairly satisfactory. There are other State farms which, in my opinion, could be made self-supporting. There is no reason why the State farm at Kairi should not be made self-supporting. There is a large area there of some of the most fertile land in Queensland which could be put under crop, and it is my intention in the near future to review the whole question of the State farms with a view to making them as self-supporting as possible. They can be made self-supporting where they have rich land and can grow crops of commercial value, and where it can be done there is no reason why it should not be done and why the farms should not still carry out their functions as experimental farms.

Mr. MORGAN: Could not the Roma State farm be made self-supporting?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I think it could, and, if it could not, it would possibly be better to reduce it to an experimental farm for wheat culture. Time and again in this Chamber I have pointed out that the advantage of such institutions cannot always be judged by positive results, and that negative results are just as valuable as positive results, as it is just as important to show a farmer what not to attempt to grow as it is to show him the most profitable crops to grow, as he cannot afford to experiment for himself. That is the justification for experimental farms, and I repeat that since I have been Minister I have gradually arrived at the conclusion that our system of State farms is not the best that can be devised. I favour the system of experimental plots, carried out by the farmers themselves. That is an idea that I have endeavoured to extend, and I think that some of our State farms could be closed down. Of course, one does not like to close them down if it can be shown that they are performing useful work; but if the money could be spent more efficiently upon employing additional instructors, whereas in some instances the State farms are white elephants and the farmers do not appreciate their value and make very little use of them, then I think the time has arrived for some of those State farms to be closed down and the money spent on them used in some other way.

Mr. CONROY (*Maranoa*): I am very interested in this vote, because there is a very excellent State farm in my electorate at Roma. I do not know whether it is self-supporting, but I do know that it has justified its existence. Mr. Soutter has been in charge of that State farm for a number of years, and he is a man who is not only a good officer but one who takes a very keen interest in his work.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: He is the greatest wheat breeder in Australia.

Mr. Conroy.]

Mr. CONROY: He has been instrumental in improving the quality of the wheat in the Maranoa district, and for that reason alone I sincerely hope that this farm will be allowed to continue. I claim that there is not a better quality wheat grown anywhere in Queensland than is grown in the Maranoa district. I am very pleased to see that Mr. Soutter's salary has been increased, and I am only sorry that the increase was not a bigger one. I am sure that Mr. Soutter will still do very good work for Queensland, and I sincerely trust that the farm will not be abandoned.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I endorse the remarks made by the hon. member for Maranoa regarding the excellent work done at the State farm at Roma. I do not think that the Minister meant that that farm would be closed down. Anyone who knows anything about the wheat industry of this State knows that twenty to twenty-five years ago the quality of the wheat grown in Queensland was of such nature that the flour milled from it did not possess the same keeping qualities as it possesses to-day. Various experiments have been carried out.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION:
By Mr. Soutter.

Mr. TAYLOR: Yes, Mr. Soutter has been able to improve the quality of the wheat at Roma, and, as the hon. member for Maranoa says, the wheat grown in the Maranoa district compares favourably with the wheat grown in any other State in the Commonwealth. I do not think the Minister had in mind the closing down of that State farm, because it would be a calamity to close up an institution that was doing such splendid work for Queensland. Mr. Soutter has produced a type of wheat that eminently suits Queensland's requirements. There have been very material changes in the seasons during the past few years, and we have evolved a type of wheat that will stand the dry winters of Queensland. I agree with the Minister that the State farms generally should not be continued. Probably very good work is being done in the Bundaberg and other districts with sugar-cane along the same lines as those followed by those carrying out experimental work with wheat, but the day has gone by when the ordinary State farms are a source of usefulness in Queensland. The experimental plots carried out by the individual farmers under the supervision of the department will produce very much better results than we are getting to-day.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): With respect to the interjection I made about the Roma State farm being made self-supporting, whilst I recognise the good work Mr. Soutter has done and is still doing there—I recognise him as one of the best authorities on wheat in Australia—I am sorry that he has not had more opportunities placed at his disposal. In addition to carrying on its experimental work, the Roma State farm should place a larger area of wheat under cultivation to demonstrate that wheat can be grown profitably in the west. Mr. Soutter has everything that is necessary at his disposal, and all he would require to be able to grow 150 to 200 acres of wheat to carry out the demonstration would be a larger area of ground and more farm labour.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION:
The farmers can grow it as soon as he supplies the seed.

[*Mr. Conroy.*

Mr. MORGAN: The Roma State farm can only supply seed wheat in very small quantities. It cannot supply seed in large quantities. If a farmer wishes to grow a certain variety of wheat, Mr. Soutter might be able to supply him with sufficient seed to plant 15 or 20 acres, but he will have to wait until he has harvested that area before he will have sufficient seed to sow a larger area. I had the pleasure some years ago of representing Queensland with Mr. Soutter at a conference of wheatgrowers held in Adelaide. I know from experience with Mr. Soutter, not only in connection with that very pleasant trip, but from my observations of his work at Roma, of the good work he is doing. I appreciate that good work, and I regret that a greater remuneration is not provided for his services. The work that he is doing should command a higher salary. I am still of the opinion that the Roma State farm should grow a sufficient acreage of wheat to demonstrate that it can be grown in that district in marketable quantities.

Mr. BULLOCK: How could you carry out experimental work under those conditions?

Mr. MORGAN: If additional farm labour was supplied the good work now being done by Mr. Soutter in propagating and experimenting with new breeds of wheat, and grappling with the problems that affect wheat-smut, rust, and other diseases, could be continued.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): I was much surprised at the information given by the Minister and the hon. member for Windsor that the Royal National Association does not own the Museum building or the gardens surrounding it. The position is a very funny one. On further inquiry, I found that the Treasurer at one time took over the whole of the grounds of the society because they had got behind financially, and that subsequently the grounds were handed back to the Society, but not the Exhibition building. If the Government had done that, surely the least that this wealthy Society could do—I forget how much it made out of the last Exhibition—would be to maintain the gardens surrounding the building.

Mr. TAYLOR: They do not own the brick building in which the Museum is housed. They only control the corrugated iron buildings which come up to the garden.

Mr. HARTLEY: To me that makes it look all the worse. Why did they not take over the lot? They have a good thing in the showgrounds, so why did they leave a thing that entails annual expense to the Government?

Mr. TAYLOR: The Government want a portion of the ground for a museum, and I think the City Council control the part of the building where the organ is.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: That is correct. The City Council hire the organ to anybody wanting it.

Mr. HARTLEY: Well, why do they not control the gardens and grow their own flowers and that sort of thing? We have other parts of the State with their botanic gardens, where they are struggling to establish nursery farms and to make them profitable and useful as well as ornamental. We are doing that in Rockhampton. Here we have a charge of £970 for the "Museum

Gardens," Brisbane, and on page 82, on the other side of the leaf, we have "Museum Gardens, Brisbane," costing £450 a year, or a total of £1,420. I am glad I have got so much information. I shall follow it up and ask the Government to hand over this "old man of the seas," which means a charge of £1,402 on the State Government. I shall ask that these gardens be handed over either to the Royal National Agricultural and Industrial Association or to the City Council, and that they be asked to support their own gardens and also the Botanic Gardens.

Question put and passed.

SLAUGHTERING ACT.

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

"That £11,862 be granted for 'Slaughtering Act.'"

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): This is a very important matter, and I want the Secretary for Agriculture to understand that any remarks I may make in connection with the slaughtering of diseased or faulty cattle are not made with the intention of making it easier for people possessing such cattle to dispose of them so that they may be used finally for human consumption. Up to a certain period cattle that were found to be faulty on arrival at the Brisbane saleyards—I shall use the Brisbane saleyards as an illustration, because a larger number of cattle pass through the Brisbane saleyards than through any other saleyards in Queensland—

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: You mean the yards at Newmarket?

Mr. MORGAN: Yes. Up to a few weeks ago the method of treating faulty cattle was, upon the arrival of an animal at the yards which was discovered to have a lump or some other fault which might mean a disease and so render it unfit for human consumption, that beast was put aside and placed in a pen with other faulty beasts. Those cattle are sold on their merits. The buyer knows they are faulty because the fact is publicly announced, and he can see with his own eyes. Such cattle are sold at the risk of the purchaser. Then the practice is for these cattle, which have been found faulty, to be marked by the inspector. The Government have their own veterinary inspector at the yards, who no doubt is a capable man and is able to detect all faulty cattle that go into those yards. These marked cattle cannot be slaughtered except in the presence of a qualified inspector. The qualified inspector visits the slaughter-yard where these cattle are to be slaughtered, and, after examining the carcass, gives a pronouncement as to whether the fault is sufficient to cause the beef to be unfit for human consumption, and, if not, the beef is allowed to go into consumption. The beast may have had a small lump on the head which does not in any way interfere with the rest of the carcass, and in that case the head is condemned and the rest of the carcass allowed to go into consumption. On the other hand, the beast may have been suffering from a disease which would be injurious to human life or health, and in that case the carcass is condemned. Kerosene is poured on the carcass and the flesh is

not allowed even to be fed to pigs. It is destroyed by fire or some other means. That is a very fine system, but it is not understood generally by the people of Brisbane. Strangers, or those who are not acquainted with the industry, may go out to the Enoggera yards, and, if they see a beast with a lump on its jaw or on some other part of the body, because that beast is put up and sold, they immediately jump to the conclusion that the carcass goes into human consumption without any further inspection. That is not so.

Mr. HARTLEY: What does the butcher buy it for?

Mr. MORGAN: The butcher who buys it takes the risk. The beast, between the station where it is loaded on the truck and the yard where it is unloaded, may get a horn mark on the jaw, which causes a swelling. Most of the butchers are experienced men, and they can judge pretty well whether a lump is caused by a bruise or by some disease, and whether it is something that should eventually lead to the whole carcass being destroyed. Some of these faulty animals will bring within 10s. a head of the same class of cattle without faults. On the other hand, a beast may bring £2 or £3 less than its market value if it had been without fault. The butcher takes the risk. I think that is a wrong system. The system in vogue in New South Wales and in Melbourne is to deduct a small amount from the proceeds of cattle sent to the yards for sale, which is put into what is called a "Condemned Fund." If one of the beasts sent in is condemned because it shows an injury, the owner receives the full amount that the beast brings. After it is sold the same system is followed as is followed at Enoggera. It is marked as faulty, and if, after it is killed, the carcass is discovered to be unfit for human consumption it is destroyed, and the butcher is paid out of the "Condemned Fund" the full amount of money that he has paid for that beast.

Mr. HARTLEY: That is a pretty good scheme for the man who produces diseased animals.

Mr. MORGAN: There is no inducement for the man who owns a diseased beast to palm the animal off on to some country butcher or kill it on his own place for the use of his employees, and not allow it to go into a yard where there is a qualified Government veterinary inspector. There is no inducement under that system for the butcher in Sydney who buys the beast to try and hide the fault from the inspector, or to try and pass the beef into consumption, because the amount of money that he has paid is refunded, and perhaps he has the hide—so that there is no inducement offered either to the owner of the cattle or to the man who buys the cattle to sell it for human consumption. Under that system there is no inducement for him to pass on to the people meat which is diseased.

Mr. BULCOCK: Do you recommend Brisbane abattoirs?

Mr. MORGAN: We should have abattoirs in Brisbane like they have in Sydney. I have been sending most of my cattle during the last ten or twelve years to a stock and station agent in Sydney for sale there, owing to the fact that the market values in Sydney are much better than they are here. I approve of this scheme, under which.

Mr. Morgan.]

should one of my animals be suffering from cancer, I should be compensated from the insurance fund to which I would be contributing. The Government have decided that no faulty cattle can go to the Brisbane yards for sale. That means that faulty cattle—and I am speaking from experience—will go into consumption in the country, and the country people have as much right to be protected from the consumption of meat which may be diseased as the people who live in the city of Brisbane. The life of a country person is as valuable as, if not more valuable than that of a person who lives in Brisbane. Under the new system which it is proposed to introduce those cattle will not be able to come to the Brisbane yards, where there is a qualified inspector, and where every opportunity is afforded of discovering whether a beast is faulty or not. If these cattle are not to be sold in the Enoggera yards with their faults, they will most likely go into the country butchers' slaughtering yards where there is no qualified veterinary surgeon. There may be a stock inspector there who has not qualified as a veterinary surgeon, and all he does is to inspect the hide after the beast has been killed. He will not have seen the beast before it comes into the slaughter-yard of the country butcher, and the beast may go into consumption in the country.

Mr. BULCOCK: Don't you think that cattle of that type are slaughtered in the bush? Anyhow, they never come down here.

Mr. MORGAN: I am talking about cattle that may not be faulty. No veterinary surgeon can tell until a beast has been slaughtered and examined whether its carcass is unfit for human consumption or not. Quite irrespective of whether an animal is faulty or not, it is far better that a beast should be slaughtered at a place where there is a Government veterinary surgeon than for it to be sold and go into consumption in a place where there is no veterinary surgeon. In the former case we have the protection of the Government official who examines the beast to see whether it is suffering from a disease which would be injurious to human beings if they ate it.

In Victoria, about October or November last, owing to the fact that barley grass grows in those localities, when the cattle go into Melbourne or Ballarat yards every beast has a couple of huge lumps protruding under each side of the jaw. Most people would naturally say that those beasts were suffering from cancer and should not be allowed to go into the yards and be killed for consumption. Barley grass gets into the tongue and causes a swelling similar to a boil on the back of a man's neck, and that is the cause of the trouble. Those cattle are not prevented from going into the Ballarat or Melbourne market. When killed, they can be examined to find out whether they are suffering from cancer or merely from some irritation caused by grass seeds. The cattle in the prickly-pear area in Queensland suffer more from faults than cattle in other parts of Queensland; in fact, prickly-pear thorns may be embedded in the tongue of a beast and cause a swelling, or in some other part of the body.

A prickly-pear thorn might also enter the skin near the eye or some other place and cause a temporary local irritation. Until that beast is examined by a qualified man,

[Mr. Morgan.

why should anybody go out with his gun and shoot it simply because it has a local swelling? If it is not going to [3.30 p.m.] injure the flesh of the animal, it is only wilful waste to prevent it from being put into human consumption, and under present conditions the people in the bush, if they are not prepared or allowed to send such a beast to the Enoggera yards, use it for home consumption or sell it to the local butcher where there is known to be no inspection.

Mr. BULCOCK interjected.

Mr. MORGAN: Can anybody tell by looking at a beast 20 or 10 or 5 yards away whether a swelling is cancer or not? The hon. member may have taken a veterinary course, and he may be able to tell a cancer in its advanced stages—when it has got to such a stage that a blind man could tell it—but in other cases it can only be diagnosed by close examination after death. I had an illustration of that myself. I sent three beasts to the Brisbane Show, and they were considered as fine as any there. They were prize winners. They were sold, and about a week afterwards I got from the agents, Moreheads, Limited, a veterinary surgeon's certificate showing that one of them was condemned for tuberculosis, yet it was one of the finest beasts that it was possible to see. I do not see that there was any obligation on me to bear any of the loss, but I refunded half of the value of the carcass without the hide. I just give that as an illustration to show how, if that beast had been slaughtered in some place where there was no inspection, it is a hundred to one that it would have gone into human consumption.

Mr. BRAND: A thousand to one.

Mr. MORGAN: Yes, a thousand to one, and the people would have eaten the meat of that beast. That is an illustration to show that it is far better to encourage people to allow their animals to be inspected by qualified inspectors than to do anything which will make people try to get rid of them otherwise. A man may truck 20 cattle to the Enoggera yards and when they get there it may be found that one of them is lumpy. It is not known whether the lump was incurred during the journey or not. Under the present conditions a man will not be able to truck an animal with a lump to Brisbane yards for sale. He will have to leave it or take it home again or try to sell it to the local butcher, and may truck the other nineteen to Brisbane. If it had gone to Brisbane it would have been discovered whether the lump was cancer or not. If that man brought his cattle to Miles or Dalby or some other place, the inspector, who may not be a qualified man, will say "You cannot send that beast. He has a lump. I do not know what it is, but you cannot send him." The result is that you either have to take it home again and kill it for your own use or treat it in some manner or sell it to the local butcher for £1 or something less than its value. He may take it because it is a cheap carcass, and it goes into human consumption.

Mr. BULCOCK: Do you say that there is a veterinary surgeon in Dalby?

Mr. MORGAN: There are inspectors in such places, but they are not qualified men. There are stock inspectors who issue permits to travel stock and administer the tick regulations. They know no more about

diseases in cattle than we do as station people. We know that the beast has a lump because we can see it. We do not know whether it is a lump which injures the carcass, or whether it is a lump that is only local in its effect and which does not seriously affect the beast.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Is the hon. gentleman suggesting that faulty cattle cannot be sent to Brisbane under arrangement with the department?

Mr. MORGAN: They are not allowed to be sent to Enoggera. I believe the Government are going to have certain yards set aside.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Faulty cattle can be sent down now

Mr. MORGAN: I understand that they have to be sent direct to certain slaughter-yards, but they cannot be sold at the Enoggera yards. Some of the big stations could, perhaps, muster a truck load of thirty or forty faulty cattle and on being slaughtered, if it is found that the flesh would be injurious to human consumption, it would be destroyed, and, if not, the carcasses would be allowed to go into use. That is all right with a big station, but it does not pay a man to send a single "lumpy" or two "lumpies" 200, 300, or 400 miles to Brisbane to be slaughtered, because the cost of trucking a single beast or two beasts would be excessive. I may be sending a truck load of cattle down, and unless a "lumpy" had a lump that was a running sore or was broken in some way which indicated beyond doubt that it was cancerous, I should be allowed to send that lumpy beast with the rest so that it can come under the inspection of a qualified man. If the Government are going to prevent persons in the bush from sending their lumpy cattle down here for proper inspection, they are going to cause more lumpy cattle to go into human consumption than is the case to-day. I do not want to see lumpy cattle or diseased cattle going into consumption in Brisbane, and I do not want to see them going into consumption in the country, but the Government's regulations will mean that more faulty cattle will go into consumption in the country portions of the State if they are not allowed to be brought to the Enoggera yards for sale. I want the Minister to consider this matter seriously, as it is very important. Matters may appear all right in the eyes of those who go to the Enoggera yards and say there are no "faulties" there. That is not all. A great number of cattle after leaving the trucking yards, say at Miles or Roma, might develop lumps before they reached the Enoggera yards. They might get a knock in the truck which would cause a lump. These cattle will not be put in the "faulty" pen, because it would not be possible to state definitely that the lump would be injurious to the flesh until the beast had been slaughtered and thoroughly examined. The Government are going to force the people, who want to know whether their faulty cattle are injurious to human consumption, to do things that they do not want to do. They are going to make them put their faulty cattle into human consumption on their own property, where they are not able to get the services of a veterinary surgeon. We want to make it easy for the faulty cattle in this State to be sold under Government inspection. It is only human nature for

people to try and get rid of their faulty cattle if then can. They might get the local butcher in a country town to pay £1 or £2 less than the value of a healthy beast for them. I do not want that to happen. I want those cattle to come to Toowoomba or Brisbane or some other place where they can be thoroughly examined by a qualified man, and, if it is proved that the flesh would be injurious to human consumption, then it can be destroyed. I am speaking from experience as a cattleman, and I know what happens. If the Government make it difficult for those cattle to be sold under the inspection of a qualified man, naturally they are going to go into consumption in the country, if not in the city.

Mr. BULCOCK (*Barcoo*): The hon. member who has just resumed his seat seems to be more agitated about the well-being of the cattleman and the return of profits than he is of the interests of the consumer who has to consume the meat that is brought to the city.

Mr. MORGAN: That is not true.

Mr. BULCOCK: The only system that is possible for the adequate protection of the people is an absolute inspection of 100 per cent. of the cattle which come to Brisbane or the different centres of population. The hon. member for Murilla suggested that under the new regulations stockowners would not send their faulty stock to market. These regulations which are to come into effect in the near future are absolutely necessary. I do not think that the slaughtering branch of the Stock Department has given the best possible results in the past. The time is ripe when some more definite plan for safeguarding the interests of the consumer was entered upon. Stockowners will not send diseased cattle down to the city now if they know they are diseased. In the cases quoted by the hon. member the owners themselves are adequately protected, because the cattle are examined and sold separately, and if they are fit for human consumption they are allowed to go into consumption. There are other questions much more vital to the community generally so far as meat inspection is concerned. I would like to see a more rigid examination of swine. If hon. members went to any of our factories they would find that the meat inspectors inspected the carcasses. If the viscera of a tubercular carcass is discovered, there is no possible means of identifying the body from which that viscera came. Yet we say that for all general purposes of inspection only the carcasses of pigs need be examined! Most of the other States employ carcass and viscera inspectors, and the number of tubercular animals discovered is much higher there than in Queensland, where only the single system of inspection is in operation.

Quite recently I had the opportunity of perusing certain questions which are set for the stock and meat inspectors' examinations. I was more especially interested in the meat inspectors' examination, because I found it impossible to secure any papers of a later date than ten years ago. Apparently, if the officers of the department furnished me with the latest papers, no fresh examination has been set for ten years, yet meat inspectors are being appointed. It might be interesting to know whether these gentlemen are duly qualified meat inspectors or not. I would like to know when we are likely to have

Mr. Bulcock.]

further examinations on this vital point, so that it can be determined whether the officers of the department are capable of carrying out their duties satisfactorily or otherwise. The slaughtering and meat inspection branch have done valuable service to Queensland. I believe that in the last three or four years 400 or 500 new slaughter-houses have been erected, and that the supervision of country slaughter-houses has been ever so much more adequate than in the past. The question agitating my mind is: How are we to replenish the supply of men when the present officers pass out or seek other avenues of employment? I was told that in the remodelling of the Gatton Agricultural College recently a fully qualified veterinary surgeon and stock husbandman, who claims to be the possessor of a veterinary degree, was appointed. From what the Public Service Commissioner, Mr. Story, told me, there is evidently some inclination and desire to train meat and stock inspectors at Gatton.

I was hoping that that would be done, and that Gatton would lay down the foundation for the examination. I am afraid that the capabilities of the officer appointed to Gatton are totally inadequate to enable him to work in that direction. A wrong appointment was made there, and to some extent the interests of the people have been allowed to suffer by reason of the fact that, if you are to have a man unqualified in veterinary science to train stock inspectors, that man can only train students to the extent of his own capacity. In this particular instance I believe the officer's capacity is very limited. It is necessary to adopt some more definite system to train our meat inspectors. Every man should pass a fairly definite examination and should be able to carry out the work he is required to do. There is big scope in the prevention of ticks, the slaughtering of animals, and various other phases of cattle activity that require a good deal of close scrutiny and investigation.

I hope the Secretary for Agriculture will go into the whole question of meat inspection, and that the hon. gentleman will not necessarily be guided by his officers. I hope the hon. gentleman will use his own discretion and institute an inquiry to ascertain whether 100 per cent. of the carcasses slaughtered in Brisbane for consumption have been inspected. I venture to say that the proportion is nowhere near 100 per cent.

Mr. BELL (*Fassifern*): The Secretary for Agriculture should give every consideration to the suggestions of the hon. member for Murilla. The people in the country want every protection in the matter of precaution against diseased meat. The people in the metropolitan areas have greater facilities for the proper inspection of meat, and the country areas should also benefit. A good deal has been said lately about the great quantity of diseased beef that is going into consumption in the metropolitan area. I think many of those statements are greatly exaggerated.

Mr. MORGAN: Hear, hear!

Mr. BELL: Under the present system faulty and diseased beasts are yarded separately at Newmarket, and they are slaughtered in separate slaughter-yards. Only a small proportion goes out for human consumption. The matter is quite different in country districts, because the inspection

has to be carried out there by officers who have to cover vast districts and cannot be all over the place at once. Many of the country butchers buy their stock direct from the farmers and take the beasts to the slaughter-yard, and the stock inspectors cannot always make it convenient to be everywhere they are wanted when those beasts are being slaughtered. There is only one method of securing complete satisfaction. It is time we had public abattoirs in Brisbane. When that is brought about, diseased meat will not go into public consumption. All large centres should have public abattoirs where beasts may be slaughtered under hygienic conditions. I commend the Minister to view this question seriously because if all the stock sold at Newmarket were slaughtered under proper supervision there would be a great protection of the public welfare. The same protection should be given to those living in country towns and country areas, and we should prevent the sale of diseased stock to butchers in those areas, because if those beasts are slaughtered it is very likely that there will be no inspection whatever.

Question put and passed.

MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES.

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

“That £10,350 be granted for ‘Miscellaneous Services.’”

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I notice that there is no amount placed on the Estimates this year for “Railway Freights on Arsenic and other Poisons for Destruction of Prickly-pear.” An amount of £3,300 was granted for this purpose last year, and I presume that that liability has now been taken over by the Prickly-pear Commission, and that in future they will deal with the matter?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes.

Mr. MORGAN: I would also like some information from the Minister with regard to the sum of £30,000 granted last year for “Relief to farmers on account of drought.” I would like to know just what amount of money has been advanced, and what was about the average cost of the fodder that was supplied to those farmers who received relief. I would like to know where the fodder was obtained, whether it was obtained in Queensland or outside the State, and I would also like to know whether the settlers who obtained relief under that vote have received accounts for fodder supplied, and whether they have been asked for repayment yet.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

Mr. MORGAN: I understand that they have never been furnished with an invoice showing the cost of fodder obtained. Twelve months have elapsed, which seems a rather long time to be without an account. I would like to know from the Minister if it is his intention not to ask these people for repayment. A great number of them were so unfortunate that it would be a very good thing if the Government could see their way clear to wipe off the indebtedness. These men were certainly in very poor circumstances. I understand that some storekeepers and others in business imposed on the Government and received chaff. If that is so, the Government should have prosecuted these men and made a public exhibition of them instead of stopping the relief,

[*Mr. Bulcock.*

as was done for a time, simply because a few impostors got from the Government fodder to which they were not entitled. I have no time, and I am sure no member of this Committee has any time, for the man who would deliberately impose on the Government. Such men should be made an example of, no matter in whose electorate they may live. The Minister told us that the chairmen of different Local Producers' Associations—who were supposed to certify to the genuineness of the cases—allowed certain men to get fodder when they were not entitled to it. Instead of making innuendoes of that description, the Minister should have prosecuted and publicly exposed such men, and, if a chairman of a Local Producers' Association was guilty of such conduct, I feel sure he would not be allowed to occupy that position much longer. The season is now changed, and those settlers who received relief have an opportunity of making good if they are given a chance. The Minister told us that he had spent about £20,000 of the vote. It is only a small matter, but it may take these men years to repay the Government. The cost of collection may be considerable, and it may entail a great deal of trouble and annoyance. Taking everything into consideration, the Minister will be well advised if he wipes the debt out altogether.

When we take into consideration the fact that the Government are paying £60,000 to the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company to enable work to be given to the men there, I do not think it is asking too much to ask them to wipe off this paltry debt. It is a paltry matter. It served its purpose during the drought time in rendering assistance to those who were in need, and the least the Government can do is to wipe off the debt altogether. I hope the Minister will give me the information I desire, and will let me know the average cost of the fodder supplied, as I am under the impression that these men have had to pay a great deal more for the fodder than they really should have done.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): The question which the hon. member for Murilla has raised is a very important one, and I have the information here. I will give all the information which is available with regard to the distribution of fodder and the personal relief given to the farmers in the drought period between June and December last year. The whole matter was handled by the State Produce Agency, and the reason why prices were not quoted and invoices were not sent out was because it was decided to charge a flat rate, and I think the hon. member will agree with me that that was the best method. It would not be right for one farmer to get a consignment of fodder cheaply and consignments to others to cost more, so it was decided to charge a flat rate as the fairest way of dealing with the matter. Although the accounts are being sent out, no man will be asked to do the impossible. I cannot agree with the hon. member that the whole amount should be wiped off just now. As hitherto, farmers are getting a reasonable time to meet these payments. There are many outstanding payments for seed wheat and other relief granted to farmers from time to time, extending over many years, which have not been collected yet. This particular relief was granted under certain conditions, and there will be no

interest charged for the first year. These are the official figures furnished to me by the department—

DISTRIBUTION OF FODDER AND PERSONAL RELIEF TO FARMERS DURING THE DROUGHT PERIOD, JUNE-DECEMBER, 1923.

	£	s.	d.
Expended—			
1922-23	3,409	9	4
1923-24	60,782	9	6
1924-25	186	8	5
	£64,468	7	3

This amount was distributed as follows:—

2,150 Farmers—Fodder	53,486	8	5
4 Farmers—Seed	24	15	0
612 Farmers—Personal relief	10,957	3	10
	£64,468	7	3

Particulars of Total Account:—

Fodder.			
	£	s.	d.
Fodder—Prime cost	47,890	10	8
5 per cent. handling charge, S.P.A.	2,393	12	5
Railage on fodder	3,512	3	6
Total, S.P.A.	£53,596	6	7
5 per cent. interest to 31st December, 1924	2,678	16	6
Stamp duty, P.N.	127	1	0
Grand total (debit)	£56,402	4	1
Personal relief	£10,957	3	10
Seed	24	15	0
	10,981	18	10
	£67,384	2	11

It will be seen from the following figures that the S.P.A. total is £109 18s. 2d. more than the amount advanced to them. This difference is caused by fractions occurring when finalising farmers' accounts at the Agency

Fodder.			
	£	s.	d.
Amount debited to farmers	53,596	6	7
Amount advanced to Agency	53,486	8	5
	£109	18	2

That statement shows the total cost of the distribution and the position of accounts at the present time. The individual accounts are being sent out to the farmers, and, as I have already stated, if the farmers are unable to pay they will not be pressed unreasonably.

[4 p.m.]

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): I want to say a word for the farmers on the Northern Downs. I do not suppose that any farmers in Queensland have been through a worse drought than these men during the last few years. For two years there was practically a continuous drought, and some of them will never recover under any circumstances, and there are plenty of them who will take all the nursing in the world before they can recover.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: You are a calamity howler.

Mr. WARREN: I am not. I am speaking the absolute truth. If speaking the truth is calamity howling, then I may be a calamity howler; but I want to make it clear to the Committee that these men are in a very serious condition. The hon. gentleman must recognise the need for doing something, and if he treated these poor unfortunate people generously it would probably save a considerable number of them. Whether it

Mr. Warren.]

is calamity howling or not, it is a serious matter. It is a question whether it would not be wise on the part of the Government to mete out assistance to those men on the same principle as assistance is being given to Mount Morgan. If there is one class of people who deserve assistance and consideration, it is the people who went through that drought in the district to which I have referred.

Question put and passed.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION.

CHIEF OFFICE.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. F. T. Brennan, *Toowoomba*): I beg to move—

“That £25,212 be granted for ‘Department of Public Instruction—Chief Office.’”

This is the first time I have had the pleasure of moving this Estimate in this Committee. The total vote for the department is £55,187 more than last year. This is one of the most important branches of the public service, and the increase in the vote and the amount which the Government propose to spend this year indicate the anxiety of the Government to extend educational facilities to everybody in the community.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): This is the first occasion on which the Minister has been in charge of this vote, and I want to pay him a compliment by not allowing the vote to go through without a discussion. I believe I hold the record for the number of schools in any electorate in Queensland.

Mr. COSTELLO: Question!

Mr. MORGAN: I am quite prepared to compare the number of schools in my electorate with those in the Carnarvon electorate.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: Does the hon. gentleman include two-up schools?

Mr. MORGAN: No, I understand they are all up North. Generally speaking, this department is doing wonderfully good work throughout Queensland. There are various systems under which the children are being educated in the different parts of the State. Within the last few years the system of correspondence classes has been instituted and remarkably good work is being done, but in some districts the parents of the children who are being taught under that system are not quite satisfied with the results. Perhaps the parents are not able to give the children the time and attention that that system requires, and perhaps they do not possess the education facilities to enable them to instruct the children as they should; but I know that many parents are highly pleased with the progress that their children are making. In my electorate some of the children are being taught under that system, and in some cases the parents are dissatisfied and would prefer to have an itinerant teacher visiting them. Those parents have had experience of both systems. In other cases the parents say they prefer to have the correspondence classes. Generally speaking, you will find that where children are making good progress under the system of correspondence classes it is because the parents are capable and willing to do what they can to assist their children in doing their lessons; but there are other

[*Mr. Warren.*

parents, perhaps, who have not those educational facilities or who have not the necessary time to devote to the education of their children. The father may be away working all day and come home very tired at night, and the mother may not be able to give the necessary time to the children to enable them to obtain full advantage of that system of education.

Mr. FOLEY: That is contrary to the results.

Mr. MORGAN: That is not so. If the hon. gentleman had listened he would have heard me say that in my electorate, where both systems are operating, there is a considerable amount of praise by the parents of children who are taught under the system of correspondence classes. I know that some of the parents say that they cannot give the time and attention that are necessary. Some of the parents believe they should receive some allowance. It costs the State a certain amount to educate each child in Queensland.

Mr. FARRELL: About £10 per annum.

Mr. MORGAN: I believe it costs £10 per annum in the State schools. If a man with five children was allowed £10 for each child, making a total of £50, he could employ a governess who would be able to live with the children all the time and give them the education they would obtain in a State school. The hon. gentleman must admit that in cases where the parents are situated 30, 40, or even 50 miles away from any school they would be doing good work for Queensland in educating their children in this manner. A man and his wife might be employed on a station, the distance of which from the nearest school or itinerant teacher was so great that it would prevent them having their children educated. It is not unreasonable to ask that in such a case the Government should lend some assistance to educate those children. If the child of parents in poor circumstances gains a scholarship, the Government make a certain allowance available to assist in the education of that child. It is not unreasonable, therefore, where the parents are poor and have not the means of providing for the future, for the Government to assist them to employ a governess. There are many schools in my electorate where the average attendance would not exceed twelve or fourteen, and the cost of educating the children in those schools is greater than £10 per year, as a teacher has to be provided, and the school built by the Government costs £350 and upwards. If the Government assisted poor parents in isolated places to engage a governess, they could have the children examined by a travelling inspector, and I feel sure that the results obtained would be greater than at present. I am not saying that my suggestion should be adopted generally, but I contend that people living in the country have just as much right to have their children educated as parents in the towns have.

Mr. FARRELL: I do not think that has ever been questioned.

Mr. MORGAN: I hope it will not. We know that the Government are continually closing down small schools. In the Murilla electorate schools are being closed down month after month because the average attendance over a period of three months does not exceed nine. The consequence is that the remaining children do not receive

any education at all. The hon. gentleman knows that is a fact. I am continually receiving letters from the department advising that certain schools in the Murilla electorate have been closed and will remain closed until an attendance of twelve or more is guaranteed. When that attendance is available a teacher is sent along. I am not saying that the department are unreasonable in that respect. They have at all times met any demands I have made fairly well, and have done all they possibly could to see that the children got instruction. I am still of the opinion, though, that a teacher has no right to be removed from a centre because the attendance falls below a certain average. Six children who are left uneducated in a certain locality are not likely to be an asset to the State, and, although it might cost a great deal to educate those children, they are entitled to receive that education.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: They can be educated through the correspondence system, if the parents are not indifferent.

Mr. MORGAN: The system applies effectively in some cases, perhaps, but in other cases it is not effective because the parents are not able to instruct the pupils efficiently.

Many applications are made for new schools and, of course, owing to the shortage of funds, the Government are not always able to meet the demands. Unfortunately, the cost of schools has gone up tremendously. Where a school to hold twenty-five or thirty could be constructed a few years ago for £250, that same school would cost to-day £500 or £600. That is the fault of the system in force in the Department of Public Works. It is much more difficult to get schools now than in the days when they were cheaper to erect. Perhaps in those days money was not so plentiful, but the cost was ever so much less.

I wish again to stress the point that where parents, after an inspection has been made by one of the visiting inspectors, prove incapable of giving the necessary attention to children who are receiving tuition by correspondence, we should institute a system whereby those people will receive some monetary compensation from the Government to provide a teacher to instruct the children.

Mr. CONROY: What do you think that scheme would cost?

Mr. MORGAN: It might not cost much. There may not be more than half a dozen families in my district who need such assistance.

Mr. CONROY: That would not apply to every electorate.

Mr. MORGAN: It would not apply to city or suburban electorates, because the children are all within a mile of a school; but many of the country children ride 8 miles and further to go to a school. Three, 4, and 5 miles is quite a common thing. Yet the people in the city look upon it as a great hardship if the children have to walk a few hundred yards.

The same may be said regarding the overcrowding of schools. From time to time a great howl goes up from the metropolitan Press that schools are overcrowded, yet in the country some schools built to hold twenty-four and thirty may have an attendance of sixty children.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: That shows that the people are not leaving the land, does it not?

Mr. MORGAN: Oh, no—that only applies to certain localities. At Tara, for instance, the school accommodation is insufficient, yet 20 or 30 miles away in the Tara district schools have been closed down owing to the fact that people have left the district. As many as half a dozen schools have been closed down.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: I do not believe that half a dozen schools have been closed down in your district.

Mr. MORGAN: I would like to make a wager with the hon. gentleman that that is so. A school may be closed in the Murilla electorate for three months, and after that period we get word that the parents have returned with their children or that there are new settlers, and I go along and get a teacher. I do not say many schools are closed down for any great length of time, but there are some in my electorate which have been closed down ten or twelve years. The same thing applies to overcrowding or the want of accommodation. It is harder on the country people to have sixty children attending a school built to provide accommodation for thirty children, than it is for the metropolitan people to have 600 children attending a school built to accommodate 500 children.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would like to point out that the hon. member is not strictly in order in discussing that matter; but, if hon. members desire it, I am prepared to allow the whole of the votes to be discussed together, as I think it is utterly impossible to distinguish between them. I am sure I cannot, and no doubt other hon. members have the same difficulty.

Mr. HARTLEY: I rise to a point of order. Do I understand, Mr. Pollock, that you propose to allow us to discuss the whole question of education on the main vote and not to allow a discussion on the other votes? I raise this point because I want to retain my right to discuss every vote for the full amount of time that the Standing Orders allow me.

The CHAIRMAN: In order to make myself quite clear I may mention that most hon. members will be discussing practically only one or two votes, and, if any hon. member desires to discuss the other votes, I am sure nobody would desire to prevent him. I certainly would not. If we take the whole discussion on the main vote, it will give hon. members an opportunity of connecting their remarks with the various votes. It is utterly impossible for me to distinguish between the vote for State schools and the administration of the Chief Office in respect to State schools, consequently I think that latitude should be allowed.

Mr. HARTLEY: We shall be allowed twenty-five minutes on each vote?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, if hon. members wish it.

Mr. MORGAN: I think our educational system is equal to any in Australia, and, perhaps, equal to any educational system in the world. The Department of Public Instruction at all times has been prepared to do its level best for the children. Notwithstanding that fact, hon. members who represent

Mr. Morgan.]

country electorates are in a different position to those who represent more populous centres. We have often to battle to get schools and teachers so that the children in the country may get a fair opportunity of receiving an education. During the sixteen or seventeen years I have been a member of Parliament I must say that I have been exceptionally well received and treated by the different Under Secretaries who have had control of the Department of Public Instruction during that period. They have been very sympathetic and have endeavoured to do their level best. The department has laid down a rule providing for the closure of a school unless nine or more scholars attend. That is one rule with which I do not agree, and one which the department could waive in certain circumstances. When it can be shown that parents have removed temporarily—perhaps they have been driven away because water has given out—and they propose to return, the department should not close down the school and thereby prevent other children in the district from getting an education.

At 4.25 p.m.,

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

Mr. MORGAN: They should carry it on, at any rate, for a certain period in order to give the district an opportunity of righting itself, and to enable those people who are game enough to remain in the country during the period of depression to secure education for their children. That is one of the reasons why, perhaps more than any other, people drift into the cities and the larger centres of population. I do not think that a parent is doing justice to his children in taking his family into the country, although he may be earning a better salary in so doing, unless he can see his way clear to secure the education of his children. A man should have every assistance when he decides to go into the country, or, if he already is living in the country, to enable him to get a good education for his children so that they may have a chance of becoming useful citizens. It is essential that children should get the good education which is necessary for them under existing conditions.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): I agree with the Minister that the department we are now discussing is really the most important department in the State, bearing in mind that it has so much to do with the young life of the State. I do not know that there is any vote which should receive closer consideration than this one. I think that the hon. gentleman who is in charge of the department has given to hon. members on both sides of the Chamber a good deal of material to enable them to discuss the vote. It is said that new brooms sweep clean.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Sometimes.

HON. W. H. BARNES: An hon. member opposite says "sometimos." That is quite true, but occasionally it happens that the broom is not too good, and in that case it does not sweep very clean. I am not making any suggestion that the Minister is not a good broom.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Leave that to me. I will clean you up. (Laughter.)

HON. W. H. BARNES: Fancy the Minister suggesting that he will clean me up!

[*Mr. Morgan.*]

I assure him that there is no need for that, though I can well remember that on one occasion there was some need for him to be cleaned up. (Laughter.)

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Your side decidedly fell in.

HON. W. H. BARNES: You will have to remind the Minister, Mr. Pollock, that he is getting outside of the vote. Before dealing with matters of greater importance I would ask the Minister why an increased amount is set down for "Postage, Telegrams, and Incidentals." Last year £5,000 was appropriated, and this year £6,000 is put down. I would also ask him to explain the reason for the increase from £2,250 to £3,000 for "Railway Fares and Freights, Printing, Stationery, etc." I assume that the explanation is that the amount put down last year was not sufficient.

Mr. HARTLEY: There is an increase in fares.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I quite understand that. However, it will be very interesting and it will assist the Minister to get a thorough grip of his department if he will give the information I am seeking.

I notice that the Minister has been receiving a wonderful amount of prominence in connection with the administration of the department.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. W. H. BARNES: I notice also that he has been very loquacious, and that he has received a very great deal of prominence, and some of the remarks which have been attributed to him I should think have been attributed to him by mistake.

[4.30 p.m.]

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Any statement I have made is quite correct. (Opposition laughter.)

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am much obliged to the hon. gentleman for that statement. I have here a most interesting clipping from the "Bundaberg Mail"—I admit that it is not of recent date—3rd December, 1919—which seems to me to indicate that the present Secretary for Public Instruction is very anxious to lead the children astray. It says—

"Mr. F. Brennan, M.L.A., Toowoomba, addressed a meeting of electors in support of the candidature of Mr. Fred Martyn and the three Labour Senators."

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I was never there. (Opposition laughter.)

HON. W. H. BARNES: If that is so, this gentleman must have been a relation of the hon. gentleman, and evidently this Bundaberg paper has confused them. (Laughter.)

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: There are more Brennans than one.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It says, "Mr. F. Brennan, M.L.A., Toowoomba." I did not know the hon. gentleman had a double. I shall just read what is said at the end of the article—

"They have no desire to rear sons to provide fodder for the guns in fifteen years' time. They were told that they must have a fleet to protect the Pacific, and that must be against Japan, which nation was proceeding with her naval shipbuilding policy. The only way to

stop Japan would be to tell her that if she built another ship she would be blown out of the sea."

(Opposition laughter).

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: What date is that?

HON. W. H. BARNES: 3rd December, 1919.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: What paper?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The "Bundaberg Mail." I want to be quite fair to the hon. gentleman because he may have changed his views since then.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I still say that.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Oh, the hon. gentleman "still says it." (Opposition laughter.) Then I am quite justified in concluding that, if the hon. gentleman still says it, he was there.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: You said recently in Bundaberg.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I said that I admitted the statement was not made recently; but I gave the date.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Those are my sentiments now.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It is said that, if a man cannot make a mistake, he cannot make anything. Now, the hon. gentleman says he said it, but a little while ago he said he did not say it. Then I have a more recent clipping, dated 27th August, 1924. This is what the hon. gentleman had to say with regard to his new ministerial job, according to the editor of this journal.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: You always watch me. You always have, and you always will.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman needs watching. I believe that it will be found by the officers of his department that he needs watching, or else there will be something going wrong in the department. I know something of the officers of the department, and I would say to the Under Secretary, "Be sure to give all the advice you can to your new Minister to try to steady him." I believe that will be good advice.

MR. DASH: Have you had that experience?

HON. W. H. BARNES: Oh, no, but I judge from some of the hon. gentleman's utterances that it is very necessary. This paper says—

"A personal wielding of the blue pencil so far as the school papers are concerned was indicated by the Minister for Public Instruction yesterday.

"The announcement of Mr. Brennan's probable sub-editorial, if not semi-editorial, debut—"

I understood that the hon. gentleman was a brilliant barrister, but I never thought he was going to do editorial work, and I would remind him that it is not wise to have too many irons in the fire.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Most barristers are literary men, as you know.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The article continues—

"The announcement of Mr. Brennan's probable sub-editorial, if not semi-

editorial, debut arose from a question as to his views on the exclusion, or otherwise, of articles on war subjects from the departmental school papers—exclusion was the line of action lately decided upon by the Victorian Labour Government. Mr. Brennan mentioned that he intended that more Australian literature should be placed in the school books."

There will be a big sale of those books.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: There will.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The article continues—

"Also he intended to write articles on health and other important matters. . ."

I hope that they will be a little more illuminating than his articles on banking.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Why?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am only saying that just as it strikes me. The article continues—

". . . so that the books would be kept well abreast of the time. 'Every-one who knows my views on war,' Mr. Brennan went on to say, 'knows that I would exclude from the books anything likely to inflame the mind of the youth with an ambition for war, but rather would I explain to the children the causes of war and the capitalistic influences which bring it about. That, to my mind, would tend towards the wiping out of war. The sooner the public are educated up to a sense of their obligations to the White Australia policy, and the sane development of the land, the better will it be for the rising generation. Too much hypocrisy and jingoism is displayed at the present time, and there is not enough sincerity by those called upon to give advice as to Australia's welfare.'"

MR. FARRELL: Very fine sentiments.

HON. W. H. BARNES: There is something there that every hon. member will entirely agree with, but I want to say for myself, speaking very seriously, that I am just as much an Australian as the Minister. I do not know whether the hon. gentleman is Australian born—I think he is. I am Australian born.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: So you have told us before.

HON. W. H. BARNES: A very worthy gentleman used to say, "Say it over and over and over again." If the hon. gentleman is an Australian, I am an Australian, too. I want to say something more than that. While I believe that Australian history should be put in the forefront of our school literature, there is another duty.

MR. HARTLEY: Particularly the treadmill on the top of the hill.

HON. W. H. BARNES: There is another duty—and I say it deliberately to-day as a citizen of the great nation of which Australia is a part—that the hon. gentleman has no right to snuff out any other reference in the school books that has to do with nationhood and nationality. In 1919 the hon. gentleman apparently made some remarks in Bundaberg with regard to the Japanese.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That is so.

Hon. W. H. Barnes.]

HON. W. H. BARNES: What absolute nonsense for a person occupying the position of Secretary for Public Instruction to say that such a thing might be done!

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: What is Groom doing over at Geneva at the present time?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I have as much as I can do to attend to a Minister who gets unruly sometimes without worrying about Sir Littleton Groom, who is well able to take care of himself.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: He should take care of Australia.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Does the hon. gentleman not know that we are protected by Great Britain and that all his talk about what might be done by the Japanese is mere moonshine and nonsense? What is it done for? To try and inflame the minds of our own people in a certain direction. I could imagine that, if Toowoomba was the scene of an invasion, the hon. gentleman would be one of the first to avail himself of the assistance of our own nation to help him in that regard.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: What is Mr. Ramsay MacDonald saying? Be consistent and honest!

HON. W. H. BARNES: I do not know what Mr. Ramsay MacDonald is saying. I am at present dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Public Instruction, and I want to strike a warning note and urge the Minister to go steady, because, if our State school children are to be given certain reading books they are going to be dangerous and damaging to the people of Australia.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: You said the same about a black Australia. You wanted a black Australia.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am not permitted to discuss anything in connection with a black Australia, but I want to say that I have never been associated with a black Australia during the whole of my public life.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: What about the company in which you are interested that is going to exploit black labour in another country?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I have no shares in any company which is interested in the black man.

MR. FARRELL: Your name appeared at the head of a prospectus which had for its object the starting of a business in the South Sea Islands.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Even in Queensland there are black men employed on some of our State stations at the present time.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: They are native-born originals.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Should our native-born black children be excluded from our schools? An insinuation has been made, but I desire to say that I do not employ any black labour.

MR. WEIR: Why did you send your capital out of the State to employ black labour?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I never sent one penny out of the State for any such purpose.

MR. WEIR: Your name appears on the prospectus of the company.

[Hon. W. H. Barnes.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Reference has been made to health matters in connection with education, but I would remind hon. members opposite that the present Government are not the only Government that have looked after the health of the children. They try again and again to claim all the credit for everything in that direction. The previous Government, of which I was a member, had to do with dental matters and with looking after the eyes of school children. The present Government have merely continued that policy. It was the previous Government that first appointed the itinerant teachers.

MR. HARTLEY: It was a Labour Government.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Before ever a Labour Government came into office itinerant teachers were stationed in a number of districts throughout Queensland.

MR. WEIR: You growled about them and would not spend any money in that direction.

HON. W. H. BARNES: That is not so. When I was at the head of the Department of Public Instruction I remember one itinerant teacher advised the department that he went to a station and sought permission from the station owner to go through the station as it would save him a good deal of time in getting to another station. The station owner said that the owner of the next station was no friend of his, and that the teacher would have to go round. He was sitting in his buggy at the time, and the station owner said to him "If you will come out, I will show you that you are no man." The teacher came out. He wrote on the report which he submitted "I know that you will not approve of my action as it did not conform with the regulations, but I was able to show him that I was some man. The station owner then replied, 'You can go through,' and I continued on my journey." I wrote across the report: "Ordinarily, the department would not approve of action of that kind, but in this case the end justified the means." Hon. members opposite to-day say that hon. members on this side of the Chamber did not have to do with the itinerant teacher and the medical and dental examination of children, but they have merely continued a policy that was laid down by us. Did you ever notice, Mr. Cooper, how greedy hon. members of your party are? They want to grab everything good and say "We did it."

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: What about the extension of the scholarships?

HON. W. H. BARNES: We were gradually extending the scholarship system, and it has been extended from time to time since. (Government interjections.) When this dialogue ceases, I will continue my speech.

THE TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member took less notice of the interjections, perhaps they would be less numerous.

HON. W. H. BARNES: That is very good advice indeed. It is as well to make these particular facts known when the Government take the whole of the credit in these matters. As an hon. member behind me says, the University was established not by the present Government but by the previous Government. There is no question about that, nor can it be gainsaid that the previous

Government did everything in its power to liberalise the educational facilities or that the present Government in continuing the system have taken credit for the whole of it.

Mr. HARTLEY: We do not claim that we have had anything to do with establishing the University. We would not own it.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I would urge the Secretary for Public Instruction to be guided by the officers of his department. It will save them sleepless nights if he takes his guidance from men who have had the experience which, I am sorry to say, the Minister sadly lacks, especially the experience of sound common sense.

Mr. BRUCE (*Kennedy*): The hon. member for Wynnum claims that we must have British history lessons placed in the school books, and recently the "Courier" published an article saying that, unless we dealt with the question of war in our school books, we could not have the truthful history of England. I would be quite prepared to have that history included in our school books if it were fit to place before children.

I have a memory of the kind of history that was placed before us during my school days. For instance, we heard about "Bluff King Hal," and what a splendid character he was. It may be that he was constitutionally strong enough to have had the various wives he had, but our school history did not tell us the actual facts known by those who have studied history, and that he murdered several of his wives in order to satisfy his sensuality. That is not a thing we could put before the children of our schools. Then we heard something of "good Queen Bess," and had the little story about Sir Walter Raleigh placing his coat in the muddy road so that she might walk over it. But we were not told that she was responsible for the murder of Mary, Queen of Scots, who was her guest at the time. These are samples of the history of England and of some of the ruling monarchs we have had. They are the truth, and, if you want the truth, that is what you will have to tell the children of Queensland. Again, we had "Bonnie Prince Charlie." Our school historians wrote romantic little stories about him. I remember a story written by one of our most reliable historians that I might relate to show hon. members of this Chamber what would have to be placed in our school books if we were going to tell the children the truth. During the reign of Charles II. of England—probably one of the most profligate reigns in the history of England—the courtiers of the day found the body of a dead child in the palace, and in a spirit of mockery and jest they took it before the King. The King further carried on the jest by dissecting the body of the child before those courtiers and, as the historian says, probably before the father of the child. Are these the things—the truthful history of Britain—that you are going to place before the children of Australia?

That deals with one side of the history of England. I could go on, and any man who has studied the history of England could go on, quoting matters of that kind for hours. But let us get back to another question—the leading article in one of our papers to which I have alluded. That article stated that, unless we dealt with the question of war in our school books, we could not have the truthful history of England. I re-

member the Rev. W. H. Fitchett, who I think was the head of the Methodist Ladies' College in Melbourne, writing a book entitled "Deeds that won the Empire." In those tales British soldiers always stood out. The other chaps certainly put up a fight, but they were practically not dealt with at all. Those stories would lead the children to believe that war was a glorious and great thing. I remember one particular incident—the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo—which was told in such a spirit that it was calculated to create a desire for war on the part of the children.

He did not tell the real history of that siege. He did not tell his readers of the rape of the women after the town was taken, of the destruction of the citizens in that town. When they talk of war do they tell the true history? When they talk of the battle of Jena, do they tell of the destruction by Napoleon's army of tens of thousands of magnificent men of the human race—the glorious manhood of the country. Do they tell that at such an hour on such a day the battle took place and that a few days later Napoleon crossed that field and saw in the mud and slush the crushed bodies and crushed bones of those thousands of men and heard the groans of the wounded, of those still living crushed in the mud and the slush? Here was the youth and manhood of those nations smashed into unrecognisable pulp. Can we tell our children these things? If we are to tell the truth of war, that is what we have to tell them. Make no mistake! For quite a long time after this battle—and after every huge battle—the stench that arose from the dead on these fields—dead men who were the same as you and I in this House—made it impossible for people to live within miles of the place. Will they tell the truth of Napoleon crossing the Alps? Will they tell that war means no gain to the human race despite the destruction of the manhood of the world? Will they tell of the mothers who gave birth to these children—mothers who have reared them as children and reared them into manhood? Will they tell of the mothers who have lost their children, and who have no further hope in life? You must deal with these things if you are going to give the history of the older countries. That is the history of the old world. Fortunately for us, Australia has not seen a war. Fortunately for us, we have not got to deal with the conditions and traditions that exist in the older countries. The greatest thing that can be done to-day, and the greatest thing this Parliament can do, is to introduce into our school books lessons free from the horrors of war and free from the brutal things that surround the power of Great Britain, and tell them the truth of this Australia—what it can be made, and the possibilities of the development of our mankind. By inculcating that method of teaching you start in this country of Australia a propaganda that will eventually do away with war. Once you start teaching the doing away with war, the same as education on any other subject, it will have its effect, and there is not the slightest doubt that that education will spread throughout the world. It is no use saying we are going to stand as we are—that war must always be a necessity of our social position. It must not. Up to the present the education has always been for war. People have been brought up believing in and trained to be ready for war. We

Mr. Bruce.]

should do our best to do away with war. If the Secretary for Public Instruction puts into this school book matters and knowledge regarding Australia, matters and knowledge regarding social questions, and the reason of our social standing, then he will do the greatest thing a Minister or a Parliament is capable of doing. There are other subjects that may be dealt with in regard to education. We had an hon. member the other day making the statement that finance is the test of good government. He went on to say that he wanted the Government to declare their policy on certain subjects.

Mr. EDWARDS: It was the Premier who said that first.

Mr. BRUCE: The hon. member did not think I was so green as to make that statement and not expect the interjection—I expected the interjection. When the ex-Treasurer and the Premier made that statement they were extremely young as politicians, and that statement was not a child of their own brains. It was taken out of the works of some of those political economists whose business it has been throughout the history of the world to tell the people that they must work along certain lines, or, as a student once put it, to take the honey from the hive without disturbing the bees.

I want to point out one matter which should be considered in our system of education and the compilation of our school books. We should teach that, while finance under our present system is a necessity of government, it is not by any means the test of good government. It is the curse of good government—the very thing that destroys good government. If any individual or body of men start making headway towards good government, in comes finance and destroys and corrupts all good government.

Mr. MORGAN: Then you do not agree with your Premier?

Mr. BRUCE: Not in all things.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*): I am sure we are all grateful to the hon. member for Kennedy for his suggestion to the Minister that the hon. gentleman should take good care that we do not get a Russianised-Australian sentiment. In the Russian revolution the children were slaughtered in the streets. The intelligent people were killed, and women were made chattels and slaves of the soldiers. They were sent in herds for the use of the soldiers in the revolutionary ranks. When the Minister is dealing with the question of war he should take good care that he does not create a Russianised-Australian sentiment. I am justified in making that statement because from the Government's own journals it appears that they have sent sympathetic messages and support to the revolutionary party in Russia. I shall quote particulars for the Minister if he likes to reply.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I will reply—don't worry about that.

At 4.58 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. FRY: All I am asking the Minister is not to create a Russianised-Australian sentiment.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: You cannot have revolution with good government.

[Mr. Bruce.

Mr. FRY: If you have got good government, you do not get revolution, and you do not get strikes on Government work.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Is a strike a revolution?

Mr. FRY: You do not get revolutionaries striking against the Government if they are satisfied. When the question of war is being dealt with the other aspect should be considered at the same time.

I would like the Minister to give some information with regard to a matter which is of very great importance—the position of the lady head teachers who are being retired. These teachers deserve favourable consideration from the department, although I do not know how the matter will be arranged. The lady head teachers who are retired are in many cases the sole support of their family. They are lower paid than the men, and they do not get a house allowance.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: At what age do they retire?

Mr. FRY: I am not dealing with the question of age at present, but I want the hon. gentleman to reply to it when he gets on his feet.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: If they are supporting their families at sixty-five, they are pretty good.

Mr. FRY: Is the hon. gentleman going to retire them before sixty-five? I want you to tell me that.

[5 p.m.]

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Will the hon. member address the chair?

Mr. FRY: I want you when you get on your feet to tell me whether that is true.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Will the hon. member obey my call and address the chair?

Mr. FRY: These teachers are being retired.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: You ought to know that is wrong.

Mr. FRY: I am only trying to get information. Some of them are supporting their widowed mothers and some supporting other dependants. I have to accept the hon. gentleman's statement, of course.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: How many of them are sixty-five?

Mr. FRY: I know of a case where there is a widowed mother and an invalid brother to support, and notice has been given to the teacher of her retirement. I do not say that it is a case of retirement at sixty-five years of age; I said that persons were being retired. It was the hon. gentleman who introduced the question of sixty-five years.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That is the usual age for retirement.

Mr. FRY: When these ladies are put off the list they have their widowed mothers and some other relatives to support, and they are thrown out on the world without means of earning a livelihood. The responsibility of providing for relatives has prevented them saving any money against retirements. They are at a decided disadvantage.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: They can get the old age pension.

Mr. FRY: It is only an old age pension that they can get. If they were men, they

would be getting a certain allowance for a house, and would probably have growing up around them a family who would soon become earning units, and in those cases retirement does not fall so heavily on the man as it does on the woman teacher who has been dismissed. I am only putting it before the Minister in this way in the hope that he will give the matter some attention. It has not occupied the Minister's mind for a moment.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION:
It is not correct.

Mr. FRY: I give him the case and, if he says it is not correct, either he has been misinformed or he does not know anything about it. I am satisfied about the case I am speaking of. I do not want the Minister to take my statement as if it were a case of retirement at sixty-five years of age. If there are many women other than head teachers who are being retired at a less age than sixty-five, what is the Minister going to do? Everybody knows that after a woman teacher has spent her life in the Department of Public Instruction she is no good for outside work. A woman teacher who has been in the department for years and is retired at perhaps fifty or fifty-five years of age finds it very hard to make a living outside, and she cannot get the old age or invalid pension.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION:
Why?

Mr. FRY: Because she is not old enough and she is not an invalid.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION:
They cannot be retired at less than sixty-five years of age unless they are invalids.

Mr. FRY: Now I have the whole of the hon. gentleman's case. I had the opportunity the other day of going with the Under Secretary to see the training college for mentally defective children, and I was very pleased with what is being done for those unfortunate children, but it appeared to me that the work was very strenuous and that the teachers were entitled to a higher remuneration than they were receiving. There is considerable difficulty in teaching such work to normal children possessing all their faculties—

THE CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. gentleman is not in order in dealing with that subject on this vote.

Mr. FRY: Very well, Mr. Pollock. When the Minister commences his Australian sentiment campaign, I hope he will give us the real Australian sentiment, and, if he does that, I am quite satisfied that the school books will be a credit to him; but unfortunately I am inclined to think, judging by his past speeches, that the books will be tinged with a little "red."

Mr. FARRELL (Rockhampton): I would like to compliment the Secretary for Public Instruction upon his appointment as head of this very important department. If he continues his work in the way that he has commenced, he will suit me and most hon. members on this side very well indeed. I notice from the report issued by the department that there have been some changes in the officers of the department since last year. It is pleasing to me to see that men who were members of the Queensland Teachers' Union—and good members at that—are occupying the higher positions in the

department to-day. I notice with pleasure that Mr. McKenna has been appointed to the position of Under Secretary. When he was on the track as inspector—I can now speak of my personal knowledge of the teachers who were inspected by him—he was known throughout Central and North Queensland as the teachers' friend—not that he was in any way lax in his duties, because I know of no inspector who was harder on a teacher who was slack than the same present Under Secretary. It is also pleasing to see Mr. Edwards, who was at one time the president of the Queensland Teachers' Union and is one of the ablest exponents of education in Queensland to-day, appointed to the position of Chief Inspector. While Mr. Edwards was a member of the Queensland Teachers' Union he was responsible for many suggestions and many reforms that since have been agreed to by the department.

While on that point I would suggest that there should be closer co-operation between the Queensland Teachers' Union and the department in the interests of the department, in the interests of the teachers, and in the interests of the children of Queensland. It does not say that, because three or four members of the union have been placed in the high positions of the department, the whole of the brains of the service have gone. When those gentlemen occupied important positions in the union they made important suggestions which have since been given effect to, and, if meetings between representatives of the union and representatives of the department were held periodically at certain definite times, much good would come and there would be greater benefit to the children of Queensland and to education in general. I suggest to the Minister that he might give consideration to a proposal of that kind. I am sure from my knowledge of the Under Secretary and the Chief Inspector that a conference of that kind would be welcomed by those gentlemen. The same policy might also be pursued in other directions and in other departments. I personally know of the good that would accrue if that suggestion was carried out. One must appreciate the wonderful strides that have been made in education during the last hundred years or so, and, although young, I appreciate the great advantages that the child to-day has that we did not have during our school days. I recall a verse of Shensstone's, written about 1742, which runs like this—

"In every village marked with little spire,
Embowered in trees and hardly known to fame,
There dwells in lowly shed and mean attire
A matron old whom we school-mistress name,
Who boasts unruly brats with birch to tame."

The sentiments in that little verse bring to mind the advantages which the teachers of Queensland enjoy at the present time compared with days gone by. As one who knows what the teachers of Queensland have had to put up with, I venture to say that there is not a body of public servants in the whole of Australia whose pay should be higher than that of the Queensland teachers. There is only one way in which we shall be able to get the best brains in the community to

Mr. Farrell.]

take on the teaching service, and that is by paying to the teachers the very highest salaries. I am not one of those who say that every teacher in Queensland should be a graduate of the University. I know many University graduates who are State school teachers, and their greatest drawback is their University education. I have known that in several cases. I am going to ask again this year of the Minister—it was a different Minister on the last occasion—that he should give more consideration and a greater amount of his time to the training of the teachers of Queensland. I was surprised on looking through the report this year to find that the unclassified teachers in Queensland are more numerous than they were last year. I raised this question on the Estimates on that occasion and expressed the hope that in twelve months' time the position would not be so bad. I am sorry to say that my hopes have not been realised. I notice that in 1922 there were 217 male and 580 female unclassified teachers, or a total of 797. In 1923 the numbers were 239 males and 641 females, or a total of 880. This is an increase of nearly 100 over the previous year. I understood from the remarks of the Minister on the last occasion that the operations of the Training College in Queensland were to be widened and broadened so as to give unclassified teachers an opportunity to be trained and become classified. I observe that Mr. Inspector George in his report of the schools in the Mackay district says—

“Half the schools in my district are in charge of unclassified teachers.”

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Why are they not classified?

MR. FARRELL: There are many reasons, the chief of which is the lack of opportunity. Most of these teachers who are sent out to small schools are persons who have passed a minor examination, and, after receiving six weeks' training at one of the city centres, they are sent out to some ungodly place to take charge of a school without having any further practical experience. I had hoped that that position would be done away with per medium of the training college. I am sorry to see that the figures shown this year do not prove that an honest attempt has been made to try and get the unclassified teacher turned into a trained teacher.

Everyone knows, and particularly those who have had experience in teaching, that the teacher has to take charge of a child for the biggest part of the day up to the age of fourteen years and has to mould the character of that child. Therefore, one appreciates the necessity for having a trained body of teachers in Queensland. I hope the present Minister will see that the operations of the training colleges are extended, and that the old system of confining the training college to Brisbane is done away with. We should have a training college in Rockhampton, run in connection with the Central Boys' school, if you like. There should be one in Townsville, and also one in Cairns. I particularly ask that training schools be established in those centres, because later on they will have the effect of doing away with the trouble we now have in transferring teachers from one district to another district to which they do not desire to go. If Northern teachers were trained in the North and could get the same facilities there that are available in Brisbane, they would not have a desire to

[Mr. Farrell.

come South, and there would not be the necessity for teachers in the South being sent to uncongenial places in the North where they will not give their best work to the State. I have here a portion of a report, in which Mr. McKenna writes—

“The basic idea in the educational world of to-day is the treatment of the individual according to his peculiar necessities and impulses; but to give full scope to this fundamental principle we require a greater proportion of highly trained men and women teachers.”

Those were the sentiments expressed by Mr. McKenna when he was an inspector, and I am sure he retains those sentiments to-day. Nobody desires to see the training of teachers pushed ahead more than Mr. McKenna, who occupies a very important position to-day. I also have the report of Mr. Mutch, one of the oldest school inspectors in the State. He takes the same view, and hopes that not only will the training of teachers be carried on, but that the matter I mentioned last year will be attended to, viz., requiring teachers to pass an examination in psychology to make their teaching more up to date and scientific. Mr. Baker, another inspector, has this to say—

“In teaching, the objectives to be kept constantly in mind are—

1. The building of the circle of thought.
2. The development of the character of the child.
3. Enabling the child to become an independent thinker.”

No teacher who has not a knowledge of psychology can give effect to the suggestions of Mr. Mutch, Mr. McKenna, or Mr. Baker, or any of the leaders of thought in Queensland education matters to-day. Mr. Mutch has this to say—

“The study of the old psychology, with its seemingly useless classification of our conscious faculties, appears to have little, if any, influence over the average teacher to-day; but the new psychology, with its discoveries in the unconscious by means of the methods of psycho-analysis and auto-suggestion, gives promise of enhancing the teacher's efficiency, not so much in the way of feeding the mind with suitable information and grafting on to it useful accomplishments as in endowing the pupil with health, character, and personality.”

How on earth is any teacher in Queensland—any unclassified teacher particularly—who has not received a training in matters of this kind going to give effect to the suggestions made by the district inspectors on their journeys round? I find that Mr. A. S. Neil, M.A., a member of the Oxford University, writing to the London “Daily News,” expresses the same view. He—rightly, too—raised the question of whether it is possible to bring about what we call an educated community if the present system is to be continued. Mr. Neil says—

“I consider subjects have little to do with education. Our so-called educated men are learned men. Select ten university graduates and ten men who left school at fourteen years of age to consider a subject of importance to humanity,”

Supposing the subject for consideration was

how to abolish war or to abolish our barbarous Criminal Code, would anybody suggest that the ten men from the university would know more about the subject than the other ten men? Mr. Neil goes on to say—

“Universities all over the world are notorious as centres for reaction and jingoism. What the nation needs is not a continuation of schooling but a change of heart about education. It needs to realise that more instruction is mostly a waste of time and energy.”

I am going to ask again—and I have every justification for asking it, because it was unanimously approved at the Emu Park Convention held last year—that psychology be made a compulsory subject for teachers in connection with other subjects that they have to study at the present time. There are, of course, those sincere teachers—they are in a majority in Queensland to-day—who would study psychology for the benefit it gives them as teachers; but there are other teachers who will not study this subject unless it is included in the examination curriculum, and it is because of those who apparently will not study the subject, unless it is forced on them, that I ask that this subject be introduced.

I also want to refer to the privileges that the teachers in Brisbane enjoy over their confreres in other parts of the State. I find that every educationist of importance who comes to this State to lecture on educational subjects has had his work confined to Brisbane, and the country teachers, many of whom want to advance, are denied that benefit. Let me take what has happened within the last twelve months. We had a demonstration of the Jones's method of teaching reading; we had Miss Caldwell giving a demonstration on the “Simplicity of number”; we had Dr. Cole, of the Teachers' College, Sydney, after touring America and the United Kingdom, coming to Brisbane and lecturing to the teachers of the Training College here and the teachers of Brisbane generally; and just lately we have had Professor Adams lecturing in Brisbane and his advice denied to the rest of the teachers of Queensland. I asked Mr. Huxham, when he was Secretary for Public Instruction, to allow three or four of the teachers of Central Queensland to come to Brisbane during the time these men and women were in Brisbane and were lecturing on education, but the department for some reason or other refused that request. The so-called financial stringency that we hear so much about did not enter into this question. These teachers should have been granted free railway passes, which would have cost the State nothing, as their visit to Brisbane would have been of great benefit to the teachers themselves and afterwards to the children of Central Queensland. I have several other observations to make which I will reserve for the particular votes with which they are connected. Among other things I wish to refer to, is the long-delayed question of nationalising the Grammar Schools of Queensland, and I will take the opportunity of dealing with that to-morrow.

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 Tuesday next.

The House adjourned at 5.30 p.m.