Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 15 OCTOBER 1924

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WEDNESDAY, 15 OCTOBER, 1924.

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

QUESTIONS.

"LIBERTY FAIR," ROCKHAMPTON.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*) asked the Attorney-General—

"1. Who authorised the running of a 'Liberty Fair' at Rockhampton, at which gambling games were publicly conducted, during the period including the last Rockhampton carnival week?

"2. Was permission given to a man named or known as Hugh Black to conduct this 'Liberty Fair'? If not, to whom was permission given?

"3. Was the running of such games as 'Under and Over,' 'Get Rich Quick,' and similar games authorised at this 'Liberty Fair'?

"4. Is he aware that a man (a carter) is reputed to have lost £150 in one night at gambling games conducted at this 'Liberty Fair'?

"5. Why were these games not stopped by the police?

"6. Were other persons about the same time stopped from running gambling games in public, such as 'Darto,' and how many persons were arrested for such offences?

"7. Were instructions sent to the police at Rockhampton, after they had taken action to stop gambling games, to the effect that this 'Liberty Fair' was not to be interfered with or that the law did not apply to Black?

"8. If not, can he explain how it was that the next night and for some time afterwards the gambling games at 'Liberty Fair' were allowed to be continued?"

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*) replied—

"1 to 8. These questions are based on the incorrect assumption that permission to conduct a 'Liberty Fair' at Rockhampton was granted."

Mr. WARREN, without notice, asked the Attorney-General—

"If this fair was not run with the permission of his department, how was it run?"

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL replied—

"See answer to Question No. 1 already given."

SALE OF BLIND HORSE AT ROCKHAMPTON SHOW GROUNDS BY GOVERNMENT.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*) asked the Secretary for Public Works—

"1. Is it a fact that at a horse sale conducted by Messrs. Duncan and Co., at the Show Grounds, Rockhampton, the Government offered, amongst others, a poor old blind horse, which was knocked down to a man named 'White' (who buys aged and decrepit horses to kill for pig feed) for the sum of 5s.?

"2. What was the net amount received on account of the sale of this horse?

"3. Has such unsympathetic action towards its one-time faithful servants become necessary owing to the financial embarrassments of the Government, due largely to its enormous losses on the various State enterprises?

"4. Does he consider such action to be consistent with the recent retrenchment of public servants at age sixty-five years, notwithstanding that many of them had been promised retention of their services to age seventy years in consideration of contributions to the Superannuation Fund?"

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

"1 and 2. The information will be obtained.

"3 and 4. These questions indicate a form of 'mental blindness' on the part of the hon. member infinitely more pitiable than the condition of the horse referred to."

(Laughter.)

REPAYMENT BY TREASURER OF DEPOSIT OF CO-OPERATIVE ASSURANCE COMPANY.

Mr. KELSO (*Nundah*) asked the Treasurer—

"1. Has his attention been drawn to the following statement in the daily Press by Mr. J. S. Inch, managing director of the Co-operative Assurance Company, which has decided to go into liquidation:—

'The Queensland Government has received as deposits £10,000 on account of life business and £5,000 in respect to accident business. The Ministry states that it is willing to refund the smaller sum in cash, but the larger amount, it is said, had been invested in bonds, with which it was contended the company would have to be satisfied. As the bonds were at a discount in the market, the company held that it was entitled to receive cash'?

"2. If the above statement is correct, will he explain why he refuses to return the full deposit in cash?"

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

"1 and 2. Yes. I have not refused to return the deposit in cash."

RUNCORN STATE SCHOOL—OUTBREAK OF MEASLES, AND ADDITIONS.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*) asked the Secretary for Public Instruction—

"In connection with the Runcorn State School—

1. Is he aware that out of a roll of 290 children only 121 are in attendance owing to an epidemic of measles?

2. As the School Committee attribute this to the excessive overcrowding of the school, there only being 4½ square feet of floor space per child as against the regulation 10 feet, will he state when the very necessary additions promised last October will eventuate?"

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

"1. Under date the 6th October, 1924, the head teacher, State School, Runcorn, reported to the department that 'owing to the rapid spread of the infectious disease—measles—in this district, the attendance has been reduced by two-thirds.' The enrolment for September was 288 and the average attendance 217.8.

"2. The provision of additional accommodation at the Runcorn State School has been approved. The Works Department advises that the materials for the addition have been ordered and will be delivered as soon as possible. As soon as the materials are on the ground the work will be started."

REDUCTION OF RENTALS ON OCCUPATION LICENSES.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*), without notice, asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"When will the decisions be made known in respect to reductions of rentals on occupation licenses upon which cattle are depastured?"

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

"As soon as the Land Court has finalised its decisions in regard to the various districts in the State, the Department of Public Lands will take the rentals fixed as a basis when reducing the rentals of occupation licenses."

TENDERS FOR LOCOMOTIVE ENGINES—REFUSAL OF CLYDE ENGINEERING COMPANY TO ACCEPT CONTRACT.

Mr. F. A. COOPER (*Bremer*), without notice, asked the Secretary for Railways—

"Can the Minister give any indication of the probable trend of events in the matter of the tenders recently received for the construction of thirty locomotives?

"As there seems to be a difficulty in procuring these engines, will the Minister consider the advisability of a rearrangement and extension of the Ipswich workshops with a view to meeting the normal requirements of the expanding railway service?"

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

"There has been a fresh development in connection with the locomotive contract since yesterday. The successful tenderers, the Clyde Engineering Company, have repudiated their contract, and the Government at once decided to call for further tenders.

"With regard to the second question submitted by the hon. member for Bremer, I would point out that there is no money on the Estimates for this financial year for extending the railway workshops, but at the earliest date when funds are available it will certainly be necessary to extend the railway workshops facilities for construction and repairing rolling-stock."

Mr. COSTELLO: Did you forfeit the deposit?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Certainly.

STATE CHILDREN ACT AMENDMENT 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 further amend the State Children Act of 1911 in a certain particular."

Question put and passed.

LAND ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*): I beg to move—

"That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Land Acts, 1910 to 1922, and the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Acts, 1917 to 1920, and the Closer Settlement Acts, 1905 to 1923, in certain particulars."

Question put and passed.

METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

The PREMIER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): I beg to move—

"That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Acts, 1909 to 1923, in certain particulars."

Question put and passed.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS.

PASSAGE OF BILLS THROUGH ALL STAGES IN ONE DAY.

The PREMIER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): I beg to move—

"That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended for the remainder of this Session as would otherwise prevent the passing of Bills through all their stages in one day."

Question put and passed.

BRISBANE TRAMWAY TRUST ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

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

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Brisbane Tramway Trust Act of 1922 in a certain particular."

This amendment of the Brisbane Tramway Trust Act provides for the appointment of an agent of the Trust in London to affix the Trust's stamp and seal to bonds issued there by it. The Trust is about to raise money on the London market, and it will be inconvenient for it to stamp and seal the bonds here, and the Bill provides for an appointment of an agent to do that for it, as is done in the case of the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed.

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

The resolution was agreed to.

FIRST READING.

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

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

Question put and passed.

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

INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

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

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to further amend the Industrial Arbitration Acts, 1916 to 1923, in certain particulars."

The object of the Bill is to amend section 10 of the principal Act, which deals with the limitation of hours. Up to the present the statutory hours of labour, with the exception of those included in the proviso to section 10, have been fixed at 48 per week. It is proposed by this Bill to amend that section by providing for a 44-hour week. It is also intended to include in the proviso to section 10 railway gatekeepers, who are now excluded from the ambit of the Act. I have described briefly the main provisions of the Bill and I have much pleasure in moving the motion.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I regret very much that the Government have seen fit to introduce this Bill at this stage of the session. I understood from remarks made earlier in the session that the Bill was not likely to come into operation until next year.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is right. It will come into operation on 1st July, 1925.

Mr. MOORE: It seems rather unfortunate that a Bill having such far-reaching effects should be introduced.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is an argument used against all reforms.

Mr. MOORE: Evidently the Government anticipate that the financial position in Queensland and the industrial position in Queensland will be much better in seven or eight months. It has been definitely asserted that, if the Bill were brought into operation forthwith, it would spell disaster to many industries in Queensland; and the Government have introduced the Bill in the hope that things will have improved by July next.

The Government say they believe in arbitration. The Arbitration Court has been

asked in the past to take the fullest evidence as to what hours the industries in Queensland can stand, and whether the introduction of a shorter working week will not mean the closing down of those industries. We had an instance the other day where an application was made for a 44-hour week to be applied to the woollen industry, and, after the most exhaustive inquiry, the judge expressed the opinion that it would mean the extinction of that industry if he acceded to the request. We know that one of the industries that we want to encourage in Queensland to the greatest possible extent is the woollen industry, and it seems that the Government are now going to interfere with the Arbitration Court by legislation to compel the court to restrict the hours, when the court has already decided, after the fullest investigation and inquiry, that it would mean ruination to certain industries if that were done.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is the same argument that your party advanced against the 48-hour week.

Mr. MOORE: In the Arbitration Court the representative for the Railway Commissioner pointed out the enormous expense that the Railway Department would incur if the 44-hour week were adopted, and the court pointed out that, because of the financial position of the State, it could not give an award which would cause the extra expenditure that would be entailed. That is one of the few instances that I know of where the court has taken the financial position of an industry into account before making an award.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is done in all cases.

Mr. MOORE: I do not think so.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The financial position of an industry is always taken into consideration when that plea is raised.

Mr. MOORE: That was the first time that the court had decided that, owing to the financial position of the State, it would not be fair to impose a greater burden on the State.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The court took very exhaustive evidence as to the financial position of the pastoral industry before making an award.

Mr. MOORE: What will be the position if a further expenditure of £65,000 is incurred in connection with the railways through granting a shorter working week? It will mean that one section of the community will have to work longer hours to make up for the shorter hours that will be worked by another section. It only means that people in the country will have to pay increased taxes or increased railway fares and freights, which is one of the forms of increased taxation to which the Government have recently resorted. I object strongly to this amendment. It has not been brought in after mature consideration by the Government. It has been introduced because of pressure exerted by outside influences on the Government. The Government are showing great weakness in acceding to pressure brought upon them from outside. The Government know the financial position of the State, and the people outside who are endeavouring to force this legislation on them do not know the financial position of the State; neither will they recognise the competition that the industries of the State are up against in the South. If the Industrial Arbitration Acts all over Australia were to be amended in a like manner simultaneously, the position would be different. The Minister must know that, while different conditions prevail in other States, it can only mean the extinction of industries in this State for the benefit of industries in those other States.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The logical conclusion of your argument is that there should be no reform in any State until the whole of the States take similar action.

Mr. MOORE: The logical conclusion to my argument is that, when the Court of Industrial Arbitration was constituted, it was left to the discretion of the judge to decide what conditions should obtain in an industry to prevent its extinction. That is what the court is for.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You opposed the Industrial Arbitration Act very strongly.

Mr. MOORE: The judges in fixing the rate of wages, hours, and conditions in an industry have to take into consideration the prosperity of the industry. By legislative action the Government are now going to interfere with the court, and take away one of the powers that it now possesses.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: We are laying down a basis on which the Court will operate.

Mr. MOORE: You are limiting the industries carrying on competition with the industries in other States. We know from the evidence which has already been given in this State that our industries are not in a position to stand competition from the other States. The Minister will remember that this year the Chief Inspector of Factories and Shops in a very significant sentence in his report drew attention to the fact that, while the number of employees in factories had decreased, the number of employees in shops had increased by 954.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You have quoted that over and over again.

Mr. MOORE: It is such an extraordinarily significant statement that it is necessary to call attention to it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You pick that statement out from its context and give it a wrong meaning.

Mr. MOORE: It is such an extraordinary statement that it must be impressed on the people of this State. It requires to be repeated over and over and over again,

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: We can rely on you for that.

Mr. MOORE: We want them to know the position into which this State is drifting. When we get an authoritative statement by a Government official and one so illuminating, it is necessary that we should call the attention of the Government and the people to it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It does not bear the significance you give to it.

Mr. MOORE: If the Minister can read in that statement anything which is likely to be of benefit to Queensland, or read any

meaning into that significant statement other than what was intended and what the ordinary man in the street would read into it, he must have a fertile imagination. We all know what the position of the industries of Queensland is.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It is better to have a fertile imagination than a distorted one.

Mr. MOORE: It is not a question of distortion. It must be a very bitter pill for the Minister to be forced to bring in this Bill. I know that he does not agree with its principle, and that the Premier, according to his own statement, also does not agree with it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I have always advocated a 44-hour week.

Mr. MOORE: In certain industries. When the Premier makes a definite statement in the public press as to the impossibility of the industries of Queensland competing with southern industries if a limitation of hours is persisted in in defiance of the court, we have every right and justification for entering an emphatic protest. We recognise that this Bill has not been brought in as a result of mature consideration on the part of the Government.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: We are not here to legislate on the policy you promulgate.

Mr. MOORE: The Government are legislating at the dictates of the Emu Park Convention, and not in the interests and for the benefit of the people of Queensland. They are carrying out the dictates of an organised body outside of Parliament. The Government, in introducing this legislation, know perfectly well that it is going to have an injurious effect on the industries of Queensland.

Mr. MAXWELL: They do not care.

Mr. COSTELLO: What do they care about that?

Mr. MOORE: The President of the Industrial Arbitration Court, Chief Justice McCawley, has pointed out in his judgments, after considering the conditions of competitive industries in the South, how impossible it is to grant a 44-hour week in many of the industries in Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Are you having a preliminary canter for your second reading speech?

Mr. MOORE: No. I recognise this is one of the most important industrial changes that could possibly be made in Queensland under the conditions we are at present labouring under.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It is an important and far-reaching reform.

Mr. MOORE: It is important and far-reaching, but I would not call it a reform. Anybody who has read the remarks made by members of the Chamber of Manufactures, who has read the different opinions of responsible men in Queensland, who is aware that the manufactures of Queensland have decreased during the last seven [10.30 a.m.] or eight years and that they had increased prior to the advent of the Labour Administration, must realise how fatal the introduction of this measure will be.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The hon. member for Nundah advocated a 44-hour week.

Mr. MOORE: All those responsible sources of information show that the production per head has decreased, and we must realise that interference with the Arbitration Court in such a manner as this is going to have a detrimental effect on the industries of Queensland. I protest against the introduction of this measure, which is most undesirable at the present time, and which is going to have a ruinous effect on most of the industries of Queensland.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*): If ever a Government introduced a measure to bring about their own discomfiture, this Government is doing so on this occasion.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: Then why oppose it?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: It may sound attractive—as was the case at past elections, when the Labour party boasted that it was their main plank—to say that Queensland is the State where working men receive the highest wages and work the shortest hours. Such an argument secures the support of the unthinking workers, but not of the thoughtful individual who is conversant with the statistics of the State. The measure now proposed is against the better advice of those who are thinkers in the Labour party, and, as was stated by the leader of the Opposition, it is introduced at the dictates of an outside organisation. It is going to bring about their own downfall, because what use are high wages and short hours if we cannot get the opportunity to enjoy them?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS interjected.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I am not going to listen to the loud interjections of the Minister. The hon. gentleman is prone to interrupt the speeches of hon. members of the Opposition.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Don't get nasty.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I am not getting nasty, but I am convinced on this score.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: We have just had one illustration in regard to what longer hours mean in connection with the tender of the Clyde Engineering Company for Queensland locomotives. You could not get a better illustration. Here are these people employing the same class of workers as we do in Queensland, but who get better results from the labour of their employees and so are able to under-quote our Queensland manufacturers.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: And then repudiate the contract.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I was expecting that interjection. Why is it the Clyde Engineering Company repudiated the contract?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You might tell us.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: It is simply because they are now engaged in a very much larger contract to supply locomotives in a different part of Australia. That greater contract made it impossible for them to comply with the time limit within which they anticipated they could do the work when they placed their tender with the Queensland Government.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You are in their confidence.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: No, but I keep my ears open and listen to any reliable information. If the Minister did that, instead of being self-centred and self-opinionated, he would be a better Minister.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: This is a most important matter. I cannot understand a Government—who must recognise from all the statistics that are available that we are approaching a financial and industrial crisis—with their eyes open and against the advice of their own thinking leaders, rushing into a pitfall of this description. If it were going to benefit the workers and were economically sound, I would most assuredly agree with it; but hon. members opposite know that it will merely make the conditions of the workers more difficult, that it is going to restrict our output, and make our manufacturing conditions more impossible still. It will leave us at the mercy of the competition of the Southern States, who will make Queensland their market in a very emphatic way immediately these conditions come into existence. I do urge, if it is not too late, that hon. members opposite will listen to the suggestions of thinkers in their party. This is not a party political matter, but a matter affecting the industrial life of Queensland.

The point I want to stress is that unemployment is rife. Men are persistently and consistently asking for employment; and what answer can we give them? Here we are restricting and strangling industry, the results of which are clearly shown by the statistics which are available, and we still propose to enact this measure. Let hon. members opposite who want to get an indication of the true trend of things in Queensland, from an industrial point of view, study the Income Tax Commissioner's reports for the last ten years, and they will see that whereas in 1914 there were 463 manufacturers paying income tax in Queensland, the number has gradually been reduced year by year until, according to the report of the Commissioner for last year, only 263 are now paying income tax in Queensland. To-day, practically only half the manufactories are running at a profit as compared with the number that were operating successfully in 1914. All this is due to the blind policy of hon. members opposite in strangling the very industries which provide work for their own supporters.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Wynnum*): The Secretary for Public Works is not fair in the suggestion thrown across the Chamber that everything of a reform nature receives the condemnation of members on this side.

Mr. DUNSTAN: History proves it.

HON. W. H. BARNES: History does not prove it, but there is no question about it that history will prove that at least the beginning of every reform came from members at present associated with those sitting on this side of the Chamber. We are not out to oppose anything in the nature of reform, or anything that is going to be of assistance to the man who is doing the toiling. But what is going to be the effect of this proposal? Let us look at it in cold blood. The hon. member for Oxley very properly drew attention to the fact that unemployment is rife. Whether we like to admit it or not, the result is going to be greater unemployment. The money will not go round.

Mr. FARRELL: Shorter hours will mean more employment. (Opposition laughter.)

HON. W. H. BARNES: Do not let us be foolish. Let me point out that there is only a certain amount of money to be spent, and, if you cannot get into competition for it, then you are shut out and there must be fewer men employed.

I hold that we are striking, too, at another very fundamental thing. I have never in the course of my public life done other than advocate the Arbitration Court, and it seems to me that, if you have an Arbitration Court which must or should be seized of all the facts, the court should be in the best position to judge. What is the condition to-day? Are we not all more or less influenced by our political surroundings? I am perfectly certain that the Minister—whether he admits it or not—and the Premier, have been influenced by political considerations incidental to their environment in connection with this Bill. I have no doubt that you, Mr. Pollock, have a very much closer connection than I with the Emu Park Convention, but it seems to me that this Bill is the fulfilment of something that was promised on that occasion. I would not care one bit for carrying it out if it were going to be in the interests of the worker; but the point I want to stress just now is that it is not going to be in the interests of the worker. It is going to hurt him. What is the use of telling a man that he has got a 44-hour week if there is no work for him to do? What is the use of telling a man that he can get a suit of clothes at some place in Brisbane if he has not the money to buy it nor the necessary credit?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS interjected.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Let me tell the hon. gentleman that my firm in Warwick was the first firm that closed on a Wednesday afternoon prior to any legislation providing for a weekly half holiday. I do not think we should do anything in the nature of sweating, but once you establish an Arbitration Court that court should deal with the matter. Conditions alter from time to time, and the condition that exists to-day may not exist in three months. Change is incessant. It is absolutely essential that the Arbitration Court should be the deciding factor. I want to emphasise that we are striking at one of the soundest principles we could possibly strike at by practically saying to the court, "Notwithstanding your judgment you have to be bound hard and fast by an Act of Parliament in a certain direction."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is the position now. The Arbitration Court can only function according to the law that is laid down. Parliament lays down a law which guides the Arbitration Court in its decisions.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I want to ask the Minister whether, if the Arbitration Court after this Bill is passed thinks that certain men can be employed profitably for 48 hours per week but not for 44 hours, the Court will have power to refuse to grant the concession. I do not think that under this measure they will be able to do so. Let us look at the facts fairly and squarely. There are men who have jobs to-day, and we are going to drive them into the street by passing this Bill. Although I stand for everything that will be a benefit to the

worker, under the guise of trying to help him I do not want to drive him into the unemployment market and hurt him in connection with his family life and associations.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): When we look over Queensland to-day we have to recognise that no matter what avenue of industry you go to, there is a great amount of unemployment. In Toowoomba last month there were more men registered in the Labour Bureau than there have been in any similar period for many years past, notwithstanding that there is a large amount of municipal work being carried out in that centre with casual labour. We have to recognise that at present the Arbitration Court judges can fix a 44-hour week if they desire. They have all the evidence before them, and there are many industries in which they might fix a 44-hour week; but there are many industries in which they have refused to fix a 44-hour week because they recognised that those industries were not in a financial position to stand a reduction of hours, as it would have made them unable to compete with other States of the Commonwealth. If we were dealing as one Commonwealth with the matter of competition, we might fix certain hours. In reducing hours we have to recognise the added cost to the community by so doing, but, if the people desired it and were satisfied with the change, it could be done. There is a difference between this State and the other States of the Commonwealth. We have had tenders from manufacturers in other States where they are working 48 hours a week as against 44 hours in Queensland. There are many industries in Toowoomba and Brisbane which have closed up because they were not able to compete with the Southern States

Mr. HARTLEY: What industries?

Mr. ROBERTS: The boot industry is one of them.

Mr. HARTLEY: There are three boot factories here now.

Mr. ROBERTS: I am not saying that there are not some factories here, but I am saying that the manufacturing carried on here is getting less. I saw a young fellow in Brisbane last week and I said to him, "What has happened to you?" He said, "We have stopped work; competition is so keen that there is no demand for our stuff." Worse still, the stuff is coming in from the South and under-selling our own manufactures. Then, again, the statement is made by hon. members opposite and a large number of their supporters that there is not sufficient work, but if we reduce the hours of labour there will be more work for the workers who require it. It would be all right for firms who can run businesses and charge the taxpayers with the loss, but the private employer cannot do that.

Mr. HYNES: The same argument was used about the 48-hour week.

Mr. ROBERTS: I am showing that after nine years of Labour administration there is unemployment throughout the length and breadth of Queensland and a cry for work, and I want to caution the Government that this innovation is not going to create any more employment. It will make it more difficult for industry to be carried on. Of course it will be possible to carry on industry where the State backs the loss; but it will not be possible, in competition with employers in the other States, to carry on an industry which depends on a private individual to find the money. I am very sorry that the Premier has given way to the clamour for this amendment of the law. (Government interjections.)

Mr. COLLINS: You would have made a good slave-driver in the old slave days in America.

The CHAIRMAN: I would ask hon. members on my right to cease these continuous interjections. I do not mind relevant interjections, but it is time that this stream of interjections ceased.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I was about to say that, on the face of the evidence before us and the statements which have been made by the Premier, I cannot see how even members on the Government side can come to the conclusion that it is desirable to introduce legislation for a reduction of the working hours in our industries. To justify hon. members in their support of the motion as applied to Government employees, one hon. member by way of interjection said that it was only a matter of the Government raising further revenue to meet the advance in wages, but you have to remember that that would mean a further burden on industry. This proposal strikes a blow at our primary industries, our secondary industries, our public activities, and our departmental activities. The hon. gentleman has said that a 44-hour week is already practically universal so far as private individuals are concerned. Hon. members of the Government have always stated that they have no desire to interfere with the functions of the Arbitration Court, and have always claimed that hon. members on this side desired to undermine the court, but we suddenly discover that the desire in that direction comes from the other side—a desire to attack the salient feature of the foundation of arbitration in Queensland. The court must have the power to decide hours and conditions. If not, it must be futile.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Have you read section 10 of the Act?

Mr. VOWLES: I have, and I understand exactly what the effect of it has been. This is a direction to the court where a direction did not exist before. This proposal reduces the number of hours, and the court in each case will have to decide what should be the basic wage of the workers of Queensland, who come into competition with men who are doing exactly the same class of work in the Southern States and working longer hours.

Mr. HYNES: You made the same speech on the 48-hour week.

Mr. VOWLES: I have never spoken on the 48-hour question in my life. The hon. member who has interjected let the cat out of the bag a few minutes ago. He said, by way of interjection, "Less hours mean more wages," and I think some of his friends "tipped him the wink" to keep his mouth closed. That is the clue to the whole thing. If there is only a limited amount of money, whether in private or Government enterprise, it can only go round a certain number of workers, and, if you wish it to go round a larger number, it has to be inflated in some direction. That direction may be impossible so far as private industries are concerned, but it is possible so far as public industries

are concerned by increasing taxation. If that is the desire, why do not hon. members opposite say so, and say where the money is coming from? It is now proposed to include railway gatekeepers under the Act, and they will be subject to the 44-hour week, which will mean that a very large sum of money will be required to meet the extra payment to a large number of people who are engaged in that activity. I would like the Minister later on to give some estimate of the amount that will be required to meet the increased wages because of the decrease in hours.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I have already given that information.

Mr. VOWLES: I should be pleased to receive that information.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I have already given that information during a "no-confidence" debate at the opening of the session.

Mr. VOWLES: I should be glad to have my memory refreshed so that I may look through "Hansard" and see whether the hon. gentleman's figures are correct. As a rule they are not. If they are not correct in this case, I venture to say we can assume that the hon. gentleman is accepting the inevitable and that a large number of gates are going to be closed. Queensland is the least progressive State of the Commonwealth so far as industry and commerce are concerned. We know that to-day the manufacturers in the other States are trading in Queensland through agencies, and we are deprived of the facilities for establishing the businesses here merely because the conditions which obtain force employers to manufacture in other States, and compel us to import their manufactured articles. Queensland is the loser, but the Queensland workers are the biggest losers. When we look at the statistics we find that there is a falling off in the number of employees engaged in certain industries in Queensland. We also find that not only is the number of manufacturing concerns increasing in the other States, but the number of men who are being employed is increasing in untold numbers. At whose expense, I ask you, Mr. Pollock, and for what reason? What is the cause, and what is the effect? The cause is simply that the labour conditions in the Southern States are more beneficial to manufacturers than they are in Queensland, and we are getting into the unhappy position that, whilst the workers may have Utopian conditions, there is no work. What is the good of having Utopian conditions if you have no work? Why, only to-day we know that there is going to be a demonstration by the unemployed. They are going to see the Premier.

Mr. COLLINS: Did you organise them?

Mr. VOWLES: I had nothing at all to do with them. It is well known that there is a large number of unemployed in Brisbane to-day, and they are coming to interview the Premier to see if he can devise some scheme by which work will be provided. Is he going to turn round and say, "This is the solution of your problems: The Arbitration Court will decrease the hours, consequently there will be more men employed?" If that is the solution of the trouble, where is the money coming from? Just the same amount of money is to be expended over a larger number of men, which will mean that those who are in employment to-day may work less hours, but they will receive less pay and have less work.

Mr. COLLINS: If the hon. gentleman had his way, he would pay them less.

Mr. VOWLES: On this matter I am of the same opinion as the Premier, who has expressed himself very plainly on the matter, and that is that the present juncture—

Mr. COLLINS: Read his speech at the Emu Park Convention.

Mr. VOWLES: We are not guided by such speeches. We know that the decisions which are arrived at at a Labour Convention are not the decisions and conclusions of people who are sent by the voters of Queensland. In many instances they are only the decisions of irresponsible persons.

Mr. COLLINS: Cut that out.

Mr. VOWLES: I do not want to go over the old ground. When we talk about irresponsibles we have only to look—

Mr. HARTLEY: Does the hon. gentleman consider himself one of the "responsible persons"?

Mr. VOWLES: I would not say that the hon. member for Fitzroy was a responsible person. When we talk about irresponsibles we have only to acquaint ourselves with the fact that to-day the Government represent a minority of the people, and consequently the people who are represented at a Labour Convention constitute a minority of the people, and in many cases a very small minority of the thinking people of the State.

Mr. COLLINS: The Tories are the good old thinking people in this State.

Mr. VOWLES: I know where the "shrinking" people are. I have observed men who are supposed to have outstanding ability and to be strong enough to express their own opinions declaim against a 44-hour week, but who, when the whip was cracked, were prepared to support it. They are not supporting this Bill in the interests of the people of Queensland, but in the interests of themselves.

Mr. MAXWELL: Self-preservation.

Mr. VOWLES: They know very well that, if they stand up against this big machine which wants them to do something they admit to be wrong, it will mean their political annihilation.

Mr. HYNES: This Bill is dictated by humanitarian reasons, and because it is practicable.

Mr. VOWLES: Why should it not be a 46-hour week? There is no reason given for the introduction of the 44-hour week except that there is a clamour for it by certain organisations which tyrannise over hon. members opposite and compel them to do something contrary to their convictions. The Bill is undesirable, uneconomical, and not in the interests of Queensland or the manufactories or progress of Queensland. If we are going to be a party to this measure, we are going to do an everlasting injustice to the people, and particularly to the workers of Queensland.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. SIZER (*Sandgate*): Some very good reasons have been given why this Bill should not be introduced. I am equally convinced that no sound argument—and I emphasise the word "sound"—has been put forward as to why it should be introduced. The only argument put forward, or that should be put forward, for the introduction of the Bill is because it conforms to a compromise made at a time when a crisis existed in the Government party. The interests of Queensland were sacrificed as a result of that compromise. That is the only argument why the Bill should be introduced. It is time we gave consideration to whither we are drifting by the introduction of this measure. Whatever argument I am putting forward, or what has been put forward by this side, can be supplemented by the arguments which were used in the Government caucus room when the 44-hour week was opposed by leading members of the Government. Though these arguments are unknown outside the ranks of the party opposite, they were probably on the same lines as the arguments we are using to-day. The arguments we are putting forward must be sound, otherwise the 44-hour week would not have been opposed by the Ministers in the caucus room.

I heard an interjection by an hon. member opposite that, if hours were reduced, employment would be increased. Some of the hon. members opposite claim to be students of economics. I disagree with them after that interjection, because everybody knows that it is no use talking about employment unless those employed are in a position to sell the products made during the time they are employed.

Mr. HARTLEY: Why did you not sell your wallaby skins when you had a 48-hour week?

Mr. SIZER: I shall tell the hon. member directly. It is quite impossible to sell products unless you are able to produce them competitively. There is ample evidence that we in Queensland have been unable in many instances to stand up to the competition of Southern people. We have been forced out of the market because the better conditions prevailing in other States enable them to produce so much cheaper than we produce in Queensland, consequently allowing them to sell so much cheaper. I am convinced that hon. members opposite who are clamouring for this 44-hour week want articles at the lowest prices, and will run around to see if they can save a penny. I do not blame them, but they must realise that they will force our manufacturers into such a position that they will be unable to compete with the manufacturers in the South. By and large Queensland manufacturers at the present time cannot compete with the Southern manufacturers.

[11 a.m.]

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: If your argument is correct, we should increase the hours to a 60-hour week and then everything would be all right.

Mr. SIZER: My argument is that, if you make further inroads on our manufacturers, you will handicap and cripple them still more. If the Government reduce the taxation and the burdens on our people, we shall be able to carry on with a 44-hour week and compete with the 48-hour week prevailing in the Southern States. We are unable to compete with Southern manufacturers, but that is not the only thing that controls our market. We are absolutely dependent on the price at which the maufacturers of the world are able to produce. We have to recognise the competition of the other countries of the world and the price at which they are able to produce.

Mr. DUNSTAN: Are you referring to China?

Mr. SIZER: In spite of the fact of the existence of a high tariff on British and Continental goods, we know that those goods come on to our market, and undersell Australian goods, leaving a profit not only for the manufacturers but also for the importers and indenters. They are able to undersell Australian manufacturers, who in many cases sell direct to the public. If the position becomes worse, it means that, instead of creating the employment that has been spoken of by hon. members opposite, there will be more unemployment, and the State will be forced to keep its citizens by means of the unemployment insurance fund or some other scheme, which, of course, has to come out of the pockets of those engaged in industries which would be already crippled.

The Minister made some reference to boots. That was an unfortunate reference for the hon. gentleman. Is the hon. gentleman aware that there are less boots manufactured in Brisbane than was the case twenty years ago?

Mr. HARTLEY: You are wrong. That is not a fact.

Mr. SIZER: Is the hon. gentleman also aware that of the boots purchased in Queensland not more than 5 per cent. are manufactured in the State? The boot industry of Queensland has passed through very perilous times owing to the fact that the Southern manufacturers have been able, by a system of mass production, to cut prices to a very large extent.

Mr. DUNSTAN: That was not due to shorter hours.

Mr. SIZER: If you are going to place further burdens on the industries of Queensland, it will mean further unemployment. At the present time our industries are the highest taxed in Australia, and, in addition, there are natural disadvantages with which they have to contend.

Mr. COLLINS: They make the biggest profits.

Mr. SIZER: Under present conditions it is impossible for the industries of Queensland to thrive. I am satisfied that in passing this Bill we are not acting in the best interests of the State or in the best interests of the workers.

Mr. HARTLEY: They cannot compete because of inefficient plants.

Mr. SIZER: The boot factory which was recently rebuilt here after a fire has one of the finest plants in Australia. The hon. member does not know the position.

Mr. HARTLEY: You do.

Mr. SIZER: I do.

Mr. HARTLEY: Why did you not make your own tanning business pay?

Mr. SIZER: I will say that it is because I never got any assistance from the hon. member or from his friends. (Interruption.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. SIZER: There is some credit in attempting to do something. It would be to the hon. member's credit if he attempted to do something for the benefit of Queensland

instead of criticising and hamstringing those who do make the attempt to do something. This Bill strikes at a very vital spot in industry. I am infinitely prouder of what I have attempted than the hon. member can be of anything he has tried to do. If any member of this Committee is looking to make money by easy means, it is the hon. member.

Mr. HARTLEY: How do you get that?

Mr. SIZER: It is true.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. SIZER: I think I am entitled to point this out——

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member for Fitzroy is not entitled to interject, and the hon. member who is speaking is not entitled to deal with anything except that which is contained in the motion.

Mr. HARTLEY: I have no objection to making money by easy means. I can assure the hon. member of that.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. SIZER: I am opposed to this Bill because it is undermining the principle of the Arbitration Court, and I am apprehensive of what is going to happen if the Bill is carried and the Government insist upon bringing the rural workers of this State under the Arbitration Court. We do know that some of our primary industries to-day are able to compete with the other States because there happens to be a shortage in some direction; but, if you are going to force a 44-hour week on most of the primary industries as well as on the secondary industries of Queensland, then Queensland will be placed in a perilous position, and every individual in the community will suffer. For these reasons, for the reasons which were given in the caucus room, and from the knowledge that we are supported by the Premier, I am satisfied that an open vote on this question would decide that this Bill is not necessary or desirable at the present time.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): The determination to introduce a measure to provide for a 44-hour week is not the result of the individual efforts of members of the Government party. I claim that it is part of the method of the international Socialists of Australia. (Government laughter.) The hon. member for Bulimba may cackle, but I think I can get right down to the position when I say that it is not any desire or thought of improving industry that has been responsible for the introduction of this measure but a desire to cripple industry. That can be proved. We know that the international Socialists claim in the columns of their paper that the workers must have and hold the factories, the farms, and the workshops—that they must control these things for themselves and abolish the wage system. Does the hon. member for Bulimba, who now cackles so loudly, say that he believes in a 44-hour week and the abolition of wages for those 44 hours, or is he going to be silent on the question? The hon. member will not deal with that side of the issue at all.

Mr. COLLINS: No one on this side has spoken except the Minister.

Mr. CORSER: No; the hon. member will not speak on it, but he will cackle sometimes. We would like to hear his opinion of the Bill, and also what he said when the proposal was being discussed in the caucus on the night when he was elected Premier for 20 minutes. (Opposition laughter.) We know that, as a part of the socialistic organisations throughout the State, hon members opposite are here to kill private ownership and industry, and they are out to kill the capitalistic or wage system in industry. Therefore it is no use for members of the Opposition to appeal to them from the standpoint of what will pay and help to develop an industry, because they claim that they will own all industry if they can break down the present system.

This Bill is only another step in the direction of wrecking industrial concerns as they exist under the present system of control. There is no gainsaying that if hon. members opposite are true to their socialistic principles—and socialists they must be. Although the Premier and some of his friends may wish sometimes to step aside, they have been forced into the position of introducing this Bill, and have had to protest against the action of their own journals. If there is one international socialistic journal in Queensland which has brought about the introduction of this measure, it is the "Railway Union Advocate." We find that even the comrades of our friends opposite have to claim that the tactics of the Australian Railway Union officials have stabbed Labour in the back. Here is the pamphlet which they themselves have distributed against this international socialistic organisation which has been responsible for the introduction of this measure.

Mr. WRIGHT: I would like to see that.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. member, no doubt, has seen it, because a number of his friends will have contributed towards the cost of printing the pamphlet, which defends Labour against the stab in the back by the Railway Union officials.

Mr. COLLINS: This is the first time I have seen it.

Mr. CORSER: It shows how little the hon. member knows about his organisation. I picked this up in the railway train, and they are distributed on the railways and roads in every direction in the State.

Mr. COLLINS: You can stab anybody in the back.

Mr. CORSER: That is why the hon. member kicked up a fuss about the railway officials stabbing him in the back, but those officials have made the party opposite come to heel and introduce this measure. As socialists they must stand up to it, and see that some little reform is brought about. They claim that a 44-hour week is essential. It is not long since Labour adopted the eight-hour day principle. They erected their temples to the Eight Hours Day movement. They had their Eight Hours Day sports and their Eight Hours Day processions, but now that will not do. They have changed the Eight Hours Day to Labour Day.

Mr. WRIGHT: Hear, hear!

Mr. CORSER: They now want to have a 44-hour week, and a West Australian Labour organisation advocated a 36-hour week. We know that what these people say in advocating a 44-hour week they will say in advocating a 40-hour week in a very short time, because so soon as they get this supposed

socialistic reform they have to start to tickle the ears of their supporters outside with something else. These leeches on the industrial worker who get their bread and butter, who get their fat living, out of agitating have to get something else to hold up before the masses.

Mr. HARTLEY: Who do you say are the leeches on the industrial worker?

Mr. CORSER: The blood-suckers of industry—these supposed organisers——

Mr. HYNES interjected.

Mr. CORSER: There is one of them.

Mr. HYNES: You are a "bludger" of industry.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member for Burnett to withdraw the remark which he applied to the hon. member for Townsville.

Mr. CORSER: I will withdraw it, but I ask that the hon. member be asked to withdraw his reference to a "bludger" of industry.

Mr. HARTLEY: He did not refer to the hon. member.

Mr. HYNES (*Townsville*): I referred the remark to the hon. member and to the Opposition as a whole, and I withdraw the remark.

Mr. CORSER: I know the hon. member did not mean his compliment as much as I meant mine. (Laughter.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. CORSER: Those who live on industry, if they do not get all they want out of it, still sit here as representatives of the profession which lives by sucking the blood of industrial workers——

Mr. HYNES: You have been associated with the middleman class all your life.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. CORSER: These men consider only one side. We claim that we should look at Bills like this, not from the point of view of one section, but broadmindedly from the point of view of every section of industry.

Hon. M. J. KIRWAN: You set the example.

Mr. CORSER: I will do it for the hon. gentleman. Whilst hon. members of the Government party point at us as individuals who would increase hours and reduce wages, we say that in the interests of the workers it is essential to build up industry, and that, unless we continue our industries on safe financial lines, there will be a reduction in the amount of work available, and that, as we reduce the hours, so there will be more unemployment for the simple reason that some industries will not be able to exist under those conditions and others will not come into existence. When the Bill making a 48-hour week possible was being considered hon. members opposite claimed that it would provide work for the unemployed—that the reduction of the hours by four would just nicely find employment for everyone. To-day we find that there is still unemployment, and there will be still greater unemployment after the 44-hour week has been passed. The only policy of hon. members opposite—particularly the hon. member for Townsville—is one of shorter hours, higher wages, and cheaper food. That is the whole policy of the Government, and their whole livelihood.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. CORSER: It is put into concrete form in measures similar to that which the Minister proposes to introduce at the present moment.

There is no excuse for introducing a Bill like this at the present time. There is no necessity to give the Arbitration Court any directions. We know that recently the Court refused to be dictated to by politicians, and even politicians, through Cabinet meetings, were unable to induce the Government to give the Arbitration Court certain directions. Why this breakdown in that refusal, and why this change of attitude on the part of the Government? It is simply to make somebody's marble good in an election not very far ahead. We should like all the workers, as well as those engaged in industries, to know that there is no section of Parliament that is more determined in its desire to create good conditions for all the people than the Opposition, and it is not the Opposition's desire to provide excellent conditions for a few, but to give an opportunity to all to obtain employment, work reasonable hours, and obtain a reasonable wage.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I think we can all sympathise with the Secretary for Public Works this morning in being compelled, against his own judgment, and against the judgment of Cabinet, to introduce this Bill.

Mr. COLLINS: Don't look so hard at me. (Laughter.)

Mr. KERR: I sympathise with the Minister who has been compelled to do something, not only against his own wishes, but against the wishes of those who do study the interests of Queensland more than the rank and file of hon. members opposite. The rank and file have decided this matter. The proper method of dealing with the hours is to submit the matter to the Arbitration Court. It will be recollected that in New South Wales the Fuller Government referred the question of hours to the Arbitration Court.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: They legislated to increase the hours.

Mr. KERR: They did nothing of the kind. The whole question of hours was referred to the Arbitration Court in New South Wales, and it was practically unanimously decided that the working week there should be one of forty-eight hours. The workers in that State recognised that the establishment of a 48-hour working week would mean advancement in industry, with the result that New South Wales would improve her position in regard to secondary industries.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The hon. gentleman knows that the Fuller Government amended the Eight-Hour Day Act by preventing the possibility of adopting a 44-hour week, and thereby increasing the hours.

Mr. KERR: I have looked into that matter very carefully, and I find that the whole question of hours was referred to the Arbitration Court, and that is what should be done in Queensland to-day.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The Fuller Government prevented the Arbitration Court from awarding shorter hours.

Mr. KERR: The Fuller Government did nothing of the kind. The matter was placed in the hands absolutely of the Arbitration Court. The statistics of New South Wales disclose that there has been an extension

in the number of manufacturing concerns and an increase in the number of men employed since that decision was arrived at by the Arbitration Court in New South Wales.

I have here a statement made by Mr. W. D. Demaine, President of the Central Political Executive of the Australian Labour Party in the State, on 15th August, 1924, on the question of a 44-hour week. That is only a couple of months ago. I have taken his statement, and I have read the statement made by the Premier, the Secretary for Public Lands, and their various colleagues in the Government, and I want to know what has intervened to alter the conditions which existed only a couple of months ago. What Mr. Demaine has stated as the excuse for not granting a 44-hour week is really the excuse of the Government, only that Mr. Demaine has put the position more concisely in order to allay any discontent which existed in the ranks of some of the supporters of the Labour party. Mr. Demaine says—

> "A very acute financial stringency brought about by circumstances that need not be gone into by this statement, and which have been fully dealt with by the State Parliamentary Labour Party, undoubtedly exists to-day throughout Australia. Under ordinary conditions the stringency in Australia would be relieved by the transfer of funds from London or other overseas money market."

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. gentleman to connect his remarks with the motion.

Mr. KERR: Mr. Demaine, the President of the Central Political Executive, published a statement giving the reasons why a 44-hour week could not be introduced by the Government. I am just quoting shortly from his statement.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You are misquoting him.

Mr. KERR: I am not. They are his own words. Mr. Demaine further said—

> "At present, however, the difficult exchange situation imposes very drastic limits on the amount of money that can be transferred to Australia on Government account."

He pointed out that nothing could be done in regard to the restoration of the basic wage or decreasing the number of hours of work. The Premier, in replying to that statement, said that in the public service alone the reduction of hours would cost £300,000 per annum; that it would cost the Railway Department £120,000, the Home Department £102,000, the other departments £25,000, and the Police Department £61,000. If the leaders of the Government were allegedly in touch with the financial position at that time —which was only a few short months ago— when they contended that the financial stringency of the State would not permit the introduction of a 44-hour week, what has happened since to force the Government into the position of placing the industries of Queensland in a worse position than they are in to-day?

Mr. BULCOCK: Why not be fair and admit that the Bill will not come into operation until 1st July next?

Mr. KERR: That is all the more reason why Parliament at this stage should not decide the matter. There is no reason to legislate twelve months ahead. We have had no assurance that our financial position will have improved twelve months hence. We should wait and see how we stand then.

Mr. CLAYTON: The Bill is to save the Premier in the Herbert plebiscite.

Mr. KERR: It probably is introduced for that purpose, but at the sacrifice of the interests of Queensland. What is going to be the result?

Mr. BULCOCK: If you had your own way the result would be a 56-hour week.

Mr. KERR: The hon. member does not know what he is talking about. A man has to be reasonable when the Government of the country and the industries of the State are concerned.

Let us look at what has happened, and what will happen after the 44-hour week is introduced. Between June, 1921, and September, 1922, the Government dismissed 1,120 public servants and reduced the wages bill by £240,872 per annum. What is going to happen when we get the 44-hour week?

Mr. EDWARDS: They will dismiss more.

Mr. KERR: Would it not be better to let the men at present employed work 48 hours a week instead of dismissing a large number to permit of a certain section working 44 hours a week? That is the position in a nutshell. This measure will mean retrenchment. It must follow in the Railway Department.

Mr. DASH: Do you believe in a weekly half-holiday?

Mr. KERR: I certainly do.

Mr. DASH: And an 8-hour day?

Mr. KERR: Yes.

Mr. DASH: Then what are you talking about?

Mr. KERR: I believe that the half-holiday can be made up without any trouble at all.

Mr. DASH: Then there would not be an 8-hour day.

Mr. KERR: The hon. member cannot get around the question in that way. The Government reduced the wages of 20,000 workers to the extent of £256,000 per annum. They also retrenched, or affected the earning capacity of 4,247 railway employees, and reduced the wages bill in that department by another £66,000. Work was also pooled, and many thousands of pounds were saved thereby. All this was done to save the finances of the State. The present position is illogical. If the hours of the Railway Department are to be reduced to 44-hours per week, it will cost the Government another £300,000 per annum.

Mr. BULCOCK: What about the retrenchment you suggested when the Estimates of the Railway Department were going through?

Mr. KERR: I suggested no retrenchment. I said then that I did not know whether the Railway Department was overstaffed or not. I do know that it was badly overstaffed a couple of years ago.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You have left the department since then.

Mr. KERR: I left the Railway Department a long while ago, and I have seen a great deal of the world since then. The position in regard to a 44-hour week must be faced. The Government are not game to face it at the moment, and desire to put it off for twelve months. Undoubtedly the Railway Commissioner will have to keep a certain number of men working 44 hours a week, and he will have to retrench a certain number. Then the pooling of all work will have to be considered. A statement has been made by the Minister that lesser hours mean more wages. We know that the position in Queensland in regard to unemployment is very serious, and it will be worse after the passage of this measure. I have looked at the statistics of the factories and manufactures of the various States, and, whereas every other State in Australia shows a very considerable increase in this direction, Queensland shows only a very minor increase. Whereas in the other States many thousands more men have been employed, the increase in Queensland can be counted in hundreds. It is very damaging, indeed, for one State in the Commonwealth to take such action as this. The growth of unemployment in Queensland at the present time is significant. In 1914-15, £5,000 was spent in outdoor relief and unemployed sustenance, while after a few short years, in 1923-24, £120,000 was similarly spent——

[11.30 a.m.]

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not dealing with the motion.

Mr. KERR: There are many factors governing the introduction of this 44-hour week. I am aware that at present we have industries working under a 44-hour week, but there are some industries that cannot work a 44-hour week and successfully compete with Southern industries. This innovation would mean a great hardship to such industries. It is not a desperately hard thing for any man to work 44 hours a week in most of our industries. Personally I work double that number of hours.

Mr. GLEDSON: There is no hardship in your case.

Mr. KERR: The same thing applies to the majority of industries. I am not going to seek support from my constituents to the detriment of this State. If this State is successful, the community will be happy. It is better to work 48 hours a week and get work than to have a 44-hour week system and receive no work at all.

Mr. BULCOCK: The average is a great deal lower than a 48-hour week at present.

Mr. KERR: I have just mentioned that certain industries are only working a 44-hour week to-day, but there are other industries which are faced with keen competition which find it necessary to retain a 48-hour week if they are to compete sucessfully with the other States, and the Arbitration Court should be the deciding factor. The Government should not make it mandatory that a 44-hour week shall be universal. I repeat that it is better for a man to work a 48-hour week and secure work than to be offered a 44-hour week and secure no work at all.

Mr. HARTLEY: You never worked 48 hours a week in your life.

[*Mr. Kerr.*

Question—That the Bill be introduced—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 34.

Mr. Barber	Mr. Hynes
,, Bedford	,, Kirwan
,, Bertram	,, Land
,, Brennan	,, Larcombe
,, Bulcock	,, Lloyd
,, Carter	,, McCormack
,, Collins	,, McLachlan
,, Conroy	,, Mullan
,, Cooper, F. A.	,, Payne
,, Dash	,, Riordan
,, Dunstan	,, Ryan
,, Farrell	,, Smith
,, Foley	,, Stopford
,, Gillies	,, Theodore
,, Gledson	,, Wellington
,, Hanson	,, Winstanley
,, Hartley	,, Wright

Tellers: Mr. Bulcock and Mr. Hartley.

NOES, 25.

Mr. Appel	Mr. Logan
,, Barnes, W. H.	,, Maxwell
,, Bell	,, Moore
,, Brand	,, Morgan
,, Clayton	,, Nott
,, Corser	,, Petrie
,, Costello	,, Roberts
,, Deacon	,, Sizer
,, Edwards	,, Swayne
,, Elphinstone	,, Taylor
,, Kelso	,, Vowles
,, Kerr	,, Warren
,, King	

Tellers: Mr. Kerr and Mr. Sizer.

PAIR.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Pease	Mr Peterson

Resolved in the affirmative.

The House resumed.

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

The resolution was agreed to.

FIRST READING.

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

INCOME TAX BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): I beg to move—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to consolidate and amend the law relating to the imposition, assessment, and collection of a tax upon incomes."

This Bill consolidates the law relating to income tax, and makes very few alterations, at any rate of a substantial nature. I shall fully explain on the second reading the alterations which are being made.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed.

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

The resolution was agreed to.

FIRST READING.

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

CITY OF BRISBANE BILL.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

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

Clause 35—"*Powers and Jurisdiction of the Council*"—

On which Mr. MCLACHLAN (*Merthyr*) had moved the following amendment:—

"On page 16, line 9, after the word—

'conveniences;'

insert the words—

'abattoirs; milk supply.'"

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): When the sitting was suspended last evening I was dealing with the amendment as it affected the milk supply and said that the real remedy lay in co-operation. This amendment proposes to give the new City Council an instruction to undertake the erection of abattoirs and the supply of milk to the people of the city. We are in a position to conduct these matters under a co-operative system without any added expense to the people. We have tried State enterprise and we have tried commercialism, and now we must give to the producers of milk, or whatever the commodity concerned may be, the right to market their commodity. One of the big drawbacks to primary production and also to secondary production is that we are not able to deal with our products in a co-operative manner.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Will the hon. member connect his remarks with the amendment?

Mr. WARREN: If this amendment is placed in the Bill, it will cut out any possibility of the milk and meat supplies being handled co-operatively.

The HOME SECRETARY: It will only give the power to the Greater Brisbane Council to operate in those directions

Mr. WARREN: The Minister surely will not say that that power is not contained in the clause as it stands. The clause gives the new council greater control than they have ever had, and this amendment is an instruction to the new council. The Minister knows that the amendment was moved with that intention.

The HOME SECRETARY: It states that they will have express power to do it, but it is not mandatory.

Mr. WARREN: There is no doubt that the amendment was moved with that intention. If not, why was it moved? The clause already contains every power that is needed by the new council. It can regulate traffic and the morals of the people. It can even stop gambling, if necessary.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Will the hon. member connect his remarks with the amendment?

Mr. WARREN: The amendment has been moved for a certain purpose. Already there is power in the Bill for the Greater City Council to institute a milk supply or establish abattoirs. The Home Secretary must admit that. I want to know why the amendment is necessary. We all admit that the council must have power to control the health of the community, and it is no use giving the council great powers unless it is given such powers in connection with the health of the community. This amendment really constitutes a direction to the future council. The work will be performed better and cheaper under the scheme that we have been advocating and that the Government have been advocating; but I must admit that the Government have not been quite honest in advocating our scheme of co-operation. They do not want it, but we want to give it a trial. The system that we desire to establish will not put one penny more in the pockets of the producers, nor take one penny out of the pockets of the consumers. It is not intended by a system of co-operative distribution to make any profit at all.

Previously I mentioned that the butter factories were not established for the purpose of making profits, and, if the producers were allowed to establish abattoirs and institute a milk supply under a central distribution scheme, it would not be for the purpose of making profits. Under a scheme of co-operative distribution it should be the object of the Government and the people concerned to do all they can to assist in the production and distribution of those articles of food. I do not see any necessity for the amendment, as I contend ample powers are granted in clause 35, and, as the amendment will not improve the measure, I hope the Home Secretary will not accept it.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*): I want to explain why I propose to accept the amendment. I intended that the Bill should give power to the Greater City Council to deal with these matters. Hon. members know that discussions have taken place in the meetings of the Brisbane City Council as to the immediate necessity for establishing abattoirs.

Mr. KELSO: The Premier turned the scheme down.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. gentlemen who have spoken have indicated clearly that they have no objection to abattoirs being made a municipal function, therefore there can be no harm in making the position clearer so that there will be no doubt about the matter.

Mr. SIZER: That is a matter of opinion.

The HOME SECRETARY: The intention of the Bill is to give power to the Greater Brisbane Council to move in the direction indicated, and the acceptance of the amendment will convey that not only to the Brisbane City Council but to those who may be in doubt. This debate has not been directed against the construction of municipal abattoirs, but has centred round a proposition from the cattlegrowers, who have some scheme for providing pure meat for the people of Brisbane. There is nothing in the amendment that will prevent the cattlegrowers from furthering their scheme, but it will give definite authority.

Mr. WARREN: It will destroy their scheme

The HOME SECRETARY: Not at all. The debate on this Bill has proved conclusively that members of the Opposition are suspicious of the men who will constitute the Greater Brisbane Council. I have no

such suspicions. I believe that the people will exercise the same intelligence in electing representatives to the Greater Brisbane Council as they exercise in electing members of Parliament.

I take it that, if the Greater Brisbane Council is possessed of the power to grapple with the problem, the many suggestions that are in the air to-day for a co-operative effort on the part of the cattle-growers, the Government, the Brisbane City Council, or anyone else, will receive just consideration from the members who will form the Greater Brisbane Council. There is nothing in the Bill that in any way affects the position. It merely defines that the Greater Brisbane Council will have the powers that it was originally intended it should have. It will also convey to the Brisbane City Council a clear indication that the greater body that will come into existence in February next will be charged with this responsibility. The City Council to-day can proceed along the lines of investigations which will be of advantage to the greater authority.

The debate has not centred around whether the amendment is a justifiable one, but around whether it will interfere with some project of some outside body. The hon. member who just resumed his seat stated that the Bill already gives the Council authority to consider these questions if they so desire. The various clauses are broad enough to ensure that the people exercising this broad franchise—a franchise equal to that on which we elect representatives to Parliament—will elect men with broad enough vision to give consideration to any proposition which is placed before them, whether it be public or municipal abattoirs.

Mr. BELL (*Fassifern*): The amendment is entirely superfluous, because the powers sought by the amendment are already included in the general provisions of clause 35.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BELL: The powers under that clause are very wide, and the Greater Brisbane Council will have very great powers indeed under that general provision. It is absolutely unnecessary to specify anything in particular. I would like to approach this question more particularly from the point of view of the establishment of abattoirs. We are not opposed to the establishment of abattoirs in Brisbane or any other centre.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BELL: The question is as to the control they are to be established under.

Mr. MAXWELL: That is right. Men of experience must deal with it.

Mr. BELL: This is a public question. A sub-committee representing the cattle interests of Queensland placed a certain proposition before the Brisbane City Council, and expressed a wish to discuss the question with their abattoir sub-committee, but we have not been able to arrange a meeting up to the present. The City Council and the public of Brisbane should go fully into both propositions. These propositions should be placed before the people of Brisbane. They would then be able to judge the merits of the proposal evolved by the stockowners of Queensland. We object to the undue haste displayed by the City Council. It is a dying council. It has only a limited period to carry out its functions, yet it is endeavouring to get the Government to rush legislation through Parliament without giving due consideration to the proposition that has been placed before it. We maintain that the co-operative proposition is very fair and generous to the people of Brisbane. It is the larger proposition of the two, because it embraces other areas in Queensland, and would not only see the people of Brisbane get a better supply of beef slaughtered under hygienic conditions, but would deal also with the possibilities of establishing an export trade with the Southern States and overseas.

It would be an absolute waste of money if abattoirs were constructed without those two factors being taken into consideration. We also contend that there are quite sufficient meatworks in Queensland to-day, and that one of those works could be acquired for the purpose. Such works must necessarily be on the sea-front to enable us to cope with the overseas export trade. In trying to hasten this matter the Brisbane City Council are foisting on the incoming Greater Brisbane Council something over which they have no say, and over which the electors have had no say. It is very unseemly for the City Council to display this haste. We are also rather suspicious as to the forces behind this movement, because we find in a reported interview between the Premier and the representatives of the City Council this was said—

[12 noon]

> "It was pointed out to the Premier, on behalf of the municipal representatives, that a great deal of information had been collected by the Council and by Alderman W. R. Crampton in connection with the working of abattoirs, and, as the Labour caucus was in favour of a municipal scheme being adopted, it was hoped to inaugurate the Council's proposal before very long."

That is one of the reasons why we object to abattoirs under municipal control, because there are outside forces and control to be considered if any such action is taken.

There are two sections of the community in Queensland to-day who cannot pass on the increased cost of production—the producer and the consumer. I cannot imagine that any co-operative undertaking which conserves the interests of both these sections can be other than of service and advantage to the community generally. This industry is one of the few industries that has no form of co-operative action at present.

In drawing up this scheme I gave every consideration to the interests of all concerned. Provision was made for adequate representation on the various boards of the Government, the consumer through the local authority, and the producer. The producer was to have three representatives, the Government one, and the consumers or local authority one. That would be a big enough board, and, taking into consideration the large interests that would be under its control, it would be a very fair board.

Mr. HARTLEY: Would you divide the profits among those representatives on the same principle?

Mr. BELL: In dividing the profits we hope that by having local killings we shall be able to cut down the operative costs, and the benefit would be handed on to the public.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is getting away from the question.

Mr. BELL: I am merely trying to point out how this proposed amendment will affect the abattoirs question. The abattoirs question largely affects the cost of the food of the people of the cities.

Mr. HARTLEY: Under a municipal scheme the people would get the profits as well as the benefit of good meat.

Mr. BELL: The hon. member says that, but we always find that any increased cost is handed back to the producer. These two sections are the same, and their interests are identical. Any scheme that sets out to eliminate the distributing and handling cost is of benefit to the consumer and the producer.

I would like to take this opportunity of explaining briefly what the co-operative proposal means, because, unfortunately, there appears to be some doubt in some minds. I mention this because the mayor of Brisbane, who was chairman of the abattoirs sub-committee, referred to the proposal put forward by the producing interests as a monstrous one. Also, in some minds, there appears to be an idea that the producers wish to get absolute control of the local distribution, which is entirely untrue. Briefly, the proposition is this: We intended to finance the scheme by a levy on the stock interests of the State, excluding the small interests—those who own less than 100 cattle or 500 sheep—so that the scheme would be financed by the industry itself. We were not appealing to the Government for any financial assistance whatever. The only thing that the stock interests hoped to get was continuity of operations in North Queensland, Central Queensland, and South Queensland. If abattoirs were established in those three centres, it would give increased employment, and if the season was a good one we could have increased the members of the staff and carried on an interstate and export trade as well. I am afraid that under a municipal scheme those controlling the abattoirs would be largely concerned with local supplies and local distribution. Under the proposal put forward by the stock interests local consumers would not have to pay any increased price. All that the stock interests hoped to get was a cut in the operating costs. The public interests would be adequately protected, because it would be the duty of the city council to see that the interests of the consuming people were conserved. The Government and the local authorities would have representation on the board, and they would see that the consumers' interests were amply conserved. No board could do anything that would be detrimental to the interests of the consumers, because we have a Commissioner of Prices, and the Government of the day would have power to step in and acquire the works if they were operated unfairly. The scheme is a big one, and, if established, it would be of great benefit in stabilising the industry and in giving employment throughout Queensland. I do not think it is necessary for me to go further into the question at this stage, but I noticed yesterday that the city council asked the Government to guarantee an amount up to £500,000 to enable it to erect abattoirs. I think the Premier did the only thing he possibly could do under the circumstances, when he refused to grant the request of the council, because it is a dying body, and it would mean the establishment of the industry by the present city council, who would then hand it on to the Greater Brisbane Council, which would have had no say as to whether it wished to carry out such a scheme or not. I do claim that the question was approached by the stock interests in the broadest and most generous spirit. They offered to the people of Brisbane and the other two centres facilities to have their meat slaughtered under hygienic conditions at no cost to themselves. That was a most generous proposal.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*): The Minister has given good reasons why we should not vote for the amendment. He says that the power is already provided in the Bill, and we, as a Parliament, should accept the hon. gentleman's statement as being the end of it. If he were interested in his Bill, he should not accept the amendment. He would not accept a similar amendment in regard to the men at present employed by the various local authorities because, he said, provision had been made for it in the Bill.

At 12.10 p.m.,

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

Mr. FRY: When a similar occasion now arises he waives his objections and accepts the amendment. I stand for the principle of co-operation as against municipalisation or Government control of industry. We know that great losses have taken place in connection with Government enterprises. The political influence exerted is so great as to force the hands of those who are controlling the industry and break down the efficiency of organisation. It is due to this fact that failures have taken place in State enterprises.

With regard to the inspection of meat, the alarming statement made by the hon. member for Barcoo that the Government know that meat charged with tuberculosis is going into consumption is sufficient to warrant a no-confidence motion against the Government for not dealing with the matter. If the Government are aware that meat affected with tuberculosis is going into consumption, they are committing a criminal offence by not engaging more inspectors and paying more attention to their obvious duty of inspecting cattle after they are killed. That is an indictment against the Government which they cannot ignore. If it is not a fact that meat charged with tuberculosis is going into consumption, then it is a reflection on the inspectors for unjustly condemning the meat. If we take the Minister's statement that the matter has been provided for and that there is sufficient power under the Bill as it stands to deal with this matter, then we must come to the conclusion that this amendment is only being moved for political or electioneering purposes.

There is nothing more important to the welfare of our community than pure food. Food inspection should be very rigidly carried out, but whether the Government are justified in taking over the cost of the structure in which the cattle are slaughtered is another thing. The Government believe in co-operation in connection with agriculture, fruitgrowing, and marketing, and it is essential that fruit should be inspected as well as meat. Is it not a fact that fruit may disseminate as much disease as meat? Why is there such a loud cry made about meat and not about fruit? A child who

goes into a shop and buys an apple, in consuming the apple may absorb the germs of such diseases as tuberculosis, phthisis, diphtheria, or typhoid fever. All these things may be on the apple which is bought in the shop.

Mr. FARRELL: That applies to pretty well everything.

Mr. FRY: Of course, and I am pointing that out. The Minister says that the council has the necessary power to do this; yet we are asked to pass an amendment to duplicate something which is already in the Bill. That is one reason why the Minister should not accept the amendment—not because it is not necessary, but because the power already is in the Bill. The hon. member for Windsor in his policy speech at the last State election advocated the erection of abattoirs, so that we are not opposed to the establishment of abattoirs.

Mr. WRIGHT: Did he advocate municipal control?

Mr. FRY: He advocated State abattoirs. We are not opposed to the establishment of abattoirs, but we say—at any rate, I say—that the Minister should not be so feeble as to accept an amendment which is going to duplicate a provision in the Bill.

The HOME SECRETARY: It is an intimation to the council that the powers are there.

Mr. FRY: That is all right, but the Minister told the House that he was going to leave the control of the affairs of Brisbane to the members of the council elected by adult franchise. Are we doing that?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes. You think it should be carried out by private enterprise.

Mr. FRY: I have not said anything of the kind. I said that the amendment duplicates the power in the Bill, and there is no need for it. The milk supply should be under proper supervision, too, and there should be sufficient inspectors for the work; but a case comes to my mind of a complaint which was made about a dirty cart conveying meat to the State butcher shops, but there was no prosecution, although prosecutions were instituted in respect of carts carrying meat to other shops.

The HOME SECRETARY: Another argument in favour of the Bill!

Mr. FRY: That case shows that under Government control reports of inspectors are suppressed because the Government do not want the light of day on their undertakings. That is on record in the official papers. So the chances are that political influence will get to work in this case and prevent a proper execution of the duties of inspectors. I have complete confidence in the ability and integrity of inspectors if they are supported. If they know that they have the Health Department behind them, and the Home Secretary behind the Health Department, they will do their duty without fear or favour. I wish to place on record that I am in favour of the rigid inspection of milk and meat and of all foods, but, taking into consideration what the Minister has said, I cannot see that there is any need for the amendment.

Mr. WRIGHT (*Bulimba*): I do not want to prolong the discussion on this clause unduly, but I claim to have had some practical experience of the meat industry, and for that reason and because the amendment is of sufficient importance I propose to say a few words. I think it is advisable to make provision in the Bill to give the Greater Brisbane Council power to establish abattoirs and control the milk supply of the city. I have had the pleasure of visiting the Sydney abattoirs at Homebush, and I was agreeably surprised at the way in which they are conducted, and the completeness of the works.

The animals are controlled by the Abattoirs Board—which is under State control—as they arrive at the saleyards from the railway. The saleyards are in close proximity to the abattoirs, and when the stock are yarded for sale, and before they are sold, they are submitted to a keen ante-mortem examination by the veterinary officers of the Abattoirs Board. After the sale, they are taken to different resting paddocks until they reach the slaughtering floor. On the slaughtering floor qualified inspectors carefully examine every carcase and brand it if they are satisfied that it is free from disease. Under the State control of abattoirs, Sydney is absolutely assured of a meat supply which is perfectly pure and wholesome, and there appears to be no possibility of Sydney people obtaining diseased meat while they have a rigid system of inspection in vogue. The same can be said of the beautiful abattoirs in Adelaide. I have also had much pleasure in seeing those abattoirs.

Mr. MAXWELL: There are others.

Mr. WRIGHT: Yes. The hon. member for Murilla has evidently had that pleasure too, as in his speech yesterday he made some reference to the Adelaide abattoirs. Their system of distribution of meat is absolutely perfect. I see very little difference between State control and municipal control of abattoirs. In Sydney the abattoirs are controlled by a board established by the State Government, but in Adelaide the abattoirs are controlled by the municipality of Adelaide.

I rose merely to make a few remarks in connection with the proposal that has been outlined this morning by the hon. member for Fassifern, and was mentioned yesterday by the hon. member for Murilla. Through the courtesy of the hon. member for Fassifern, I received some time ago a copy of the proposal by the United Graziers and Stockowners to co-operate and establish meatworks and abattoirs. I am satisfied that we could be assured of a pure meat supply under such a scheme, as I believe we could arrange for the inspection to be so rigid as to leave no loophole for any diseased meat going into consumption in the suburbs of Brisbane. The supply of pure meat is a most important matter, but there is another section of the industry which I think hon. members opposite will acknowledge is the most lucrative side of the industry, and that is the by-products department. The profits from the by-products is the "milk in the cocoanut" in connection with the proposal put forward by hon. members opposite. Anybody who knows anything about the meat industry knows that the profits are largely made out of by-products, and hon. gentlemen opposite quite realise that by controlling the abattoirs they will possess a big lever for their scheme of helping their friends.

To substantiate my point I am going to quote from the report on the operations of the abattoirs at Homebush, Sydney. The Homebush abattoirs do not allow anything

but the very best fat and hides to leave the abattoirs. An agreement is made with the butchers on the first day of every month. It is agreed then that so much per lb. shall be paid for the fat and different by-products, and the price is based on London parity. The board administering the abattoirs controls the whole of the by-products and the manufacture of the various articles therefrom. The report, in dealing with the operations of the abattoirs, and particularly with by-products from March, 1916, to 30th June, 1922, says—

"This section of the board's activities is in many respects the most important, and lends itself to an expedition into the fields of research and developmental work of an interesting character. It is an ever-widening avenue of industry, presenting fresh possibilities from year to year.

"The most important branch of the by-products department is that of tallow manufacture. The rough fats are purchased by the board from the carcase butchers, and a good mixed tallow produced. This commodity, under normal conditions, finds a ready sale because of the uniformity of the grade and its reliability generally. An inferior grade is manufactured from offal fats, whilst of recent years—at the request of ship-building authorities—the board has produced a special grade of tallow for ship-launching purposes.

"Heads and feet of cattle slaughtered are also purchased by the board, and every portion is turned into a marketable commodity. Horns, hoofs, hair, bones, sinews, knuckles, and hide pieces are all treated and sold for various purposes. The growth of the products of this department, both in quantity and value, has been remarkable during the past few years."

The growth of the value of the by-products is shown by the following figures:—

	£
1917	73,974
1918	159,913
1919	266,993
1920	424,799
1921	227,165

If the proposal of the United Graziers and Stockowners' Association was agreed to, this very valuable portion of the business would pass out of the control of the people of this State. It is a most valuable side line, and is more valuable than the meat itself so far as profits are concerned.

The hon. member for Fassifern, in outlining his proposal this morning, made reference to the fact that the alternative scheme was a white elephant. I want briefly to show the contrast as revealed by the operations of the Homebush abattoirs. The annual net profits realised on the operations of the board since the time of the establishment of the abattoirs are—

	£
1916-17	41,662
1917-18	67,227
1918-19	40,941
1919-20	58,394
1920-21	7,685
1921-22	34,052
1922-23	54,619
Total ...	£304,580

The year 1920-21 was following the great drought.

Mr. MOORE: To whom did the profits belong—the producer or the consumer?

Mr. WRIGHT: A large proportion of the profits was gained from the treatment of the by-products. That is the "milk in the cocoanut" so far as the scheme proposed by hon. members opposite is concerned. It is another method by which they will attempt to gull the people of this State,

[12.30 p.m.] by putting forward a proposal to establish co-operative abattoirs and a pure supply of meat to the community of Brisbane. I do not doubt for one moment that we could get a pure supply of meat, because we could make the inspection so rigid that the supply could not be otherwise than pure; but the State would lose the by-products of the meat to the extent I have outlined.

OPPOSITION interjections.

Mr. WRIGHT: It is useless for hon. members to interject. They said nothing about by-products when speaking. When the hon. member for Fitzroy asked how the profits would be divided, the hon. member for Fassifern very wisely kept silent.

Mr. SIZER: No, he replied.

Mr. WRIGHT: I am satisfied that the question of the control of abattoirs is not one for the producers of cattle in the State only. It should be managed by men who are representatives of the people.

Mr. MOORE: Do you not think that a man engaged in an industry should get the full profit of his labour?

Mr. WRIGHT: Yes. (Opposition laughter.) Hon. members opposite talk glibly about the control of abattoirs and a pure milk supply, but they want to get control of the abattoirs and keep all the profit for their friends. Hon. members opposite admit they are out to help the cattle-owners of this State. They cannot help the cattle-owners of this State in the matter of local consumption of meat, unless they increase the price of meat.

Mr. KERR: What about the export of meat?

Mr. WRIGHT: Hon. members opposite have more than they can do to establish their export trade now.

Mr. KERR: Why?

Mr. WRIGHT: Ask the hon. member for Fassifern. Hon. members opposite cannot benefit the cattle-owners of this State by controlling abattoirs unless they increase the price of meat to the local consumers

Mr. SIZER: We would reduce the price of meat to the local consumer.

Mr. WRIGHT: That is an argument the hon. member may advance, but I cannot see how it can be done. If hon. members want to benefit their cattle-owner friends, and the main source of revenue is to come from local consumers, the price of the commodity must be raised. That is the "nigger in the woodpile" or the "milk in the cocoanut." Hon. members opposite want their friends to control the abattoirs for that reason.

At 12.35 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. SIZER (*Sandgate*): The hon. member for Bulimba does not realise the object

of the scheme, which is to keep our meatworks going throughout the year and to find a market for all meat and by-products. By co-operative action we hope to establish both an export trade and cheap local trade.

Mr. WRIGHT: There is nothing to prevent that being brought about by the scheme proposed by the Government.

Mr. SIZER: That is so, but I am not in favour of municipal control. I believe the hon. member for Fitzroy misconstrued a remark I made this morning, which he evidently considered a reflection on his personal character. Evidently the hon. member construed my remarks to indicate that he was getting money by dishonest methods. Let me assure the hon. member and members of the Committee that nothing was further from my mind. While I do not often agree with the hon. member, I have always recognised that he is as sincere and honest in his convictions as any member of this Committee. I am equally satisfied that he is totally wrong in his viewpoint in regard to the milk supply of Brisbane. He said that the milk is about thirty-six hours old before it is delivered in Brisbane. That is absolutely incorrect.

Mr. HARTLEY: From twenty-four to thirty-six hours old.

Mr. SIZER: Under the Wellington scheme, which the hon. member supported, immediately the municipality took control of the milk supply, as reported to the Victorian Government by Dr. Stanley Argyle in 1922, the cold milk was forty-eight hours to sixty-four hours old before it was delivered, whereas before the milk supply was taken over by the municipality the cold milk was only twenty-four hours to thirty hours old before it was delivered. Dr. Argyle went further, and stated that neither the farmers, the distributors, nor the consumers were satisfied in any shape or form. Let me tell the hon. member that hot milk is supplied to the consumers in Brisbane six hours after it is milked by the dairyman. Then the cold milk—which we know as country milk—is delivered on an average of from twelve to twenty-four hours after it has been milked. That is the minimum and the maximum, which gives an average of about eighteen hours after milking. Municipal control or farmers' control is the question, and the authorities will never be able by regulation to overcome the difficulty until they enter into a scheme which will protect the milk after it leaves the vendor until it actually gets into the hands of the consumer. That can only be brought about by a farmers' co-operative scheme and the adoption of the bottling system. Hon. members have argued that under a bottling scheme the price would be increased. Let me tell hon. members that in some towns in America, under a system of municipal inspection and the licensing of dairymen and vendors, they have the most up-to-date and probably the purest milk supply in the world, and at the same time the milk is sold in bottles at 6d. a quart as against a price of 8d. a quart in Brisbane to-day. That shows that by adopting an up-to-date method of farmers' co-operative control we could have a hygienic system and at the same time give the public pure milk at a cheaper price than is charged at present.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): The question is not whether proprietary ownership of abattoirs could do the business or whether municipal ownership could do it. The point I take is that, when the people own and control their meat supply and milk supply, they will have the best system for giving to the consumer the article in its purest and most wholesome form, and there will be no incentive, as there might be under proprietary ownership, to resort to improper practices which might deteriorate the article. That is the reason why I support the amendment, which embodies the principle of the control of the milk supply by the municipal authorities.

I was glad to hear the hon. member for Sandgate say that he had no intention of implying anything improper when he mentioned that I would get money easily if I could. Like anybody else, if I could see £100 sticking out easily by putting £1 on a horse I would do so. The question of profit arises in connection with private enterprise, and then the consideration for the welfare of the community goes to the wall.

The hon. member for Sandgate mentioned the milk supply which comes in from various places to the city. Let me point out what happens in regard to milk cans which are sent in, and probably the hon. member for Murrumba will recall instances of what I am saying. Take, for instance, the milk supply which comes to the various stations along the North Coast line.

Mr. SIZER: Most of the milk comes from there.

Mr. HARTLEY: The train service is such that only the milk from cows which are milked about 5.30 a.m. can be sent, as it has to be at the station at a little after 6 a.m.

Mr. SIZER: They can get a train at 7 a.m.

Mr. HARTLEY: At a number of outside places, such as Burpengary, Caboolture, and places further out, and particularly places on the Woodford line, they cannot get a train until late in the afternoon, and the milk will not get into town early enough for distribution that day.

Mr. SIZER: They get a midday train and a train at 5 p.m.

Mr. HARTLEY: Bear in mind that milk sent in the midday train is the milk of cows which have been milked at 5 a.m.

Mr. SIZER: You are wrong.

Mr. HARTLEY: Selectors living 5 or 6 miles from the railway station are not able to make milk deliveries to the stations earlier.

Mr. SIZER: You are wrong.

Mr. HARTLEY: I know that is right. I have made inquiries and found out how the milk comes in. There may be one or two individual cases which are different, but the majority of cases are such as I have described. That is my authority for saying that the milk is from twenty-four to thirty-six hours old before it is delivered. It is milked at 5 a.m., and a lot of it does not get into cold storage here until 2 p.m. or 3 p.m. in the afternoon, or it comes by the 5 p.m. train, when it is probably too late for the evening delivery and is delivered next morning. That is how a good deal of the contamination of the milk supply is brought about. I do not think the amendment will affect in any particular the interests of the dairy farmers who supply milk. I believe they will get just as good,

or a better return from the municipal control of milk supply, as they do by sending their milk into consumption through the distributing companies. The cost of distributing milk would be less if the business were controlled by one central authority like the City Council than it would be if controlled by half a dozen distributing companies. Under municipal control the producers would receive the money which would be saved by the lesser cost of distribution as compared with the cost under the distributing companies. I am satisfied that a municipal supply will give to the dairyman a better return for his milk, because there will be no incentive to make big profits but merely to cover overhead costs.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*): I do not want to cloud the issue as to the municipal control of abattoirs, but I want to explain just exactly where I stand on the question of municipal enterprise. I am in favour of abattoirs, but I am certainly opposed to giving the municipality control of anything that can be dealt with by private enterprise. We have had such bitter experience of State enterprise that it is absolutely suicidal for any Government to recommend that a municipal council should go in for a scheme such as this. Do the Government want to unload some of their butcher shops on the municipality? It has been said by hon. members opposite that the Greater Brisbane Council could control abattoirs such as those at Sydney and Adelaide. I have seen those at Adelaide, and I know they are controlled under absolutely different conditions, because here they would be subject to political influence if we have a continuance of the conditions which obtain to-day.

Mr. MCLACHLAN: That is your nightmare.

Mr. MAXWELL: I have observed the trend of things generally. Hon. members opposite are trying to achieve their objective of the socialisation of industry, and this is one of the steps by which they hope to accomplish it. I shall certainly raise my voice against such control, because, as I said at the outset, we have had the bitterest experience any State could have of State enterprise.

I object also to the method by which this scheme has been brought before the public. To me it is one of the dirtiest jobs ever perpetrated. I am not attributing anything to the hon. member who introduced the amendment or to the Government. I want to draw the attention of the Committee to the method by which the Australian Meat Industry Employees' Union brought this matter before the people of Brisbane. They did so by saying that they were consuming cancerous and tubercular meat, and raising the cry that it was the result of the control of the industry by private enterprise.

Mr. HARTLEY: How do you make out that it is one of the dirtiest jobs ever perpetrated?

Mr. MAXWELL: It is a dirty job to frighten the people into anything like this, making them believe that people engaged in private enterprise are prepared to sell their bodies and souls for pounds, shillings, and pence, and to sacrifice the unfortunate consumers in the community. I have a greater opinion of those people than that. Perhaps the environment of some of the hon. members who are interjecting may lead them to a different conclusion. I was not at all surprised at the Minister accepting the amendment moved by the hon. member for Merthyr, but the most agreeable surprise to me would be to see the Minister accepting an amendment from this side.

Mr. FARRELL: It would be a surprise.

Mr. MAXWELL: We know that. What sort of a charge was made by the Australian Meat Industry Employees' Union against the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Public Health in connection with meat and milk distribution? Those departments have their inspectors out doing their work. I have heard hon. members say that Melbourne and Adelaide have a very fine system of meat supply, and people have stated that better meat could not be obtained under any other system. The Southern people have stated that the best of their meat comes from Queensland. The other day the hon. member for Murilla sent down a number of Queensland cattle to be slaughtered in the South and secured wonderful prices, which proves the quality of the beasts. It is a most lamentable condition of affairs to find a certain section of men who are prepared to sacrifice decent men in Government departments who are doing their inspection work faithfully, to traduce men in business, and stampede the people by making them believe that they are eating cancerous and tubercular meat. That was one of the dirtiest jobs that could have been perpetrated, and I as a member of Parliament am not going to assist those people to accomplish what they desire.

Mr. HARTLEY: What does the hon. gentleman mean by "dirty job"?

Mr. MAXWELL: It is a contemptible act for this body to tell the people that cancerous and tubercular meat is being distributed in the suburbs of Brisbane under Government inspection. Would the inspection under municipal control be any better than the inspection under Government control?

The HOME SECRETARY: Of course.

Mr. MAXWELL: That does not say much for the Government. The Department of Agriculture have their inspectors doing this inspection work, and I have more faith in them than I have in those persons who are prepared to sacrifice a number of decent men who are carrying out their work faithfully.

Mr. BULCOCK: When did the hon. gentleman become an authority on meat inspection?

Mr. MAXWELL: I am not saying that I am an authority on meat inspection.

Mr. BULCOCK: How does the hon. gentleman know that cancerous or tubercular meat is not going into consumption?

Mr. MAXWELL: I have sufficient faith in the Government inspectors.

Mr. BULCOCK: Did the hon. gentleman see where a butcher the other day was fined for having tubercular meat hanging in his shop?

Mr. MAXWELL: I do not say that that did not occur, but it only shows that the Government inspectors are doing their duty by instituting prosecutions, and are alive to the interests of the people. I have heard some hon. members of experience say that at times it is difficult to pick out a healthy animal.

Mr. BULCOCK: The hon. gentleman knows that supervision at the present time is absolutely impossible.

Mr. MAXWELL: The method by which the question of abattoirs came into prominence was that adopted by certain persons who attempted to stampede the people, and then the Brisbane City Council sent a delegation to Adelaide for the purpose of inspecting the abattoirs there.

Mr. BULCOCK: What did the hon. member for Murilla say about the Adelaide abattoirs? He said that they were the most perfect abattoirs in Australia.

Mr. MAXWELL: I think so too. The hon. gentleman was not in this Chamber when I made a statement to that effect, and when I pointed out that the conditions which would obtain in Brisbane are different from the conditions which obtain in Adelaide.

Mr. BULCOCK: We are more favourably circumstanced than they are in the other States.

Mr. MAXWELL: In Queensland political influence would be brought to bear, and naturally the candidates selected by the other side for seats in the Greater Brisbane Council would be politically controlled. If they do not carry out the wishes of their organisation, they will be tuned up.

Mr. HARTLEY: Those who politically control your side sent the delegation to London.

Mr. MAXWELL: We have had an example of that political control in another measure which was introduced this morning. The Government had either to introduce that Bill or resign. The pity of it is that the Secretary for Agriculture never stood up and contradicted the libellous statement that his officers allowed beef to be placed on the market for human consumption that was supposed to be diseased. One has only to read the literature of the militant section of the Labour party to know what their aim and intentions are. This is part of their scheme. That section does and says things which are not in accord with facts and are misleading. If we cannot do so here, we can tell the people that whatever authority is allowed to go in for such a scheme as this, the poor unfortunate ratepayers will have to pay for it, and very little results will be achieved for the people. If a number of the members of the Butchers' Union are out of employment, a notification will be served on the management of the abattoirs, if they are municipally controlled, and work will have to be found for those men. As proof of this statement, I have only to refer to what has been done before. Some time ago a deputation of unemployed waited on the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board, and told the board that it was not their function to find money first, but to find work, and then the money. Although I do believe in abattoirs, I do not stand for the control of abattoirs by the Greater Brisbane Council on similar lines to the State enterprises. It is for that reason I strongly resent giving the Greater Brisbane Council power to control the abattoirs.

Mr. CLAYTON (*Wide Bay*): I am totally opposed to municipal control, especially if the results of State control are any guide. The results of State control have been disastrous to this State, and I am inclined to the opinion that municipal control will have similar results.

I can give some practical information with regard to the milk supply. I happen to be responsible for the delivery of a large quantity of milk which goes into consumption in Maryborough.

There is a suggestion that milkmen should tender to supply the different areas in the city with milk. As one who has had a considerable practical experience I contend that such a scheme will entail a
[2 p.m.] tremendous amount of difficulty in its establishment. I do not want to go into details, but I could give the Minister a great deal of information gained as a result of practical experience, which no doubt would cause him to consider seriously before moving in the direction indicated.

We know that the control of a dairy herd supplying milk to a city comes under three different departments. First of all, there is the Department of Agriculture and Stock, which sends out an officer to look into the sanitation of the dairy and to see that the dairyman complies with the regulations. Then there is the Health Department, which sends an officer to your farm to see that your cattle are in a healthy condition. Finally, there is the Home Secretary's Department, which has a Commissioner of Prices to see that you do not make too much profit out of your herd. It would be in the interests of the producer and the consumer if the control of the milk supply for the city were placed under one department. It is detrimental to the health and general welfare of the community to have conflicting reports from officers of various departments.

In the matter of abattoirs I contend that it would be a move in the right direction if they were established, not under municipal control, but under the co-operative control of those engaged in the industry. The producers or those engaged in the butchering industry could control the supply of meat to the city much better than the municipality. If municipal control is going to be on a par with State control, we shall have a state of affairs existing which will not be in the interests of the consumer. Only the other day when discussing the matter with a Maryborough butcher that butcher pointed out to me that there were no less than five or six different slaughter-yards around the city of Maryborough. If the cattle in that area could all be slaughtered at central abattoirs under Government supervision, the meat could be sold at a much cheaper rate than is the case at present. I advocate the establishment of such a system to cut out the difference between what the producer receives for his meat and what the consumer pays.

The question of abattoirs leads up to the question of State butcher shops. In Maryborough we are not making a success in the matter of serving the public with meat from State butcher shops, and the same condition of affairs will exist in the city of Brisbane if we bring about municipal control. In Maryborough at the present time negotiations are proceeding through a firm of commission agents for the purchase of one of our State butcher shops. One of the firms that is negotiating for the sale of this butcher shop is D. Weir, Maryborough. (Opposition laughter.) He is negotiating for the purchase by a private individual of an existing State butcher shop, and it shows that, if we are going to have men on that side of the Chamber advocating the purchase by private individuals of State butcher shops, the

municipal control of the supply of beef is not going to be the success that hon. members opposite say it will be.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. CLAYTON: I am not going to dwell on this matter very long.

Mr. CARTER: Hear, hear!

Mr. CLAYTON: The hon. member for Port Curtis says, "Hear, hear!" He does not like a few home truths. From the few remarks I have made, it will be seen that if you bring about municipal control of the milk and meat supplies, then you are going to do something that will be detrimental to the people of Brisbane.

Mr. BULCOCK (*Barcoo*): When the hon. member for Toowong addressed himself to the question of the establishment of abattoirs he said that the statement that tubercular and cancerous meat had gone into human consumption in the metropolitan area was a despicable and dastardly assertion. The hon. member for Toowong should verify the statement before coming to this Chamber. His prejudices in favour of private exploitation carry him away and divorce him from his judgment, and the consequence is that he comes here and makes statements without knowing anything of the circumstances of the case that he sets out to discuss. He has challenged the assertion of the Butchers' Union that tubercular and cancerous meat is going into consumption. The hon. member says such is not the fact, that meat inspectors would prevent such a thing, and that the assertion that such meat is going into consumption is an attack on our meat inspectors. The hon. member does not know what he is talking about, and, furthermore, his desire to see perpetuated the present system of public utilities being controlled by private individuals has carried him beyond his depth. I will tell the hon. member of one case that will bear verification. It happened not so very long ago. There was a butcher in Sherwood who took to his shop a quarter of beef that was badly tubercular, and he proceeded to cut up that beef and make it into sausages. The meat inspector appeared on the scene when the quarter was half cut up, and he ordered the removal of the balance of the meat and instituted a prosecution. The butcher was severely penalised for having sold tubercular meat.

Mr. MAXWELL: The inspector came on the scene.

Mr. BULCOCK: The inspector did come on the scene, but not until half the people of Sherwood had eaten tubercular sausages for their breakfast. That is the system the hon. member wants to perpetuate. In this particular instance the culprit was detected after he had sold tubercular meat. There are many such cases where the culprit cannot be detected, because the scattered system of slaughtering makes it impossible for close supervision to be exercised over all the meat that is consumed, and therefore the necessity for the establishment of abattoirs is absolutely apparent to anybody who has no desire to perpetuate a system of private exploitation.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): After listening to the hon. member for Barcoo, one must come to the conclusion that he has had so much to do with microbes that they are crawling all over him. (Laughter.) It is a terrible pity that any member of this Committee should attempt to alarm the public by making statements such as the hon. member has made. One must admit that generally the beef supplied is healthy, and under any conditions—whether under municipal or co-operative control—some unhealthy meat must get through. It is impossible always to detect everything which may be wrong with the meat. Every hon. member stands for an absolutely healthy supply of milk and meat, but what we want to get at is whether those commodities are supplied in the way which is best for the people. I am of opinion, and I stand for it every time, that co-operation, with State or municipal inspection, will be all right. Take the bacon factories, for instance. Nobody thinks we are consuming bad bacon. Everybody knows that the supervision is so strict that the best article possible is put on the market.

Mr. BULCOCK: The pig inspection in Queensland is the worst in the Commonwealth, and you know it.

Mr. MOORE: Not in the factories.

Mr. BULCOCK: Yes; the factory inspection is the worst in the Commonwealth.

Mr. WARREN: I want to give a meed of praise to the men who are doing this sort of work. I have come in contact with the work which is being done, and it speaks well for the Department of Agriculture that these men are always doing their duty. I feel quite sure that we are pretty safe in this respect.

The hon. member for Fitzroy made a statement about milk being a certain age before it is consumed. The hon. member has been wrongly informed. Take the North Coast trains, for instance. Hon. members opposite do not know how the milk comes to the trains. The train starts at a few minutes to seven from Caboolture. There is no milk coming to the city from places north of Caboolture. If milk from the North Coast comes into the city late, it is a case of the people missing the train. Contamination of the milk is not caused by the cans, but is due to other causes. The milk cans are clean. No dairyman would be so foolish as to put good milk into dirty cans. The cans are inspected, and any faulty cans are put aside. The system must be gone into from A to Z. We must not think that by merely discontinuing a certain habit we have got into it is going to make for a good supply of milk. As a matter of fact, Queensland consumes its milk in less time than any other State of the Commonwealth, because 80 per cent. of our milk comes from places within 30 miles of the city. Therefore, from that point of view, we must have a better supply than other people: but we are not so much up to date in our handling of it.

Mr. McLACHLAN (*Merthyr*): When I moved the amendment I did not say much upon it, but suggested that, as we were desirous of securing a better supply of meat and milk by the adoption of more up-to-date methods, it would not meet with opposition from any hon. members. I was surprised, therefore, to see hon. members opposite rising one after the other and talking, as it were, against what is sought to be attained by the amendment. All that the amendment seeks to do is to make it perfectly sure that there will be included in the Bill authority for the Greater Brisbane Council to take full and complete control of abattoirs and also of the milk supply.

I listened to what the hon. member for Toowong had to say about the attitude which is being adopted by the Brisbane City Council and his remarks with regard to some of the members of that council. The city council have gone into this question, and have come to the conclusion that, unless we have a proper system of inspection, there is every likelihood that diseased meat will get into human consumption. The hon. member for Barcoo has disclosed what took place quite recently at Sherwood, and what may take place to-day. There is no desire on the part of anybody to create a scare amongst the people.

Mr. KING: A similar charge was made against the State stations.

Mr. McLACHLAN: The case mentioned by the hon. member for Barcoo was discovered, and the butcher concerned was prosecuted and a heavy penalty imposed upon him. The desire of the city council is that abattoirs shall be established so that the people will be able to get meat as good and wholesome as it is possible to get it. They get it in other States in the Commonwealth where they have abattoirs. The hon. member for Toowong said that diseased meat did not go into human consumption, but I hold in my hand extracts from a report of the Royal Commission which investigated the meat industry in 1912. After going exhaustively into the whole question, they recommended—

> "That there is necessity for establishing abattoirs in popular centres as speedily as possible.
>
> (*a*) The whole of the evidence taken throughout the State demonstrates that until abattoirs are established there cannot be any adequate inspection of stock killed for local consumption, or of the meat that is to be consumed. It is quite safe to assume that not more than 10 per cent. of meat passed into local consumption is inspected in accordance with the Acts and regulations.
>
> (*b*) The medical evidence shows that the consumption of meat affected with tuberculosis and other diseases is a menace to health, and a perusal of the evidence taken in Brisbane and the Southern States very clearly indicates the extent of this danger."

Mr. TAYLOR: Who were the Commission?

Mr. McLACHLAN: The members of the Commission were—Hon. W. H. Campbell, M.L.C. (chairman), Mr. W. W. Hood (manager of Messrs. Birt and Co.), and Mr. G. E. Bunning. Several medical men gave evidence. Dr. Elkington said—

> "In any community purporting to live under civilised conditions public abattoirs are esential to the public safety. Before meat can be regarded as safe for consumption it should be examined both ante and post mortem. It is impossible to carry out such inspection when there are a number of small scattered slaughter-houses, but with abattoirs all inspection is brought under one roof. Both ante and post mortem inspections can then be made, and all organs are available for inspection."

Mr. FRY: A good man, too.

Mr. McLACHLAN: The city council are anxious to get power to establish abattoirs; but, if they cannot get it now, they want to have no doubt that the power is included in the Bill. Dr. Jackson said—

> "Most of the diseases from which we suffer are conveyed by what we eat and what we drink rather than what we breathe."

That is most important. I presume that the report of that commission can be obtained in the library, and hon. members who peruse it will see the great necessity which exists for the establishment of abattoirs. The importance of the question has been recognised by the city council, who have been gathering data through their committee, who have presented their report during the last week. That report, without the use of any extravagant language, shows that a great deal of care is necessary in the handling of the meat supply, and proves the need for the establishment of public abattoirs to bring under municipal control the meat supply of the city.

The daily papers have been commenting on this question ever since it was raised. The "Telegraph" of the 14th instant, in dealing with the matter, said—

> "The construction of abattoirs also will be necessary; the city council places the capital required for new works at £500,000. Now the question has been raised whether the present city council should commit itself to such expenditure, seeing that the Greater Brisbane scheme is to be brought into operation next year. An answer to that is, that the construction of abattoirs is necessary, and if the present council does not obtain legislative authority the hands of the Greater Brisbane Council may be tied, and thus delay be caused."

The Brisbane City Council is hopeful of getting authority to allow it to go on with this work without delay. If it is possible to obtain legislation this session to give effect to it, it will be carried out in the interests of the people of Brisbane. But even if it is not possible to get the legislation through, I believe that there is power under the Local Authorities Act for the Brisbane City Council to do that work. The sooner we construct public abattoirs and institute a milk supply under the control of the Brisbane City Council, the better it will be for the community as a whole.

Amendment (*Mr. McLachlan*) agreed to.

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

> "After line 33, page 16, insert the following new paragraph:—
>
> 'The powers conferred by this subsection shall not include the establishment or carrying on of any trading business or of any industry, unless such industry is carried on solely for the purpose of supplying requirements of the council or is an industry not operating in competition with other similar industries already established within the city.'"

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Committee has just carried an amendment giving the Greater Brisbane Council the power which the hon. member proposes to withhold under this amendment. The amendment, therefore, is not in order.

Clause 35, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 36 to 41, both inclusive, agreed to.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I beg to move the following new clause to follow clause 41:—

"41A. No resolution for borrowing money other than for temporary accommodation as hereinafter provided shall be adopted by the council unless a notice thereof has been published in the 'Gazette,' and also twice in some newspaper, not less than one month nor more than three months before such resolution is adopted, stating the amount of the moneys proposed to be borrowed and the purposes to which the loan is to be applied.

"At any time within one month after the last publication of the notice of a proposition to borrow money, any ratepayers, not being less than one hundred in number, whose names appear in the rate book as owners of rateable land in the city may, by writing under their hands delivered to the mayor or clerk, require that the question whether the money shall be borrowed shall be submitted to a vote of all the electors of the city whose names appear in the rate book as the owners or occupiers of rateable land within the city.

"When such demand has been made, a poll shall be taken of such electors, and if upon such poll being taken the number of votes given against the loan is greater than the number of votes given in favour of the loan, the council shall be forbidden to proceed further with the loan."

Under the Bill the ratepayers will be liable for the loan money which is spent, but will have no say whatever as to whether it shall be spent, neither will they have any means of protecting themselves. Under the old franchise the ratepayers elected the council, and there was not the same justification for a poll as there is now. We know that a large number of people will vote to elect aldermen who will go in for considerable expense, not for the purpose of benefiting the city but to purchase support at election time, and it is desirable that the people who are to be held liable for the repayment of loan money should have a voice in deciding whether it is justifiable or expedient that this money should be raised. Objections may possibly be raised that the refusal to approve of the expenditure of loan money might be the means of blocking works which are in the interests of the city, but the people who have to repay the money and whose property is to be mortgaged by the council should have some say as to whether they consider it is justifiable that this money should be raised. The liability is solely on the occupier or owner of the property. If the electors living within the city had to make good any loss, the objection I have made would not stand; but we know perfectly well that the liability remains on the land. If a tenant vacates a property, the owner has to meet the liability. A section of electors living within a certain district might possibly induce the council to undertake an expensive programme of public works which might not be profitable for some considerable time, if ever. The people who enjoy the benefits of the expenditure of that money might possibly leave Brisbane as soon as the work is completed. There is no liability upon them for the repayment of that money. The liability is on the owners of property within the area. It has been recognised in the Local Authorities Act, and even in the Local Authorities Amendment Act of 1920, that a poll shall be taken on all loan proposals if 10 per cent. of the electors make a request. We made an effort when the Act was being amended in 1920 to have it laid down that ratepayers only should have the privilege of voting on loan proposals. Clause 41 leaves the question of what amount of money shall be borrowed entirely at the discretion of the council. They do not need even to borrow it from the Government.

The HOME SECRETARY: The Greater City Council cannot borrow any money without an Order in Council.

Mr. MOORE: An Order in Council is rather a broken reed to lean upon from the point of view of those liable for the repayment of the money.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MOORE: They are the sole persons that the Government or the debenture holders can levy upon if there is a loss on the enterprises on which the loan money has been spent. We have always stood up for the principle that the people rendered liable for loans shall have the opportunity of saying whether the money shall or shall not be spent. That principle is not only recognised in every Local Authorities Act in the other States, but it is recognised in the New Zealand Act, about which the hon. member for Port Curtis had so much to say. The franchise in New Zealand is not the same as in Queensland, because they recognise the rights of holders of property on which the sole liability of loans rests. The New Zealand Act distinctly says that before a loan can be raised the ratepayers have the right to ask for a poll, and the owners or occupiers, whether living in the area where the poll is taken or not, also have the right to vote. It is generally recognised as being fair and just that these people should have some say on these matters if they so desire.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): The proposed new clause outlined by the leader of the Opposition is one to which the Minister might well give favourable consideration. This Greater Brisbane Council, when constituted, will send out its rate notices to those who have property and who are responsible for finding the money. This new clause does not in any way propose to [2.30 p.m.] emasculate or weaken the Bill in any shape or form. The number of electors or ratepayers who will vote in connection with the matter of raising the loan will be quite considerable. I do not suppose that the number who will have the right to vote will equal those who really have not the right to vote, but a considerable number will be asked to exercise the franchise in connection with the flotation of these loans. I certainly think the Minister should give favourable consideration to the rights of the ratepayers who are responsible for the payment of the money which will be borrowed to carry out the works of the Greater City. As the leader of the Opposition pointed out, provision already exists in the New Zealand Local Authorities Act, and under our present Local Authorities Act those who are responsible for the payment of loan money have the right to say whether a council is justified in raising a particular sum of money for a particular purpose. In the populous part of the Greater City of Brisbane scheme the people who are the

largest payers of taxes will be debarred from having any say in matters connected with the expenditure of loan money. They may not live in the city area, but, considering the amount of money for which they are responsible, those ratepayers should have the right to say whether it is desirable that these loans should be floated or otherwise.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Stopford, *Mount Morgan*): Briefly, the amendment means that a limited franchise will be inserted in the Bill to destroy the broader franchise. In other words, it means that you are going to place the councillors of the Greater City of Brisbane in a worse position than the present city councillors.

Mr. KING: Only for one specific purpose.

The HOME SECRETARY: Only for one specific purpose, and that is what I am dealing with. Under the existing Local Authorities Act it is necessary for 10 per cent. of the people on the roll—not necessarily ratepayers—to initiate a petition before a poll can be taken. Now the leader of the Opposition asks, under a broader Bill, that I should allow 100 ratepayers to have the opportunity of nullifying the whole endeavours of the Greater Brisbane councillors. Hon. members will recollect that in the matter of public health it became absolutely necessary to destroy the principle which hon. members opposite are seeking to establish here, because no council could carry out by a vote of the ratepayers the necessary drainage schemes and other matters necessary in the interests of the general health of the community. The menace to the health of the community became so great that an amendment became necessary to except loans for health purposes from similar provisions to the one we are discussing.

Mr. KING: The Commissioner of Public Health could override the result of a poll.

The HOME SECRETARY: He could under the Health Act, but here hon. gentlemen opposite desire 100 ratepayers to have the power to override the whole of the councillors. The ratepayers have the protection that every loan must be submitted to the Governor in Council, by whom it will be carefully scrutinised. Then take what it would cost to hold a poll in the Greater Brisbane area. I venture to say that a poll could not be taken over the whole of that area for less than £3,000. If the amendment were carried, it would destroy the whole intentions of the Bill, and for that reason I cannot accept it.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): The Home Secretary is not altogether correct. It would not be within the power of 100 ratepayers to override the wishes of the electors. The 100 ratepayers would only initiate the movement.

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes, but it takes 10 per cent. to initiate a movement under the Local Authorities Act.

Mr. KING: They only initiate the movement, and it rests with the remainder of the ratepayers to say whether the money shall be expended or not.

The HOME SECRETARY: One hundred ratepayers could initiate a poll which would cost £3,000. The experience in the Home Office is that nearly every month we get appeals from different local authorities to override the provision in the Health Acts with respect to loans, and the Treasury Department is continually getting requests to grant loans without a poll.

Mr. KING: We know there will be objections every day if the people are to be asked to pay increased taxation. After all is said and done, it is not asking the Home Secretary for very much when you consider that the population in the area covered by this Bill is somewhere in the vicinity of 240,000.

The HOME SECRETARY: According to your argument a Government loan ought to be subject to the same provision.

Mr. KING: No. We have a population of 240,000 in this larger area proposed to be covered by this Bill, and of that number we know that 63,432 are ratepayers. That is to say, practically one-quarter of the people are ratepayers, and a number of these ratepayers have families. It would only be a very small minority who are really not ratepayers or connected with ratepayers, and the leader of the Opposition is making a perfectly fair request when he asks that those people who have to find the money should be consulted as to whether they are willing to bear the burden or not. It is a very easy thing for a certain section to come along and say, "You have to foot the bill for £5,000 or £10,000. The liability is yours, but we think the expenditure of that money will be for the good of the area, although we may only be here to-day and gone to-morrow." The permanent residents who are the people who have an interest in the locality, should have a say as to whether they are prepared to bear such a liability or not. The liability is theirs. They cannot pass it on to anybody else, and I say the request made by the leader of the Opposition is a perfectly legitimate one.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): The request of the leader of the Opposition that the ratepayers who have to bear the burden should have a say in the expenditure of the loan money is a fair and reasonable one. We have to recognise that the owners of property have to carry the liability. The question is one which should receive some consideration at the hands of the Government. The Minister says that there is sufficient power under this Bill, and that the power to borrow is subject to the consent of the Governor in Council. Under some conditions that may be sufficient, but in these days there are great forces in operation, and these forces have considerable control over the Government. Only a little while ago we were discussing a clause in the Bill, and the reply of the Premier to a deputation from the city council in regard to abattoirs was referred to. The "Daily Standard" wants to know whether the decision of the Premier is to be final. What would the position be if the Greater Brisbane City Council, under this new constitution, should propose to borrow certain moneys, and the Premier came along and said, "No, gentlemen, I do not think it is in the interests of the municipality that this burden should be placed on the property within the area"? We would find the "Daily Standard" coming out with an article, as it has done this afternoon, in which they take exception to the position taken up by the Premier yesterday. It says that the Premier must not stand in the way, and it calls upon the Cabinet to take some action. The article states—

> "Therefore we appeal to the Cabinet to review his decision at once; if Cabinet

fails, it becomes a caucus responsibility. If caucus takes no notice, then it will be high time that organised labour did."

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. ROBERTS: I want to show that that is the doctrine which is being established under these conditions. If the Bill becomes law without the amendment of the leader of the Opposition, these powers will all be qualified by the men outside who dominate the Labour party. If the Premier of the day or the Governor in Council is not prepared to obey their dictates, then pressure will be brought to bear. This morning, for instance, the 44-Hour Week Bill was brought in.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I must ask the hon. member to obey my call to order. He must deal with the amendment.

Mr. ROBERTS: Those are reasons why this provision should be included in the Bill. It is not sufficient that a man who has come along looking for work, and who only stays in the district for a month or two, should have the right to say what the indebtedness of the municipality is going to be. I think that the amendment, which provides for an owner or occupier of the property having a vote, should be accepted.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*): I support the amendment of the leader of the Opposition. My view of the matter is that at present those whose properties are practically mortgaged to the local authorities for loans which may be incurred have no voice in saying what work shall be proceeded with. We may have an example of a local authority in its dying days wanting to go in for some scheme of building construction or something else under the Bill, and it may want to spend anything up to £500,000. The people who have to put their properties in pawn practically have no voice in the matter. Then again, when we say we want to give the people an opportunity of saying "Yea" or "Nay" to a proposition, there may be outside influences which want to show their strength. The political organisation of the party in power at the time may come along and say, "You must carry out our policy." We do not want that positon to arise, and the amendment is only a fair proposal. I venture to say that the Minister would fight very hard indeed for his property to see that a fair and decent thing was done. My contention is that it is not a fair proposal to ask people who have great interests to let other people decide what shall be done in the way of loans and loan rating, and, after all, the rating is on the unimproved value of the property, and the security is the property which has been placed in the custody of the local authority for that purpose. Should the owners of that property not have some say in deciding whether a loan is necessary or not? Surely the Home Secretary will see the justice of the request.

The HOME SECRETARY: The Commissioner of Public Health has power to require a local authority to do work.

Mr. MAXWELL: We know very well that the Commissioner has full power in that respect. The Health Act had to be amended in connection with a certain health matter at Ithaca; nevertheless it is only a fair thing to give the ratepayers an opportunity of saying whether a number of aldermen or councillors shall go in for a lot of schemes such as have been undertaken by the Government. I ask the Minister to consider the amendment favourably. During the debate we have heard a lot about the advice which has been tendered by local authorities and the desirableness of paying attention to it. Here we have the president of the Local Authorities' Association, who is the leader of the Opposition, and the secretary of the association, who is the deputy leader of the Opposition, speaking with no uncertain voice. Surely then, in the face of the statement which he has already made on the floor of this Chamber, the Minister is not going to remain silent and pay no attention to their opinions? Have we not some rights? Have not the people whom we represent some rights? The hon. gentleman knows that we represent a majority of the people, and I say that undoubtedly the amendment is justified.

Mr. WRIGHT: It is not a good amendment.

Mr. MAXWELL: In the opinion of the hon. member it may not be, but he has had no experience. What is the good of an amateur coming here and attempting to dictate to those who have had experience?

Mr. WRIGHT: I have had experience.

Mr. MAXWELL: The hon. member would set his opinion against that of experienced men who have done the pioneering work in local government, and who say that, unless this amendment is accepted, the Bill will not make for the advancement of the city.

Question—That the proposed new clause (*Mr. Moore's amendment*) be inserted—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 22.

Mr. Appel	Mr. Logan
,, Bell	,, Maxwell
,, Clayton	,, Moore
,, Corser	,, Morgan
,, Costello	,, Nott
,, Deacon	,, Roberts
,, Edwards	,, Sizer
,, Fry	,, Swayne
,, Kelso	,, Taylor
,, Kerr	,, Vowles
,, King	,, Warren

Tellers: Mr. Costello and Mr. Logan.

NOES, 32.

Mr. Barber	Mr. Hynes
,, Bedford	,, Jones
,, Bertram	,, Kirwan
,, Bulcock	,, Larcombe
,, Carter	,, Lloyd
,, Collins	,, McCormack
,, Cooper, F. A.	,, McLachlan
,, Cooper, W.	,, Mullan
,, Dash	,, Payne
,, Dunstan	,, Riordan
,, Farrell	,, Ryan
,, Foley	,, Smith
,, Gillies	,, Stopford
,, Gledson	,, Theodore
,, Hanson	,, Winstanley
,, Hartley	,, Wright

Tellers: Mr. Hartley and Mr. Lloyd.

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Barnes, G. P.	Mr. Bruce
,, Petrie	,, Wilson
,, Peterson	,, Pease

Resolved in the negative.

Clause 42—"*Overdraft*"—agreed to.

Mr. Maxwell.]

Clause 43—"*Rating powers*"—

Mr. KELSO (*Yundah*): I beg to move the following amendment:—

"After line 8, page 20, insert the following new paragraph:—

'An ordinance shall be made prescribing that special rates shall be levied upon the ratepayers in each of the areas which will, on the first day of October, 1925, be comprised within the city, of such amounts, respectively, as will provide for the payment of interest on and the redemption in ten years of the indebtedness on account of loans existing in respect of such areas, respectively, on the first day of October, 1925.'"

[3 p.m.]

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member's amendment is not in order, as the principle which he seeks to have admitted has already been negatived by the rejection of an amendment moved by the leader of the Opposition on clause 32.

Clause 43 agreed to.

Clauses 44, 45, and 46 agreed to.

Mr. McLACHLAN (*Merthyr*): I beg to move the insertion of the following clause, to follow clause 46:—

"CONTROL OF TRAFFIC.

"On and after a date to be fixed by the Governor in Council, by Order in Council, the council shall have and be charged with the control, management, and direction of traffic within the city, and thereupon the following provisions shall be applicable:—

"(1.) Without limiting its general power to make ordinances under this Act, the council is expressly empowered to make all such ordinances under this Act as it deems proper relating to traffic within the city.

"On and after the date on which the council has made any such ordinances, none of the provisions of the Traffic Acts, 1905 to 1916, or any regulations made thereunder, shall extend to or have any force within the city.

"Until the council has made any such ordinances, the city shall be deemed to be a district within the meaning of the said Acts, and the council shall administer the said Acts and all regulations made thereunder and in force for the time being.

"(2.) The Minister charged with the administration of the Traffic Acts, 1905 to 1916, and the Commissioner of Police and members of the police force shall cease to be charged with the administration of the said Acts and regulations so far as the same relate to the city.

"(3.) Nothing in this section or the said Order in Council contained shall be construed to prejudice or affect the powers, authority, and jurisdiction of the Main Roads Board under the Main Roads Act of 1920 and its several amendments, and for the purposes of the administration of those Acts the council shall be deemed to be a local authority."

When I spoke on the second reading of the Bill, I urged the need for the Greater City Council to have control of traffic. Noticing that the word "traffic" occurred under the heading of the general powers of the Greater City Council, I was of the opinion, in the first instance, that that council would have control of traffic, but on inquiry I found that to get that control it would be necessary to repeal the Traffic Acts, 1905 to 1910.

Mr. KING: Have we not power under this Bill to control it?

Mr. McLACHLAN: No. I am advised by the Home Secretary's Department, who have consulted the Parliamentary Draftsman, that we have not that power. That is why I bring forward this amendment, so that the Greater City Council may have power to control traffic. The need for the Greater City Council to have control of traffic within the city boundaries is apparent to everybody. There was a time when traffic of Brisbane was under what was called a "Transit Commission," but the powers of that body were not sufficient to enable them to do everything necessary for the control of traffic. When the Greater City Council control our traffic, they must have the same full powers which the police have at present.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I would like to ask you, Mr. Pollock, whether this amendment will not increase the charge on the consolidated revenue. The amendment proposes to take the control of traffic out of the hands of the police, and in my opinion it will add to the expenditure that was contemplated when the Bill was introduced.

The CHAIRMAN: I am of opinion that the amendment will not increase the charge on the consolidated revenue.

Mr. KELSO (*Yundah*): The hon. member for Merthyr says there is no express power in the Bill to control the traffic.

Mr. McLACHLAN: I was advised to that effect.

Mr. KELSO: Well, clause 35, subclause (3) reads—

"Without limiting the generality of its powers, the council shall have and possess express powers in relation to the following matters . . . and generally all works, matters, and things in its opinion necessary or conducive to the good government of the city and the well-being of its inhabitants."

It seems to me that under that the council will have power to undertake anything it likes.

Mr. McLACHLAN: I thought the power was there, but I am advised by the Parliamentary Draftsman that it is not.

The HOME SECRETARY: The Parliamentary Draftsman advises me that it would have to be done by ordinance, and the council cannot make an ordinance which conflicts with a State Act of Parliament. That is why it is necessary to make the provision here.

Mr. KELSO: It opens up a big subject. Some other State Acts might be found to be conflicting, and it means that from time to time an alteration in this Act will be necessary.

The HOME SECRETARY: Every other power is there.

Mr. KELSO: It is to be hoped that the Minister is right and that all other matters are catered for, but it seems to me that

from time to time the Act will have to be altered so that it will not conflict with existing Acts of Parliament. If this amendment is passed, it will neutralise the effect of the State Act so far as traffic is concerned and give to the Greater City of Brisbane power to control the traffic within its area.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is right.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): In reply to the leader of the Opposition, Mr. Pollock, you said that this amendment would not increase the charge on the consolidated revenue. I am not going to discuss that aspect of the case, but it does appeal to me that under present conditions the object is to get the traffic right throughout the State under the control of the police. At the present time the police collect certain registration fees and so on, and I can see that the control of traffic in Brisbane has been a profitable concern to the State. I do not know whether, if this amendment is passed, the police will still continue to collect these registration fees or not. I have a very high opinion of the police with regard to the control of traffic, but I do not know what are the ideas of the member for Merthyr in this regard. I have seen the police in this State and I have seen them in the other States, and I have a very high opinion of the police of this State. I do not know whether, if this amendment is agreed to, the Greater City Council will make some arrangements with the police to control the traffic and pay them a certain fee, or whether they will appoint their own officers. If we are going to take away the control of the traffic from the police, we are not acting wisely or in the interests of the general community.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I do not see the need for the amendment. Clause 35, subclause (3) states—

> "Without limiting the generality of its powers, the council shall have and possess express powers in relation to the following matters:—The provision, construction, maintenance, management, control, and regulation of the use of roads, bridges, tunnels, ferries, subways, viaducts, culverts, and other means of public communication."

Then, later on, it goes further and says the council shall also have power to control permanently or temporarily—

> "Markets; baths and bathing places; tramways, motor omnibuses, omnibuses, and other means of public transportation; traffic."

The HOME SECRETARY: And tramways and sewerage.

Mr. TAYLOR: I do not see any reason for the amendment being brought in, because subclause (5) of the same clause says—

> "The council may do any acts not otherwise unlawful which may be necessary to the proper exercise and performance of its powers and duties under this Act or under any other Act conferring powers or imposing duties on the council."

The HOME SECRETARY: I asked the Parliamentary Draftsman if it would not be necessary to put in a specific statement that the ordinance should not be subject to an Act of Parliament, and he said it was not necessary.

Mr. TAYLOR: I do not think any of us have any complaints to make about the way our traffic is controlled.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Hear, hear!

Mr. TAYLOR: If you are going to improve the system of regulating the traffic as it is carried on at the present time, there may be some reason for the amendment, otherwise I do not see any reason for it.

The HOME SECRETARY: One of the biggest problems we have to face to-day is the parking of motor-cars.

Mr. TAYLOR: There is provision already in the Bill to do that.

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

Clause 47—"*Fire Brigades*"—

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*): I desire to move the following amendments in subclause (4):—

> "On line 47, page 22, omit the word—
> 'If,'
> and after the word 'Council,' insert the word—
> 'shall.'
> In the same line omit the words—
> 'determines to.'
> "On line 50, page 22, after the word 'Council,' omit the word—
> 'then,'
> and insert the word—
> 'and.'
> "On line 51, page 22, after the word 'ordinance,' omit the word—
> 'may.'
> and insert the word—
> 'shall.'
> "On line 55, page 22, after the word 'Companies,' insert the words—
> 'The number of associated members allowed under any such ordinance to represent the aforesaid insurance companies shall not be less than three-sevenths of the total number of members of such standing committee, including such associated members.'"

The clause will then read—

> "The council shall by ordinance delegate the administration of the said Acts and by-laws or of any ordinance made in respect to the like matters, to a standing committee of the council, and such ordinance shall provide for the election by insurance companies liable to contribute towards the expenses of the council under this Act of the member or members to act as associated members of such standing committee and represent such insurance companies. The number of associated members allowed under any such ordinance to represent the aforesaid insurance companies shall not be less than three-sevenths of the total number of members of such standing committee, including such associated members."

I take it that hon. members on the other side must realise that that is a fair proposition. The insurance companies are taxed, but the Bill merely says that they may be represented on the standing committee dealing with fire brigades. It is not mandatory. It is possible that the insurance companies may be called upon to bear three-sevenths of the cost of the fire brigades without any representation. Under the Fire Brigades Act

of 1920 the Treasurer and the insurance companies contribute, together with the local authorities, to the upkeep of the brigades, and they all have representations on the boards. That is reasonable, but this Bill leaves it to the council to say whether the fire insurance companies shall be represented or not. They might find it convenient to tax the companies without giving them any representation. That would be a huge injustice. If it is not the intention of the new council to levy upon the insurance companies, then there is no need for the amendment; but at the same time there is a possibility that they will be called upon to contribute as much as three-sevenths of the money required for the maintenance of the brigades, and for that reason I ask that the clause be amended in the way I suggest.

The HOME SECRETARY: I will accept the hon. member's amendments.

Amendments (*Mr. Maxwell*) agreed to.

Clause 47, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 48 and 49 agreed to.

Clause 50—"*Brisbane Tramway Trust*"—

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*): I want to voice my objection to the tramways not being taken over immediately, as extensions are required in my electorate. It is well known that tramway construction has been neglected in the electorate of Kurilpa. Not only does that apply to my electorate, but it applies also to the electorate of Nundah and other electorates round about Brisbane. The services in the Kurilpa electorate are not as they should be. The length of tramway in the electorate is very short, and the people there pay more comparatively than anybody else. The terminus of the line is in Hardgrave road, where the trams stop for a long time. The population has increased to such an extent round the river bend as to warrant the extension of the line to Gray road, Hill End, and a bridge should be constructed to take the line across the river to St. Lucia. The section cars at present run as far as Vulture street, where they remain sometimes for five, seven, and ten minutes. In the time they remain there they could easily run along Boundary street to Paradise street, if the line was extended in that direction, where they would be of great service to a considerable number of people. Between Vulture street and Dornoch terrace there is a steep hill in Boundary street. During the hot weather it is bad enough for young people to have to climb the hill, but it has a very serious effect on old people. The tramways should be made as serviceable as possible.

Then a direct link from West End to Woolloongabba should be constructed. Anyone who wants to go from West End to Woolloongabba must proceed from West End to Victoria Bridge, and possibly over to town and catch a car going to Woolloongabba. That means a needless waste of time and money, which could be obviated by a little attention.

There is also the question of the construction of a tramline in Montague road to be considered. The objections that could be advanced against the running of heavy trains along Montague road cannot be advanced against the running of trams for the purpose of carrying merchandise to and from the industries which are springing up in that thoroughfare. In Sydney the tramways haul a lot of merchandise during the night time.

We heard a good deal about the construction of a branch railway line to Montague road, and its construction was virtually promised by the Government at the last election, but in the end they said they had not the money to construct it. By handing over the tramways to the city council, and allowing those who have a greater interest in the various districts to control them, better results might be secured. If the district has direct representation on the city council, especially if the representative be a Nationalist, it will be better served than if represented by a person who has to obey the dictates of someone else. I am voicing the needs of my electorate, and I wish to make this emphatic protest against the non-completion of the tramway extensions I have mentioned.

Clause 50 agreed to.

Clause 51—"*Provision for Enlargement of the City*"—

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

"On line 4, page 27, after the word—

'case,'

insert the word—

'and.'"

Amendment (*Mr. Stopford*) agreed to.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 52 and 53, and Schedules I. and II., agreed to.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with amendments.

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

[3.30 p.m.]

COTTON INDUSTRY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

COMMITTEE.

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

Clause 1—"*Short title and construction of Act*"—agreed to.

Clause 2—"*Amendments to Principal Act*"—

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

"On line 5, page 2, after the word—

'cotton,'

insert the words—

'Provided that ratoon cotton shall not be acquired unless and until at a poll of the cotton-growers held as prescribed, a majority of such growers have voted in favour of such acquisition of ratoon cotton.'"

The idea of the amendment is to provide that ratoon shall not be included in the Bill, and therefore shall not come under the provisions and the operations of the British-Australian Cotton Association, Limited. At the present time the agreement really applies to cotton that is seed cotton, and there has been no provision for ratoon cotton because the Government had previously prohibited its growth. This amendment is of interest to the growers, not only as to the value of the lint, but more particularly in

the matter of the value of the seed. If ratoon cotton is excluded from this clause, the acquisition of ratoon cotton will not come about, and the growers will have an opportunity, by their own votes, of saying whether or not they shall directly handle it. The amendment has a direct bearing, inasmuch as cotton seed is a very valuable commodity. The agreement provided that the British-Australian Cotton Association should pay only £1 per ton for cotton seed last year, and £1 10s. per ton this year. That cotton seed is worth £4 or £5 per ton to the farmers. If ratoon cotton is not included in the agreement, the growers will have an opportunity of managing and controlling the ginning and marketing of ratoon cotton.

Mr. HARTLEY: Would not that mean that they would have to erect new ginneries?

Mr. CORSER: Not necessarily. Several ginneries were idle last year, and it is quite possible that the ratoon farmers could acquire the use of one of those ginneries for the year—of course, with the consent of the Minister and the British-Australian Cotton Association They could arrange to pay a rental for the ginnery. Of course, that would be subject to the approval of the Minister and the consent of the British-Australian Cotton Association. If the Minister is not the dictator in this matter, who is? The hon. gentleman has taken a wrong attitude. If he is not going to deal with the matter, as we hope he will, from a common sense and dispassionate point of view, it will certainly mean that somebody will say things that will not be in the best interests of the grower. It will be agreed that we are at some little disadvantage in discussing this amendment at the present moment, because Senator Massy Greene, Mr. Macgregor, and others just at present are putting forward certain propositions as a basis for negotiations with the cotton-growers, and that might alter the tone of our argument. We can only view the agreement as it is to-day, and not what it might be after the farmers have met and after a certain vote has been taken. The Bill makes it possible for the cotton-grower to grow ratoon cotton, and we can only assume that this ratoon cotton is going to be included in the agreement and ginned by the powers that support the growing of seedling cotton. My amendment provides that this ratoon cotton shall not be included with the seedling cotton, and that the farmers shall have an opportunity of taking a vote—which is provided for—to decide whether they shall control it or not.

Mr. HARTLEY: Would not your amendment affect the negotiations that are going on at the present time?

Mr. CORSER: No, because, if the negotiations are successful at all, they are going to be successful through the fact that the grower will have control, and we are asking that the grower shall have control of ratoon cotton. The Minister, the Government, and the British-Australian Cotton Association—all of whom will have some say in the handling of this class of cotton—have claimed that it is not a marketable commodity; they have claimed that it is not legal tender; that it is not a good asset to the State; and they have banned it right along. Why should those of us who have convinced the Government of the necessity to amend the law—though they have not amended their consciences in the matter—give to the enemy of ratoon cotton the right to handle that product when, to prove that they were right, they must prove that ratoon cotton is not a valuable commodity? The grower is the man concerned. He has claimed that it is a valuable commodity, and he has proved that it is a valuable commodity, and surely it would be better to give him the handling of that commodity. The amendment does not say we are going to give it to him. It merely asks that the growers be given an opportunity to take a vote on the matter, which is a very reasonable request.

Mr. CLAYTON (*Wide Bay*): I do not think that any Government claiming to be democratic can object to the amendment. I hope that, if the Minister has a democratic feeling towards the cotton industry, he will agree to a poll being taken and a majority of the growers being allowed to decide this ratoon question. Last session a great deal of time was taken up in discussing this all-important question, and recently it has been proved that ratoon cotton is of commercial value; but, instead of taking the onus upon ourselves, we want to do the democratic thing and give the growers an opportunity to express their opinion as to the wisdom or otherwise of growing ratoon cotton. I do not think you can go past the experience of the practical cotton-growers in Queensland. They have proved by practical experience that ratoon cotton is of commercial value.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member will not be in order in dealing with the growth of ratoon cotton. The principle of the acquisition of ratoon cotton is the question involved in the amendment.

Mr. CLAYTON: Our climatic conditions have proved that it is necessary that an amendment such as this should be introduced. Do you rule, Mr. Pollock, that I cannot discuss ratoon cotton under this amendment, which reads—

> "Provided that ratoon cotton shall not be acquired unless and until at a poll of the cotton-growers held as prescribed, a majority of such growers have voted in favour of such acquisition of ratoon cotton?"

The CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member had listened, he would know that I said he would not be in order in dealing with anything other than the question of the acquisition of ratoon cotton on the amendment.

Mr. CLAYTON: We have proved that the acquisition of ratoon cotton has been a move in the right direction, and that ratoon cotton is of commercial value. The benefits to be obtained from the acquisition of ratoon cotton have been proved through the organisation of the Cotton Growers' Union in Central Queensland. I think that the Minister in introducing the Bill, and the hon. member for Burnett in moving his amendment, have indicated that the acquisition of ratoon cotton is desirable. I have pleasure in supporting the amendment.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): Seeing what has happened during the past twelve months through the agitation which has been brought about in connection with the growing of ratoon cotton, it is not right that the acquisition of ratoon cotton should be undertaken by the Government. The ratoonists all

through fought what may be called a lone hand. They have had to fight the prejudice which has been raised by the spinners in the old country. They have also had to recognise the fact that in certain parts of the world ratoon cotton has not been looked upon as a marketable commodity, and was not likely to bring a favourable price. Hitherto those who grew ratoon cotton were breaking the law. The Government have now thought fit to bring in a Bill for the purpose of making the growing of ratoon cotton lawful. They are also bringing in an amending measure for the purpose of acquiring the ratoon cotton which up to the present has not been looked upon as something which could be lawfully grown or sold. Now that the Minister has decided that ratoon cotton can be grown under certain conditions, I think the ratoonists should have an opportunity of being able to record a vote, if they so desire, as to whether the Government shall acquire ratoon cotton or not. It seems only a fair and democratic proposition.

I hope that the Minister will agree to the amendment which has been moved by the hon. member for Burnett, and before the British-Australian Cotton Association is allowed to gin the cotton give the growers an opportunity of voting on the question of whether the cotton should be acquired, or of deciding whether they can do better in some other way. We have had twelve months' experieince of what may be done and of the working of the agreement with the British-Australian Cotton Association, and there is a great diversity of opinion amongst the cotton-growers as to whether we have adopted the proper course by entering into the agreement with regard to plant cotton. After the experience we have had in the case of plant cotton, the growers should be in a position to say whether it is right to allow the British-Australian Cotton Association to gin ratoon cotton. It might be much better for the growers of ratoon cotton to strike out on their own without any control by the association or the Government. It might be better for them to gin it and market it, and show in that way that it is possible to grow ratoon cotton profitably. If that can be done by the growers of ratoon cotton, it will be a good thing for all the cotton-growers of Queensland. I trust that the Minister will give these men an opportunity of controlling their own industry, as it were, without any interference by the British-Australian Cotton Association, and, if they wish, show that they are capable of having it dealt with in such a way that it will be equal to if not superior to plant cotton. The Bill does not say what advance can be made on ratoon cotton.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We are not making any advance at all.

Mr. MORGAN: It is left entirely in the hands of the Minister, and, if this amendment is carried, it will allow the growers of ratoon cotton, with the knowledge that no advance is guaranteed, to vote for the acquisition of their cotton by the Government and its ginning by the British-Australian Cotton Association or to vote in favour of another plan. If they desire to gin their own cotton and market it, it is only a fair thing that they should be allowed to do so, more especially when it is doing no injury or damage to the rest of the community. The Government would be quite justified in taking over ratoon cotton if the growers agreed by a poll, but it must be recognised that the Government would not be doing the right thing if the growers themselves desired to gin and market their own cotton. That is a very important question. An agreement has been entered into by the Government with respect to cotton seed, and the agreement has been in operation for some time.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MORGAN: If the amendment is carried, then the ratoon cotton-growers will be able to use the seed that they obtain from ratoon cotton if they so desire. The people are beginning to recognise the value of cotton seed as fodder for dairy stock.

Mr. COLLINS: Has the hon. gentleman fed his cattle on it?

Mr. MORGAN: Yes; cattle will do exceptionally well on it.

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

Mr. MORGAN: I want to show that if the amendment is carried, the ratoonist will be able to handle the seed as he desires, and if it is not carried, the seed from the ratoon cotton will go into the possession of the British-Australian Cotton Association. That is a very important factor, and one which has actuated the hon member for Burnett in moving the amendment.

Mr. BULCOCK: What process would the seed have to go through when being used for fodder?

Mr. MORGAN: I have fed stud cattle on the seed, and it is not necessary to put it through any process whatever. At first I boiled it, and then I found that there was no necessity to boil it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Only a small quantity would be used for that purpose.

Mr. MORGAN: The fattening quality of cotton seed is superior to that of maize. It is no good for pigs or horses, but it can be given without treatment to animals that chew the cud.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I shall ask the hon. gentleman to resume his seat if he does not deal with the amendment.

Mr. MORGAN: One reason for the amendment is the fact that the grower of ratoon cotton will be able to use his seed as he desires, and that is why I argue that the grower should be allowed to take a poll. One of the reasons why the growers would vote against handing over ratoon cotton is the fact that the seed is a valuable commodity.

Mr. FARRELL: Yet the growers are asking for an advance against their ratoon cotton.

Mr. MORGAN: I suppose some of them have asked for an advance against the ratoon cotton that was grown illegally. If the ratoon cotton-growers decide to vote against the Government acquiring the ratoon cotton, they do it with the full knowledge that they can obtain no advance from the Government. No Government would allow them an advance if they could not handle the commodity. I certainly think that no harm can be done by allowing the cotton-growers to control their own industry, and this is a step in that direction. If the

amendment is carried, the ratoon cotton-growers can utilise their own cotton seed and market their own ratoon cotton as they desire, and will have the right to handle their commodity in the same way as they handle all other products of their farms. I hope the Minister will accept the amendment.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): I hope the amendment will not be accepted. I cannot understand hon. members opposite, who ought to be in touch with the position, moving and supporting the amendment at this stage.

Mr. EDWARDS: Why not let the farmers control their own commodity?

Mr. HARTLEY: They can control it under certain conditions.

Mr. CLAYTON: Price-fixing conditions.

Mr. HARTLEY: If I understand the position rightly, the growers are a bit afraid now that they have too much control of their own commodity. That doubt has arisen in their minds since the Government have stepped aside.

Mr. CORSER: The Government have not stepped aside.

Mr. CLAYTON: The Government have side-stepped the question.

Mr. HARTLEY: The Government in introducing this amending Bill are stepping aside and giving permission to growers to grow ratoon cotton under certain conditions. This amendment would have three bad effects if it was inserted. Firstly, it would prevent the Government from making any guarantee.

Mr. CORSER: They are not making a guarantee.

Mr. HARTLEY: It would prevent them from doing so.

Mr. CORSER: The Government say they will not give a guarantee. The Minister will tell you that.

Mr. HARTLEY: The Government have been asked by the growers to give a guarantee.

Mr. CORSER: The Minister will tell you that there is no guarantee for ratoon cotton. The Government refused to give a guarantee.

Mr. HARTLEY: The growers of ratoon asked for a guaranteed price. It does not matter whether they have been refused on the first time of their asking. The amendment, secondly, would throw upon the ratoon growers the responsibility of ginning, marketing, and selling their cotton before getting any return at all. It would prevent the Minister giving them an advance price. They would be left at the mercy of the banks to finance their crops. If the amendment is not carried the Minister will have power to make an advance on the ratoon crop. As the position stands at present, ratoon cotton is part of the product which will be handled by the British-Australian Cotton Association. The third reason why the amendment should not be accepted is because the grower of ratoon cotton would have no possibility of getting his crop ginned until he built or obtained permission to build a cotton gin, or waited until after the annual cotton season had finished and made terms with the British-Australian Cotton Association to gin his crop. That is an undesirable position, and is not one that the majority of ratoon cotton growers want to take up.

Mr. EDWARDS: Why not give them a vote on the question?

Mr. HARTLEY: I am satisfied that they do not want to vote on it.

Mr. CORSER: They do.

Mr. HARTLEY: I have been in touch with a good few cotton-growers in the Central District, which is one of the largest cotton-growing districts in Queensland, and I know that, since the growers have got permission to grow ratoon cotton, they are fairly content. I do not say they have got all they want. This is one of those things where the growers did not quite see where they were [4 p.m.] going. They first asked to be allowed to grow ratoon cotton, and now they ask to have the right to market their own cotton. We must consider what effect this amendment would have on the present arrangement between the cotton-growers and the British Australian Cotton Association. Negotiations are at present going on for the taking over by the cotton-growers of the whole of the plant and the assets of the British-Australian Cotton Association, Limited. That is on the understanding that things remain as they are, and not as they would be if this big section of the crop were withdrawn from the operations of the association. Such a step would immediately affect the whole position, and the negotiations would have to be gone over again. Even as things are it is going to be a very difficult thing for the two parties to come together.

Mr. FARRELL: Particularly in view of the 8 per cent. interest.

Mr. HARTLEY: Yes, particularly when they are asked to pay 8 per cent. on their purchase debentures.

Mr. CORSER: They have not decided to pay it yet.

Mr. HARTLEY: No, and, if the hon. member's amendment is accepted, it will complicate the position and prevent any decision being arrived at. I am afraid of the position even as it is at present. I am afraid the growers have become a little frightened.

Mr. EDWARDS: My word, they have!

Mr. HARTLEY: Yes, and hon. members opposite are responsible for that. After 1926 the Government will not extend the cotton agreement. That will cause the growers either to make their own negotiations with the British-Australian Cotton Association to gin their crop, leaving them at the mercy of the association to dictate any terms they like or having to face the alternative of taking over the whole of the plant of the association. I am very much afraid they will be forced into taking over these assets without giving due regard to writing them down to set off the over-capitalisation of the association and the extravagant management of the ginneries. That is one of the effects this amendment would have on the present position, and I think the hon. member for Burnett would be wise to withdraw the amendment. I cannot see that the hon. member is going to help the grower of ratoon cotton in any way. With the amending Bill as it stands the grower will have the right to go to the Minister and ask for an advance against his crop to carry him over the period while his crop is being ginned and marketed. The ginning and marketing of the crop will be

carried out by the British-Australian Cotton Association, Limited. I take it that that will be the case, as all cotton in Queensland will come under the scope of the agreement until 1926. To take this specific class of cotton from the scope of the treatment of the association and the Minister will leave the grower of ratoon cotton right up in the air, both as regards the advance over his cotton and the facilities available for ginning his crop. I hope the amendment will be defeated.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): I am surprised at the opposition to this amendment. I was hoping to see the Minister get up and accept it. Until this amending Bill was launched ratoon cotton was banned, and now this Bill makes ratoon cotton one of the cottons to be taken over by the British-Australian Cotton Association, Limited. The object of the amendment is to make it optional for the farmer either to handle his own cotton or to hand it over to the association. When all the circumstances are taken into consideration it is quite possible that the growers may prefer to handle the ratoon cotton themselves.

There has been a very pronounced opinion expressed by the British-Australian Cotton Association against ratoon cotton, and, although there is now a probability of their taking over the control of ratoon cotton, at the same time there is room for apprehension that their treatment of that cotton may not be altogether sympathetic. It is only natural that the growers should have that feeling, and all the amendment proposes to do is to leave it at the option of the growers as to whether ratoon cotton shall be taken over by the British-Australian Cotton Association or whether they will control it themselves. I note that the Commonwealth Government have appropriated certain moneys for the encouragement of exports, and they are prepared to make an advance of 80 per cent. of the value of some primary products exported from Australia. In view of that assistance, the cotton-growers might say, "We will export our ratoon cotton ourselves. We will take advantage of the advance that can be obtained from the Commonwealth Government on exports, and under the circumstances it is to our interests that we should control the ratoon cotton ourselves." What objection can the Minister have to that? It is in keeping with what has been urged throughout the farming districts for some considerable time—that the producers in any particular industry should have control of their own product. The amendment simply leaves it to the growers to say whether they want the ratoon cotton to be dealt with by the same people who are handling seed cotton, or whether that ratoon cotton shall be controlled by themselves. I can see no objection to that. I think it is a fair request for the growers to make, and I am quite sure that the growers will be in favour of a provision of that kind.

Mr. LOGAN (*Lockyer*): I am in favour of the amendment, and I would like to see the Minister accept it. At the present time there is no provision in regard to the control of ratoon cotton, consequently it is reasonable that the growers should be allowed to control that commodity themselves.

The hon. member for Fitzroy raised certain objections to the amendment. He said that it would prevent the Government from giving a guarantee. I cannot see that it is going to prevent the Government from giving a guarantee if they so desire. By this amendment we are asking that ratoon cotton shall not be controlled by the British-Australian Cotton Association until a vote has been taken by the growers, and they signify their willingness to the control being taken by the British-Australian Cotton Association. Personally, I would like to see the farmers control it themselves, because in such an event they would be able to utilise the seed for their own purposes. At the present time the British-Australian Cotton Association are getting the profits out of the seed which I think the farmers themselves should have a right to. I would like to see the Minister accept the amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Kacham*): I have no intention of accepting the amendment. It is well for the Committee, without going into details, just to get a grasp of the position. The object of the Bill is to remove the ban on ratoon cotton and allow it to be grown under certain conditions, this makes it quite clear that it comes within the agreement. It will be ginned under the agreement, and it will be possible also for the Government to make reasonable advances to enable the farmers to market their cotton. The clause provides for the repeal of the words "seed cotton," and the insertion of the words "annual cotton" in lieu thereof. We make the distinction between annual and ratoon cotton quite clear. The Bill will enable the Government to make an advance on ratoon cotton, but I am doubtful whether growers of ratoon cotton desire this amendment, because if such an amendment were put in the Bill, it would not be possible to make an advance on ratoon cotton without a poll being carried. We are told by hon. members opposite that all growers will be growers of not only ratoon cotton, but annual cotton. It would further complicate the position if we allow the growers of ratoon cotton to have a vote as to what shall be done with their crop, and do not give the same privilege to the growers of annual cotton. The acceptance of the amendment would only complicate matters, in view of the fact that negotiations are proceeding at the present time, and if these negotiations are satisfactorily terminated before the next Parliament, there may be no reason why the whole cotton legislation should not then be repealed. I have no intention of imposing any conditions on farmers after the Government guarantee comes to an end which are held to be unfair; but while the agreement exists, we have to observe both those conditions. The people who talk about repudiation are really suggesting that the agreement should be repudiated.

Mr. CORSER: We never suggested that. Nobody suggested it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The guarantee is divided between the Commonwealth and State Governments, and that should be kept in mind in dealing with this legislation. The guarantee relates to annual cotton, and the reputation of annual cotton is wrapped up in ratoon cotton. In the next place, the agreement between the Government and the British-Australian Cotton Association terminates in 1926. It can be terminated earlier than that if the farmers

and the British-Australian Cotton Association mutually agree upon it, for the Government will not stand in the way. When that takes place the legislation can be repealed, and the farmers can grow cotton in their own way. But while those two things remain in existence, I cannot accept the amendment, which would only complicate the position so far as the agreement is concerned.

Mr. NOTT (*Stanley*): After listening to the Minister's explanation, I cannot see that the acceptance of the amendment is going to have the effect that he claims for it. It is interesting to note that he has stated that he thought a mistake had been made in the original measure in the description of seed cotton. Instead of the words "seed cotton" the description is now to be "annual cotton." It seems strange right throughout the piece the word "ratoon" has been introduced into the cotton business at all. It has complicated things to a considerable extent, and it was very doubtful throughout Queensland until quite recently whether the word was used at all in regard to cotton.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is quite a proper word. It is defined in Webster's dictionary.

Mr. NOTT: The definition of "annual cotton" in the Bill is not altogether satisfactory—

> "Cotton obtained from the first growth of the cotton plant after planting; the term does not include ratoon cotton or tree cotton or any perennial cotton."

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is not dealing with the amendment, which proposes that a poll of cotton-growers shall determine whether ratoon cotton shall or shall not be acquired.

Mr. NOTT: I am just endeavouring to get at what is the ratoon cotton to be acquired by the Bill, and I would like to say that annual cotton as well as ratoon cotton is a product of a perennial plant or tree. I hardly follow the hon. member for Fitzroy when he says that the amendment would place the growers at the mercy of the British-Australian Cotton Association. To my mind the object is to give to the farmers an opportunity to get away from the association control if they so desire. For some time past it has been the policy of the Government to take polls on various matters connected with primary industries. We have had polls on maize, wheat, milk, eggs, and a number of other matters, but in this case the Government baulk at the taking of a poll and they refuse to give the cotton-growers the right to ask for a poll.

Another reason why I would like to see the farmers have an opportunity of taking a poll is that a group of farmers may decide to erect their own ginneries and market their own lint and seed, and I take it that at this stage of our development primary producers should have every opportunity to establish further works to treat their product, whether they be co-operative or proprietary works, and it should be to the interest of the Government to foster any such move. We hear quite a number of hon. members opposite saying that they are out to assist secondary industries, but it seems to me that by refusing to accept the amendment the Minister is preventing the establishment of secondary industries in Queensland other than by giving a monopoly to the British-Australian Cotton Association.

We have heard one or two interjections about advances on cotton and wool for export. I am quite certain that there is no trouble in getting advances on the wool which is being exported from Queensland, and there should be no difficulty in getting advances on cotton once it is baled and ready for export.

Mr. HARTLEY: Whom do you get the advance from?

Mr. NOTT: Whom do the wool people get their advance from now?

Mr. BULCOCK: Wool fell 7½ per cent. the other day in Melbourne because they could not get an advance.

Mr. NOTT: I would like to see the cotton industry established on the same lines as the wool industry. It is rather a pity that there should be some differentiation between ratoon and annual cotton. Let it all be classed as cotton, and let it all realise a price based on its quality. The Minister would be well advised to accept the amendment, and I hope he will consider it thoroughly before definitely declining to accept it.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): The hon. member for Stanley has put the case very well. The Minister claimed that an advance had been promised on ratoon cotton. The growers from one of the biggest cotton-growing districts in Queensland—the Central Burnett—agreed to an advance being made, but that was part of the scheme by which the Minister was allowing them to grow ratoon cotton. The hon. member for Fitzroy seemed to be confused as to whether the Government were going to make an advance or had guaranteed a price.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He was not.

Mr. CORSER: Does the Minister not wish to make the position quite clear? It is quite clear so far as the Opposition are concerned. If the Minister says that he is going to guarantee a price for ratoon cotton, I will withdraw the amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member for Fitzroy did not say what you suggest.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. member for Fitzroy was under the impression that the Government were guaranteeing the price.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No. The hon. gentleman knows that there is no intention to do that.

Mr. CORSER: The remarks by the hon. member for Fitzroy may convey a very significant meaning in "Hansard," but the Minister has stated definitely that the Government have not guaranteed a price. The growers have accepted certain conditions so as to be able to grow ratoon cotton, but they also desire to handle that cotton. If the Government are not going to guarantee a price, why do they want to draw up an agreement which is distasteful to the growers? The Act provides that certain cotton shall come under the agreement, and we claim that under the agreement the grower is not getting a fair go.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: All cotton comes under the agreement.

Mr. CORSER: Then why the necessity for this Bill?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Read the Act.

Mr. CORSER: If all cotton is included in the agreement, why the necessity for this Bill?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Read the agreement.

Mr. CORSER: Never mind about the agreement; it deals with seed cotton. The Minister knew what was meant by seed cotton when he used that term. If the principal Act applies to ratoon cotton, why the necessity for this Bill? It provides for the possibility of co-operatively handling at least one-half of the cotton grown as against proprietary control. By opposing the amendment the Government are allowing all the cotton to be handled by a proprietary company. The Minister says that we are breaking down the agreement. We have made no suggestion in that direction. The agreement is there, and we are going to honour it; but we are not going to allow the ratoon cotton that is now permitted to be grown to come under that agreement. The amendment means that the ratoon cotton to be grown shall be handled co-operatively. The amendment seeks to make that possible. The Government members who have spoken have advocated the cotton crop being controlled by a proprietary concern. That is the position we are opposing. The advance that the Minister speaks of could be arranged by any concern to whom the co-operative control sell their cotton. The Minister is not making an advance of 5½d. on ratoon cotton. He claims that its value is only 3d. or 4d. per lb., so he might make an advance of 1d. on it. The Minister cannot say what that advance is going to be.

Mr. BULCOCK: Can you?

Mr. CORSER: It is going to be very little if the Government have their way. The Minister must admit that cotton had a fair value when he refused the growers permission to grow ratoon cotton.

Mr. FARRELL: You are more concerned about that than about actual cotton-growing.

Mr. CORSER: I am more concerned about the cotton-grower. I said that I was prepared to withdraw the amendment if the Minister announced that he would give a guarantee of 5½d. per lb. on ratoon cotton.

As a cotton-grower I claim that, as the Minister is giving us nothing in the way of a guaranteed price, he should have no control over the crop. We disagreed with him as to the agreement which he made, but we honoured it; but we do not wish any further cotton to be included in that agreement. Notwithstanding all that has been said, the British-Australian Cotton Association are anxious to obtain ratoon cotton, because they could obtain the seed at £1 a ton when it is worth £4 to £5 a ton under co-operative control. Hon. members opposite must agree that the farmers are getting too little for their seed. The Government claim that ratoon cotton will represent one-half of the total crop to be harvested this season. Why then should ratoon cotton be included in this generous agreement with a proprietary concern?

Mr. BULCOCK: Who determines the price of the seed?

Mr. CORSER: The Government.

Mr. BULCOCK: The Auditor-General determines it.

Mr. CORSER: I wish the hon. member would submit his value to the Auditor-General. The Minister quoted Webster's dictionary as his authority with regard to the definition of ratoon cotton. Well, acording to that authority, it derives its name from the word "ratun," which is the Indian word used to signify the growth of certain plants from the root. Now ratoon cotton does not grow from the root, but from the old stalk. The word "ratoon" might be properly applied to sugar-cane or sorghum.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: It is a Spanish word.

Mr. CORSER: It is an Indian word which is used to describe the second, third, and fourth growths of cane, but it cannot be properly applied to a second growth of cotton any more than it can be applied to roses, apples, peaches, or any other plants which throw out fresh growths from the stalk and not from the root.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Does sugar-cane grow from the stalk?

Mr. CORSER: I have moved the amendment as a protest against the Government applying a system of proprietary control in preference to co-operative control to cotton.

[4.30 p.m.]

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted in clause 2 (*Mr. Corser's amendment*) be so inserted—put and the Committee divided.

AYES, 23.

Mr. Appel	Mr. Kerr
,, Barnes, W. H.	,, King
,, Bell	,, Logan
,, Brand	,, Maxwell
,, Clayton	,, Moore
,, Corser	,, Morgan
,, Costello	,, Nott
,, Deacon	,, Sizer
,, Edwards	,, Swayne
,, Elphinstone	,, Taylor
,, Fry	,, Vowles
,, Kelso	

Tellers: Mr. Brand and Mr. Logan.

NOES, 33.

Mr. Barber	Mr. Jones
,, Beuford	,, Kirwan
,, Bertram	,, Land
,, Bulcock	,, Larcombe
,, Carter	,, Lloyd
,, Collins	,, Mullan
,, Conroy	,, Payne
,, Cooper, F. A.	,, Riordan
,, Dash	,, Ryan
,, Dunstan	,, Smith
,, Farrell	,, Stopford
,, Foley	,, Theodore
,, Gillies	,, Weir
,, Gledson	,, Wellington
,, Hanson	,, Winstanley
,, Hartley	,, Wright
,, Hynes	

Tellers: Mr. Bulcock and Mr. Wright.

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Barnes, G. P.	Mr. Bruce
,, Petrie	,, Wilson
,, Peterson	,, Pease

Resolved in the negative

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

"After line 21, page 2, insert a new paragraph reading—

'(iv.) (*a*) Subsection three of section ten of the principal Act is repealed.'"

Subsection (3) of section 10 of the principal Act reads—

"No person, unless under the authority of the Minister, shall establish a ginning plant in any district during the currency of any agreement made by the Government with any association or company for the purpose of ginning, treatment, grading, preparation, or manufacture of cotton."

Though the Government have the right in the preliminary part of this clause to acquire cotton against our wish, it is not essential that they shall exercise that right. The amendment does not say that it is essential that a co-operative ginnery should be established, but, if the growers think they can do better, it gives them that option, provided the Government agree. I do not think that is an unreasonable request, but it will mean a very great deal to the growers. We cannot anticipate any future agreement that might be made between the growers and the British-Australian Cotton Association. We cannot anticipate at the present time what the outcome of these conferences is likely to be. All we can do, when this amending Bill is going through, is to do the best we can for the grower. It is no good saying that certain negotiations are taking place which are going to do this or that. We cannot anticipate any of these things. We should make all the provision possible to give to the farmers all the control that is necessary for the treatment of ratoon cotton and the handling of the seed of ratoon cotton.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I cannot accept this amendment for the reasons that I gave in regard to the previous amendment. There is an agreement in existence, and, unless that agreement is terminated by mutual arrangement between the growers and the British-Australian Cotton Association, it must stand until 1926. If the present negotiations are successful—I sincerely hope they will be successful, and that the farmers will be able to make the very best terms possible—it may be necessary next session to bring in legislation to cancel the existing agreement and validate the agreement arrived at. That will be done if necessary. It may be possible to carry out an agreement without any amending legislation at all; but at the present time, while the agreement obtains, I cannot agree to the deletion of subsection (3) of section 10 of the principal Act.

Mr. CORSER: Seed cotton will be protected It only refers to ratoon cotton.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: All the cotton must be dealt with by one authority. I do not care whether that authority is the British-Australian Cotton Association or the farmers themselves. So long as the guarantee obtains we cannot allow every little section of the growers to gin their cotton in their own way—probably destroying it in the process—by establishing or erecting unsatisfactory ginning machinery, and in that way ruining the reputation of Australian cotton. The Federal Government would not agree to it, and I certainly would not agree to it, while the guarantee obtains. While we are allowing growers to grow ratoon cotton, we have to safeguard the growers of annual cotton, and to see that the reputation of Australian cotton is properly maintained. That can only be done by the cotton being ginned and marketed by one authority. I am not concerned with the question as to whether that authority is the British-Australian Cotton Association or the farmers themselves. If the farmers take over the cotton and market it under an authorised scheme there will be no one more pleased than myself; but until that time arrives the ginning and marketing of cotton must be controlled by one authority. All the advice and information I have been able to obtain goes to show that the control of the industry must be under one authority. Cotton must be properly graded, ginned, and marketed, otherwise our cotton industry is not worth the paper that I hold in my hand. We are not going to allow everyone to grow, gin, and market cotton in their own way. It would be a very bad thing for the industry. If the farmers want to take control of the industry, and under a properly-organised scheme carry out the work themselves, I shall be quite agreeable; but while the guarantee exists, we cannot agree to the cotton crop being dealt with piecemeal. It must be dealt with as a whole, particularly so far as ginning, grading, and marketing are concerned. I cannot accept the amendment.

Amendment (*Mr. Corser*) negatived.

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

"On line 36, page 2, after the word—

'first,'

insert the words—

'or second.'"

The growers who have resisted the Act and endeavoured to break down the opposition of the Government to ratoon cotton have all along asked to be allowed to grow first and second year ratoons.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

Mr. CORSER: They have right along asked for the first and second year ratoons.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No—first-year ratoons.

Mr. CORSER: The resolutions of the Central District Council of Agriculture and the Cotton Growers' Union of Queensland show that right along the growers have urged upon the State and Commonwealth Governments the necessity of being permitted to grow first and second year ratoons. This amendment only goes along that line. It proposes to permit the growing of second-year ratoons. If, as has been stated in many places, a great amount of our ratoon cotton will be killed by the cold weather in the coastal areas and in the inland districts, what has the Minister to fear? Where ratoon cotton can be grown successfully the first year, there is nothing to prove that it is not possible to grow very good cotton from a second ratoon. The amendment asks that first and second year ratoons may be permitted to be grown, and in the opinion of

many cotton-growers in the State, that is a very moderate concession to ask for.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: It should be five years.

Mr. CORSER: We hear Opposition members who know something about the growing of ratoon cotton claiming that the amendment is too moderate, while hon. members on the Government side, who have had to give way in one particular, are reluctant to grant that which is desired by the growers themselves. In some parts of South America some species of cotton are grown year in and year out for sixteen or eighteen years. In my own district cotton has been grown on the same bushes for seventeen years

Mr. NOTT: It has been grown up to fifty years.

Mr. CORSER: Hon. members will agree that I was pretty moderate when I said sixteen years, and the hon. member for Stanley can vouch for fifty years. I showed the cotton from seventeen-year old bushes in my district to an expert in this House not so long ago, and he said that it was a very fine cotton of the variety. In Peru and other South American countries very excellent cotton of the tree variety is grown year in and year out on bushes which are not even ratooned. We have to consider that aspect of the question, although I am not asking to include in my amendment cottons which are generally known as tree cottons, because they could not be dealt with as ratoon cottons. I think the evidence which can be gathered in this Chamber will prove that my request is very moderate, and I have much pleasure in moving the amendment, which embodies the desire of the advocates of ratoon cotton ever since the ban was imposed.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*): I hope the Minister will accept the amendment. In my opinion it is a very reasonable amendment, for the reason that a great deal of the cotton coming from the plants this season will be second year ratoon cotton, and, if the Minister stands steadfastly by the Bill as introduced, he will have to take immediate steps to see that tens of thousands of acres of cotton are immediately cleared. I know the hon. gentleman has no intention of doing anything of the sort, and therefore he cannot help in the interests of the industry agreeing to the amendment of the hon. member for Burnett.

Mr. HARTLEY: There are not tens of thousands of acres of ratoon cotton in Queensland.

Mr. EDWARDS: The statements that there were very few acres of ratoon cotton are nowhere near correct, because the ratoon cotton was sent in as plant cotton. The Minister knows that the bulk of cotton last year was grown as ratoon cotton, and the cotton which will come from those plants this year will be what should be termed second-year ratoon cotton. I therefore think the hon. gentleman would be well advised not only in accepting the amendment but also in making the conditions much more liberal than the hon. member for Burnett asks. He would be wise in allowing the growers to grow ratoons for at least three years, and then see the position of the cotton industry in Queensland before taking any further action. If that is not allowed, there will be another fight similar to that which has taken place during the last year, which has gone a long way towards damning the industry in Queensland.

Mr. BULCOCK (*Barcoo*): I know that the Minister will not accept the amendment moved by the hon. member for Burnett. If he were to accept it, he would be accepting responsibilities altogether disproportionate to the benefits that might be gained by allowing second year ratoons to be grown. The whole question of the cotton controversy is bound up inseparably with the question of the quality of plant cotton as compared with ratoon cotton. Hon. members opposite have claimed that first and second ratoons and various other ratoons will have an equal value, or will have a marketable value, but anybody who is prepared to take a broad view of this question must realise that there is still a good deal of conflict of opinion. There is no general consensus of opinion concerning the cotton industry in this regard. Those who say that plant cotton is the only satisfactory cotton can still bring forward arguments in support of their contention, and those who say that ratoon cotton is a valuable article can also support their contention; but the fact remains that the factor of the market for cotton has determined the action of the Minister on this particular occasion.

At 4.53 p.m.,

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

Mr. EDWARDS: No. Caucus whipped him up, as it whipped you up.

Mr. BULCOCK: The hon. gentleman has a hide too thick to be whipped up.

Mr. EDWARDS: The hon. gentleman knows that he is talking against his own conscience.

Mr. BULCOCK: The hon. gentleman has not got, and never had, a conscience to talk against.

Mr. EDWARDS: What a pitiful tale.

Mr. BULCOCK: I have here the "American Cotton Handbook," which, I take it, is a production of the leading cotton experts in the world, because America is the chief cotton-producing country in the world, in which Professor George F. Atkinson, M.Sc., Professor of Botany in the Cornell University, United States of America, who is also connected with the Alabama Experimental Station, says that investigation in this particular regard has proved conclusively that, in order to safeguard the crop and produce the best type of crop, the destruction of the volunteer plant in an abandoned field is an imperative necessity. I think the term "volunteer" is the correct term to apply to what we call "ratoon" cotton.

Mr. EDWARDS: No.

Mr. NOTT: No.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. gentleman is a comedian.

Mr. BULCOCK: The hon. member for Burnett knows that it takes some ability to be a comedian, and he cannot rise to that standard. Professor Atkinson—against whom the hon. member for Burnett is prepared to pit his meagre opinion—also says that the cutting and burning off of cotton stalks is

desirable for the prevention of disease, and the ground should be ploughed at the same time.

Those arguments were not brought forward during the last session, when the question of ratoon cotton against annual cotton was being discussed. The fact remains that the more one plunges into this question the more one becomes convinced that nobody seems to know whether the growing of ratoon cotton is the proper policy, or whether the growing of annual cotton is the proper policy. I started off with a bias against ratoon cotton, but I believe now that, with the seasons and circumstances and possibilities of acclimatisation and all the innumerable factors that are associated with the growth of cotton, we shall in the course of time evolve a type of cotton in Queensland that will be adaptable to Queensland only, and will present problems that will not be found in the cultivation of cotton in any other part of the Commonwealth or possibly in any other part of the world. A market has been made for cotton, in spite of what hon. members opposite have had to say about what the Government have done to discourage the cotton industry, and I venture to say that the Minister has done more to encourage the cotton industry than any other individual. The ban was placed on ratoon cotton to determine whether we could establish a cotton market overseas for a satisfactory type of cotton, and by doing so establish ourselves as a cotton-growing community. I still maintain that it is necessary for us to produce the best cotton.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Hear, hear!

Mr. BULCOCK: Hon. members opposite must admit that, while there was an increase in quantity, there was a diminution in the quality of ratoon cotton. That is generally admitted, and the investigations of Mr. Daniel Jones in England conclusively establish the fact that ratoon cotton commands a lower price than seed cotton.

Mr. CORSER: No, no! There is no proof of that at all.

Mr. BULCOCK: The hon. member can say "No, no!" but that is only his parrot-like contention.

Mr. CORSER: You have to talk to orders. You spoke in the opposite direction the other day.

Mr. KERR: You made a different speech altogether.

Mr. BULCOCK: I am dealing with facts. The hon. member for Burnett for the purpose of political capital has endeavoured to bring the cotton industry and the Government into disrepute. Hon. members opposite have suggested that the cotton-growers forced the hands of the Government on the question of ratoon cotton. That is not the question at all. The question now is whether the market overseas is capable of absorbing our ratoon cotton. The London "Times" has expressed an opinion that arises out of that contention, and in the best possible way shows why the growing of ratoon cotton is made possible. It says—

> "The world is so accustomed to take its supplies of cotton and wool for granted that it will come as a shock to find there is a distinct possibility of a real famine. Great Britain has been slow to recognise the formidable character of the danger to her prosperity which the curtailment of raw cotton supplies threatens. Cotton goods before the war represented one-third of the value of Britain's total exports. The world's demand for woollens is rapidly increasing, and Sir Arthur Goldfinch asserted at the Wembley Conference that it was impossible in 1924 to supply sufficient wool to keep the mills active. Happily the Dominions present boundless opportunities, and failure is inexcusable if the Empire neglects its opportunities."

It is obvious that, if there is a dearth in the supply of a commodity, there is a demand for it, and that is why every class of that article can be marketed, but at a price.

Mr. CORSER: Hear, hear! You are coming round.

Mr. BULCOCK: The growers will have to face the inevitable fact that the time will arise sooner or later when ratoon cotton will not be sufficiently valuable to make it worth while growing. If we are going in for an unrestricted policy of ratooning and allow not only second year ratoons, but third and fourth ratoons—because there is no saying where this is going to stop—then we have to bear in mind that we are laying the foundation of uncontrolled ratooning. This will mean the depletion of our cotton-growing areas, and, furthermore, we shall be encouraging the insect and various other pests that threaten our cotton industry. What did we read in the "Courier" this morning? It might be a mile-post along the road, but the information is significant. The Director of Cotton reports that no fewer than three different varieties of insect pests have manifested themselves in the cotton-fields of the Lockyer district.

Mr. MORGAN: They are on plant cotton, too.

Mr. BULCOCK: That does not make them any less dangerous to the ratoon cotton, does it?

OPPOSITION interjections.

Mr. MORGAN: That knocks out your argument.

Mr. BULCOCK: That does not knock out my argument at all. If the pests are on plant cotton, there is a possibility of destroying the eggs by cultivating the land; but with ratoon cotton, where the land cannot be worked adequately, there is little possibility of combating the pests. That has been the experience in the United States of America, and it will be the experience in our own State.

[5 p.m.]

The phase of the question that I want to deal with is that we are in the experimental stage so far as cotton culture is concerned. When looking through some reports the other day I was somewhat amused to find that from our last year's returns—I am speaking now of annual cotton—the cotton that was graded by our experts as "C" grade—our lowest grade—brought the highest price in Liverpool, while our choicest grade—"A"—brought the lowest price. That shows that we are only in the throes of experimentation in this matter. The obvious question is not so much that of marketing ratoon cotton separately, but of classing our cotton into distinct varieties, as we do our wool, of which we have nearly

thirty grades for export purposes. By doing that we shall get a fair and adequate value for our cotton.

I hope the Minister will refuse to accept this amendment. After 1926, when the responsibility is exclusively on the growers themselves, the position may be different. I suggest that, as we have experimental plots, it might be advisable for the Minister, through the agency of those experimental plots to pursue a vigorous system of ratooning, under a rigorous system of protection against pests, so that we could determine any difference between first, second, third, and any further number of ratoons the Minister might like to continue experimenting with.

The Minister has been placed in a very difficult position in regard to the question of ratoon and annual cotton, and hon. members opposite have been prone to say that the Minister has destroyed the cotton industry. In 1919 the total value of the cotton produced in Queensland was £853. Then the Department of Agriculture, under the direction of the Minister, took a hand in the affair, and began to demonstrate that cotton could be grown successfully in Queensland, and, despite what hon. members opposite say to the contrary, in 1923 we produced 11,769,502 lb. of cotton, valued at £264,399 sterling.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is a knock-out to the Opposition.

Mr. BULCOCK: It becomes obvious, therefore, that we have been the friends of the cotton-growers and not hon. members opposite, who have at all times been prepared, for political purposes, to sacrifice the cotton-grower to the tender mercies of a market that might not be satisfactory to him, and might not be able to absorb his ratoon cotton in years to come. Hon. members opposite have been prepared, for the sake of making political capital, to place what may have been and what may yet be a damper on the industry by allowing the unrestricted propagation of pests in the cotton industry. At the present time nobody can say whether ratoon cotton can be grown profitably in quantity in Queensland. There are factors to consider on both sides. Acclimatisation, difference in the seed that is available, and many other factors have to be taken into consideration, together with the irregularity of the seasons, irregularity of germination, and the impossibility of predicting what the weather may be during the period of the growth of the crop. They all make a strong case for ratoons, but it may be possible under certain conditions and during certain seasons that ratoon cotton can be grown. We have to admit that, because of a bad season, plant cotton that may be grown successfully this year may not be grown successfully next year, and the Minister, after due thought and consideration, is taking the wise but cautious step of allowing one ratoon only to be produced. I think that meets the desires of a majority of the cotton-growers, and will possibly put the cotton industry on a sounder and more secure footing than it is on at the present time, and, after the obligation of the cotton-growers to the department ceases, we may allow them to grow cotton in any way they like, and grow first or tenth ratoons if they so desire.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): The hon. member for Barcoo mentioned Mr. Atkins as being against ratoon cotton. The Minister quoted the same gentleman in 1923 and, as recorded in "Hansard," page 1601, of that year I said—

> "The Minister quoted experiences in Egypt. I have here the opinion of Mr. L. C. Atkins."

Mr. BULCOCK: That is not the man I quoted. I quoted Professor Atkinson, of Cornell University, United States of America.

Mr. CORSER: I am quoting the proclaimed authority of the British Cotton Delegation when they were here. This is the gentleman they brought with them.

Mr. BULCOCK: He is not the man I quoted.

Mr. CORSER: He is a great authority, and the hon. member for Barcoo certainly gave the impression that he was quoting the opinion of Mr. Atkins, the cotton expert.

Mr. BULCOCK: Not only did I say Professor Atkinson, but I mentioned the University to which he was attached.

Mr. CORSER: Last session I said—

> "The Minister quoted experiences in Egypt. I have here the opinion of Mr. L. C. Atkins, the Egyptian expert of the British Cotton Growing Association—the field supervisor quoted by the Minister. Mr. Fredriksen sent two samples of second-year ratoon to the British-Australian Cotton Association, Limited, for their opinion, and this is the reply from them, signed by Mr. Atkins himelf—
>
> > We are in receipt of your letter of the 3rd March, also of two samples of cotton. The cream-coloured cotton belongs to the Egyptian type, and probably, owing to continuous cross-fertilisation with the Upland types of cotton, has deteriorated greatly from the pure original type. We would certainly not advise you to grow this cotton. The sample of white cotton, on the other hand, is an ideal one for Queensland, and is almost identical with the Durango variety of Upland cotton that we intend to grow in this country. It has a good bloom and colour, good texture and strength, and has a fibre length of 1¼ in. There is an unlimited demand for this quality of cotton on the markets of the world, and it is a very desirable one to grow. We would certainly advise you to keep the seed from this cotton and plant it out separately, at least half a mile from any other cotton."

I went on to say—

> "There is a recommendation from Mr. Atkins in favour of second ratoon cotton, and he advises this farmer to plant the seed, as it will propagate rapidly; but this Bill is going to prevent him from doing it."

The point is that the British-Australian Cotton Association's first expert—Mr. Atkins——

Mr. BULCOCK: He is not the man I quoted.

Mr. CORSER: I am not saying he is, but the hon. member would give the impression that an authority like Mr. Atkins made that statement, and he has given me the opportunity of saying that Mr. Atkins—this expert of the British-Australian Cotton Association—favours the growth of ratoon cotton.

Mr. BULCOCK: Does not your intelligence indicate to you the difference between Mr. Atkins and Professor Atkinson?

Mr. CORSER: The hon. member's want of intelligence is such that he is influenced one day to say one thing and another day to say another thing, and we do not really know what he believes in. What we are concerned about is the statement of the expert, who is in favour of ratoon cotton. He received certain samples of cotton, and so good were they that he asked that the seed should be kept separate from any other seed, and he said that that class of cotton was in very great demand.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Did not the Association sack him afterwards?

Mr. CORSER: Did they sack him? Yes, he did not stay here. Perhaps the Minister might know something about that.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That discounts your statement.

Mr. CORSER: It does not discount my statement, because he is to-day considered one of the leading cotton experts. Our experts who are here to-day have been just as honest with regard to certain samples that have been sent to them, and have proclaimed them to be good second-year ratoon. We have Mr. Atkins's own statement praising the cotton from second-year ratoons. This amendment provides for a second-year ratoon cotton, which has been proved, on the finding of their own expert, to be first-class ratoon. That is evidence against the Minister. Some of the cotton was also sent by the cotton farmers to Mr. Powell, and some to Mr. Boyd. The reply from Mr. Powell is as good as, if not better than, the reply which was received from the other expert.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE interjected.

Mr. CORSER: Just to be ready for any dirt which the Minister likes to put in against an expert or anyone else, it is as well to have a counter reply ready. They sent samples of the cotton to two different authorities, and both authorities proclaimed it to be good and useful cotton, and of a sort that was wanted in the markets of the world. That cotton was grown by an old Texas grower, who is in the Burnett, and who has been associated all his life with cotton-growing. He has grown cotton here for five or six years running, and has always grown a larger crop and received a bigger price for ratoon cotton than he ever received for seed cotton, and it is on his authority that we base our statements. The authorities have shown that second-year ratoon is a good cotton, and that is the reason why I have moved the amendment.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): The more I hear of this discussion on cotton, the more perplexed I am getting. Last session we passed the Cotton Industry Bill.

Mr. CORSER: You will have another Bill next year.

Mr. COLLINS: I went up to my electorate in good faith, visiting nearly every centre in the electorate, and told them that the growing of ratoon cotton was prohibited after a certain date. I delivered my last speech in the electorate on 4th July last, and arrived here on 6th July. Shortly after I arrived in Brisbane I found that the Government had come to the conclusion that that decision was to be reversed, and the growing of ratoon cotton was to be allowed.

Hon. members have before heard me talking about experts. I am puzzled about these experts. I have heard experts saying that we should grow only annual cotton. I have heard other experts say that we should grow only ratoon cotton. This afternoon I have heard another expert say that we should grow second-year ratoon cotton. When I was up in my electorate they showed me a tree, and said, "This tree is twenty years of age, and is still producting cotton."

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. COLLINS: I do not know where it is going to end. I am inclined to think that we should have a little more common sense in connection with these matters, and take less notice of the experts.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. COLLINS: At the same time, I am not going to support the amendment of the hon. member for Burnett.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Ah! Ah! (and laughter).

Mr. COLLINS: I shall try to explain what I mean by common sense. We have a number of experimental farms in Queensland. There is one in my electorate where at the present time they are experimenting with the growing of cotton. Let us carry out these experiments, and not trust so much to the experts. My experience in all walks of life is that experts are miserable failures. I am getting full up of the man who calls himself an expert. In fact, if some of the members of the Opposition talk much longer about cotton, I shall begin to think they are experts, and also that some hon. members on this side are experts. I prefer that, when doing work, we should do it well—not that I am preaching altogether the "go-slow" policy.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Ah! Ah! (and laughter).

Mr. COLLINS: I say that in connection with certain legislation experiments should be carried out before we commence to put Bills on the statute-book. I want to make it clear that we need to be guided more by common sense.

It is all very well to have theories. I have theories myself, as most hon. members know, but they are always backed up by practical results. Common sense lies at the back of all my theories. I also know where I am going—I am out to reach a certain goal, and it should be the same with the growing of cotton. I do not know where we are going to land if in one session of Parliament we decide that only annual cotton shall be grown, and I go to my electors and tell them so, and they put a certain amount of trust in me, and now after this session I have to go up and tell them, "We made a mistake; you can grow ratoon cotton." (Opposition laughter.) For all I know—considering the trust I know some of them repose in me—they may have pulled out their cotton on the strength of what I told them in good faith. We have to get down to common-sense facts. Let us carry out these experiments on our experimental farms. Let us demonstrate whether we should grow annual cotton, first year ratoon cotton, second year ratoon cotton, or third year ratoon cotton. Anybody listening to the hon. member for Burnett would think

that he had been up in the Innisfail district where they grow ratoon cane for twelve years because the climatic conditions allow it. At any rate, I owe an apology to my electors, and I therefore thought it necessary to speak although we want to get the Bill through.

Mr. KELSO: What are you in favour of?

Mr. COLLINS: I am going to vote for the Bill. (Opposition laughter.) It is all an experiment. My friends opposite want to grow ratoon cotton for two years, and there are some men in my electorate who think they should grow it for twenty years. I am voting for the Bill as it is, because I think that even the Bill as it stands is an experiment.

Mr. KERR: You talk one way and vote another!

At 5.18 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): Mr. Pollock—

Mr. DEACON: Another expert. (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. HARTLEY: I shall not say that I am an expert, but I shall say that I have done practical work in the growing of cotton, and I do not care twopence whether I am called an expert or anything else. I have always found that the man who studies his job and gets his experience in a practical way is the man who knows what he is talking about rather than the man who gets his knowledge from books; and I think that is where the hon. member has learned anything he knows about cotton.

I want to get down to the basic facts. My opposition to this amendment rests on the same grounds as my opposition to the countenancing of ratoon cotton at all. It is a question of value, and whether after the crop has been grown the value will be sufficient to pay the grower for the high cost of picking and growing under conditions which it is necessary to give in this country—the best conditions of any cotton-growing country in the world. On that one ground alone I base my opposition to the acceptance of an amendment such as this, and I shall quote a few parallel facts to show that I am on sound ground.

Second-year ratoon cotton would be of low quality and would come into competition with the same grade of cotton from other countries with cheaper labour and cheaper growing conditions. Only a couple of days ago we saw in the "Courier" a cable from the old country stating that an English company, with a capital of £17,000,000, was going in for the growing of cotton in Iraq. Their proposal was to utilise the water of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in Mesopotamia for the growing of ratoon cotton by irrigation. Let the hon. member who moves this amendment visualise the fact that £17,000,000 is going into the growing of cotton there under conditions which would not be countenanced by any party in Australia.

Queensland cotton has to come into competition with that cotton in the open market, and it can only compete successfully with it if it is of superior quality and realises a higher price than the cotton grown in Iraq or the cotton grown in Brazil or elsewhere by cheap labour. When you come to consider that, you will see at once the inadvisability of extending the provisions of the Act so as to allow low value cotton to be grown. Ratoon cotton is low value cotton, and second ratoon would be lower value cotton.

Last year America produced 10,000,000 bales of cotton, and this year it is estimated that 13,000,000 bales will be produced, or an increase of 3,000,000 bales. There is no doubt that the supply of American cotton is having some effect on the value of cotton at the present time. At the present time the value of American middling cotton is 13.42d. per lb. Taking that as a basis, the Queensland Government for the best annual cotton are paying 5d. per lb., or 1s. 3d. per lb. for cotton lint. Add to that 3d. per lb. for baling, shipping, freight, and other charges, which makes a cost of 1s. 6d. per lb. to the Government. Taking the difference between the lower value American cotton and the highest value Queensland cotton—it is 300 points in favour of the Queensland cotton—you get 3d. per lb. in favour of the Queensland cotton. That would bring the price of our Queensland cotton to 1s. 6d. per lb. on the market in England, to clear expenses. But at present values all we could get would be 1s. 4½d. That means that, if the market does not improve we shall sustain a loss of 1½d. per lb. on the best quality of Queensland cotton, and, if that loss is sustained on that quality of cotton, how on earth are you going to face the market with the poorer quality cotton?

Mr. WARREN: The hon. gentleman is making out an awful case.

Mr. HARTLEY: Does the hon. gentleman mean to say that I am making out an awful case when I say we expect to lose 1½d. per lb by the guarantee in price if conditions do not improve? That is nothing new. The hon. gentleman knows that the Government have lost £50,000 to date by the guarantee on the superior cotton. The money is not lost in the true sense, because the country has been improved, and the Government have demonstrated the possibilities of the cotton industry, so that we have an increase in industry in this State as a set-off against the £50,000.

Mr. MORGAN: Does the hon. gentleman know how much the growers have lost?

Mr. HARTLEY: No; but I do not think that there are many cotton-growers who have really lost much on their cotton crops. (Opposition dissent.) I have been through the cotton belt, but hon. members opposite, with the Secretary for Public Lands, only glanced at it during their trip to the Dawson Valley. When the cotton industry started in the Central district most of the people in the Dawson Valley and in some of the other localities were in the hands of the banks, and I have it on the authority of at least two bank managers that about 1922 not only had they cleared off their overdrafts and had credits standing in their names, but many possessed motor-cars as well. The values and selling prices of their farms had also increased considerably.

At 5.25 p.m.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported progress.

The further consideration of the Bill in Committee was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

The House adjourned at 5.30 p.m.