

Queensland



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Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 9 NOVEMBER 1933

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Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. G. Pollock, *Gregory*)
took the chair at 10.30 a.m.

QUESTIONS.

STATE AND LOCAL AUTHORITY INDEBTEDNESS.

Mr. BARNES (*Warwick*) asked the Treasurer—

“ 1. What was the public debt of Queensland at the following respective dates:—30th June, 1915; 30th June, 1933?

“ 2. What was the debt of local authorities to the Government on the respective dates of 30th June, 1915; 30th June, 1933?

“ 3. What amount was owing by local authorities under State guarantee on the respective dates of 30th June, 1915 and 1933?

“ 4. At what date was authority first generally given to local authorities to negotiate for loans on their own account? ”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. F. A. Cooper, *Bremer*), for the TREASURER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*), replied—

“ 1. Public debt of the State of Queensland at—

£	
30th June, 1915	... .. 57,340,763
30th June, 1933	... .. 114,530,855

“ During the year ended 30th June, 1921, the sum of £5,936,916, representing portion of the funds of the Queensland Government Savings Bank, was added to the public debt. It was the practice to make use of these funds towards meeting the cash requirements of the State. As no securities were issued for the sum used in this manner, the liability

was not treated as part of the public debt. In terms of the agreement under which the Queensland Government Savings Bank was transferred to the Commonwealth Bank in the year 1920 Queensland Government securities for this sum had to be issued to the latter bank, thus necessitating the addition of the amount to the public debt. If this transaction had taken place on the 30th June, 1915, the above amount of £57,340,753 would have been increased to £62,324,061.

"2. Amount due by local authorities to the Government at—

30th June, 1915	...	...	3,878,932
30th June, 1933	...	...	12,355,761

"3. Loans to local authorities, etc., guaranteed by the Government at—

30th June, 1915	...	...	Nil
30th June, 1933	...	...	£11,535,258

"4. 31st March, 1903, being the date on which 'The Local Authorities Act of 1902' came into operation. The first guarantee under the provisions of 'The Local Bodies Loans Guarantee Act of 1923' was given on the 4th September, 1923."

STRIKE AT MOUNT ISA.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*) asked the Secretary for Labour and Industry—

"1. In connection with the strike at Mount Isa, has this strike been authorised by the Australian Workers' Union, and have the provisions of section 51 of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act been complied with?"

"2. If section 51 has not been complied with, has any action been taken to enforce the penalty provided for an offence against that section?"

"3. Has the Australian Workers' Union been given preference in respect of the work performed by its members at Mount Isa?"

"4. In view of this strike, has any action been taken to secure the abolition of such preference in the public interest?"

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY (Hon. M. P. Hynes, *Townsville*) replied—

"1 to 4. As the case is now being heard by the industrial magistrate and is sub judice, the present time is not opportune for answering the questions of the hon. member."

REGISTERED UNEMPLOYED AND INTERMITTENT RELIEF WORKERS—MAY AND AUGUST, 1932 AND 1933.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*), without notice, asked the Secretary for Labour and Industry—

"In view of his reply to a question first asked by me on 6th September last relating to the number of registered unemployed and intermittent relief workers—namely, that the information required would be contained in the annual report of his department, when will such report be made available?"

The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY (Hon. M. P. Hynes, *Townsville*) replied—

"I anticipate that the report will be tabled within the next day or two."

PAPER.

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

Annual report of the Commissioner of Main Roads for the year 1932-33.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—ESTIMATES—ELEVENTH AND TWELFTH ALLOTTED DAYS.

(*Mr. Hanson, Buranda, in the chair.*)

ESTIMATES-IN-CHIEF, 1933-34.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

CHIEF OFFICE.

Question stated—

"That £59,019 be granted for 'Department of Agriculture—Chief Office.'"

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*) [10.36 a.m.]: On a day such as this, when it is raining, any reference to the necessity of averting losses caused by drought may appear inappropriate; but it is in years of plenty that one has to provide for the lean ones to follow, and the matter is of such vital importance that I propose to address myself to it this morning. We have unfortunately had experience of the losses due to unfavourable seasons, and we are also aware that bad seasons will recur. It behoves us, therefore, to take such action as will minimise, if not totally avert, the serious losses which occur through unfavourable seasons. If hon. members will turn to page 184 of the last annual report of the Department of Agriculture and Stock, they will find a table which gives information for the ten-year period from 1923 to 1932 concerning the flocks in the State, and they will ascertain from that table that there was a decrease of approximately 4,000,000 sheep in 1926, as compared with the previous year. A responsible official in one of the leading stock and station agencies of the State considers that the 1925 drought was only a partial drought, and in his opinion the losses could be set down at 5,000,000, while in other parts there was the normal increase, which on a conservative valuation of 10s. per head would represent a financial loss of £2,500,000. The question for consideration is how such losses can be averted and what the department can do to assist in that direction. I know it is largely a matter for private enterprise, which in my opinion is the best means for doing the work, provided the necessary departmental assistance is forthcoming; and in this case that assistance should come from the Department of Agriculture and Stock. The Committee will realise as much as I do that wool is our chief source of income. Any steps that can be taken to avert a loss in our national income should receive our urgent consideration. Three or four methods of assistance might be adopted. In a previous debate I pointed out how one station situated in what I might term the middle west of Queensland—I refer to Retro, a station in the Peak Downs area—had since 1912 made it a practice to put in a plot of 160 acres of wheat annually, using the stiff black soil flats on the holding for that purpose. During the worst years the station has carried 25,000 sheep and has had a 54 per cent. lambing, although almost every other station in the vicinity has had to seek relief country. Not only has the station been able to avert losses in its own case, but it has also helped

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other stations further west. When I was there I noticed a lorry load of chaff being sent to Longreach. I contend, therefore, that provision can be made by means of a certain amount of agriculture that will save large numbers of our flocks and herds when dry times come. The matter should be carefully investigated and the department should do everything possible to assist the people who are disposed to carry out this work. I know that it will be pointed out that many others have tried and have spent large sums of money before they have given it up. I speak with some knowledge of the subject, and I think that those failures were largely referable to inexperience and could have been averted by using proper methods. Furthermore, the expense of working the crop is not very great in comparison with the benefits which accrue from it. The manager of the station I am referring to was in Brisbane the other day and told me that he had gone into the figures lately and found that the difference between the cost of what he produced himself and what it would have been if he had to purchase the fodder was something like £18,000. He had saved £12,000 in fodder costs alone since 1912, besides saving his sheep! That is a good illustration of the advisability of such fodder conservation; and the department should assist owners in doing so.

Again, in New South Wales we had a good example during a drought period of what could be done with an irrigated lucerne crop. There are very few sites in Queensland which are suited to that crop, but some are available. It is easy to demonstrate what a wonderful value a small acreage of lucerne has had in the time of drought. During the 1902 drought members of a noted sheep-breeding family in Tasmania started to grow lucerne under irrigation on a farm at Cowra, on the Lachlan River, in New South Wales. The work they did was such that the Government of the day looked upon it as of national importance and sent an official up to check it. This official made an arrangement by which he got the use of 22 acres for irrigated lucerne. He bought 1,600 drought-stricken sheep and he fattened them during the 1902 drought. That shows the possibilities available in this direction.

It has been stated that a great deal could be done by the conservation of Mitchell and other natural grasses in Western Queensland. We have had a great many reports on the matter, some of which show that when fodder made from such grasses is taken out of the stack for use it has been turned into dust. On the other hand, there are men who say that a stack has been found in good preservation after a considerable number of years. The failure would probably be due to bad stacking. Those accustomed to farming know that the preservation of hay depends upon its proper stacking, and any crop would spoil in a short time if the stacking was not well done. I found thirteen stacks of hay on Retro holding, some of which were ten or twelve years old, and were still good. So that that difficulty can be overcome by skillful treatment. I have a letter from that station in which the writer mentions that he has just taken a crop from 90 acres and he has cut 3 tons per acre, which has cost £1 per ton. There are good crops and bad crops, but the average cost of chaff since 1912 has been a little over £3 a ton. This is very good work and every encouragement should be given to other

stockowners to do the same. Then there is the use of maize, but I have not time now to go into that question.

Another matter which I think requires attention on this vote relates to a new process of chilling beef which we are told is likely to be a success, the initial difficulties having been overcome. I am interested in the matter from the point of view of many persons in my electorate, in which are considerable areas of cattle country. If we wish to hold our own in the British beef market we must be prepared to guarantee the quality of our produce. I am afraid the condition of our beef herds has gone back considerably in recent years. I know it has because I have travelled through a large area of cattle country and have observed that the herds have deteriorated in quality. The Chief Inspector of Stock, in his report, states—

“Deterioration in the herds of northern cattle for years past has been mainly due to neglect in procuring fresh bulls of suitable type and quality to improve breeding standards, and not to unhealthy climatic conditions.”

It will be seen that the Chief Inspector bears out what I have said in reference to the deterioration of the quality of our cattle. It may be that here again it is a matter for private enterprise. Perhaps it does not concern the Department of Agriculture, but I think the Minister should get into touch with his colleague, the Minister for Transport, to see what can be done to assist such people, perhaps by making big concessions in freights on purebred bulls, especially to people in distant parts of the State. It is necessary that something should be done to assist this industry when, as I have previously said, a martial drought—a drought in one section of Queensland—resulted in a loss of sheep to the value of £2,500,000. It cannot be said that it is impossible through a shortage of cash, as it is proposed to spend £2,000,000 on a third bridge over the Brisbane River. Surely, if it is possible for a Government to spend so much money in the city areas, it is possible for them to assist in the encouragement of the beef industry! Of course, we all know that the industry is affected by the variation of seasons and it is difficult to calculate for a year ahead what return is likely to be received. From what I have been able to read, it is evident that the graziers will have to do their very best and produce stock of the first quality in order to retain markets already held, and to secure new markets. It is possible that stock will have to be forced to a certain degree. There is much good country where the natural grasses ordinarily will suffice, but seasons are variable. It might be possible, however, to adopt some system for the raising of lucerne in certain localities. There are some excellent lucerne paddocks west of Brisbane, but I am told that owing to the advent of motor vehicles there is no call for lucerne for horse feed, and these paddocks are, therefore, useless for that purpose. It might be found profitable to let such areas for the purpose of topping up cattle in a few weeks. I remember on the Hunter River as a boy—it is a long time ago, a little over sixty years—it was the custom to use lucerne land for this purpose. I think it was said that 1 acre of lucerne would top up four bullocks. I have already pointed out that a small area

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of 22 acres planted with lucerne was sufficient to maintain 1,600 drought-stricken sheep. That is verified by the official reports of the Department of Agriculture in New South Wales. There are many areas of land on eastern river watersheds, particularly in the Burnett, Fitzroy, and Burdekin districts, which are adjacent to waterholes and suitable for irrigation purposes. I know of one place on the north coast, Wumalgi, where a natural lagoon is used for irrigation purposes in a dry season, with the result that that area produces splendid crops of fodder while the rest of the country is quite bare of grass. There are numerous other places where similar results could be obtained. Small areas of this kind go a long way in producing fodder. It is quite possible that relief labour could be utilised in the establishment of small irrigation plants by the construction of weirs, dams, and other artificial water supplies. When travelling through cattle country in the Clermont district I noticed big waterholes and lagoons that might well be utilised for the purposes that I have mentioned. Of course, we do not possess the advantages that obtain in South America, where alfalfa is grown on large areas covering hundreds of square miles of country, well watered by a seepage of melting snows from the Andes, but we should make the best of the advantages at our command. I do not wish to be extremely critical of the department just now, but I am satisfied that in the last year or so much time has been wasted by the department in quite useless legislation. My proposal is much bigger than many things that have been tackled up to date, and I am satisfied that if my suggestion is adopted huge periodical economic losses will be avoided. During my long life on the land I can remember that our thoughts were turned chiefly in the direction of wondering when it was going to rain. We experience a few good seasons and then years of drought; and we shall have droughts again. No more useful work could be carried out in the interests of primary production than an investigation into the possibilities of averting the severe economic loss due to droughts. Action must be taken.

We are hopeful of being able to engage in the chilled beef trade in the markets of the world, but it behoves the cattle-owners to be prepared to supply the trade with a suitable type of stock when the opportunity offers. I have already pointed out that suitability is a matter of quality and condition. We shall probably have two or three years of good seasons—possibly more if we are lucky—but we should not enjoy these good seasons without giving some consideration to the safeguards that should be employed to prevent serious economic loss during the inevitable dry years that would follow.

Mr. LARCOMBE (*Rockhampton*) [10.57 a.m.]: The hon. member for Mirani, who is a practical farmer of many years standing, has contributed a very interesting speech on the possibility of agricultural research.

As the representative of a very important agricultural district and one who has had the pleasure of representing for many years a constituency partly agricultural in nature, I am pleased to be able to speak with approval of the annual report of the Department of Agriculture and Stock for

the year 1932-33 and to commend the Minister and his officers for the very excellent service they have rendered to the State during the past year. It is pleasing to read these remarks on page 9 of the report, dealing with dairying—

“Yet another annual record has been achieved in dairy production, the factory output of butter exceeding that of the previous year by nearly 5,000,000 lb., notwithstanding the climatic vagaries that contributed so much to comparatively low crop returns in other branches of husbandry.”

It is gratifying to note that degree of progress in butter production in this State during the first twelve months of the Forgan Smith Administration. It is useful to review that section of the report and to compare it with the absurd predictions of our opponents prior to the last election, when they said that if Labour was returned to power all confidence in industry would disappear and the volume of production would seriously decline.

It is very interesting to review the progress of this debate. The hon. member for Cooroora and the hon. member for Murrumbidgee, like the hon. member for Mirani, dealt with the physical side, the research side, the experimental side, and the scientific side of agriculture. We were told this morning in the press that there was an atmosphere of Arcadian simplicity about the Committee yesterday. But when the hon. members for Enoggera and Cook rose to their feet, that atmosphere of Arcadian simplicity and rural tranquillity disappeared as if by magic. One might describe the state of the Committee then in the terms used by the hon. member for Cooroora in referring to a special kind of grass—blue panic. Blue panic seemed to seize the Committee, and these two hon. members exchanged pleasantries on the relative merits of the agricultural policies of their respective Governments. I intend to make a brief reference to the speech of the hon. member for Cook later.

The real difficulties and problems of the agriculturist and of agriculture have not been discussed. I have collated them as follows:—

1. The hostile policy of the Federal Government in relation to Queensland industries.
2. The secret commission evil.
3. High brokerage and handling charges.
4. High rates of interest.
5. High overseas shipping charges.
6. Scarcity of markets.
7. The low prices of produce.
8. Fifty years of squatters' Government in Queensland, until Labour Administration took control.
9. The tariff policy of the Lyons Government.
10. The Ottawa Agreement.

Those ten points summarise the outstanding difficulties of the agriculturist and agriculture in this State.

It is hardly necessary to say much concerning the first point. It is obvious that

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the action of the Federal Government in respect of our primary industries—namely, the cotton, tobacco, banana, sugar, and other industries, has been unfortunate in the extreme. It has reduced the volume of production and the value of production, and seriously handicapped the producer.

The secret commission evil has been reviewed by a royal commission, and the serious handicap and burden imposed on the producer by it has been demonstrated. I hope—I feel sure—that as a result of that investigation this evil will be greatly reduced in the future, if it does not entirely disappear.

Brokerage and handling charges are very important to the agriculturist. The Labour Government have helped to remove the handicap and disability in this direction so far as agriculture is concerned. A great handicap, however, still falls on the producer in the wool industry in respect of them. The action of the Labour Government in establishing primary producers' pools and primary producers' organisations and enacting similar legislation has been beneficial not only in enabling him to organise better methods of distribution, but also in securing a greater return for his labour. In reply to a question I submitted, the Department of Agriculture informed me that products worth £20,000,000 are now handled in this State by organised marketing. That fact gives one an idea of the advantage of Labour legislation in solving the problem of distribution in this State.

Rates of interest charged by private institutions are still too high, although the Federal Labour Government, by their policy, reduced interest rates, and thereby lightened the burden on the agriculturist greatly in the last few years. Complaint has been made by the hon. member for Cook, and other hon. members concerning the interest charges of the Agricultural Bank. That question can be more conveniently and appropriately discussed on another vote, but in passing I will say that, metaphorically speaking, the Labour Government carried the agriculturists on their backs for many years in regard to interest rates. They did not charge the rates of interest that were exacted from the Government by the overseas money-lender. If one analyses the rates charged for some years in Queensland, he will find that the Labour Government have been generous to the producer. If hon. members opposite consider the rate of interest on Agricultural Bank advances too high, why did they not reduce it? That is not a mere platitude, but a fair, honest challenge.

Mr. BARNES: Money values are very different to-day from what they were.

Mr. LARCOMBE: Certainly, but money values have not changed a great deal in the past eighteen months. One objection I have to the criticism of hon. members opposite is that they indict Labour Governments for failing to do what they failed to do themselves. Although they had three years to do so, the late Government did not reduce the rate of interest on Agricultural Bank loans.

The overseas shipping rates are also high. We know that as a result of recent protests to the Prime Minister of Australia some slight reduction has been made. The

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growers' representatives associated with fruit and other industries pointed out that they were faced with ruinous charges made by the shipping combine, which increased its rates after the Commonwealth Government-controlled shipping line was discontinued. The value of that line as a competitor against the overseas shipping interests and as an influence in reducing shipping charges to the lowest possible point was only realised when it had gone out of existence.

Mr. BRAND: The shipping charges have been reduced.

Mr. LARCOMBE: Yes; but hon. members opposite cannot dispute the fact that shipping charges are still all too high.

The question of low prices for primary products is interlinked with the question of the decreased purchasing power of our home market due to unemployment. There is very little hope of any radical improvement for agriculture in Queensland, or indeed throughout the world, until there is a reasonable modification of the economic, monetary, and banking system of the world. Where at least 100,000,000 people are suffering directly and indirectly from unemployment, how can we expect the Queensland producer to find a market and a reasonable price for his products? Unemployment is a serious evil that is affecting the agriculturist, depriving him of a profitable market, and robbing him of a reasonable price. Here we come back to first principles and original causes—up to the present we have been dealing with palliatives. It is necessary to concentrate on that fundamental evil which, until it is modified in some respects, will keep the farmer in subjection in this and every other country.

My next point has relation to the fifty years of squatters' government in Queensland—an influence that has seriously affected the small farmer. Legislation was framed and administration was dictated by a consideration of the interest of the great squatting combines of this State. Land monopoly was rampant as a result of the control of that monopolistic party for fifty years. In short, progress during the first fifty years of Queensland's history was much slower because of that heavy handicap and burden than otherwise it would have been.

Mr. MAXWELL: The rate at which the public debt was increased was certainly slower.

Mr. LARCOMBE: If the hon. member will turn to the "Queensland Producer," he will find there eloquent proof of the severely handicapping influences of the squatters' Government in Queensland for half a century.

My ninth point deals with the Lyons Government's tariff policy, which is helping to smash down that great manufacturing policy that was speeding rapidly ahead under the careful direction of the Scullin Government. If we retard the growth of population—as we shall do unless secondary industries are built up—we definitely restrict home markets and lessen the opportunities of the Queensland producer who requires a home market. As a matter of fact, the Queensland and Australian producer needs to be less dependent upon a capricious and uncertain overseas market. There is a direct interdependence between the agriculture of Queensland, the tariff policy, and

secondary industries. Unfortunately, not only has the Lyons Government policy directly damaged our primary producers in Queensland, but it is also indirectly injuring them by limiting that home market which is so essential to the local producer.

Then I come to the tenth point, which deals with the Ottawa Agreement. What an eloquently profound silence has been exhibited by hon. members opposite with regard to the Ottawa Agreement—an agreement that was ushered in with spectacular effect, glorified as something which would relieve the grower of his burden, and hailed as a means by which an impetus would be given to agriculture, not only here, but also in other parts of the Commonwealth! What a contrast there is between the grim reality and the promises that were made—between actual results and the fairyland-like tales of the splendid benefits that would accrue to the growers of Queensland and Australia from the Ottawa Agreement! Great sacrifices have been made by the Queensland agriculturist under this agreement without any real advantage in return.

Let me refer to a quotation of the "Courier-Mail" of 2nd September last dealing with the matter—

"The Minister for Commerce (Mr. E. H. Stewart) said to-day that from 1st July to 29th August exports of butter from the Commonwealth amounted to 158,756 boxes (3,960 tons) compared with 360,786 boxes (9,019 tons) for the corresponding period last year.

"Shipments to the United Kingdom totalled 121,275 boxes (3,032 tons) against 325,597 boxes (8,140 tons) for the corresponding period last year, representing a decrease of 62 per cent. Shipments to other countries, however, increased from 379 tons to 937 tons."

That is the grim reality of the Ottawa Agreement. The Queensland and Australian grower incurred substantial obligations as a result of that agreement, hoping for some compensating advantage, but we find that the quantity of butter exported to England is decreasing and the price has dropped enormously. In no way at all has the Ottawa Agreement assisted the Queensland producers. I shall now quote some of the cable messages that have recently appeared concerning the Ottawa Agreement. We have the "Evening News" of Rockhampton, of 5th May of the present year, stating—

"The former Secretary of State for the Dominions (Mr. L. C. M. S. Amery) in a letter to the press states that the Argentine and Danish agreements are disastrous betrayals of the principles of Empire co-operation; though they may be strictly consistent with the letters of the Ottawa Agreement they are absolutely inconsistent with its spirit."

So we find that after the Ottawa Agreement, an agreement has been entered into by the British Government with other countries contrary to the spirit of the Ottawa Agreement. That is the reason why butter exports are decreasing and why the Queensland producer is not getting the advantages which were promised him when the Ottawa Agreement was made. We find the following in the "Daily Mail" of 28th April last:—

"Lord Beaverbrook in a special interview said the Danish Agreement is

wicked. Supporters of the Empire policy put the Government in power, and we have been betrayed and sold to foreigners."

I have dealt with my ten points. I have shown hon. members a few of the problems that confront the farmer in Queensland and other parts of Australia. Those are the problems that have to be faced and solved; and they will never be faced and solved by a party represented by hon. members opposite.

Mr. MAXWELL interjected.

Mr. LARCOMBE: I will give the hon. member for Toowong a quotation from the "Producers' Review." In an article of 15th October of last year it is stated—

"Maybe in the near future self-preservation will compel our primary producers to join with Labour in politics in an endeavour to bring about a new social and economic order which will not be dominated by capital."

That is not the opinion of a Labour paper, but the considered opinion of the "Producers' Review," a journal of standing and credit in Queensland, which represents the man on the land.

Let me pass on to the hon. member for Cook's remarks concerning the tobacco industry. Here, again, he tries to cloud the issue. That is a favourite method of hon. members opposite. It is a cutesy method of defence. The hon. member has endeavoured to apologise for and excuse the Federal Government, and he sought to drag into support of his argument the officers of the Department of Agriculture. He quoted from the departmental report to show that there was no evidence there that the Federal Government were responsible for the unfortunate plight of the tobacco growers in Queensland. The officers of the department do not deal with matters of a party political nature, but proceed along the various lines I have mentioned in the opening part of my remarks. It is the disastrous policy of the Federal Government which is responsible for the serious plight of the tobacco growers in Queensland. First of all, the import duty was reduced from 5s. 2d. to 3s. a lb. with a very serious effect on tobacco growing in Australia. Millions of pounds weight of tobacco leaf have been brought into Australia since the reduction was made, and the Australian grower finds there is no market with the Australian manufacturer. By the decrease in the import duty and the increase in the excise duty by almost 100 per cent., the Federal Government are dragging out of the industry Customs and excise duty exceeding £7,000,000. That is the way in which the growers and the consumers are being treated by the Federal Government!

Mr. KENNY: You cannot look after both the consumer and the grower.

Mr. LARCOMBE: Yes, you can look after both. The old protection and the new protection will enable Australians to do that. If the hon. member will look up a lecture delivered by a well-known professor of the Queensland University last year, he will see that he emphasised that point. He said that not only could both the consumer and the grower be protected, but also that their interests were indissolubly united. But I do not wish to confine my remarks to a

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reply to the hon. member for Cook. I want to quote the remarks of Mr. V. C. Thompson, a member of the Country Party, when speaking in the Federal House of Representatives in May last—

“This afternoon the hon. member for Kennedy (Mr. Riordan) referred to the unfortunate position of the growers at Mareeba. I know that hundreds of growers in New South Wales and Queensland—I shall not mention the other States—are loaded up with tobacco held over from last year and grown this year, and have not the vaguest prospect of a buyer. Only a few weeks ago I visited a number of tobacco farms. I saw quantities of excellent tobacco, quite as good in respect of colour as any tobacco brought from America.”

To come nearer home, to come to the Mareeba district, represented by the hon. member for Cook, I find the following reference in the Rockhampton “Morning Bulletin” of 13th June, 1933:—

“Reports of recent tobacco sales in Mareeba have apparently caused a mild sensation in North Queensland, and already speculation is rife concerning the future of Mareeba and district.”

There is no condemnation there of either the State Labour Government or the Department of Agriculture, such as the hon. member for Cook suggests, but there is a condemnation of the Federal Government's policy in reducing the import duty on tobacco leaf and increasing the excise duty. That is the effect of that report—a mild sensation has been caused as the result of the unfortunate action of the Federal Government!

Mr. KENNY: Do you think it is the duty of the Federal Government to provide finance for the tobacco-growers?

Mr. LARCOMBE: They are providing finance in excess of that recommended by the Tobacco Commission. Of course, I realise that a reasonable amount of revenue is necessary, but no one can suggest that £7,000,000 should be dragged out of the pockets of the consumers and producers of Australia in the way I have mentioned. Just fancy an excise duty of 4s. 6d. upon tobacco leaf! The unfortunate growers in Queensland are thus responsible for finding hundreds of thousands of pounds in taxation in that way of which they should be free.

Now let me follow up my remarks by quoting the remarks of the ex-Home Secretary, the hon. member for Fitzroy, as reported in the Rockhampton “Morning Bulletin” of 4th March, 1932—

“I deeply regret that Mr. Gullett has seen fit to strike such a severe blow at the primary industries of Queensland, said the Home Secretary (Mr. J. C. Peterson).

“Mr. Gullett had struck a staggering blow at the tobacco-growers, demanding twice as much in excise as what the growers received.

“Other sections in the South wished to cripple the sugar industry, apparently oblivious to the fact that they, by an overwhelming vote, demanded a White Australia and insisted that sugar should be grown by white labour.

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“He sincerely trusted that every effort would be made by the Federal Country Party to prevent the sugar, cotton, tobacco, and other industries being slaughtered.”

Notwithstanding that, the hon. member for Cook endeavours to throw the responsibility for the unfortunate plight of these tobacco-growers upon the Department of Agriculture and the Labour Government of the State! He cannot escape the severity of the criticism and condemnation of hon. members of his own party with whom he sat—and still sits. Out of anti-Labour mouths we are able to criticise the actions of the Federal Government, and in turn refute the criticism of the hon. member for Cook.

Mr. KENNY interjected.

Mr. LARCOMBE: If the hon. member for Cook is satisfied that the Federal Government are responsible for the unfortunate plight of the tobacco-growers, why did he not say so last evening and co-operate with us in the protest made against the action of the Federal Government, which is having the effect of paralysing the tobacco industry, reducing the area under cultivation, decreasing the output, hindering the investment of capital, and at the same time destroying the confidence of the people and bringing about desolation where there should be prosperity?

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

Mr. BRAND (*Isis*) [11.24 a.m.]: I realise that this is the most important vote in the Estimates; particularly is it so to the primary producing industries, which we recognise as the most important industries to the development of the State. Most primary industries are receiving assistance from Parliaments throughout Australia. The primary industries are at a very low ebb, because of the unprecedented slump on the markets of the world, and it is only natural that the primary producers should turn to parliamentarians for assistance in their time of trouble. The hon. member for Rockhampton was a member of a Labour Government for approximately nine years, but this morning he confessed that the present Government could do nothing to assist the primary producers of this State and suggested in effect that the present parlous state of the primary industries could be attributed to the present Federal Nationalist Government and to fifty years of squatter Government in this State. He frankly confessed that this Government could do naught to assist the primary industries, and he even went so far as to say that the Labour Government had carried the producers on their backs.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. BRAND: An hon. member says, “Hear, hear!” Never in the history of Queensland have Governments carried the producers on their backs, but the reverse is certainly true, that the producers have carried Governments on their backs. During the last two years in particular, tributes have been paid to the producers not only by Nationalist members, but also by Labour Premiers and Labour Prime Ministers who have gratefully admitted that the producers of this country saved Australia and her Governments. In view of the splendid

achievements by the primary producers they are entitled to the highest respect and regard of members of Parliament irrespective of party. The producers do not wish Governments to carry them on their backs. They merely desire freedom of action so that they can develop their own industries and earn a livelihood in the way which they think best. Of course they do look forward to that degree of assistance which is naturally expected from all Parliaments.

The annual report by Mr. Graham, Under Secretary of the Department and Director of Marketing, is a very interesting document, and any hon. member who reads that report must be convinced that the primary producer has not fallen down on the job. The report discloses record production in almost every branch of rural industry. The primary producer has stood up to his responsibilities, no matter what Government were in power. The greatest anxiety of the primary producer to-day is as to the price he can receive for his commodity, and the responsibility of seeing that he gets a reasonable price must be assumed by the Government. The price paid for primary products to-day is not sufficient to cover the cost of production, and, therefore, does not permit the farmer to earn a decent livelihood. The question of price is not the responsibility of the primary producer; it is the duty of Parliament to recognise the importance of the primary industries and endeavour to assume the responsibility of securing an increased price for primary products. The only bright spot in rural life during the past twelve months was the welcome increase in the price of wool, which can now be produced at a profit. That increase was not brought about by the activities of any Government, but came as a result of the more buoyant tone of the wool markets of the world. We cannot hope to restore the measure of prosperity so earnestly desired by the primary producers until better prices are secured for our primary products on the markets of the world. I agree with the hon. member for Rockhampton to a certain extent that our difficulties lie in the marketing and financial end of the business. The difficulties of the producer in regard to export trade are not confined to our own State. The producers all over the world are facing a similar difficulty and are demanding that they should receive proper protection from Parliament. In spite of this serious phase of the question, the producers have shown a record production in the State. The Minister should regard their effort with some pride and give them credit for being at least able to manage their own activities. I do not wish the Minister to continue with his policy of directing the producers how they should carry on their industries. I do not desire the Minister to compel the canegrowers to grow only the varieties of cane he desires or that he should dictate to the producers in the dairying industry what class of cattle and what class of pigs they should acquire. The producers have shown that they are able to look after their own business and achieve a record production under most adverse conditions, from both climatic and marketing viewpoints, by their own energy and initiative.

I was pleased to see the reference of the Under Secretary to the great sugar industry. He points out that last year the production of sugar amounted to 514,916 tons,

and of this production only 65.48 per cent. found a market in Australia. The balance, 34.52 per cent. had to be exported overseas to find markets, in which it realised only £8 5s. 9d. a ton. The sugar marketed on the home market realised £25 2s. 3d. a ton. The average value of the sugar produced last year was £19 6s. 1d. a ton. The Under Secretary proceeds to indicate what the prospects of the industry are in the coming year. In this respect he has given food for thought, not only to the Minister but also to the sugar producers themselves. It is quite clear from his remarks that in the coming year we cannot look for an average price of more than £17 per ton. This price will be only equivalent to that of pre-war years. At the same time we must remember that our costs of production to-day are almost double what they were in the pre-war period. The Under Secretary states—

“It is difficult to foretell how the price reduction on Australian-consumed sugar will react on the industry. The declared price for raw sugar for home consumption has been fixed for the present crop at £23 per ton, while the current quotations for raw sugar on the London market remain at a particularly low figure. Assuming that the average price realised for export sugar will reach the 1932 level, it is doubtful whether the net price for sugar will this year exceed £17 per ton.”

That average price is over £2 per ton less than the average price secured for the past season's production. That is a most serious loss to the sugar-growers. The growers have had to submit to a loss of £1,500,000 because of the action of the Federal Government in reducing the price of sugar within Australia by ½d. per lb. That is a loss which they can ill afford to suffer. It is generally recognised that it is a valuable asset to the country to have an exportable product. The value of the exportable portion of the sugar crop, amounting to £2,000,000, has been invaluable to Australia. Last year Australia had a favourable trade balance with the United Kingdom of £11,000,000. After the interest commitments on Australian loan moneys were taken into consideration, there remained an adverse balance of approximately £12,000,000. Therefore, without the value of our primary produce exported overseas, we would not be in the position we are in to-day. It is necessary that every industry should export what it possibly can. Producers in the sugar industry are asked to produce under conditions that do not exist in any other sugar-producing country in the world. They are conditions which we wish to continue, but I draw the attention of the Committee to the fact that the sugar producer in this State is at a considerable disadvantage when compared with the producer in other parts of the world. The price we received for our sugar overseas last year was approximately £8 per ton. Our export sugar has to compete in the world's markets with sugar from Java and Cuba, where costs of production are infinitely lower than ours. Even there difficulty is being experienced in producing profitably at existing world prices. What, therefore, must be the position of the Queensland sugar producers whose costs are infinitely higher than those in other countries? A higher price has been given to

Mr. Brand.]

sugar producers for sugar sold in the Australian market to make good the loss on sugar exported overseas, but at present prices for sugar in Australia no margin is available to recoup producers for the loss on export. At the date on which the report of the Department of Agriculture and Stock was published it was estimated that the yield of raw sugar for Queensland for the 1933 harvest would be 547,000 tons, but the latest estimate is that the production of sugar will be approximately 620,000 tons, approximately 50 per cent. of which will have to be exported at the ruinous prices I have mentioned. The price in London to-day is about £5 a ton, but at that price other countries, with which we are competing, find it difficult to make the industry pay. Great Britain gives us a preferential tariff of approximately £3 15s. per ton, which assists to recoup us for the expensive freight and insurance.

Mr. O'KEEFE: Do you favour the increasing of production for the overseas markets?

Mr. BRAND: No, because I do not think the industry can possibly stand it; but we have to continue because we have a product that must be sold in whatever market is available. In that connection I trust the Minister will direct his energies to placing the greatest quantities of sugar in the best markets of the world.

Mr. O'KEEFE: How do you account for the increased assignments given last year?

Mr. BRAND: That is a question for the Minister, but I believe the increased assignments last year were given to correct anomalies that existed. A more serious question than increased assignments is the quantity of unassigned land growing sugar-cane that finds its way into No. 1 pool. I understand that important matter has already been taken in hand by the Minister. It is a practice that should not be allowed to continue, and I believe that the industry itself will demand that very drastic action be taken. One thing that can be said about the position of unassigned land is that immediately the product from that land passes into No. 2 pool, the growers receive only export prices, so that the position of those who are endeavouring to carry out the arrangement entered into by this Parliament is not jeopardised. The point I want to stress to the Minister is the serious plight of the growers who to-day are finding it difficult to carry on their industry because of the great slump that has been brought about principally by low prices for the commodity exported.

I would ask the Minister to endeavour to assist the industry, as he can in many directions in his capacity as a Cabinet Minister.

The hon. member for Rockhampton endeavoured to indicate that it was the sole duty of the Federal Government to give assistance to Queensland industries, but I claim that action should also be taken in other directions. For example, care should be exercised to see that costs are not increased in such a way that the producer finds it difficult to continue. The burden of land taxation, high railway freights and levies should have attention and relief should be given. I recommend that the Minister direct his attention to the levies associated with the Central Sugar Cane

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Prices Board as one means of reducing the costs of the producers. At present there is a balance of £10,404 in the fund. There is a levy of 1½d. per ton to meet the cost of the board, and after the present year I believe there will be a substantial balance of possibly £12,000 or £13,000. Even a farthing is a large levy to-day in the sugar industry, and I ask the Minister to give consideration to the reduction of the levy to 1d. During the period of the Moore Government the levy was cut out altogether for one year because of the favourable position of the fund. The Minister could reduce the levy to 1d. and yet secure sufficient funds for the next five or six years. In the present year the costs of running the board is something like £17,000. A penny a ton would bring in between £14,000 and £15,000, and there would be £12,000 or £13,000 in the fund at the end of the year.

The dairying industry is most important to Queensland and to my electorate. The hon. member for Rockhampton mentioned the record production in Queensland, but with the record production last year there were also record low prices for the primary producer, which made it difficult for him to carry on. The report of the department states—

“Grading records show considerable improvement in quality and a commendable uniformity of factory products.

“The body, texture, and general condition of butter were satisfactory, an indication of a high degree of efficiency on the manufacturing side of the industry.”

Which is a tribute to the co-operative factories in Queensland. When we have a report setting out record production of first quality butter, we can come to no other conclusion than that the industry is doing well and should be left alone.

The report further states—

“In the course of the year ‘The Dairy Cattle Improvement Act of 1932’ became law. Its object is to assist dairy farmers to head their herds with bulls bred on production lines.”

The producers themselves know the best way to increase the production of the herds, and where necessary they have the advice of the departmental officers. During the present year I attended meetings of protest against the operations of this Act, and particularly the operation of the tax. I found at Biggenden that the farmers were incensed at the action of the Minister—they were almost in a rebellious state. At that meeting the president of the Council of Agriculture, Mr. MacRobert, and the secretary, Mr. Sheehy, both denied when questioned by the growers that they had ever advised the Minister to bring forward the measure.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not in order in discussing the Dairy Cattle Improvement Act. He must discuss the vote which is before the Committee.

Mr. BRAND: I realise that. I was endeavouring to discuss the policy of the Minister with regard to it.

The Minister in his previous reply did not discuss the question brought forward by the hon. member for Cook—that herd testers who were originally under this vote have been transferred to the Dairy Improvement Board, a fact which shows that the 5s. levy on

bulls as the policy of this Government has been raised for the purpose of relieving the general revenue of the State at the cost of the dairy farmer. The dairy farmers are incensed at the action of the Minister. They are struggling against all kinds of difficulties and should not be asked to pay money for something which they know is not going to be of material value to them. We must recognise that this industry is of the greatest importance to the State, and the Minister ought to recognise the claims of the producers to manage their own concern. The producer should be left absolutely free to work out his own salvation, and above all he should not be restricted in any way. I have found that the producers in my own electorate are highly intellectual members of the community. They are aware of what is wrong with their industry and the difficulties that have to be faced, and are prepared to take action to correct them. They have both the ability and the business acumen to solve these difficulties without any direction from the Legislature.

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

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. A. Bruce, *The Tablet*) [11.50 a.m.]: Everybody recognises the importance of the primary industries to the State, and I am glad to be able to say that the greater part of the assistance given to primary producing organisations has been given by the Labour Party. Hon. members opposite apparently do not take much interest in the affairs of the country or they would have remarked what was said by the Leader of the Federal Country Party, Dr. Earle Page, who stated recently that the United Australia Party was detrimental to the interests of the primary producers and advocated that he and his colleagues should break away from that party.

I wish to deal principally with the attitude adopted by the hon. members for Wynnum and Cook in connection with the tobacco industry. The hon. member for Wynnum stated—

“If the tobacco growers of this country cannot produce a leaf with a duty of 3s. per pound on imported tobacco they deserve to go under.”

Mr. KENNY: The hon. member for Wynnum did not say that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He did say that, and the hon. member for Cook moved an amendment to the motion then being debated supporting the cutting down of the duties on imported tobacco leaf, and to increase the excise duty on Australian-grown tobacco.

Mr. KENNY: Mr. Hanson, I rise to a point of order. I did not move any such amendment, and I ask that the Minister withdraw his statement, and accept my denial.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the Secretary for Public Works to accept the denial of the hon. member for Cook.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I accept the denial, Mr. Hanson. The hon. member for Cook moved the following amendment on the motion proposed by the hon. member for Rockhampton:—

“Omit the words—

‘The tariff and excise legislation and general policy of the present Commonwealth Government in respect to the

primary and secondary industries of Queensland have been, and continue to be, injurious to the State.”

The hon. member for Cook moved that amendment, and thereby declared that he supported those things and held they were not injurious to the State. I knew the hon. member for Cook was in the habit of asking for a withdrawal, and on this occasion I was prepared for him.

Mr. Forde, the Federal member for Capricornia, is reported in Federal “Hansard” to have said—

“It was only when the duty on imported leaf was substantially increased that the British-Australasian Tobacco Company and other manufacturing companies were obliged to purchase Australian-grown leaf. When the duty on imported leaf was increased from 3s. a lb. to 5s. 2d. a lb., and the excise duty fixed at 2s. 4d. a lb., a tremendous impetus was given to the Australian tobacco-growing industry. The present Government has now reduced the duty on imported leaf from 5s. 2d. to 3s. per lb., and has increased the excise duty on Australian leaf from 2s. 4d. to 4s. 6d. per lb., an increase of 93 per cent.”

In 1931 the quantity of tobacco produced in the Cairns hinterland was 40 tons, valued at £15,000, and in 1932—owing to the decrease of the excise duty by the Scullin Government and the increase of the Customs duties on imported tobacco—the amount produced in that area was 400 tons, of a value of £100,000 to the State and the Commonwealth as a whole. Notwithstanding this, we have the hon. member for Cook directly moving an amendment supporting the cutting down of the duties on imported tobacco leaf, and the increase of the excise duty on Australian-grown tobacco.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. gentleman is not in order in discussing that matter while a motion dealing with the question is on the business-sheet.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The hon. member for Cook suggested that the Queensland Government should extend relief to the tobacco-growers. Why has it been found necessary to seek relief for the tobacco-growers from the present Government? The increase in the excise duty and the decrease in the Customs duty have so impoverished the farmers that they have no alternative other than to apply to the State Government for assistance. At the same time the hon. member for Cook supports the very thing which was responsible for the ruination or the partial ruination of the tobacco-growers—an influence which has been strenuously resisted by the present Government all along the line. I have received this letter from a tobacco-farmer in the Cairns hinterland—

“There are things I would like to bring under your notice in reference to so-called financiers—their proper names would be go-getters.

“In the first place, they financed the worker to go on the land, and some of them even promised the landholder wages, and backed their store bills. In some cases they got the farmer to sign crop liens from £2,000 to £3,000. In many cases they drew up agreements and promised to pay the farmer a weekly wage, which he never received. The go-getter built kilns, got the timber

Hon. H. A. Bruce.]

on credit, and is paying big interest for it. The farmer agreed to give the go-getter half of the crop, which he did, and in many cases now the farmer is obliged to apply to the Land Court and get his certificate, so the go-getter and the storekeeper can get a mortgage on the place so that when the time is OK they can push the farmer out, and all the work the farmer and his family have done will have to be left to these go-getters, because they know when Mr. Scullin gets in next election things will be OK. The farmer in many cases cannot go to law with these men as the farmer has never received any money.

"For your information, if you so desire, I could send you a copy of some of these agreements, as I am sure the go-getters and storekeepers are working together. A royal commission would not do any good, as a lot of the farmers would be afraid to give evidence as it might cause them some trouble in getting a bit of credit."

There is no doubt that the tobacco situation was extensively exploited when a reasonable price was being paid for tobacco, and when little difficulty was being experienced in disposing of an acceptable crop. For the 1932 season the tobacco crop was responsible for the introduction of £100,000 into the Cairns hinterland, but following the attack upon the industry by the Federal Government, supported by the hon. member for Cook, the outlook for the industry is doubtful.

Mr. KENNY: I did not know that I was so important.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The hon. member is important only as an antagonist of primary producers in general, and of the tobacco-growers in particular. This is a report of a debate in the Federal Parliament on the action of the Commonwealth Government in connection with the tobacco industry—

"There is grave danger that, because of the falling-off of the consumption of tobacco made from Australian leaf, and the large quantities held in stock, the manufacturers will refuse to buy the coming season's crop. I have already been told by one manufacturer that this year he will not be in the market for Australian leaf. The Australian growers have put their all into the industry. They have effected improvements at considerable cost, and while the industry is in its initial stages it should be given a greater measure of protection. If there is any doubt as to the extent of the protection needed, the tobacco-growers should have the benefit of it."

Mr. KENNY: Give us your own opinions.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: First of all I must show what happened. This is a continuation of the report of the debate in the Federal Parliament—

"It was only when the duty on imported leaf was substantially increased that the British-Australasian Tobacco Company and other manufacturing companies were obliged to purchase Australian-grown leaf. When the duty on imported leaf was increased from 3s. a lb. to 5s. 2d. a lb., and the excise duty fixed at 2s. 4d. per lb., a tremendous impetus was given to the Australian tobacco-growing industry. The present

Government has now reduced the duty on imported leaf from 5s. 2d. to 3s. per lb., and has increased the excise duty on Australian leaf from 2s. 4d. to 4s. 6d. per lb., an increase of 93 per cent."

Obviously, that is the reason why the tobacco-growers are in such difficulties to-day, and it behoves every member of Parliament and every member of the public who is sufficiently interested in the plight of the tobacco-growers to agitate for the re-enactment of the duties that operated during the Scullin regime.

The increased Custom duties enabled the industry in the Cairns hinterland to increase in value from £15,000 to £100,000 in a brief space of twelve months. Obviously, that £100,000 was distributed amongst workers, including railway workers, and tradesmen of every kind. It represented considerable assistance to the people of North Queensland. A new industry, certainly not of very large dimensions, had been definitely established prior to the introduction of the increased tariff by Mr. Scullin. I cannot understand why any Government should attack this industry. The continual cry is that we must increase the volume of primary production. We emphasise that cry to the primary producers. The hon. member for Burrum pointed out the position of the sugar industry. He is a sugar-grower, but he unconsciously admitted that the Federal Government had injured the industry. It is obvious, according to that hon. member, that the sugar industry has reached its peak of production. That being so, it should be the aim of every person interested in the welfare of the State to encourage a new industry. We had such an opportunity in the tobacco industry. Under the tariff policy of the Scullin Government tobacco production increased from 2,000,000 lb. to 12,000,000 lb. There is evidence in those figures that Australian consumption requirements will soon be supplied, and that in the near future we shall reach a point where it would be necessary to consider finding an export market. Sympathetic consideration should be given to the tobacco industry, because it was, and still is, the means of placing thousands of men on a class of land which previously was of very little use, and certainly of no use for agricultural purposes. Mareeba is generally spoken of as the centre of the tobacco-growing industry in North Queensland. That is hardly correct, because the centre of the district which produces the largest amount of tobacco in that portion of the State is probably Dimbulah, on the Walsh River. The class of soil in that district is evidently suited for tobacco-growing. The average rainfall is 20 inches a year. If the rainfall is not too heavy in the Mareeba district an excellent tobacco can be cultivated, but if the rainfall is heavy the clay in the sub-soil does not assist in the growing of such a fine quality tobacco as can be grown in the Dimbulah area. The land selected for tobacco-growing would not be worth more than 2s. per square mile for any other purpose. It is practically waste country and useless. If tobacco-growing ceased in that area the land would be useless for any other purpose. Most of the tobacco-growers would have been doing well if there had not been a reduction in the duties on tobacco and an increase in excise duties. Yet the hon. member for Cook supports the attitude of the Lyons Government.

Mr. KENNY: No, not necessarily.

[Hon. H. A. Bruce.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The hon. member has interjected that these tobacco-growers should be relieved by granting them relief rations.

Mr. KENNY: No, I said you should give them financial assistance.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: These men, previous to the reduction in duties, were doing well and were rearing their families as Australians should be reared. Many men were being employed in the industry. It was only because of the attitude of the hon. member for Cook on this question that I rose to participate in this debate. The hon. member for Wynnum made the statement in this Chamber that if a duty of 3s. on imported tobacco was not sufficient to enable the tobacco-growers to make a "do" of the industry, then they deserved to go under.

Mr. BAYLEY: Hear hear! They deserve to go under if they cannot make a "do" under those duties.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: These tobacco-growers are working harder than ever the hon. member has worked. They put in more than eight hours a day and are a fine stamp of men. It is all very well for any man possessing the inferiority complex like the hon. member for Wynnum to make such an attack on a section of our primary producers who are doing something for the country. He only makes such a statement in the coward's castle and under privilege. He has never investigated the question whether these tobacco-growers were working at full pressure. He has never investigated the question of the efficiency of these men. He condemns them without any evidence at all, with the object of supporting a Government to which he previously was attached until the people decided that he should no longer have the opportunity to do so. The hon. member for Wynnum makes a statement against a body of men who are unable to protect themselves. These men are working under tropical conditions, and have settled on country which previously was only occupation license country, which would not carry many cattle to the square mile. The men who are developing that country are condemned by a member of this Parliament in a most off-handed manner. The hon. member for Wynnum says that if they cannot make a "do" of it with the duty of 3s. per lb. then they should go under. Surely the intelligent attitude would be this: If these men are working effectively and doing good work, and extra duty of 1s. or 1s. 6d. per lb. would be justified if it meant a continuance of tobacco-growing. That would be the attitude of any hon. member or any honourable man, because to condemn men who are pioneering this country—men who are opening up new stretches of country, fencing it, and improving it—is to do something unworthy of any decent man. The attitude of the Federal Government is typified by the attitude of the hon. member for Wynnum. By a reversion to the original duties, the tobacco-growers could be saved from going under, could feed and clothe their families in a proper way, and could carry on an industry of value not only to the State but also to the Commonwealth. But here, for some unknown reason—certainly there are large financial interests involved in the British-Australasian Tobacco Trust—these men are being ruined by the reduction of the tariff and by the increase

of the excise on locally-grown tobacco. Judging by their interjections hon. members opposite who were present this morning approve of that attitude, and in several speeches the hon. member for Cook also approved. Yet at the same time that hon. member blames the Labour Government, which have fought desperately against the attitude to which I am objecting, and he asks the Labour Government to come to their rescue. Certainly, I am convinced that anything that can be done to keep these men on the land will be done by this Government, in conformity with the Labour Party's policy; but the position would never have been created had it not been for the action of an anti-Labour Government. It was with the knowledge of these facts that I was astonished to listen to the remarkable attack on the tobacco-growers in Queensland made by the hon. member for Cook.

Mr. BAYLEY (Wynnum) [12.10 p.m.]: The Secretary for Public Works has devoted a good deal of his time to dealing with a remark of mine, and robbed it of its context. I cannot recall my exact words, but my statement was to the effect that if the industry could not get along with a duty of 3s. per lb., then it deserved to go under.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: No. "Hansard" will not show that.

Mr. BAYLEY: That was the meaning of my statement.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: No.

Mr. BAYLEY: Then perhaps the hon. gentleman will give me my exact words.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You said, "If the tobacco-growers of the country cannot produce a leaf when they are assisted by a tariff to the extent of £85 for every acre under tobacco, they deserve to go under."

Mr. BAYLEY: The reason the tobacco-growers of this State are in trouble is that the Labour Government under Mr. Scullin and Mr. Forde lured them to their destruction. They placed a duty on tobacco leaf of 5s. 2d. per lb. What was the result? Hundreds of men were induced to go into the cultivation of tobacco. The duty was so high that the American Tobacco Company and the other tobacco companies in Australia were forced, in their endeavour to put tobacco on the market within the reach of the consumers to use as much Australian leaf as possible, and so defeat the tariff. The result was that consumption fell off immediately, and the Federal Government realised that if that high duty were allowed to remain the tobacco-growers of this industry would suffer. The duty was reduced from 5s. 2d. to 3s. per lb. That specific duty of 3s. is equivalent to an ad valorem duty of from 300 to 500 per cent. It is equivalent to a duty of £85 on every acre under tobacco. I say again that if the tobacco industry cannot prosper in Australia without an assistance equal to £85 per acre, or an ad valorem duty of from 300 to 500 per cent., then it deserves to go under, because it is uneconomic for this country to foster such an industry. But the industry can prosper with a duty of 3s. a lb.

Mr. MOORE: It has been doing it for years.

Mr. Bayley.]

Mr. BAYLEY: Of course it has been doing it for years. A few years ago approximately 2,000,000 lb. of tobacco were produced in this country, and the industry was prospering; the men were receiving a fair and adequate price for their leaf. By reason of the tariff people were induced to enter the industry, so that two years ago between 12,000,000 and 13,000,000 lb. of leaf was produced, much of it of an inferior quality, which could not be used to advantage by the manufacturer. There is a duty of 1s. 8d. a lb. in Canada on leaf grown in that country. As I said before, she is in juxtaposition to the greatest tobacco producing country in the world, the United States of America. Canada exports 6,500,000 lb. of tobacco per year, and we shall have to export. If the tobacco industry is to prosper we must export a certain quantity of leaf or throw it into the incinerator, because it is impossible for us to use 100 per cent. of the tobacco grown in this country.

At 12.14 p.m.,

Mr. W. T. KING (*Maree*), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved the Chairman in the chair.

Mr. BAYLEY: In order to manufacture a suitable tobacco, the local article must be blended with other tobaccos. The United States of America has been growing tobacco for hundreds of years, and what is the position there? Last year they produced 1,400,000,000 lb. of tobacco, exported 600,000,000 lb. of leaf, and imported between 140,000,000 and 150,000,000 lb. If a country like the United States, the leading tobacco country in the world, finds it necessary to import approximately 150,000,000 lb. of leaf in order to place a tobacco on the market which will meet with the approval of the consuming public, we also in Australia will have to import leaf. Our annual consumption is in the neighbourhood of 20,000,000 lb. We should be able to produce for our own use 26,000,000 out of that 20,000,000 lb., but we will have to import the other 4,000,000 lb. The Secretary for Public Works has charged the Federal Government, who are responsible for the levying of tariffs, with enmity towards the tobacco industry. A duty of 3s. a lb. should be sufficient.

Mr. O'KEEFE: The growers also charged the Federal Government with being responsible for the position brought about.

Mr. BAYLEY: Naturally. The growers were falsely led by Mr. Scullin and Mr. Forde, aided and abetted by those men who had land to sell, not only in the Mareeba district but also in and around Brisbane. Men who owned land in and around Brisbane, who found it impossible otherwise to sell their land, placed it upon the market for the purpose of tobacco-growing. The prospective buyers were told that there was a fortune in it with this duty of 5s. 2d. a lb.

Mr. O'KEEFE: Why didn't the Moore Government tell the people it was not so?

Mr. BAYLEY: The Moore Government gave them the land at a nominal figure.

Mr. O'KEEFE: That is not entirely correct.

Mr. BAYLEY: It was a nominal price. As a result hundreds of men were induced to enter the industry who would not have done so had the industry been allowed to

develop along proper lines. We say that experience teaches, but I am convinced that what the politician will not learn is to leave industries alone.

The hon. member for Isis referred to the sugar industry. The sugar industry is in the position it is to-day because politicians interfered with it—and I must take my share of the responsibility. If Mr. Hughes had not given the sugar-growers £30 6s. 8d. a ton the industry would be in a prosperous condition to-day.

Mr. O'KEEFE: Brought about by fictitious land values.

Mr. BAYLEY: Brought about by fictitious prices.

Mr. O'KEEFE: And brought about by the Moore Government.

Mr. BAYLEY: The position has been brought about by a fictitious price, a fictitious price paid to the growers to recoup them for what they lost during the war. We cannot escape our responsibilities. Political parties in this country have wrought havoc amongst the primary producing industries, to say nothing of secondary industries, which it will take many years to redeem. Take, for instance, the dairying industry, about which the hon. members for Rockhampton and Isis spoke. Four years ago this country exported 47,000 tons of butter. A year later, as a result of the Paterson scheme, it went up to 78,000 tons; in the following year to 91,000 tons, and last year to 104,000 tons. But what happens? When we sent away 47,000 tons we received 158s. per cwt.; when we sent 78,000 tons the price got down to 112s. per cwt.; when we sent 91,000 tons the price got down to about 97s., and when we sent 104,000 tons, the price dropped to 74s. per cwt.

Much has been said about the Ottawa Agreement and Britain's treatment of the Dominions as against foreign countries. Butter imports to Britain from foreign countries increased by 20 per cent. within four years, whereas imports from the Dominions increased by 225 per cent. The market was flooded. We sent to the British market last year 104,000 tons of butter, or an increase of 225 per cent. in four years. That was brought about by unnatural causes. Before that the industry was prosperous, but many people were induced to go into it, and we are paying the penalty to-day. We will pay the penalty whenever any Government interfere and take part in primary industry or any other industry.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Leave them alone?

Mr. BAYLEY: Leave them alone. They should be left alone to work out their own salvation. Assist them. Reduce their taxation. Get away from this paternal form of government. We say we have not got Socialism in Australia at present, but it is mighty close to it. This paternal form of government has become a religion with hon. members opposite, and the Secretary for Agriculture is the archpriest. The hon. gentleman is never happy unless he or his department can put a finger in someone else's pie. Leave the producers alone. Let Governments spend less and ask less from the people in the form of taxation. Let the products of our industries go on the markets and find their own level, and we shall be far more prosperous in this country than we are to-day.

[Mr. Bayley.]

I say these few words in reply to the statement by the Secretary for Public Works, in which he endeavoured to show that I had no sympathy for the tobacco-growers of this country. My sympathy goes far deeper than his, I make bold to say. I am prepared to do the unpopular thing, because I realise it is for their ultimate good. He evidently is prepared to see them suffer for ever rather than do or say those things which on the surface appear to be against their best interests at the present moment. I take a long view of it; he a short one; and I will leave the people of this State to decide which is the better view.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Vanango*) [12.22 p.m.]: There is no doubt whatever that members of the Labour Government are using the Estimates of this department for the purpose of making political propaganda. I am astounded to see that sort of thing, and I am sure that the Minister does not concur in their attitude. First of all, we had the hon. member for Rockhampton metaphorically patting the hon. members for Mirani and Cooroora on the back by commending them on the statements they made, but immediately working himself into a white froth about what the Federal Government had done, and how Australia had been treated in the Ottawa Agreement. From then on he proceeded to make a speech the like of which we have had since the last election. What is the purpose of this propaganda? Is it to condemn the Lyons Government, or is the hon. member going in for Federal politics? What has he or the Secretary for Public Works contributed to this debate that is of value to agriculture? He merely rose in his place and endeavoured to make a gin-like case with a view to disseminating propaganda in the interests of the Labour Party. He did not even submit a case in keeping with advanced Labour thought, but was content to revert to the dark ages. The Secretary for Public Works went out of his way personally to abuse the hon. member for Wynnum, and he thereby disgraced his ministerial position. The hon. member for Kelvin Grove laughs; he cannot see any further than that. When the Secretary for Public Works referred to the allegedly low intellect of the hon. member for Wynnum he absolutely disgraced his ministerial position. If one liked to be personal one could ask what the Secretary for Public Works had done in the interests of the welfare of this State before he entered this Chamber.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to discuss the question before the Committee.

Mr. EDWARDS: That is just what I intend to do. What has the Secretary for Public Works done in the interests of agricultural pursuits? All his life he has organised with the object of creating conditions unfavourable to the best interests of agriculture. His efforts are no credit

to him, and it is no credit to him personally that he is prepared to abuse another hon. member of this Chamber. His contribution to agriculture in this State is absolutely nil.

The hon. member for Rockhampton harped on the freights charged on produce transported to Great Britain, and he pointed out that if they were lower there would be a great saving to our primary industries. Does he know that it costs more to convey a ton of produce by rail from Roma to Brisbane than it costs to convey the said ton of produce from Brisbane to England? What sort of an argument is his? Why do the Labour Government not attend to their own job by lowering the freight on the railways so that produce can be transported cheaply to the seaboard? They should confine their attentions to that aspect of the matter instead of harping on what the Federal Government are doing and on overseas freights.

Sneering reference has been made to the Ottawa Agreement, but what was the purpose of the Ottawa Agreement? I am not as conversant with the Ottawa Agreement as are Federal members, but I definitely state that the position in Australia was improved by that agreement.

Mr. WATERS: Ask the exporters about that!

Mr. EDWARDS: The only job that the hon. member had before he entered this Parliament was tearing up pieces of paper from the wastepaper basket. One has only to consider the quotas conceded by Great Britain to realise the wonderful assistance that Great Britain has extended to this country. I have here the figures showing the percentage of our products exported to the countries of the world over the past five years, these being the latest figures available. These figures show the percentages:—

	Per cent.
United Kingdom	41
Other parts of the Empire	11
Eighteen foreign countries	48

Now compare the 41 per cent. taken by the United Kingdom and the 52 per cent. taken by the United Kingdom and other Empire countries with these percentages taken by foreign countries:—

	Per cent.
France	11
Japan	7
United States	7
Germany	6
Belgium	5
All others (thirteen)	12

Do those figures not show that Great Britain has extended a considerable benefit to Australia? Later on I shall show where the duty of the Government lay in respect of markets. I also have the figures showing the principal items of exports for the year 1931-32, these, also, being the latest figures available. These figures show the quantity absorbed by the United Kingdom in comparison with the total amount exported:—

	United Kingdom.	Total.	Per centage.
Wool (greasy)	256,845,000 lb.	775,227,000 lb.	35
Wool (scoured)	32,713,000 lb.	55,719,000 lb.	59
Wheat	29,531,000 centals	76,440,000 centals	39
Bran and pollard	1,094,000 centals	1,460,000 centals	75
Dried fruits	102,948,000 lb.	185,533,000 lb.	56
Frozen beef	128,145,000 lb.	165,872,000 lb.	77

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Those figures are invaluable and enable people to see at a glance how dependent Australia is on Great Britain for a market for her products. The following additional figures are also illuminating from the same point of view:—

—	United Kingdom.	Total.	Per-centage.
Lamb ..	104,415,000 lb.	106,599,000 lb.	98
Mutton ..	53,230,000 lb.	58,681,000 lb.	91
Pork ..	7,038,000 lb.	7,383,000 lb.	95
Eggs ..	9,878,000 doz.	9,921,000 doz.	99
Butter ..	185,367,000 lb.	202,639,000 lb.	91
Cheese ..	6,838,000 lb.	7,267,000 lb.	94
Sugar ..	5,423,000 cwt.	5,758,000 cwt.	95

I cannot understand why hon. members should utilise this vote for the purpose of disseminating political propaganda. What is the use of it to Queensland or Australia? We should endeavour to relieve Great Britain of some of the obligations she is assuming, and take advantage of the trade facilities which she is opening up for us. It should be our object to find more markets for our products in the East instead of concentrating on political propaganda and making speeches about what the Federal Government have done and are doing. The primary producers are contributing an enormous amount to the revenue of the State by way of taxation, and they naturally desire that the various departments should be administered in the best interests of the people; instead of devoting themselves to such questions hon. members opposite are indulging in political propaganda. There was no occasion to introduce political propaganda on this vote. This is a vote on which calm and deliberate discussion is required. I do not know whether the Minister in charge of the vote was responsible for the participation in the debate of the hon. member for Rockhampton, but it is apparent that he was put up by somebody to get in a little propaganda on behalf of the Federal Labour Party.

There is not the slightest doubt that, owing to the heavy fall in the prices of primary products, producers find themselves in a difficult position. The Government should endeavour to meet producers by bringing about a reduction in costs. A commencement should be made by a reduction in railway freights. The Government could also assist in reducing costs by removing many of the restrictions which have been imposed in recent years in consequence of the legislation passed by this Parliament. They could remove many restrictions imposed on the handling of primary products from the time of their production on the farm until they are placed on the ships for transport overseas, instead of harping about what takes place after that is done. The duty of the Government lies in that direction, and nowhere else.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Tell me what restrictions can be removed and I will endeavour to give consideration to them.

Mr. EDWARDS: Many pinpricking labour and administrative conditions are imposed on the primary producer. Some of these are the result of the efforts of the Secretary for Public Works as a Labour organiser. Thus industry is becoming top heavy. The Government can also give consideration to relieving industry by lowering the incidence

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of taxation. When the hon. gentleman in charge of this vote introduced the Dairy Cattle Improvement Bill we were led to believe that the fees collected from the bull tax were to be expended specially in assisting the dairyman.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: So it is.

Mr. EDWARDS: The hon. gentleman may say so, but that is merely camouflage because the hon. gentleman knows that consolidated revenue has been relieved to a certain extent in the cost of administration and the deficiency made good from contributions by the producers.

Before I conclude I desire to commend the officers of the department for the report which has been issued. At the same time, throughout the report I can see the Minister's idea of the paramount importance of the scientific side of agriculture. I do not condemn the utilisation of scientific methods, but it is wrong for science to control the practical side of primary production in this State. Reference is made in the report to the training of boys at the St. Lucia Farm School, which to my mind is of no benefit to the State, but is a burden on the people, including the primary producers. I know what boys are, and I know that at this school they may be taught how to saw a tree and split a post, but the chances are that they will attempt to tell the first farmer to whom they are sent that they know more about his business than he does. Why not allow the boys to go to the most practical farmers in the different country districts, from whom they will get first-hand practical experience? I give the Minister credit for his enthusiasm, but it is wrong for the scientific to outrun the practical. Some of the officials of the department are to be commended. Recently I heard the poultry expert address a meeting of farmers in a practical manner, speaking to them as man to man. That is the manner in which the department should be conducted.

I notice that the sum of £1,000 has been allotted for pig experimentation at the Animal Health Station, Yeerongpilly. Why should not those experiments be carried out at Gatton College? These matters are of vital importance to primary producers, who find it extremely difficult to carry on under depressed market conditions, especially in view of the heavy overhead costs to which they are subjected. If the Minister were receiving 2s. 4d. or 2s. 5d. a bushel for maize and £2 10s. for a ton of chaff, he would realise that the plight of the farmer is serious. Let the Minister eliminate charges in every way, so that even when low prices are ruling the primary producers may be able to market their products satisfactorily.

I should also like to refer to the methods likely to be adopted in connection with the Stallion and Dairy Improvement Boards—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member will not be in order in discussing those matters on this vote.

Mr. EDWARDS: I do not propose to refer to the legislation concerning them. At the present time there is a shortage of draught horses in the State. The Minister should be careful as he may create a position whereby we will not overtake that shortage for many years to come. Everybody neglected this industry while the motor craze was on. For seven or eight years we neglected to breed horses or to care for them in a sensible way. People now are

waking up. When they see aged horses coming into the yards and bringing up to £30 they realise the position we are likely to be in. They range from twelve to twenty years of age, and mares anywhere near the latter age will not breed, so that we are not going to be able to breed many horses for many years to come. The Minister should be very careful not to overstep the mark and so kill this industry.

The same thing applies in connection with dairying. We must admit that the dairying industry has made wonderful strides in Queensland. That has not been done by the control of the practical side of the industry by science—practical men have done the work. There are men in my district who are a credit to Australia. They are selling cattle to every State in the Commonwealth. These men gained experience first in one way and then in another, and have at last bred the type of cattle suitable for this and other States. They have been largely responsible for the increased output of butter in the Commonwealth. If we relieve these people of the burdens put upon them they will do the rest. They will look after the interests of the dairying industry. They are not likely to breed from scrub bulls—they know more about the industry than that. They are working from one month to another to get the farmers to improve their herds and to secure better bulls. The administration of the Government savours too much of interference with the interests of the people. I believe that if we were to reduce taxation and railway freights, bring down Government costs, and remove pinpricking conditions our agricultural industry would be something of which we could be proud.

I quite agree with the statement in the press this morning by a visitor to this country, which I feel sure that everyone appreciated. While he was proud of Australia, he said, "After all, you are building up your capitals with too many people; there are too many people in your large cities and towns." I quite agree with him. What has brought about that condition? It is because conditions are made so hard in the country and so easy in the large centres of population. The Government are increasing that trouble tenfold, because they are collecting taxation by way of unemployment relief tax and income tax, and spending the money in the large centres of population.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) [12.47 p.m.]: The report of the department, which is a very full and excellent one, puts the activities of the department in a very clear and concise manner, and states exactly what has been done. It also affords excellent proof that many of the statements which have been made for political propaganda purposes against the Federal Government are entirely without foundation. It goes to prove that the tobacco-growers in particular have not suffered by the reduction in the tariff. The report clearly sets out the position—

"The prices at auction and by private treaty realised so far for the leaf produced this year, when quality is considered, are held to be equal to those paid for that of last year. As the leaf produced this year, due largely to the season, is on the whole much inferior to that of last year, the average price is expected to be a good deal lower, while a considerable quantity of leaf will be found unsaleable. In the Mareeba dis-

trict, for example, where the total leaf cured is estimated at approximately 900 tons, it is anticipated that 60 per cent. will not be sold."

The Federal Government are not responsible because the quality of the leaf is inferior and unsuitable for manufacture. The suggestion that everything should be used for the purposes of political propaganda against the Federal Government will not do any good to Queensland, nor place us in any better position. The report gives facts, so that the people concerned will be in a position to come to conclusions based on facts and not on imagination, as is the case with hon. members on the Government benches. It is a valuable report and people who read it will get the truth without being misled by speeches made by some members of this Chamber, speeches made for propaganda against another Government with which they are not concerned in any way whatever. One matter I would like to mention is the Auditor-General's report on the reports of the various commodity boards.

There are rather extreme discrepancies in the balance-sheets supplied by the Auditor-General in regard to commodity boards. Most of the boards give working accounts with necessary details to show people how they are being conducted, and allow members of Parliament to know what is being done. No working account, however, is given by either the Council of Agriculture or the Butter Board in respect of two boards which have expended the most money. The Council of Agriculture, which receives £5,950, does not supply any details—balance-sheet or working account—everything is lumped in one general sum. The Butter Board is in a similar position in this respect; no details are given. I would like to know why this difference exists; everything that is done by the other boards, including the Honey Board, the Wheat Board, the Northern Pig Board, the Arrowroot Board, the Broom Millet Board, the Cane Growers' Council, and the Cotton Board gives working accounts for the guidance of Parliament and the people concerned. No details are given by the largest spenders! I think that is a mistake, because the people who contribute are interested in knowing how their money is being spent. I cannot see why there should be this discrimination.

The hon. member for Rockhampton and also the Secretary for Public Works asserted that the Ottawa Agreement was practically useless. The Secretary for Public Works actually mentioned meat in connection with the matter. I would like him to turn to the report of the Queensland Meat Industry Board, which states—

"The declared policy of the British Government in relation to meat production, as set out in the Ottawa meat agreement, is, first, to secure development of home production, and, secondly, to give to the Dominions an expanding share of imports into the United Kingdom. Under this agreement, which is to remain in force for a period of five years from 20th August, 1932, the quantities of meat which can be imported into the United Kingdom from foreign countries during each quarter of the period 1st January, 1933, to 30th June, 1934, have been definitely prescribed.

"Expressed as percentages of the quantities imported in the corresponding

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quarters of the twelve months ended 30th June, 1932, the foreign importations are to be as follows:—

Meat.	1933.				1934.	
	Janv.- March.	April- June.	July- Sept.	Oct.- Dec.	Janv.- March.	April- June.
Frozen mutton and lamb ..	90	85	80	75	70	65
Frozen beef (carcasses and boned beef) ..	90	85	80	75	70	65

These figures show a decreasing percentage throughout to the advantage of the Dominions and the people of Queensland, who are the biggest exporters in Australia of frozen beef. As regards chilled beef there is no restriction. The report also states—

“In addition to the foregoing restrictions, a subsequent trade agreement between the British Government and the Argentine provides that a 10 per cent. reduction of chilled beef from that country can also be imposed, and this reduction is in effect at the present time.

“The Commonwealth Government, in carrying out the terms of the Ottawa Agreement, limited the quantity of frozen mutton, lamb, beef, and veal exportable to the United Kingdom during 1935.

“It would appear that the substantial restriction in foreign imports of beef, mutton, and lamb into the United Kingdom should permit the Commonwealth, at least, to maintain its present export volume in these products. To the extent that the British farmer cannot supply the deficiency, if any, in trade requirements caused by the restrictions the Dominions should, under the declared policy, have the opportunity to increase their shipments to that market.”

The meat industry is one of our important industries, and the Ottawa Agreement has conferred on it considerable benefits. The restrictions are definitely set out so that the public may know just what they are. The Commonwealth Government are to be congratulated instead of being eternally blamed for the state of our external markets. The benefits also apply materially to butter and cheese.

Another matter which I desire to mention is of considerable importance to a large section of the people I represent. Just prior to the last election a wonderful pamphlet was issued which related to the alleged “great bread ramp.” It pointed out that the people were being robbed. It said—

“READ THIS!

“The people have been paying at least 1d. a loaf more for bread during the last three years than can be justified by any Government.”

What have the present Government done? When they were returned to power they reduced the price of wheat to the farmers by about 6d. per bushel; the miller was left in the same position, but the consumer benefited by a reduction of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. a loaf for his bread. Who paid for it? The wheatgrower. On 28th September the hon. member for

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Cooroora asked the Secretary for Labour and Industry—

“What is the present price of flour and bread in Brisbane?”

The Secretary for Labour and Industry replied—

“The present price of flour, Brisbane, is £9 7s. 6d. per ton, and the fixed price of bread is $4\frac{1}{2}$ d. per 2-lb. loaf cash at bakehouse, shop, or delivered.”

This wonderful pamphlet called “The Great Bread Ramp” says—

“In November, 1930, wheat was 3s. $8\frac{1}{2}$ d. and flour £9 10s.”

This year wheat is 3s. $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. per bushel and flour is £9 7s. 6d. per ton. The pamphlet referred to also says that at that time the people were being robbed by having to pay a 1d. a loaf more for their bread than they should pay. These figures give a comparison on prices—

	June, 1932.	Nov. 1933.
Wheat	4s. $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. a bus.	2s. $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. a bus.
Flour	£11 10s. a ton	£8 15s. a ton
Pollard	£6 10s. a ton	£6 a ton
Bran	£5 10s. a ton	£5 15s. a ton.

In June, 1932, when, according to the Labour pamphlet, people were being fleeced by the millers to the extent of £567,000 per annum, the price of flour per ton was 55.1 times the price of wheat. Now, the price of flour is exactly 56 times the price of wheat. In June, 1932, the price of 1 ton each of flour, pollard, and bran was 112 times the price of a bushel of wheat. Now the price of 1 ton each of flour, pollard, and bran is 131 times the price of a bushel of wheat. That means that the prices of flour, pollard, and bran are now higher in comparison with the price of wheat than they were prior to the last election, when the Labour pamphlet was issued. Who issued this pamphlet in which it was stated that the consumers were being robbed of a 1d. a loaf for their bread and that £567,000 per annum was being taken out of the pockets of the people to the benefit of millers? The pamphlet was issued by Mr. W. J. Riordan, now a member of the Industrial Court, which has power to control prices! If the contents of the pamphlet were true, why has Mr. Riordan not taken action to remedy the extraordinary position? If the prices of 1 ton each of flour, bran, and pollard are now 131 times the price of a bushel of wheat whilst the said prices were only 112 times the price of a bushel of wheat when the pamphlet was issued, why has some action not been taken by Mr. Riordan?

Mr. KENNY: He is paid £40 a week to do the job.

Mr. MOORE: Yes. It only goes to show that the statements in the pamphlet were not true, and that it was issued to the country in an endeavour to mislead the farmers by telling them that they were being robbed. The only person who has been called upon to suffer is the primary producer, the man about whom the Secretary for Public Works made such a fuss this morning. He said that these men who had pioneered the country should be protected.

But how are they being protected? By a reduction in the price of bread to the consumer for which the farmer has to pay. The miller is in the same position. The man who grows the wheat—the man about whom the Secretary for Public Works shed crocodile tears—has to pay for the benefit, but he gets no benefit for himself.

At 2 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. MOORE: That part of the annual report of the department dealing with the operations of the Wheat Board shows how the farmers fell in when they put the present Government in power. At that time they were obtaining about 3s. 10½d.—up to 3s. 11½d.—per bushel for their wheat. Money which goes to the farmer goes into circulation. That is the advantage which the community gains. The only advantage to the community in a reduction in the price of bread is in a reduction of the cost of living to which should mean a decrease in the cost of production. Has that reduction had any such effect? Of course it has not. We see from this report that the Government offered the Wheat Board 3s. 6½d. per bushel for last season's wheat, including the Federal contribution. That offer was turned down by the Wheat Board. The report states, at the bottom of page 137—

"Subsequently the board signified their willingness to confer with the millers, and a meeting of the millers and the board took place on 3rd April of this year, when a sale of the millable wheat was finally agreed to on the price basis of 3s. 3½d., exclusive of any Federal grant, but with dockages of 1½d. and 3d. per bushel on Q 2 and Q 2A grade wheat."

With an addition of the Federal grant and the expenses of the board the farmer has only about 3s. 1½d. per bushel for his wheat instead of 3s. 10½d. and 3s. 11½d., which he received before this Government came into power. He is the one person who is losing over the whole transaction. The consumer is getting a reduction of ½d. per 2 lb. loaf. There is now a bigger discrepancy than ever between the price of wheat and flour and the price of bread. The whole position is unsatisfactory to the farmer, and is not calculated to encourage the industry.

In the pamphlet which was published by Mr. W. J. Riordan, the director of the Labour campaign at the last election, in order to bring home the iniquity of the late Government to the farmer, it is not pointed out that the miller took control of the wheat immediately on delivery, and had to suffer any losses which thereafter occurred—for instance, of the ravages of weevils and decrease in weight which amounted to 20,000 bushels. That fact is commented on by the Auditor-General in his report of the operations of the Wheat Board, according to which the losses were very serious. The pamphlet issued by the director of the Labour campaign attempts to show what an unfortunate position the farmer was placed in. It says—

"Theoretically, the farmer was to get 4s. 2½d. per bushel for f.a.q. wheat, but owing to an arrangement the millers got control of the grading, and very little of the crop was graded as f.a.q.; in

fact, it seems that it was graded at second and third grade quality."

If hon. members look at the Auditor-General's report they will see that that is an absolute and downright lie. The wheat received into the pool consisted of 2,868,473 bushels of milling wheat, of which 136,554 bushels were subsequently sold as seed wheat, in addition to 571,708 bushels of feed wheat.

The pamphlet continues—

"and, of course, at the lower rates, and the grower is a sadder but wiser man. While this is going on the consumption of bread has dropped 10 per cent. owing to the poverty of the people. They hunger for bread while the millers pocket their rake-off. The Moore Government winks the other eye at this ramp in the wheat industry, and the secret commissions in the dairying industries. Meanwhile every loaf of bread you eat costs 1d. more than it should."

If bread cost 1d. more than it should when wheat was 4s. 2½d. per bushel, how much more iniquitous is the present price when wheat is bringing only 3s. 2½d. per bushel? Why has no action been taken if that statement is true? If the suggestions put forward in the pamphlets issued by Mr. Riordan are correct—"Drop the Pirates"—"Give Labour the Helm again"—"Banish Poverty" and "Restore Prosperity"—are correct, why does not this gentleman, who is now a member of the Industrial Court, take some action to stop the people from being robbed? It is an extraordinary position. Here is a man who has issued a pamphlet in which very definite and serious statements are made, yet when the opportunity is his, and the position is infinitely worse, and the position of the farmer is infinitely worse, he takes no action. We know why no action is taken. Because the whole position was duly investigated by the Commissioner of Prices, Mr. Ferry, before this pamphlet was issued. The price was fixed according to Mr. Ferry's recommendation. That pamphlet only goes to show that people in responsible positions are prepared to issue pamphlets in which are statements which are absolutely incorrect, not for the benefit of this community but in order to secure votes.

Settlement is taking place on land that has been cleared of prickly-pear. That land is eminently suitable for fat lamb raising. Although the position of the dairying industry is rather precarious and an infinitely greater expansion in that industry might have quite disastrous results under the present depressed condition, we find this interesting statement at page 23 of the last report of the Queensland Meat Industry Board—

"CONSISTENT CROSSBRED LAMB TRADE.

"Past records clearly indicate that the price of wool determines, to a great extent, the quantity of merino-type mutton and lamb exported from Australia. The graph on page 40 illustrates the position. In view of the recent sharp rise in wool prices, it is unlikely, therefore, that mutton and lamb will be available for export in the same quantities as during the past year or two, when wool prices were at such a low level.

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"In the board's opinion, farmers in this State should contemplate making a regular business of producing several hundred thousand crossbred lambs annually, in order that Queensland can consistently remain in the export trade in this product."

That page also contains a photograph of the Darling Downs crossbred lambs, the type that is required. These lambs took first prize at the last Brisbane Exhibition, and are of as good a quality as any produced elsewhere in Australia or New Zealand. There is a demand not only for the export trade, but also for the local trade. I should say that there is an extensive demand in Brisbane for lamb of this quality, and as the board points out there is an almost unlimited scope for expansion in this trade at a good price and in a good market. Fat lambs can be grown in Queensland, particularly in the southern district; and in this class of country that I have mentioned, where artificial grasses will take the place of prickly-pear—such fodders as rape and rye—every opportunity should be given by the department for people to embark on an industry that will ensure a reasonably decent return and will provide an infinitely better opportunity for profitable production than would be afforded by an expansion of the dairying industry. The land is available and suitable for that class of husbandry, and from personal experience in the raising of fat lambs I am quite satisfied that it can be made a profitable industry. Let us, therefore, give encouragement to this industry rather than to the expansion of the dairying industry at this particular time.

In dealing with avenues for improved export business, the board also has this to say at page 27—

"NO RESTRICTION ON PORK.

"With regard to frozen pork, there are no restrictions imposed by the Ottawa Agreement on the quantities exportable from Australia. The importation of frozen pork into Great Britain is practically confined to Australia and New Zealand, as no frozen pork is allowed to be imported from the Continent of Europe.

"The board's latest advice from several English buyers is to the effect that Australia can continue to increase its export of frozen porkers, but they emphasise that they cannot build up a business on spasmodic shipments such as are made from this country. They urge that regular consignments should be made, as is being done by New Zealand shippers."

The Queensland Meat Industry Board is providing not only adequate slaughtering and handling facilities for the export of pork, but is also after careful scientific investigation, producing a food that takes the place of milk for the rearing of pigs—a food that is eminently suitable for producing weight at an economical price. The difficulty the board has experienced is to get our own people to use it, although an unlimited market exists in Germany, whither quantities are presently being exported. If it pays to ship that food to Germany for use there, surely it ought to be more payable to pig producers here! We have a market overseas for a tremendously increased production of pork, and the board is making

[Mr. Moore.

a food out of by-products that enables a very large increase to take place in that production. It seems to me that the efforts of the Department of Agriculture should lie in these two directions, where the markets are available, instead of increasing the dairying imports to Great Britain, where the market has become saturated. To-day the market for frozen pork in Great Britain is practically confined to Australia and New Zealand as the importation of frozen pork from Europe is prohibited and we have unlimited opportunities for expansion. These are two lines on which the department should concentrate as far as possible. That would open up an avenue that is not exploited at the present time, in which there is room for expansion, and a market that is not saturated. We might well take to heart the remarks in the report of the Meat Industry Board, particularly as it looks as if corn and wheat are this year going to be very low in price.

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

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*) [2.14 p.m.]: This is a most important department, and I wish, first of all, to thank the officers of the department for the courtesy they have shown to me on every occasion I have had to interview them. I also thank the Minister for the courtesy I have received from him. He has done his best, so far as the limitations of his party's policy will allow, to help everyone in trouble.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: You always say that.

Mr. DEACON: What I say is only meant to guide him in the right direction. He has a most efficient staff, who do a great deal of good work and help along the various agricultural industries in the State. Perhaps they do not do it to the extent the Minister said they do, still they do a great deal to that end, and we appreciate their work.

The hon. member for Rockhampton mixed up his expressions of appreciation of the department with his denunciation of the Federal Government, and did a little electioneering. He made some absurd statements about the effect of low tariffs on the farming industry. Low tariffs do not hurt the farmer much at all—if anything they help him—but high tariffs raise expenses. Our markets are ruled by overseas prices, not local prices. If everything the farmer bought were manufactured here, and the farmers had only the home market to supply, he would be a considerable loser in the transaction. It is mostly manufactured goods which are supplied to the farmer, and primary industry does not flourish when too heavy a burden is placed on the farmer in the shape of the cost of such articles. If goods do not come out here in the ships we use for the export of our products we have to pay double for the carriage of everything we send overseas. We have to bear that in mind besides the increased cost of the machinery we have to buy. Protection does not help the farmer a great deal, and before any hon. member opposite—in his denunciation of tariffs—includes the farmer as somebody who benefits, he ought to inquire further and ascertain whether they have not an effect the direct opposite of that for which he is contending.

Another matter in which I am interested is the agreement which was arrived at between the Federal and State Governments whereby certain sums of money were provided by the former for the assistance of wheatgrowers by the payment of a bonus of £25,000 and the distribution of £15,744 amongst necessitous wheatgrowers. The payments were to be based upon the quantity of wheat produced by the individual grower. There has not been any variation of that agreement—or if there has the Minister has not informed us of it—and if there was a variation it was not made with the consent of the Federal Government. However, a variation has been made and the Secretary for Agriculture in reply to a question recently informed the House that £26,000 odd had been paid by way of bounty and £13,000 to necessitous individual growers. In other words, £2,000 had been taken from the necessitous farmers and given to the others. That is not fair to the necessitous farmers. In the first place they were entitled to more, as their need was greater. If there was no new arrangement between the Governments, the Secretary for Agriculture had no right to vary the agreement. I am certain that the variation was not suggested by the Federal Government; it may have been suggested by the State. In any case it was a wrong thing to do, because some growers had no crop last year and a very light crop the year before. Such men were entitled to the full amount allotted for their assistance. It is easy to understand what has happened. When the Minister found that the quantity of wheat on which a bounty had been promised had exceeded the amount expected originally, and the State Government would not find the extra money necessary, they took from the poorer of the farmers, the men in the greatest of need, £2,000 in order to make up the difference.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is not right.

Mr. DEACON: It looks very much like it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You wait until I explain the whole thing to you.

Mr. DEACON: The fact of the matter is that the money was taken. I have read out the two amounts that were paid out. Part of the money that was intended for needy farmers was taken to make up the shortage of bounty.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You know that is not right; you know better.

Mr. DEACON: I do not know better. I only know what the Minister has told this Committee and what Mr. Latham told the growers. If there is any reason for the variation I would be glad to have the explanation. As it is at present, both the growers and myself know why it was done. The necessitous growers know that the amount agreed upon for them was reduced by very nearly £2,000 while the other amount was increased by £2,000. That was not the agreement between the two Governments.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I can explain that; it is a very simple explanation.

Mr. DEACON: The Government received a certain tangible amount, and the total amount expended corresponds with the amount received. The Minister did not

receive any more money, and we want an explanation. As it is, the growers have been deprived of money which they needed and which should have been paid to them.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They got it.

Mr. DEACON: They did not get it, and we wish to know why they did not. Writing to the Nangwee Local Producers' Association, the Commonwealth Attorney-General, Mr. J. G. Latham, said—

“DEAR SIR,—With reference to your letter of 22nd May, 1933, relative to the Commonwealth grant of £40,744 under ‘The Financial Relief Act, 1932,’ to the State of Queensland, I desire to inform you that in response to an application for funds made recently by the Under Secretary to the State Treasury, the amount of £40,744 was paid without delay to the Queensland Government for distribution in accordance with the provisions of the Act. The Commonwealth Government had previously expressed concurrence in the proposals submitted by the Government of Queensland for the allocation of the abovementioned amount as follows:—

(a) For reducing the cost of the production of wheat, including cost of transport and marketing—£25,000.

This amount to be distributed on the basis of the acreage cultivated and sown to wheat.

(b) Providing for the needs of individual wheatgrowers, but not upon the basis of the quantity of wheat produced by individual wheatgrowers—£15,744.

This sum to be used to assist wheatgrowers, of whom a number failed to produce any crop at all.

“Section 28 of the Financial Relief Act provides that—

Any money paid to a State under this Part (Part VI., Relief to Wheatgrowers) shall be applied by the State for the benefit and assistance of wheatgrowers by—

(a) Reducing the cost of production of wheat (including the cost of transport and marketing); and

(b) Providing for the needs of individual wheatgrowers, but not upon the basis of the quantity of wheat produced by individual wheatgrowers.

“Yours faithfully,

“J. G. LATHAM,

“For Prime Minister.”

That is plain enough. In answer to a question the other day as to what amounts had been paid, the Minister gave £25,000 odd as the amount paid in the first case, and £13,000 in the second case. If there is any explanation, it should have been made long ago. The necessitous wheatgrowers asked for it, but they got no definite answer. The Minister could have made his explanation in this Chamber or otherwise publicly before now, but no explanation has been made. It is a great shame that nothing was said before. If the Minister is possessed of any other facts which permit him to make a variation of the agreement, then I shall be glad to have them. All that we know is that a grave injustice was done to people who badly needed assistance.

Mr. Deacon.]

Mr. BARNES (*Warwick*) [2.27 p.m.]: The department is to be highly commended for the excellence of the report which is before the Chamber to-day. A more comprehensive report it has not been our pleasure to peruse, and the amount of information therein contained must be highly satisfactory to hon. members and to the country generally. It is interesting to see that so many industries associated with the development of this country are showing up so well. Our pig industry, about which a great deal has been said, occupies a foremost place in the Commonwealth. Whilst the number of factories is fewer in Queensland than in some of the other States, the number of employees is greater in Queensland. That is a fact worth noting. The turnover or sales amounted to £1,092,740 last year—a figure which indicates that this industry is of considerable importance. Let us hope that it will continue to expand.

A great deal was said this morning concerning the tobacco industry, but I fear that in dealing with this industry hon. members have not made the fine use that they should have made of the report that is before us, otherwise the hon. member for Rockhampton would certainly not have expressed himself as he did. If hon. members turn to page 23 of the report they will see the following statement:—

“Generally, seasonal conditions were not conducive to the production of good crops in Central Queensland this year. In the northern section continuous rains hampered cultivation and growth greatly, minimising yields, whilst in the south, although good conditions prevailed until early February, they suddenly ceased and became definitely adverse, much damage being caused by sun scald and other disorders. Despite these setbacks, however, some excellent crops of high-quality leaf were harvested, and good prices realised.”

The trend of expression of hon. members opposite to-day has been that the Federal Government are responsible for the conditions which militated against the success of the tobacco crop. It is just as well to look matters fairly and squarely in the face, and if hon. members opposite do so they will find absolute proof of the reason for the failure, in a great many cases, of the tobacco crop last season.

Several references have been made to disease in various industries. I may be very critical, but I think the hon. member for West Moreton was rather more severe in his references to the inspections of potatoes than facts warranted. The Committee and the Minister might be induced to consider the lessening of the services rendered by the experts of the department. We want to avoid that. We have no fewer than twenty-seven officers whose work has to do with the control of disease and similar things in connection with plant and other forms of life. I hope that nothing which has been said will deter the department from prosecuting to the fullest extent its duties in this matter. No land was so free of pests as our country, yet through neglect and inattention we have suffered from the ravages of the fox pest, the rabbit nuisance, the prickly-pear pest, bathurst and noogoera burrs, the Scotch thistle, and other introductions. Some attention is being given to them now, but if that attention had been given earlier

these pests would not have assumed the magnitude they have. I plead with the Minister that there should be no diminution of effort in dealing with animal and other pests.

Mention was made of the Government supplying bags to the primary producer. The Minister seemed somewhat sympathetic, but on reflection he will see that the request is practically unworkable. If the Government hired out bags they would go from Brisbane north, south, east, and west. The great bulk of the maize grown on the Darling Downs is distributed in the South. How could the Government follow up their bags? It may be remembered by some that in the olden days, when bags were returnable, they were found to have been used for all kinds of things. The Minister should make full inquiries and go very warily. Like the man crossing the street to-day, he had better look four ways—in front, behind, to the right, and to the left—before deciding to acquiesce in the suggestion. If he looks thoroughly into the matter he will find no inducement to do what he seems to be inclined to do.

I am disposed to think, however, that the hon. member for Rosewood was right when he made reference to the fly as the cause of the infection of potatoes. The infection of potatoes is caused from fly deposits from which the grub ultimately appears. Affected potatoes should not be allowed to go on the market for domestic use.

Another point on which I agree with the hon. member for West Moreton is that the inspection charges of the Government are excessive. It would be far better for the individual if condemned potatoes were sold as pig feed rather than that considerable delay and expense should be entailed in differentiating between good and bad potatoes in a consignment. The grower should realise that it does not pay to send to the market potatoes infected with disease.

There is talk at present of a Federal sales tax on wheat. I wonder whether the Government have considered what a general sales tax on this commodity may mean to the public life of Queensland. I imagine that such a tax would be collected by the Commonwealth authorities and the revenue distributed by them; and, bearing in mind that in wheat-growing Queensland occupies but a minor place in comparison with other States, I foresee that the distribution would operate against Queensland growers, who do not grow for export. I should also imagine that a considerable sum of money—probably hundreds of thousands of pounds—would be involved.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The Government have taken cognisance of the matter.

Mr. BARNES: I am glad to hear that, and I trust the Government will not agree to any such idea. The only thing that would be suitable for Queensland would be a general home consumption price for all wheat grown in Australia. However, I am glad that cognisance has been taken by the Government of a matter that might have escaped notice.

On the general wheat question I am not one of those who see no good in the other fellow. The Moore Government certainly achieved great success, but that in no small measure was due to the introduction of

[*Mr. Barnes.*]

legislation by a previous Labour Government, of which the present Premier was Secretary for Agriculture. In 1928 that hon. gentleman, in association with Mr. L. R. Macgregor, served this country in an admirable way with great advantage to the industry. In 1929-30 wheatgrowers received 3s. 11.9d., in 1930-31 3s. 11d., and in 1931-32 3s. 10½d. per bushel. What the 1932-33 price will be is not definitely known. It would appear likely that the price for No. 1 wheat will be 3s. 3½d., plus 3d., and as, judging from the Auditor-General's report, the charges will be 4½d. per bushel, the farmer will probably receive about 3s. 2d. That excessive charge of 4½d. per bushel is simply due to the stand taken by the Wheat Board in disregarding the offers that have been made. All this would not count very much unless there was some other tale to be told in connection with it, and I propose to show how matters have worked out for the Darling Downs. The Opposition have been charged with a lack of concern for the man on the land, but when I can bring forward figures such as I shall to-day the Committee will understand that the Moore Government were not blind to the highest and best interests of the people. The real work was done under the Sugar Acquisition Act. The Moore Government had the courage to use that enactment, and in consequence Queensland farmers received a very high return. For the first year, 1929-30, the growers received about 8d. a bushel over and above the growers in New South Wales. That really meant to them about £129,000. But in the peak year, when there was every inducement for the Moore Government to cut concessions to the bone, they allowed the system to continue, with the result that whilst wheat in New South Wales brought on the average 1s. 7d. a bushel in Queensland the average price was 3s. 9d. a bushel. That meant that the growers in Queensland received, on a reasonable calculation, about £270,000 more than the growers in New South Wales for a like quantity.

Mr. KENNY: They did not get too much then.

Mr. BARNES: They did not get too much then, but there is an insinuation coming from the other side that the Moore Government were blind to the best interests of the people. I am ready to say that although a reduction has been made, and the farmer this year is going to receive only 3s. 2d a bushel, the Government stuck to their cudgels well, and as a result—while I have not worked it out exactly—the advantage which the Queensland grower will get is very great. I have here the figures showing the value of wheat on the New South Wales basis—

“Commencement of the harvest on rails—

	s.	d.
December, 1932	2	2½
January, 1933	2	3½
February, 1933	2	3½
March, 1933	2	4
April, 1933	2	4½
May, 1933	2	8½
June, 1933	2	9
July, 1933	3	0
August, 1933	2	9½
September, 1933	2	8½

Seeing that the great bulk of that wheat would certainly have been delivered by the

wheat commission, the average the New South Wales man will receive for his wheat will be about 2s. 6d. a bushel, so that the Queensland grower this year—although he is not by any means so well off as in 1931-32—will practically receive 8d. per bushel over and above what his fellow on the other side of the border will get.

I am wondering whether the department is giving full thought to investigations as to whether some rust-resisting wheat can be introduced. This matter is engaging the attention of other Governments. I noticed the following article in the “Telegraph” of 30th May last—

“RUST-RESISTING WHEAT.

“It is confidently expected that within the next two or three years the momentous announcement will be made that a new rust-resisting wheat of high quality and good yielding ability is available for propagation by farmers in those districts which have been so sorely pressed.’ This statement, made recently by L. H. Newman, Dominion of Canada cerealist, indicates to what length research work by plant-breeders has been reached in solving one of the Canadian wheat farmers’ greatest problems.

“‘While the creation of an early ripening, high yielding variety of wheat of good quality has been a major objective of the Canadian plant-breeder for many years,’ said Mr. Newman, ‘more recently he has been grappling with another problem of equal if not even greater importance. This consists in an attempt to combine in one variety the yielding ability and baking quality of such varieties as Marquis with the ability possessed by certain non-bread wheats to resist the attacks of that dread enemy of the wheatgrower of Manitoba and Eastern Saskatchewan—namely, the disease known as wheat stem rust. Within recent years this disease periodically has ravaged the wheat crop throughout the above area causing damage running into the millions. This work, which is centred largely at the Dominion Rust Research Laboratory at Winnipeg, seems to be progressing rapidly toward the desired goal.’”

I have read that paragraph in case it may not have been noticed by the department. We should keep in touch with such developments. Although last year was not a rusty year, many splendid fields went under in consequence of rust, and it is in weather such as is being experienced now that rust seems to thrive to an alarming extent.

The report of the department is a most interesting document. First of all, it shows that the sum of £114,126 was expended in this great department from revenue. Fortunately that is only part of the provision for its great work, because there was expended from the trust funds £138,340, and loans through the Agricultural Bank (which include, I think, the Beerburum tobacco settlement) absorbed the sum of £352,700. I am wondering why the Beerburum settlement should be included in that £352,700.

Another matter of much significance, also dealt with in the report of the Department of Public Lands, is the propagation of new grasses. Nothing is more important to the dairying and pastoral industries than the introduction of new grasses in order that

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some of the old grasses which have been eaten out may be replaced, and a valuable winter fodder established. The production of a good winter grass would mean an immense advance to the dairying industry and other industries of that nature. I am sure the matter is receiving the attention of the department. One very pleasing aspect of the matter is that the school children are taking an interest in it. When passing a school a few weeks ago I noticed that plots of grass had been planted for the purpose of tests. Such things speak wonders for what is being done. I hope the Minister will have something to say with regard to these matters.

It is most necessary that definite advice should be given as to what crops can be grown in particular districts. Last year, when the placing of people on the land received much attention, it was suggested that people ought to be advised as to what commodities might find a market either at home or abroad. I am not sure how far the department has advanced in that direction, but very great service would be done to the country if information were conveyed through the schools and otherwise. We have been told of this drought-resisting grass and that drought-resisting grass, but real advice as to what to grow is lacking. The experimental stage lasts too long.

More advice as to the use of fertilizers should also be given. I read a statement in the Brisbane "Courier" of 8th April, 1933, which I think is worthy of notice—

"PROOF FROM IRELAND.

"Sir Frederick Keeble, in his book, 'Fertilizers and Food Production,' tells the story of the development of fifteen farms in Ireland, totalling 284 acres, which, through fertilization of pasture land, increased production from 32,146 gallons of milk to 50,224 gallons. The milk produced per acre was raised from 113 gallons to 256 gallons. The gross return per acre was raised from £3 13s. 10d. to £7 16s. 1d., and the cost of fertilizers was only £2 1s. 8d. an acre. This means that, under intensive management, the net return per acre was increased by 75 per cent."

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

Mr. C. TAYLOR (*Windsor*) [2.54 p.m.]: The Department of Agriculture is a most important one, since Queensland is a primary producing country, and this department is the one which is charged with the duty of doing whatever can be done in the interests of her primary producers.

The primary producers in Queensland are going through very troublous times, but it is quite unfair of the hon. member for Rockhampton to lay the blame at the door of the Federal Government. The hon. member referred particularly to the tobacco industry. Reference is made in the report of the department to the fact that the tobacco industry has experienced extreme difficulties because of climatic conditions and otherwise. The tobacco industry is by no means a new industry in this State. Over thirty years ago the Department of Agriculture imported from America a tobacco expert named Nevill, and thousands of pounds were

expended in Queensland in establishing tobacco cultivation at Texas and in other parts of the State. The venture failed, although Mr. Nevill and his officers had the co-operation of the whole of the administrative force of the Department of Agriculture. It was not possible to produce leaf of good quality in Queensland at that time. I remember that there were three or four tobacco factories quite close to the city of Brisbane, and I also know that the tobacco manufactured was known as "K.S.D.," otherwise, "Kill Stone Dead." That was what the people of Queensland thought of the locally manufactured tobacco at that time! I am not romancing; what I am saying is true. It was considered that the tobacco was grown principally for the kanakas, who could smoke it or chew it and do other things with it that the white man could not do. Attempts have been made during the last two or three years to grow tobacco again in Australia, but the cultivation of tobacco is very different from the cultivation of cabbages or tomatoes. Cabbages and tomatoes can be grown practically anywhere, but we are told by experts that there are many areas in this State where tobacco cannot possibly be grown. The industry is a highly technical one. Proper curing kilns must be erected, and the temperature must be maintained at a certain level. It is also necessary to guard against the introduction of blue mould and other diseases that are likely to attack the seedling plants. The report by the department outlines the many difficulties that must be overcome. I am not a tobacco expert, but on seeing the first tobacco grown at Beerburum I formed the opinion that no better leaf could be grown. It was of a beautiful lemon colour. It is probable that the seasons were against the tobacco growers on the Beerburum area, but I am hopeful that by the exercise of proper supervision a considerable quantity of first-class tobacco leaf will be grown in this State. It is no use burying our heads in the sand and saying that we are producing the proper leaf; we are not. That is clearly evidenced by the fact that whilst certain leaf realised from 3s. 6d. to 4s. per lb. at the Brisbane sales, other leaf could not attract a bid. There is no use in fooling ourselves. Proper supervision is required in this industry, and the growers will have to be fortified with the requisite knowledge if they are to produce acceptable leaf. I am satisfied that under proper conditions we can produce a first-quality tobacco leaf.

I agree with all that has been said by the hon. member for Warwick in regard to wheat. My knowledge of wheatgrowing in Queensland extends back forty years, to a time when we could not grow wheat of good quality suitable to the manufacture of a good, sound, wholesome flour. We were growing a very soft variety known as the Allora Spring variety, and flour manufactured from it would not keep. Not merely Queensland but every State in Australia has made great advances in the growing of suitable varieties of wheat. We are growing wheat of a quality not surpassed in any other part of the Commonwealth. We can produce flour better than flour manufactured in any other State. Given a favourable harvesting season, we will have a surplus wheat crop in Queensland of from 2,000,000 to 2,500,000 bushels. One of the greatest troubles facing wheatgrowers in this State—it does not trouble growers in other States

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to the same extent—is the weevil. In Victoria, Western Australia, and South Australia—and the same remark applies to a less extent to New South Wales—growers are not troubled with the weevil pest to the same degree as in Queensland. Imported chick wheat is selling in Brisbane at 4d., 6d., and 7d. per bushel above Queensland wheat. Why? Because Queensland wheat is so riddled with the weevil that its food value is greatly diminished. In the Southern States, particularly New South Wales, there is a magnificent system of silos for the storage of wheat. Millions of bushels of wheat can be retained in those silos for an indefinite period without any fear of depre-dations by weevils. We cannot do that here.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: Queensland wheat requires silo treatment more than wheat grown in other States, because of the warmer climate.

Mr. C. TAYLOR: If we had a similar system of silos in Queensland we could store our wheat and maintain its quality much better than is done at the present time. The wheat industry is now in a practically hopeless condition. All the assistance that any Government can offer to assist the wheat-growers of the Commonwealth out of their difficulties should be given. The average yield of wheat in Queensland last season was 12 bushels an acre. Even if a grower with 100 acres of wheat obtained 5s. a bushel for his crop he would receive only £300. Out of that amount he has to pay living expenses, cost of harvesting his crop, cost of seed, etc.; yet some people think that bread can be sold for about 2d. or 2½d. per loaf! Bread can be sold at that price if the wheat-grower is to be starved out of existence. One hon. member stated that metaphorically speaking Governments have been carrying the agriculturist on their backs for years, whereas, as the hon. member for Isis pointed out, the reverse has been the case. The agriculturist has been carrying Australia and the people engaged in other industries on his back for the last thirty or forty years.

Mr. O'KEEFE: Why don't you get off their backs?

Mr. C. TAYLOR: I got off their backs long ago. I was never on their backs. If the hon. member for Cairns had assisted the man on the land with unsecured credit, without any security—as I have done—he would have done good service to the man on the land; and I am not singular in that regard. Any person engaged in the same industry or business as myself is not like the Agricultural Bank or a Government bank. He gets no security for his advances. Such men have on their books unsecured debits of tens of thousands of pounds advanced to men engaged in primary production. The same remarks apply to the country store-keepers throughout Queensland and Australia.

The hon. member for Rockhampton blamed the Commonwealth Government for practically everything. The hon. member set out figures showing the export of butter for a particular period. We sent overseas all the butter we could; but no Government in Australia can regulate the price of butter overseas, where we are in competition with many other countries of the world. We have to sell at world parity, or else we do not get a "look in." As I have stated previously, the more the dairying industry is hampered,

the less will it progress. It may be said that the time will come when we will have to adopt some such scheme as is in existence in the sugar industry. Whilst I admire the sugar-growers for what they are doing, I remind the Committee that some men in that industry have pointed out that if they go on in the way they are the industry will commit suicide in a few years' time. If the same acreage is to be cultivated and if the sugar content of the cane is increased, more sugar will be produced and the sugar producers of Queensland, by reason of having to compete on the overseas market with Cuba, Java, and other countries, will not get a payable price. We are getting dangerously close to a non-paying price. It is a great pity to have to say that, but the local consumption is not nearly sufficient to absorb the production. The probability of our having to export 300,000 tons of sugar this year at a price of £7 or £8 a ton will influence also the price payable to the sugar producer here. The report of the department tells us that the probable average price for sugar this year will be £17, as against £19 a ton last year, and that we must reduce costs. I do not know how we are going to reduce costs.

Mr. O'KEEFE: That applies to all industries.

Mr. C. TAYLOR: It is no good burying our heads in the sand and screaming out that all is well when it is not! There was a time when these matters were only of domestic concern—when we had little regard for what was happening outside our country; but as the hon. member for Cunningham very aptly reminded us, we cannot send ships overseas with Australian produce and expect them to come back empty, unless, of course, we pay double freight. In international trade there is no such thing as one-way traffic, and the question is vital to us in the Commonwealth.

Mention has been made of the wool industry, which is the one bright spot so far as exports are concerned.

Mr. SPARKES: It has no stabilisation, bounty, or anything else.

Mr. C. TAYLOR: The wool industry does not require the same stabilisation and bounties in certain directions as other industries, because the great merino wool industry of Australia practically has a monopoly.

Mr. SPARKES: And the people responsible for that are the men who built up the industry—not the politician.

Mr. C. TAYLOR: It is good to think that we have that monopoly and that breeders are responsible for the very fine position.

The hon. member for Mirani referred to a station in the Peak Downs area where provision was made for a certain amount of agriculture to provide crops for fodder purposes. When the Dawson Valley scheme was started and the town of Theodore was established, I was hopeful that we would have a very fine fodder-producing area in Queensland. I have been disappointed. If it could have been established up there, about 300 or 400 miles from Rockhampton, it would have been a splendid thing for the pastoralists of Central and Northern Queensland. Up to the present our anticipations have not been fulfilled. I think that some scheme of fodder conservation in areas such as that would be one of the best insurances that we could possibly have for the wool industry.

Mr. C. Taylor.]

Various grasses have been mentioned—the Mitchell grass, for instance. Men engaged in pastoral production tell us of the wonderful value of Mitchell grass. I do not believe there has ever been an organised effort on the part of the pastoralists to save one pound of Mitchell grass seed, and it cannot be bought. The seed can be saved, but nothing has been done to save it; yet Mitchell grass is looked upon as one of the best standbys in the pastoral districts. Efforts should be made to secure supplies of that seed. It falls to the ground, and it is evident that much of the seed will lose its vitality by lying in the ground for a long period. If the seed was saved and distributed over the country there would be a wonderful increase in the growth of grass and in the different products that would be raised in connection with it.

The Department of Agriculture costs a considerable amount of money, but expenditure on developmental agriculture in this State is money well spent. We are not, perhaps, so well placed as some of the other States in regard to the things we grow, on account of drought conditions and pests. It is, therefore, necessary that all the departments associated with agriculture should be maintained at full strength, and all the advice possible given to prevent the spread of pests and diseases so that people engaged in primary production will be able to make a fair living. My experience is that 90 per cent. of the men on the land are honest, hard-working triers. They work hard in order to pay their way and provide for their wives and families. Market and drought conditions impede them at every step they take; yet they render great services to the community. I think that if any concessions or tax reductions are to be made they should be given to the men engaged in primary production.

Mr. O'KEEFE (*Cairns*) [3.17 p.m.]: I appreciate the value of the suggestions which have been made by the hon. member for Windsor with regard to the natural grasses in the western portion of the State—for instance, the Mitchell grass. Every person who has visited the Western districts will realise the value of the Mitchell grass in that part of the State. It would be wise for the Department of Agriculture to set aside an area in the West for the cultivation of these grasses to maturity, and the saving of the seed for distribution among the holders of lands there. We all admit that there is no better grass than the Mitchell grass, and it is desirable that the State should recover some of the economic losses which have occurred in recent years.

Various members of the Opposition have uttered words of praise of the officials of the department. The Secretary for Public Works referred to the hon. member for Wynnum, and recalled that he had made a certain statement. Some members of the Opposition, including the hon. member for Cook, rushed to the assistance of the hon. member for Wynnum and declared that he had not made the statement attributed to him concerning settlers on the Beerburum tobacco land. They persisted in that denial until the hon. member for Wynnum himself convinced them to the contrary by repeating in this Chamber the words complained of. The hon. member for Wynnum, who is now in the Chamber, stressed the point that the trouble which at present exists amongst

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the tobacco-growers was largely brought about by legislation introduced by the Scullin Government when Mr. Forde was Minister for Trade and Customs. The hon. member for Wynnum said that the men on the land and those who contemplated going on to the land were being misled by that legislation, inasmuch as they had no chance of carrying on successfully on their holdings. I pointed out in this Chamber last year, and will do so again for the benefit of the hon. member for Wynnum, that the whole of the trouble does not lie in that legislation and the duties placed upon imported leaf by the Scullin Government. The hon. member must know, if he has made a study of the matter, that many people who are on the land in the North have been penalised because of the action of the late Government in allowing certain land to be purchased at auction. When the Moore Government were in power tobacco-growing was coming to maturity in the North, and the Government launched a very good scheme of settling people on the land. They allowed a certain number in the Mareeba district to take up land at a very nominal rental. I think the deposit was about 2s. 6d.

Mr. KENNY: The freehold price was 3d. per acre.

Mr. O'KEEFE: Only about two dozen people were settled on the land under that scheme, when the Government for some reason at present unknown abolished the scheme, and people were invited to come from all parts of Queensland, also from New South Wales and Victoria, to compete at a land sale in Cairns. The result was that men were competing with one another for possession of the land, and the price at that auction averaged somewhere about £8 per acre. I remember in some cases it went as high as £12 per acre.

Mr. KENNY: That was on the perpetual leasehold basis.

Mr. O'KEEFE: If the Scullin Government were wrong in giving the protection they did by way of duty, why did not the late Government in Queensland allow it to be known that there would be competition for the land at Cairns? The reason they did not do so was that they desired to assist certain people who held freehold land in the northern portion of the State. There is not the slightest doubt about that. It was the fictitious value of the land which brought about the trouble that exists on many of those holdings, and the cause was well known to the hon. member for Cook. If the people who took up that land under the original scheme of the Government at a very low price could not succeed, how can we expect men to get on who had to pay up to £8 an acre for their land?

Mr. KENNY: Reduce their values.

Mr. O'KEEFE: It is no use saying "reduce their values." These men are on the land and we have to look after them. If it was dishonest on the part of the Scullin Government to give protection to the growers by means of customs duty, it was just as dishonest on the part of the late Queensland Government to allow those people to compete against one another for possession of the land on the occasion of that auction sale at Cairns. There were hundreds of

thousands of acres of similar land unoccupied in North Queensland, and there was no reason why a fictitious value should have been established under the auction system under which these lands were sold. The land was over-capitalised from the start. What has the hon. member for Wynnum to say to that? Is it seriously contended that the man on the land should be left to his own devices? If the Department of Agriculture were closed to-morrow there would be an outcry from all the people on the land within a period of six months. They would be ruined without the assistance of the department. I agree with the hon. member for Wynnum that only a certain amount of assistance should be extended to the settlers by the Government, and that the settlers should do something for themselves. The Agricultural Bank has assisted the settlers to a very large extent, but in many cases the settlers were not prepared to assist themselves. That occurred in some cases in North Queensland. The Agricultural Bank has certainly played the game, but it has not achieved the results that should have accrued from it.

Last night we had the sorry spectacle of the hon. member for West Moreton advocating that the Government should not be so active in calling upon their inspectors to condemn diseased potatoes conveyed to the markets for sale. He would have the people of Queensland believe that no matter how diseased the crop might be it should be offered for sale for human consumption. Can anything be worse than an hon. member advocating that the people of Queensland should be allowed to eat diseased potatoes? Is the department not doing an excellent service in keeping our various crops free from disease? I doubt whether there is any other country in the world with so much insect life as Australia, and it is well known that insect life means bacterial or parasitical infection of animals and crops. Therefore, we must have an army of scientific workers constantly engaged in combating the depredation of these insects. I am glad to know that some hon. members opposite do not agree that we should slacken in our efforts in this direction, and I regret that the hon. member for West Moreton should suggest that the Government should not condemn the diseased potatoes that are grown in this State.

The money expended by the Agricultural Bank is money well spent. I would remind hon. members who complain that the Government interfere with the man on the land that they approach various Ministers with a view to securing benefits for those individuals with whom it is contended the Government are interfering. I congratulate the Minister for the splendid work that he is carrying out. I am satisfied that he is proceeding on the right lines. Does the hon. member for Wynnum suggest that the Minister should not have interfered to remedy the position of the wheatgrowers, as it existed when he assumed office? The department is doing good work. May it long continue to do good work!

The Leader of the Opposition has offered the opinion that the fat lamb industry might be developed with advantage in this State. A sufficient area of land is available, and given suitable climatic conditions this country bids fair to compete successfully with the New Zealand product. But we have to bear in mind that if the farmers are going

to demand that they be allowed to develop the industry in their own way by introducing into their herds the type of beast that they consider to be the correct type it will be impossible for this country to exploit the markets of the world.

Mr. SPARKES: Don't you think that a grazier knows best what cattle to stock his country with?

Mr. O'KEEFE: No, he must get advice.

Mr. SPARKES: How is it that our wool industry is the best in the world?

Mr. O'KEEFE: I dare say that the department has had a big say in the development of that industry.

Mr. SPARKES: What, the wool industry?

Mr. O'KEEFE: Yes. Scientific men have been engaged by the department to combat the various diseases in sheep. The moment we discard our expert advice we will find ourselves unable to compete in the markets of the world. Some people engaged in tobacco-growing believe they can carry on the industry without the advice of experts, but without their aid they will not proceed very far. I heard the hon. member for Cook say last session or early this session that a certain expert employed by the department should not be holding his position.

Mr. KENNY: Quite right, and I repeat it. His evidence in North Queensland proves it.

Mr. O'KEEFE: The hon. member is not a judge of the qualifications of that gentleman. If we attempt to carry on our various industries without the aid of experts who have studied plant life and diseases we cannot successfully develop them. The hon. member for West Moreton advocated that the Minister should allow diseased potatoes to go on the market. If industry is carried on along those lines how will our exports overseas fare? Our overseas buyers will refuse to purchase. They want the very best, and unless we send quality produce from Queensland to the home market we shall not be able to dispose of our surplus produce.

The hon. member for Warwick made a very fine speech and was able to point out that the department was doing very good work. No matter what political party is in power the department has done good work. That is its duty, and I hope it will continue the good work for which it is famed. The various officers of the department are worthy of our congratulations.

Mr. RUSSELL (*Hamilton*) [3.33 p.m.]: Several important matters have cropped up in the debate to which I would like to refer, although I am a city member and cannot speak on behalf of the primary producers as can hon. members who represent country electorates. I recognise that the welfare of Queensland is bound up in the success of our rural population, and the prosperity of Queensland must to a very large extent depend on the success of that section of our population engaged in agricultural pursuits.

The report of the department gives a detailed account of the activities that are controlled by the Minister. We are budgeting for an expenditure of £114,126 for the upkeep of this great department. I am not cavilling at that expenditure, but we certainly expect from the expenditure of this money that great good will result to those

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sections of our population engaged in agricultural pursuits. The principle expenditure is the Chief Office vote, which amounts to £59,019. The Chief Office embraces most of the experts. Queensland, owing to her position, requires a good deal of expert advice. We are the outpost of Australia, and the State which is called upon to combat pests from Asiatic countries. In order to preserve many of our primary industries we naturally must spend a good deal of money to prevent the introduction of pests. While we do not begrudge this expenditure, we expect great results. The report of the department deals with many subjects, and I propose to deal briefly with the important questions upon which it touches.

First, I am afraid that very little regard has been given to the improvement of our pastures. We have been quite content for many years to carry on production and denude our pastures, either through the feeding of stock or by the policy of closer settlement. These practices must have impoverished our pastures. This is a matter to which a great deal more attention should be given. Some time ago the Council of Agriculture voted a small sum of money for the improvement of pastures. In Queensland we are fortunately blessed with a good deal of natural pastures which are not found in colder climates, but there is no doubt that in the last few years the pastures deteriorated, owing to intense grazing by sheep and cattle. The matter is referred to at page 10 of the report of the Department of Agriculture and Stock, as follows:—

“Pasture improvement is becoming more generally accepted as an essential in successful dairying practice. Farmers are realising that grass, both indigenous and introduced, is the best and cheapest food for the milking cow. In Queensland up to 80 per cent. of the food consumed by dairy cattle consists of grass. The importance of grassland management in our rural economy is, therefore, stressed constantly by the department.”

That is not sufficient to meet our present needs. Dairy farmers and pastoralists state that pastures have deteriorated in Queensland and that no attempt has been made to restore them to the condition they were in twenty or thirty years ago.

On the same page of that report appear two paragraphs which to my mind are quite contradictory. In the first place it is stated—

“According to advices, the British pork buyers prefer white pigs, that are said to dress to better advantage and maintain that ‘bloom’ that purveyors look for when purchasing stocks. This preference of the British pork trade has led to the development of a scheme for making available to farmers on easy terms of purchase stud boars (Large Whites principally) for mating with selected sows, and for adequately supplying the requirements of the export pork trade.”

The next paragraph states—

“Overseas shipments of bacon and hams are increasing in volume; British, Malayan, and East Indian markets being among those it is aimed to constantly supply. The quality of these Queensland products compares favourably with similar commodities manufactured elsewhere. In annual competitions with

the production of other States, Queensland bacon and hams are invariably well placed in award lists, and often attain the premier position.”

A good deal of nonsense is talked about the white pig; but advices from Great Britain show that shipments of Queensland pork are considered equal in quality to that which is produced in any other part of the world. As is well known, the bulk of our pig products come from our present breeds of pigs, and although I am not an expert in the matter, I know that they are not the products of white pigs. I cannot understand all this highfalutin’ nonsense talked about white pigs in Queensland, and I consider that the author of these two paragraphs should be taken to task and shown that his reference to white pigs as against other classes of pigs is nonsensical and ill-founded.

A paragraph at page 11 refers to apiculture. People engaged in Queensland in the cultivation of honey have had a lean time, because the industry is able to produce more honey than can be consumed locally. An enormous market for honey and honey products exists abroad, but, unfortunately, the department has paid very little attention to the requirements of Great Britain in this respect. Some years ago I made inquiries in Britain as to the possibilities of the trade in Queensland honey. I am satisfied no better honey is produced in the world than that produced on the Darling Downs. In London I had the opportunity of inspecting honey products from all parts of the world, but, strange to say, the honey produced in Queensland—which we consider par excellence—is not considered as good as the honey imported to London from countries like Cuba, Jamaica, and Mediterranean countries, where honey is the product of specially grown flowers. The honey-growers in those countries that have those flowers on their farms produce honey of a very fine quality, very sweet when compared with our honey. The colour is no better, but the popular taste on the other side of the world demands a very sweet honey. We are not producing honey of that kind. I think that with our genial climate, which must tend to the production of a honey at a very low cost, more attention should be paid to this industry. I believe that if we were to study the palate of the people on the other side of the world, where vast quantities of honey are consumed, we could do a great deal more for our apiculturists in Queensland.

One item in the report by which I was intrigued is the passage relating to the protection of our native flora and fauna. I do not think Queensland has any advantages over other States of the Commonwealth in regard to the possession of a vast quantity of native flora. I do not think our areas are to be compared in that regard with those of a State like Western Australia: nevertheless, we have in Queensland some very fine native flowers, and it is very galling to think that the beauties of our landscape and the quality of our native flowers are not appreciated by a greater number of people. I am afraid that a good deal of vandalism has been indulged in, and the Government should take active steps to see that our native flora in the reserves controlled by the Government are preserved for all time. I have seen on my travels wanton destruction of some of our beautiful

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wild flowers. This is a matter which has been neglected by all Governments, because it is not an activity in which there is any commercial return, but some method should be adopted to preserve the beautiful native flowers which we undoubtedly possess.

Mr. WALKER: We have the legislative power.

Mr. RUSSELL: We have the power, but I am afraid that nothing has been done to use it. There is nothing more beautiful in Southern Queensland than the Christmas Bells, but year after year there is wanton destruction of these beautiful blossoms. The blossoms might be allowed to be taken, but some steps should be taken to counteract the tendency to destroy the plants themselves. A great many people are not content to pick the flowers, but destroy the plants, too. In years to come we may be very sorry we did not take better care to preserve the native flora of the State.

The same remarks apply to our native fauna. We see year after year a great decrease in the wild animals of Queensland. The report states that steps have been taken in one part of Queensland to recommence the growth of opossums. It seems a terrible commentary upon us as the inheritors of this great country that we should be compelled to replace these lost animals with new stock from other parts of Queensland. I know that a previous Government, in order to bolster up its revenue, permitted the wholesale slaughter of opossums and native bears. That was a tragedy and a great blot on the Administration of the State, and I trust that this Government will see that these native animals, which are not procurable in any other part of the world, will be preserved for all time.

I was very interested in one point raised by the hon. member for Cunningham—that was the payment of the wheat bounty allotted to Queensland under the financial relief legislation. The hon. member stated that in his opinion certain wheat farmers had been penalised. Section 23 of "The Financial Emergency Relief Extension Act of 1932," so far as it relates to wheatgrowers, provides that moneys paid to a State shall be applied by the State for the benefit and assistance of wheatgrowers by—

"(a) Reducing the cost of production of wheat (including the cost of transport and marketing); and

"(b) Providing for the needs of individual wheatgrowers, but not upon the basis of the quantity of wheat produced by individual wheatgrowers."

Wheatgrowers know that a proposition was made by the Federal Government that a sum of over £40,000 should be paid to them—£25,000 on the acreage cultivated and £15,744 to assist such of them as had failed to produce any crop at all. The proposition was agreed to by the State Government. It was found afterwards that the Queensland Government had not carried out that agreement, and the Commonwealth Government agreed to a modification of the two amounts of the grant. The hon. member for Cunningham asked a question last week and was informed that of the amount granted £26,900 had been allocated to the payment of bounty, and £13,843 to individual wheatgrowers. The Commonwealth Government raised the question of the correctness of that action, and the Commonwealth Solicitor-General expressed the opinion that the

Queensland Government had acted within their rights in the distribution. That does not overcome the fact that somebody blundered, that too much was paid to those growers who had good crops and too little to those who had no crops at all. It is quite clear that the distribution was not made as was intended by the Federal Government. There has been some alteration, and I would like to know if the Government can produce any communication from the Federal Government consenting to the alteration of the basis of allocation that was agreed upon—that £15,744 should be distributed among necessitous farmers who had not produced any crop at all. These people should have received payment equal to 6s. 4d. an acre, but all they received was 2s. 2d. an acre, so they have been short paid to the extent of 4s. 2d. an acre. I have been informed that growers who had good crops—some as high as 30 bushels to the acre—received from the bonus grant 8s. 3d. an acre in addition to the amount they received for their crop. I understand the grant made by the Wheat Board was equal to 3d. per bushel on the wheat delivered. I think the board made the mistake of paying too large an amount to some growers, while some growers who had no wheat at all received only 2s. 2d. an acre, contrary to the agreement. One man planted an area of 300 acres, but did not reap anything. He received 2s. 2d. an acre or about £32 in all, against the man who had a good crop of 30 odd bushels to the acre and was paid 3s. 2d. an acre in addition to its price. The original proposal has been altered, and the Federal Government were ignorant of the alteration. That can be seen by the correspondence which passed between the State and the Commonwealth. I would like to know why the alteration was made. The Federal Government did not know that there had been any infringement of the agreement—which is shown by the fact that the Solicitor-General was consulted and held that the Queensland Government were within their rights in making the alteration. It appears to me that a great injustice has been done to the necessitous farmers who included men producing from 4 bushels to others who reaped nothing at all; and despite the arrangement under which they were to receive £15,000 odd, they were short-paid to the extent of over £2,000. The Queensland Government should make that money available for payment to these people. It seems that some blunder has been made either by the Government or the Wheat Board. It is useless for the Government to shelter themselves behind the board. A grave injustice has been done, and the £2,000 of which these men have been deprived should be made good. I make this suggestion to the Government in the hope that the wrong will be righted. It is ridiculous to suggest that these men have been amply compensated by the payment of 2s. 2d. an acre for their wheat land when others who had splendid crops received 8s. 3d. an acre as well as payment for their wheat. I think that is a scandalous thing and should be remedied.

The department generally is faced with very great problems in production and marketing matters generally. It has great tasks before it. I hope that the experts are alive to the situation, and recognise that in all quarters of the globe we are up against restrictions against the entry of our products

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and against hostile tariffs. The future of our agricultural and kindred industries is so grave that it demands the best brains if we are to solve our problems. Only to-day we learn that there is a demand in Great Britain for a restriction on the import of our dairy products into that country. We look upon Great Britain as an illimitable market for our butter, cheese, and other products, but the agitation in that country on behalf of the local producers is so strong that before long the dairy farmers of Great Britain will demand that further restrictions be imposed on the import of our dairy products. It will mean that instead of the dairy farmers being able to produce in greater quantities, for which we are agitating to-day, they must face the situation that the time is not far distant when they must resort to other markets for the disposition of their products. To-day there seems to be no market that offers the same possibilities as Great Britain. A good deal of nonsense is talked about the Eastern trade.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Hear, hear! A good deal of nonsense.

Mr. RUSSELL: I see no possibility of being able to export to the East a sufficient quantity of our products to make any material effect on the surplus that we might have in this country.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We would have to Christianise the Eastern people first.

Mr. RUSSELL: We cannot expect the people of the East, with their low purchasing power as expressed in Australian currency, to be able to buy Australian dairy products produced under our conditions of labour. Our costs are so high and the purchasing power of the people of the East is so low that it is impossible for them to absorb any quantity of our dairy products at prices that will pay us. We must look for many years to come to Great Britain for the absorption of our products, but if further restrictions are to be imposed by Great Britain then all I can say is that the prospects of our dairy industry will be gloomy in the extreme.

The department has the support of every section of the community. It is charged with a great work and we look forward to the experts engaged under the aegis of the Secretary for Agriculture to solve many of the pressing problems that confront us.

Mr. LLEWELYN (*Toowoomba*) [3.53 p.m.]: I join with other hon. members in paying my tribute to the importance of the Department of Agriculture. A great deal has been said during this debate about the vicissitudes of the wheat-growing industry, but before proceeding to deal with that matter I should like to express the hope that no arrangement will be made in connection with an Eastern trade which will compel this country to purchase manufactured goods from Japan under a reciprocal agreement. The standards of living in Japan are far and away below our own, and it would be nothing short of a calamity if a trade commissioner acting on behalf of Queensland agreed to accept Eastern manufactured goods in return for Queensland primary products.

I have been very much concerned about the contemplated action of the Federal Government to impose a sales tax on flour. The matter has agitated the minds of most people throughout the Commonwealth and

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I can only express the hope that the tax will not be imposed. The consumers of bread in Australia are paying full value for their purchases. I should like to add that the wheat industry is deserving of the most serious and the most careful consideration at the hands of any Government. The industry in Queensland is beset by many difficulties, particularly in view of the record crop that is in anticipation. Our millers are competing with flour gristed in New South Wales and Victoria. Until quite recently the staffs of the local flour mills were working three shifts continuously, and later the operations were reduced to two shifts, while recently the mills have been employing their staffs for one shift only. That is attributable to the fact that a good deal of Southern flour is coming into Queensland. The position is serious enough to warrant the most earnest consideration of the Government.

Mr. WALKER: What would you suggest in a case like that?

Mr. LLEWELYN: Every hon. member should be able to make a suggestion worthy of consideration. A tax levied on all flour gristed in Australia and imposed equally in all the States will not remove any of our difficulties. We shall still be faced with the competition of flour gristed in New South Wales which, by virtue of the cheap railway freights, is able to come over our border and successfully compete with the locally manufactured article.

Mr. WALKER: Why don't you take the action the last Government took?

Mr. LLEWELYN: The last Government benefited by the Sugar Acquisition Act, but the decision of the High Court does not enable the Government to take advantage of its provisions. I suggest that the Minister for Transport take into consideration a reduction in railway freights on flour. If railway freights on flour gristed in this State were reduced £1 or 30s., or even £2 a ton we would be able to compete on much more favourable terms with the Southern commodity and at the same time give more equity and consideration to both the wheat-grower and consumer.

Mr. NIMMO (*Oxley*) [4.4 p.m.]: I take this opportunity of complimenting the department on its wonderful report. It is brimful of information, and should do much good. An astonishing range of subjects is brought before the attention of the Committee. We recognise that the Minister possesses a fair amount of theoretical knowledge, but I hope that fact will not lead him to interfere unduly with officers of his department. He must remember that his knowledge is only theoretical, and that he has under him practical men who have done good work for the agriculturists in this State. Those men should be allowed to function along practical lines because experts should be unfettered in the discharge of their duties.

The Minister is making a great mistake in interfering in the pig industry and by imposing taxation on the small primary producer. There is an outcry in my electorate against the bull tax and similar imposts since this Government took office.

The egg pool is receiving a mixed reception amongst egg producers. That is because there is too much secrecy altogether with regard to its operations. Some of the egg producers in my electorate say they have no objection to the pool, but object to the

lack of information concerning its operations. They are compelled to pay a levy of 1½d. per dozen on all eggs marketed. This fund has been gradually growing, and the last information I received was that it was in credit to the extent of £24,600. When is this money to be distributed among the suppliers? For some inexplicable reason the meeting of the suppliers, which is usually held in May, was not held until after Exhibition time. Furthermore, no notification of the meeting was sent to suppliers, some of whom are very wroth. One supplier went so far as to say that the whole operations of the board were secret and fishy. Such conduct will not inspire confidence, and I strongly urge that every consideration be shown to suppliers.

Another matter of which suppliers are complaining is the rise in the price of bran, and that recalls to my mind the following paragraph which appeared under startling headlines in very large type in the "Daily Standard" of Friday, 1st July, 1932:—

"F. W. BULCOCK'S STARTLING REVELATIONS.

"RUTHLESS EXPLOITATION UNDER MOORE REGIME.

"Producers and Consumers alike Suffer.

"Abattoir and Flour Ramp.

"Startling revelations of how the Moore Government had allowed primary producers to be exploited, while at the same time raising the prices of essential commodities to the producers, were made by the Minister for Agriculture, Mr. F. W. Bulcock, in a speech at Myrtleton last night in support of the candidature of Mr. A. J. Jones."

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What were those startling revelations?

Mr. NIMMO: That you said that the Moore Government were fleecing the primary producers and charging the public too much for their bread.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. NIMMO: Since you have become a Minister the possibility is that the responsibility of office is steadying you up.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must address the Chair.

Mr. NIMMO: The Minister made these statements, and I strongly object to them in the light of what has happened subsequently, because the following figures will show the comparative prices on the dates shown:—

	June, 1932.			Nov., 1933.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Wheat	...	0	4 2½	...	0	3 1½
Flour	...	11	12 0	...	8	15 0
Pollard	...	6	10 0	...	6	0 0
Bran	...	5	10 0	...	5	15 0

These figures show that the farmer has received less for his wheat while in some cases the consumer has been charged more for the product.

The price of bread is now 4½d. per 2 lb. loaf, but during the Moore regime bread was being retailed in many shops at 4d. per 2 lb. loaf. In June, 1932, when, according to an electioneering pamphlet issued by the Labour Party, the people were being fleeced by the millers to the extent of

£567,000 per annum, the price of flour per ton was 55.1 times the then price of wheat, but now the price of flour is exactly 56 times the price of wheat. The Minister or the department responsible is apparently carrying on a very big ramp at the expense of the wheatgrowers. If during the Moore regime there was any ramp, then there is an infinitely greater ramp to-day. Take it in another way. In 1932 the price of 1 ton each of flour, pollard, and bran was 112 times the price of a bushel of wheat. Now the price of 1 ton each of flour, pollard, and bran is 131 times the price of a bushel of wheat. I am not going any further into the matter for the reason that I feel sure the Minister must admit that the accusations he made against the Moore Government were wrong, and he cannot prevent the position which then existed from continuing.

There is a big outcry at the price of bags amongst those who are selling chaff and other farm products. The Department of Agriculture should carry out some experiments with regard to bags, and provide containers for chaff and other commodities sent by farmers. In the Oxley electorate we have the Darra Cement Company, which is sending its product to market in paper bags. Experiments should be made by the department with a view to bringing out a bag—I do not say altogether made of paper—which would be a container for many of our primary products. Paper to-day can be manufactured in Australia, and jute, which is the foundation of the bags, the present containers, has to be imported. I honestly believe that we can get a paper bag made which would be excellent for chaff, though they would have to be reinforced with some sort of light material.

When I was in Melbourne some little time ago I noticed that the Council for Industrial and Scientific Research was carrying out a very large experiment with regard to fruit and vegetables. That body should also be asked to carry out experiments along the same lines in Queensland. I particularly notice that the council has demonstrated that apricots and peaches and many other stone fruits can be kept for quite a long time by picking well-formed fruit at the green stage, keeping them in cold storage for six months, and then ripening them. It is impossible, of course, to pick the fruit ripe and keep it in store for any length of time. Experiments of that nature could be carried out in Queensland with reference to tomatoes and other seasonal crops. There ought to be a big field for that kind of thing here. We can produce excellent tomatoes and other truck crops in the Brisbane area, but, unfortunately, there is a glut at certain seasons, while at other times they are unprocurable.

We can also grow peaches equal to any in the world. The soil around Brisbane seems to be adapted for the growing of peaches, but the fruit fly is so prevalent that if they are left on the trees they are full of grubs by the time they are ripe. If some experiments could be carried out the possibilities are that the fruit could be grown and picked just before the ripening stage and then artificially ripened.

We have in my electorate quite a number of people who have been endeavouring to grow tobacco. I strongly urge the Minister

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to give those people a little more encouragement than what they have had. I think they are doing equally as well as the tobacco-growers in other parts of the State—that is, they are making a partial success of it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They are in difficulties.

Mr. NIMMO: I do not think they are in any greater difficulties than the settlers at Beerburrun. They are in difficulties that are common to those in other parts of Queensland. For instance, they are growing good tobacco in the northern part of the State, and a great deal of very bad tobacco; and at Beerburrun a little good tobacco and a tremendous quantity of bad tobacco. Excellent tobacco is being grown in my own area, and in some cases it is topping the market. I would suggest that an officer be delegated to plant half an acre of tobacco in the area in order to show that good tobacco can be grown there and how to grow it. There is no doubt that an excellent demand exists for good tobacco. The Minister himself knows that he will not smoke bad tobacco, and I believe that if an embargo were put on the importation of tobacco from America he would cease smoking altogether.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: And you would, too.

Mr. NIMMO: Yes, I would, because some tobacco is not smokable.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: And I have seen some very excellent Queensland tobacco, too.

Mr. NIMMO: That is so. A very good tobacco is being produced to-day in Queensland, and for that reason I think experimental plots should be planted in my own area where much money has been spent by farmers who are working on the right lines, although when their crop gets to a certain stage disease or something else detrimentally affects it. Naturally, these people think that an embargo should be placed upon the importation of American tobacco, for then they would be able to sell this inferior product. I have been informed, however, that such would not be the case, and that even if factories were compelled to use only Queensland tobacco there would be very little demand for it, as they would lose their customers. We must have some imported tobacco for blending purposes. Factory managers will admit that the best of Australian tobacco is produced in Queensland, but the yield per acre is much too small. Many of the tobaccos produced in the Southern States are being marketed, but I dare say the Minister has read the report which states that some of them are very inferior.

In conclusion I would like to ask the Minister when he intends to bring in the Milk Bill for Brisbane? It has been promised for a long time. At present in cafes in Brisbane you are charged 4d. a glass for milk or at the rate of about 5s. 4d. a gallon, for which the unfortunate producers are paid about 6½d. or 7d. I would strongly urge the Minister to proceed with the Milk Bill in order to give the producers some protection from exploitation. Every vendor of soft and other drinks in the city should be compelled to sell pure milk before he is granted a license to sell other drinks, and should be compelled to sell the milk at not more than 3d. per glass. The consumption of

milk in Queensland would increase enormously. It is remarkable that the consumption of milk in Queensland at present is less per capita than in either New South Wales or Victoria, and the reason is that the Governments have not given sympathetic consideration to the people who are producing the milk. A different story is heard across the border at Kyogle. Immediately you see notices "Drink more milk," and the price is only 3d. per glass. The shops are forbidden to charge more. Even in the most expensive places in Sydney milk can be obtained for 3d. a glass, and the same thing applies to Victoria. I again ask the Minister to take some action to protect these people, who are working very hard and producing a good article.

I congratulate the Minister upon the work that has been carried out at Yeerongpilly Animal Health Station. We all recognise that the work that is being done there is on the right lines. We want the health of our animals to be cared for.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must confine his remarks to a discussion of the vote before the Committee. He cannot deal with the Animal Health Station on this vote. He may do so on the Trust and Special Funds.

Mr. NIMMO: I have said practically all that I wish to say in that regard, and I conclude by appealing to the Minister to see that we have a Milk Bill for the protection of the producers as soon as possible.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN (*Murilla*) [4.23 p.m.]: Queensland, as we all know, is a primary producing State. We have seen a great deal in the press, principally in the metropolis, about settling people on small areas around the city and getting them to producing this, that, and the other. We all have said at some time or other: "Go West, young man; go on the land," yet we find that our greatest difficulty is to dispose of at profitable prices the different things that are produced by the farmers in Australia. This year there will be a record wheat crop throughout Australia, a record production in the dairying industry, and a record production in many other farm products. Ultimately it will mean a smaller return to the producer. The markets overseas that have been available to us for so many years are being glutted and import restrictions are being imposed. The hon. member for Hamilton voiced the opinion that very little was to be gained from the market in the East, but I hold a contrary view in respect of certain primary products. I am satisfied that every little helps. If we can place a few tons of produce here and a few tons there we shall be assisted considerably. Every encouragement should be given to the establishment of markets in the East. The Minister may claim that the people in the East are too poor to buy our products.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member for Hamilton said that.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Probably the Minister agrees. Is not the difficulty in Australia also a question of price? Is not the cost of production so high that we cannot supply our produce to certain parts of the world? The markets are available, but the people are not prepared or are unable to pay the price that we demand, consequently there is a loss on practically every

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item of produce exported. We can overcome the difficulty only by reducing the cost of production. The Dairy Products Stabilisation Bill has been passed to stabilise butter prices within Australia. The price of sugar for home consumption has also been arbitrarily fixed; but where are all these artificial restrictions to end? The Australian consumer is called upon to pay a profitable price to the primary producers, but since we have over-produced, the surplus must be sold overseas. The price secured for our overseas surplus is so low that the average return to the producer is reduced considerably. Dealing with the question of sugar, the annual report by the department states—

“In the absence of any outside influence which might modify these abnormally low values, it is evident that relief will come only by a further effort on the part of the industry to reduce production costs.”

What does the report mean by that? It is fresh in our memories that within a comparatively recent date the price of sugar for home consumption was reduced by $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb., or £4 13s. 4d. per ton. The people in the Southern portions of Australia held the view that the price of sugar should be reduced in common with other commodities throughout Australia.

At 4.30 p.m.,

Mr. O'KEEFE (*Cairns*), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved the Chairman in the chair.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: We naturally thought that the reduction would be spread over all parties interested in the industry. What happened? When the representatives of the sugar-growers and millers went to the Industrial Court and endeavoured to get some relief in regard to wages they were turned down. Everyone admits that wages paid in the sugar industry in Queensland are on a higher basis than in any other primary producing industry in Australia. It can be truthfully said that the men engaged in the sugar industry in Queensland receive a higher rate of wages than is paid in any other primary producing industry in the world.

Mr. FUNNELL: The sugar workers are more efficient.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: That may be so. There are a large number of foreigners working in the industry, many more than are stated in the statistics. Sugar-workers receive an exceptionally high wage for their work. The sugar-worker is now receiving the same rate as he did before this reduction of £4 13s. 4d. per ton was made in the price of sugar. While the producer should bear his proportion of that reduction, he should not be compelled to bear the whole of it.

The wheat industry has been treated in a similar manner, notwithstanding the pamphlet issued by the Labour Party at the last election. We all knew that pamphlet was merely political propaganda, but it served its purpose. I do not know whether many people were affected by its contents, but it will act as a boomerang to the Labour Party at the next election. We have that pamphlet and we will be able to use it and show the electors just what has happened in the wheat industry. We will have figures, and truthful

figures, to show that notwithstanding the fact that the price paid to the wheatgrower for his wheat was considerably less last year than the previous year, the only person who suffered as a result was the poor unfortunate wheatgrower. The consumer got a reduction in the price of flour. The miller, who was referred to in the pamphlet as a member of the capitalist class who supported the Moore Government and contributed to their funds, made considerably more profits during the period the present Government have been in office than during the regime of the Moore Government. They are the very men the Labour Party condemned at the election! The man who has had to bear the brunt of the reduced price of wheat, and suffered the whole consequences, has been the primary producer, whom we talk so much about as being the backbone of the country. Yet on every occasion the backbone is compelled to carry greater and greater burdens.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: The backbone can't move without the arms and legs.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: It is extraordinary that at election time the Labour Party tell the primary producer that he is the backbone of the country, yet they put all the burden of taxation and reduced values on that backbone and make it carry the burden. The producer has always borne the burden during the regime of Labour Governments. Every piece of legislation which was enacted during Labour's fourteen years' occupancy of the Treasury benches before the advent of the Moore Government, or during the period the present Government have been in office, and which was alleged to be for the benefit of the farmers, has been followed by increased taxation. The poor old farmer had to pay through the nose every time!

Mr. FUNNELL: That is not true.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: It is true. Every piece of legislation which the Minister brought down last session, and during the present session has meant increased taxation on the producer. He said, "We want to confer some benefit on you," but increased taxation has always followed. There is always a desire to appoint experts to teach the farmer how to do this and that, but my experience is that these experts go to live with the farmer to learn their business. I remember when a previous Labour Government legislated for the cotton industry. I was growing 20 or 30 acres of cotton and my neighbour did likewise. An expert came to our properties and boarded with us for a week. We took him down to the crop and asked him what was the name of this fly, and what effect it had on the crop, and he could not tell us. He said he had come out to learn.

Mr. FUNNELL: What was his name?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: There were several of them. They were distributed throughout the State, going from farm to farm and learning from the farmer whatever they could. Generally speaking, these so-called experts have gained their knowledge from the farmer. Many of them have been on farms, but were not capable of making a living on a farm. Now, however, they attempt to tell the farmer how to run his business. If you gave these experts an area of 640 acres, and asked them to make

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a living on it, I do not suppose half of them could do so.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is an absurd statement.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: It is correct. I know more than the Minister does, because I have had greater experience. That is one of the difficulties—something like the hot meals for pigs! (Laughter.) That was the advice of experts. The Minister believes in it, although he has never fed a pig in his life. The hon. gentleman believes that these silly things should be put into effect. The white pig is another instance; and we know that the white pig is no better than the black pig—when it is killed. (Laughter.) The fact of the matter is that the poor old primary producer has to pay for all the experimental work, just as the sugar producers had to suffer the whole of the reduction of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. in the price of sugar, and just as wheatgrowers have had to bear the whole of the loss in the price of wheat, although the millers have made more money during the last twelve months in grinding, gristing, and selling the wheat under the protection afforded by the Government—although that protection was probably illegal—than at any previous period.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is not so.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: The Minister cannot deny it, because the Leader of the Opposition showed conclusively to-day that notwithstanding that there had been a big reduction in the price of wheat the miller was not made to suffer, although his capital was less. The primary producers were made to suffer.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Before you leave that subject tell me the name of this cotton expert.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: There was not one expert, but half a dozen of them—not the principal expert. The department has about half a dozen of these men.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I want the name of the cotton expert who lived with you.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: There were probably half a dozen of them. They were following one another round the country. That was years ago.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What is the name?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I do not intend to give the hon. gentleman any further advice.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Give me one name. I am anxious to test the efficiency of these people.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I propose now to deal with the abattoir.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Won't you give me the name?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: The hon. gentleman will not get any more out of me than I have stated. He cannot draw me. (Laughter.) I can tell the hon. gentleman that these men went along, and I can prove it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is only a fair thing that you should give me the name of this man.

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Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I will not give the hon. gentleman the name of any individual. I know scores of people, not only in my own electorate but also in other electorates, who were visited by these people.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That does not prove anything unless you tell me the name.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: The establishment by the Moore Government of the abattoir has proved beneficial in every way. It has ensured the hygienic killing and distribution of meat. Up to the moment the abattoir—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. gentleman is not in order in discussing that matter on this vote.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Under what vote does it come?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Under the vote for the Premier and Chief Secretary's Department.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: So far as the domestic organisation of the abattoir is concerned, I think the hon. member can speak on this vote.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I referred to the matter last year under this vote. I understand we were allowed to deal with it on this vote, but if that is not so I will get in later on what I have to say.

We were told what wonderful results would accrue from the production of tobacco, which could be grown almost anywhere in Australia. But is what we can grow the class of tobacco that is wanted and which will be marketable? Is it the class of tobacco the people will smoke? The answers to these questions show why a certain amount of restriction as to where tobacco must be grown must be imposed. We know that a huge monopoly is in control of the manufacture of tobacco—a huge monopoly that has been able to make huge profits for its shareholders and has exploited the consumers of tobacco, although the Commonwealth has benefited from the revenue derived from the tariff. I do not blame any national Government for having put a high duty on tobacco, as on alcohol. Alcohol and tobacco are more or less injurious to the people; but they are looked at from a national point of view as something from which revenue should be obtained.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You believe in a tariff with regard to tobacco?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Yes; every country believes in that. All countries have to get revenue from some sources, and taxes on tobacco and alcohol are two recognised methods of obtaining revenue. Before we grew tobacco to any extent in Australia the monopolistic tobacco companies were doing just what they desired. They did not care how much the tariff went up. As soon as it went up, say, 1d., 2d., or 3d. a lb., up went the price of tobacco, and the extra cost was paid by the consumer. It did not come out of the pockets of the manufacturers. They did not care a rap. It was just the same when the price of alcohol went up. The men who drank beer or whisky had to pay the difference. The publicans and others concerned did not care a rap, but passed the increased price on to the consumers, who have always to pay the piper. What will

happen with regard to tobacco? The Minister made a suggestion some time ago, and it is extraordinary how great minds think alike. I opened the Texas railway line about three years ago when I was Secretary for Railways. That is a great tobacco growing district, and the representative of the tobacco monopoly company was present. When I was replying at the banquet I made a suggestion that if the tobacco industry of Australia was going to progress the Federal Government should reduce the importation of tobacco by, say, one-fifth each year for a period of five years and after that no tobacco should be imported into the Commonwealth. I was not aware of the fact that it is necessary to import tobacco from other countries for blending purposes. I suggested on that occasion that in order to protect the tobacco industry in Australia the Federal Government should compel the manufacturers to use Australian leaf. That suggestion would have had a good effect had it been put into operation. The manufacture of tobacco in Australia has been a big monopoly. The people are entirely in the hands of the manufacturers who never did want Australian-grown tobacco, because they knew that if tobacco were grown in Australia eventually it would be manufactured under a co-operative system, as is the case in the dairying and other industries. Eventually the whole of the tobacco industry will be in the hands of farmers and co-operative concerns.

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

Mr. SPARKES (*Dalby*) [4.50 p.m.]: The hon. member for Cairns has made some extraordinary statements with regard to private enterprise, and I would like to answer some of them. For instance, he said that the various markets of the world would not be available to us if it were not for the interference of the Government. I think the hon. member should be enlightened. Take, for instance, the wool industry; I do not think that Governments had anything to do in the perfecting of merino wools. That was done purely by private individuals. The same applies to cattle, although the hon. member for Cairns said that we would not have such good cattle to-day but for the legislation passed by the Government, that if we had been allowed to use whatever bulls we liked, the herds could not have been improved as they have. That argument will not hold water because we know that in every case where the Government started a farm they have failed. It is not necessary to go back to ancient history and refer to the State stations. Government enterprises have not been successful. Governments can not even breed horses for the police. They have to get them from private individuals. There is no more valuable dairy breed in Australia than the Illawarra Milking Shorthorn, and that breed was developed purely by private enterprise. Scientists have been helpful in certain directions. I am pleased with their work in dealing with prickly-pear. I do not agree with the hon. member for Cairns that any breeder of stock should be told by the Government what class of bull or stallion he should use. I think that is ridiculous.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not think the hon. member for Cairns said that.

Mr. SPARKES: I may have had bad hearing, but I understood him to say that we would not be able to take advantage of the markets of the world if we were allowed to use whatever bulls we liked.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is not what the hon. member for Cairns said. At least, it is not what I thought he said.

Mr. SPARKES: I will be prepared to listen to the hon. gentleman's version of what he did say. I listened very patiently, and that is what I heard. As I have said, I appreciate what has been done by scientists in certain directions. I would like to draw the attention of the Committee to a statement on page 114 of the annual report of the Department of Agriculture, which states—

“Deterioration in the herds of Northern cattle for some years past has been mainly due to neglect in procuring fresh bulls of suitable type and quality to improve breeding standards, and not to unhealthy climatic conditions.”

The matter is of considerable interest to me as a breeder of pure bred bulls. I am also anxious to obtain whatever information is available concerning the experiment that is now being carried out in North Queensland in the establishment of a cross by the importation of Zebu bulls. I have no desire to throw cold water on the proposal; I have not yet a sufficient knowledge of the prospects, but I hope that the Minister will supply us with whatever information he has at his command.

Mr. KENNY: The Brahman or Zebu cattle at least are tick resisting.

Mr. SPARKES: I am very pleased to know that. I also hope that the Minister will be able to use his persuasive powers to advantage with his colleague, the Minister for Transport, and prevail upon him to reduce the freight on pure bred bulls consigned to North Queensland. I recently trucked 130 bulls to Almaden. The buyer, Mr. Ernest White, who purchased on behalf of Australian Stock Breeders Company told me that the freight on the bulls was nearly as much as their purchase price.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the question before the Committee.

Mr. SPARKES: I am discussing the question of cattle breeding, and I am commenting on the report by the Chief Inspector of Stock.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is dealing with the question of railway freights.

Mr. SPARKES: I am pointing out that the Chief Inspector of Stock has stated that the cattle in the North are deteriorating because of the lack of a proper type of vigorous bull, and I am suggesting that the Minister should induce the Minister for Transport to offer freight concessions on bulls consigned to these areas. The suggestion is a business proposition. In Argentina the railways are privately owned. Would to God that ours were privately owned, too! The progeny of any beef breed registered in any herd book is carried free on the privately-owned lines of Argentina; that is regarded as good business. I suggest that the Minister, who is very enthusiastic in the administration of his department, should have a heart to heart talk with the Minister

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for Transport to see if freight concessions cannot be granted to the Northern cattlemen to induce them to import pure breed bulls and thereby develop a more vigorous type of stock.

Mr. TOZER (*Gympie*) [4.57 p.m.]: The vote is being increased this year. I have no objection to that, because I regard this department as practically the chief department in the State. The majority of our people are interested in agriculture and stock, and no one can say that we have wasted our time in occupying the whole of the day in discussing the administration of the department. The department will be assisted if only one small suggestion is of material advantage. The annual report is a long and interesting document, but it is unfortunate that we have not had sufficient time to study it in a proper way. However, I am very grateful that the report arrived prior to the consideration of the Estimates of the department. I congratulate the department upon the issue of its very fine "Agricultural Journal" which we receive from month to month. Its useful information is of interest to quite a large number of people. The majority of the producers know nothing about the "Agricultural Journal." That is their own fault. Every producer is entitled to a free copy, and non-producers can obtain it at the small cost of 1s. per annum. No literature can be cheaper. I desire to thank the department for the journal. I get it, and pass it on to those interested in dairying. They find it is both useful and important in their business.

There is no doubting the fact that the department is in a position to give splendid advice to the producer. I have no desire to say anything against the department, its inspectors, or its other officials, because I recognise they are experts in their subjects and possess knowledge superior to that of the average person. We have persons who specialise in some form of primary production. They may be authorities in their particular subjects and be able to carry on their activities without advice, but the great majority of primary producers have invested their money in the land, and have no special knowledge at all. The department can be and is of considerable benefit to those people. That is the purpose for which it was established. We have diseases breaking out amongst stock, our fruit industry, and even amongst our grasses; in fact, everything we produce becomes affected at some time or other by disease. The average man has not the time or ability to devote to the study of those questions, and it is only right that the Minister should have experts at his command to advise him in eradicating disease. Thus benefit is conferred, not merely on the individual producer, but on the whole State.

The greatest crop in the State is our natural grasses. The department is devoting a great deal of attention to demonstrating what are the best crops of grass to plant in the various districts. We have had small experimental plots in several districts to demonstrate how, by the use of fertilizers, the growth of grass can be improved. That is not generally known. Many people are not aware of the benefits to be obtained from the growth of artificial grasses and the use of fertilizers. We have always relied on the natural grasses until adverse seasons com-

pel us to rely on artificial feeding. The past two seasons have been exceptionally dry, and this has compelled dairy farmers, especially, to go in for the conservation of both water and fodder. There is a certain amount of relief country on our coastal belt. On the approach of a dry spell the inclination of the dairy farmer is to shift his cattle to these coastal areas. I have had some experience in this matter, but I am determined that I will never shift my cattle again. It is necessary to send some person down in charge of them. If the cattle are milkers they very often go off their milk. That is mainly on account of the change of grasses. Another detrimental result is the fact that the cattle pick up a quantity of loose sand while feeding, and if they remain on the coastal belt long enough balls of sand form in their stomachs. They fall away in condition, and a number of them die. The approaches to water are generally boggy, and cattle become bogged. In addition, the cattle stray, because the country is unfenced, and in the final muster a number are found to be missing. Anyone who has had that experience will not embark on such an undertaking again. There is a large tract of country between our North Coast and Double Island Point which is used as relief country in dry periods, where many of the cattle disappear and are never heard of again.

If the department can render assistance to farmers in fodder and water conservation, it will be doing something that will be of general benefit. One point that the department could stress on producers is that many holdings are overstocked, the owners apparently failing to realise that what may be a suitable carrying capacity in a good season is probably unsuitable in a bad season. It is in unfavourable seasons that the troubles of the primary producers are accentuated, because where no provision has been made for fodder conservation, the producers are compelled to purchase fodder, which is an expensive item, particularly so when it has, as in most cases, to be imported from the Southern States. We want to educate the people to an understanding of what is a safe carrying capacity, and in that matter the dairy inspector might assist. The average dairy farmer thinks that the chief consideration is to have as large a number of cattle as possible, and that the more stock he can run on a property the better it is for him. What he fails to realise is that if a suitable number of cattle were kept, and sufficient feed were available to carry the stock through not only good seasons but also bad seasons, there would be a greater return and a saving of stock losses in drought time.

In my own district a comparatively large area was utilised and a large number of people were engaged in banana-growing.

The following figures will show the comparative position of the banana industry in Gympie district in the years shown—

	1912.	1922.	1932.
Land under bananas (acres)	106	2,570	2,377
Yield of bananas (bunches)	10,008	552,561	417,682

In 1930 the banana industry was responsible for the circulation of £200,000 in the Gympie district, but through the ravages of disease the amount had declined to £15,000 or

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£20,000 in 1933. That is a very serious loss, and it is in such matters that the department might render greater assistance. I know that the department was able to stop the spread of bunchy top beyond Maroochy-dore; but, unfortunately, thrip disease broke out in the Gympie district. It came down from the North and spread down South, and if it is not stopped it will spread to New South Wales. I understand from the deputation which waited on the Minister when the matter was discussed that an officer was appointed to go into the matter. In the first instance the experimental work in North Queensland was delegated to Mr. J. Harold Smith. Then the experimental work was transferred to the South and put in charge of Mr. J. A. Weddell. I understand that Mr. N. Caldwell now has it in charge.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He is only working on thrip.

Mr. TOZER: The disease has practically ruined the banana industry in the Gympie district. It is spreading south, and will do damage to the rest of the banana plantations if the spread is not stopped. Experiments have been made in the use of bags. Some people contended that bags were an absolute success, but others say that a different kind of bag than the one used was required, that the latter was too open, and the result was not as successful as was anticipated. The department could go into that matter and a great deal of good would be done if we could get rid of the pest. The trouble is that the areas which have gone out of banana cultivation are too small to carry on any industry, except growing beans or tomatoes, but there is not enough in these crops except as sidelines. The areas are too small for dairying, and being on high lands have not sufficient water. The banana-growers were earning a considerable amount of money, and when the industry went down not only they themselves suffered but the employees working for them also. The ranks of the unemployed have been swelled by former banana-growers and their employees. In addition to that, the Government are losing railway freights. The Government stand to lose "fifty-fifty" with the banana-growers and their employees.

Bananas were exported from the Gympie district as under—

	Cases.
1932	74,000
1933	26,000

That shows the great loss which has taken place. From Cooran and Gympie two years ago they were sending away by train 50,000 cases a month, and it has now dropped to 7,000 cases a month. Those figures show the loss caused through the thrip pest. We can realise what the loss through pests would be in other industries controlled by the department. If the department can curb this particular disease as well as others, and prevent them from spreading, it will be doing wonderful work for the State. There are diseases which break out in the pig industry. I hope that the Bill which was brought forward to deal with this matter will prove successful and fulfil our anticipations. Many things are necessary to improve our stock. Many people sell stock medicines to dairy farmers, but the ordinary person does not know whether they are pure or not. It is the same with regard to the quack medicines which the ordinary person

buys. I understand, too, that there are many stock medicines being sent out to dairy farmers. The farmer does not know whether they will benefit his stock or be the means of introducing other diseases. If the department can remedy that evil in any way I think it should render the necessary assistance. It is not possible to get the ordinary dairy farmer to apply to the department for advice. If the benefits that I have suggested can be given without increasing taxation they should be given. Some good is being done, but I do not like the idea of increasing taxation.

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

Mr. CLAYTON (*Wide Bay*) [5.20 p.m.]: I would like to take this opportunity of thanking the Secretary for Agriculture and his officers for the many kindnesses I have received at the department during the past year in connection with matters relating to my own electorate. I would also like to say that we farmers appreciate very much the monthly journal which is issued by the Department of Agriculture. Many farmers in my district appreciate the interesting matter contained in the journal, which is very helpful to them and encourages them in the treatment of disease and other agricultural practice.

I wish to speak more particularly in connection with the dairying industry. Unfortunately, Queensland's milk production per cow does not compare favourably with that of some of the other States and other countries of the world with which we have to compete on the British markets. A great deal more should be done with the object of improving the milk production, and for that purpose information should be provided for men engaged in the dairying industry. Instruction and advice could be given to them as to the more scientific methods to be used in the industry. I admit that much of our trouble as regards milk production is due to the largeness of the areas which are used for dairying purposes, the result of which is that the matter of fodder conservation is not studied as it would be if we were forced to cultivate certain areas in order to carry on the industry. We are trading on our natural advantages, with the result that the production per cow is not improving. Moreover, in many districts which are occupied mainly by graziers with beef cattle a few of them bring in their beef cattle to milk, and the small return they get has a tendency to reduce the average of milk production obtained from pure-bred cattle. That is to a large extent responsible for the low milk production per cow. If statistics were obtained from some of the more excellent breeds that are being used in the industry, the position would be different. I have always contended that much of the improvement that has been achieved in the dairying industry has been due to the assistance rendered by the Agricultural Show Societies, which are very numerous throughout Queensland, and have had an enormous influence upon the progress of the industry and the improvement of dairy cattle. It is unfortunate that the Government this year have not seen their way to consider the restoration of the subsidy that has been given to these societies in years past.

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It is also unfortunate that periodical dry spells are experienced in Queensland, so that frequently our pastures are in many instances overstocked. Immediately a good season is experienced the farmers endeavour to raise as many of the calves produced by their good cows with the result that they become overstocked in a very short time, and when a dry spell comes they begin to lose their stock—very often their best milkers—which brings a tremendous loss not only to the dairyman himself but to the whole State. I am of the opinion that more scientific methods must be adopted in the conduct of the dairying industry.

The average dairyman who does not adopt scientific methods does not secure the maximum production per cow. He cannot expect to obtain the maximum production if he allows the bull to run freely with the cows. Much better production could be secured if the bull were enclosed and a register were kept showing the date of calving and the date when the cow should be taken over for service again. The maximum production will certainly not be obtained if the cow is allowed to get in calf again five weeks after the date of calving which occurs very frequently with quite a number of dairymen. It is quite a simple matter to fence off a small area adjacent to the cowyard, so that these matters can be handled in a more scientific way with a view to greater production per cow.

Another matter of vital importance to the dairyman is the question of the conservation of fodder. The department is quite prepared to assist the dairymen who are willing to erect silos for the purpose, and I am quite satisfied that the shortage of fodder supplies in dry periods could be overcome by the conservation of fodder on the farm during seasons of plenty. Fields of maize and other green crops could be converted into ensilage which would be of immense value during dry spells and it is unfortunate that greater efforts are not directed to this end. It is essential that the farmers should conserve as much hay as they possibly can. They should not be content with a single stack but should build more and more stacks. This would obviate the necessity of having to drove valuable stock to relief country from time to time, from which many do not return. Perhaps many years of effort have been expended in the development of a valuable dairy herd, and it is of the utmost importance to the dairying industry that fodder be conserved to maintain such herds intact.

It is pleasing to note that every assistance is being given to the dairymen in the matter of herd-testing. I have always been a firm believer in the policy of herd-testing, because I could never see the wisdom of feeding a useless cow when it could be culled by the method of testing. Herd-testing very often discloses that many unprofitable cows are running in the herd. They consume as much feed as a profitable cow, perhaps more, and by the adoption of scientific methods pastures can be conserved by the elimination of unprofitable cows.

At 5.29 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. CLAYTON: I stated on a previous occasion—I am under the impression that the Minister promised to give effect to my proposal—that the teachers in the State schools should be given tuition in herd-

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testing at technical colleges or butter factories, so that they might impart the knowledge to the children. The children would then be of great assistance to their parents. The time and money of the department would be saved if the children were able to test the herds of their parents. This would be beneficial to the dairying industry as a whole. If, after testing a herd, it is found that some are not giving a profitable return there is a very convenient method of dealing with them, and that is by spaying. In the course of time these spayed cows will fatten and can be sold to the butcher. That operation can be carried out successfully by any farmer who has any knowledge of stock. It is a method of culling the herd, and getting some return at the same time.

If measures such as I have suggested were adopted we would get a much more even return throughout the year from our dairy herds. An unfortunate circumstance in the marketing of our butter overseas is the fact that during the summer months we have supplies in abundance, while in the winter months supplies greatly decline. The shortage of supplies during the winter period does not enable us to maintain a continuity of supplies on the London market. It is most unfortunate that we should have a very large amount of butter to export in one period of the year, and then practically go off the market until supplies are available again. We lose contact with our clients and permit foreign countries to exploit the market we have been supplying.

I trust the Minister will give very serious consideration to the matters I have brought before him. I speak as a practical dairyman. I have given my views on running a dairy on more scientific lines. I trust they will lead to greater encouragement amongst dairymen, and that the Minister through his officers will do something along the lines suggested. If so, dairymen might be encouraged to carry on operations along more scientific lines than they are following at the present time.

Mr. FUNNELL (*Brisbane*) [5.33 p.m.]: First, I desire to congratulate the Minister, the Under Secretary, and the staff of the department for the very excellent work achieved during the past year. The report of the department contains a fund of information. This can be passed on to the man on the land, including the agriculturist, the dairyman, and the fruitgrower. This information is the result of accumulated experience of the departmental technical officers, and the excellent work performed by the inspectors over a number of years. Many of our producers fully appreciate the remarks contained in the report in reference to the great variety of industries dealt with. The advice it contains tends not only to preserve the present wealth production of the land, but increases it. The producer in the remote parts of the State welcomes information of this kind. He is able to study it and put it in practice when necessary. I find during my travels throughout the State that the advice tendered by the department is fully appreciated.

I rose particularly to give an emphatic denial to the statement made by the hon. member for Marilla concerning the sugar industry. The action of the Federal Government in making a vicious attack on the sugar industry, as well as several other primary and secondary industries in this

State, has been discussed at great length on a number of occasions. Through the action of the Federal Government a reduction was brought about in the price of sugar of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. I hold very definite views on the subject. If fuller consideration had been given by the Federal Government to what method should have been adopted to bring about this reduction, I am convinced that they would have decided that it should have been borne by those best able to bear it. If correct information could be obtained from the raw millers and refiners it would be found that the whole, or the greatest part of the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. reduction in the price of sugar to the consumer, which I gladly welcome, could have been borne by these interests.

I take the opportunity of referring now to the statement made by the hon. member for Murilla, who complained that the reduction in the price of sugar was not fairly borne by all sections in the industry. The hon. member quite incorrectly stated that the workers in the industry were not suffering a reduction in wages, but that the total reduction was being borne by the producer. In actual fact, the Industrial Court award applicable to the industry imposed a reduction from the 1st July last of 3s. per week in the wages of sugar-field workers, a proportionate reduction in the hourly rate of sugar-mill workers, and a reduction of 3d. per ton in cutting rates. It is only fair that I should give a strenuous denial to the incorrect statement made by the hon. member for Murilla, in order that the people may know the true position. I have extensive knowledge of this industry, not only in Queensland but also in New South Wales, where, of course, there are only three small mills and considerably fewer people are employed than in Queensland. There, however, the workers have suffered an even greater reduction in wages than is the position in Queensland. The bulk of the industry is carried on in Queensland, and until the return of a Labour Government in 1915 the industry was practically monopolised by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, Limited, the Millaquin Sugar Company, Limited, and two or three smaller companies. At that time the farmer did not know the convenience of a telephone or a motor car; as a matter of fact, his farm was merely a piece of land surrounded by mortgages. Through the efforts of the Queensland Labour Government the industry has been developed to a remarkable extent, and to-day the producer is receiving a fair and reasonable price for his cane, whether as a return for his labour or on the capital invested in the industry.

Mention has been made of the 44-hour week. My interpretation of a "farmer" is that he is a man who owns his own land and works it with his own labour, except for the short period when harvesting operations are being carried out, and I claim that no undue hardships have been imposed on the sugar farmer by Industrial Court awards; and the 44-hour week does not affect the farmer. The larger holder in the industry—the person or company who employs labour all the year round—is more or less a speculator, and is employing labour to show a profit. The small farmer in the sugar industry appreciates the legislation which Labour Governments have enacted to assist him, because as a result he enjoys a standard of

comfort that is comparable with that of any other farmer in the State. We recall, too, the efforts of the Labour Government in building railways and roads to North Queensland resulting in the opening up of a vast area of country on which we have thriving townships and hundreds of farmers. Moreover, the Labour Government provided central sugar-mills and broke down the competition of private sugar-millers. The cane farmers of this State have had all this beneficial and sympathetic legislation from Labour, while no such legislation has been passed for the sugar producers in New South Wales. The three mills operating in New South Wales are owned by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, Ltd. The sugar farmers and workers there have had to meet in conference with the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, Ltd., secure the best possible price for their cane. They have never had the necessary legislative protection of any Government in New South Wales.

Prior to Labour coming into office in Queensland the cane farmer himself had very little say in the industry. Years before, when black labour was employed, what value was placed upon sugar lands? It is only because the cane farmer gets a fair and reasonable return for his labour, which he did not enjoy prior to Labour's coming into office in 1914, that sugar lands have increased in value. The industry, although suffering from over-production, is still a profitable industry, and is giving the cane farmers and others engaged in it a fair and reasonable standard of living. It is one of the most important industries operating in Australia. It gives vast employment to the workers. It has been the means of townships being built up in the sugar areas with thriving businesses, and it has largely contributed to increased railway and shipping freights. It has been proved to be deserving of the consideration and support accorded to it by Labour, and the present Government desire to continue that support.

I make this statement in answer to the question of hon. members opposite as to what the Labour Government have done for the men on the land. One could go on quoting what Labour has done, not only for the sugar producers but also for those in other industries. I do not know of any better example of socialisation of industry than what has taken place in the sugar industry. It is a true illustration of what can be done under legislation to provide that all engaged in the industry receive a fair and reasonable return for the labour and capital invested therein.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*) [5.46 p.m.]: I did not propose to speak on this vote, but after hearing the hon. member for Enoggera yesterday, and the hon. member for Brisbane to-day, I wish to point out the false position they have adopted.

The statements of the hon. member for Brisbane as to what this Government have done for the men on the land is not correct, so far as my knowledge goes, and I can claim to have a reasonable experience of the country districts. As I have listened to the rain which has been falling during the week, for instance, I have thought of the position in the country districts where they want sunshine. I realise what it means to those men on the land who, after months of

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labour, are now uncertain as to whether they will be able to gather their crops. Last Saturday crop after crop in the Drayton and Toowoomba district was utterly destroyed by heavy storms. Those are conditions to which the workers whom hon. members talk about looking after are not subjected. They may find difficulty in obtaining employment, but they have not got the anxiety with regard to the gathering of the crops that the men on the land have, who if they cannot harvest their crops are left without wages. The industrial worker, however, is assured of every advantage conferred by the awards of the Industrial Court. The primary producer toils and toils, but seldom reaps. What has the Secretary for Agriculture done for these men on the land? He has almost been cursed uphill and down dale in certain districts for the penance he has imposed upon them. During the last couple of weeks meetings have been held in my own electorate to protest against the interference of the Government by legislative enactment with their respective industries. If you go into the library you will see in the Toowoomba "Chronicle" that two meetings have been held in my own electorate and two in the electorate of the Leader of the Opposition, and others in other districts. The farmers have held these meetings of protest, and have taken up the attitude of refusing to pay the taxes. I hope they will not persist. A large bundle of postal notices have been sent out. What for? To tell 500 people that they have not sent in returns that are required in respect of their bulls. They have been ordered to pay 5s. registration fee each. Only this afternoon I received a letter from a man in my district, who says—

"Please find enclosed circular which I received on Tuesday. Also a card for registering bull, fee 5s. Now, sir, I have not got the 5s. to pay it. As you know, about twenty months ago I got all my paddocks burnt out, and there was no season to make the feed grow up to about two months ago. Then the storm and hail that we got last Saturday chopped and washed my potatoes down towards Brisbane, washed them nearly all away."

That is one of many complaints that I have had.

I have followed the legislation passed by men who adopted the same methods as the present Government over fourteen years, and I know that the conditions of men on the land are worse now than they were before that regime. Those methods are going to be repeated.

I have heard a good deal about pigs in the course of this debate, and I would like to show, from the report of the Department of Agriculture and Stock, the progress that is being made in that industry. Many people are interested in the pig industry in Queensland, and much greater strides have been made here than in any other State of the Commonwealth. The report of the Senior Inspector in Pig Raising, on page 38 of the departmental report, shows the number of pigs in the several States of the Commonwealth in the years 1925 to 1931, both inclusive. I do not intend to read the whole of the table. I take the years 1925

and 1931. The table shows that in those years the numbers were—

	1925.	1931.
New South Wales ...	332,331	335,846
Victoria ...	339,601	286,780
Queensland ...	199,593	222,686
South Australia ...	90,794	109,780
Western Australia ...	74,316	120,521

It will be seen that the number of pigs in New South Wales increased during that period by only 3,515, and in Victoria there was a decrease over the same period of 52,321, whilst in Queensland the number increased by 23,088. South Australia shows an increase of 18,986, whilst Western Australia is the State to compare best with Queensland, showing an increase of 46,205. In the production of bacon and pork Queensland can more than hold its own. Reference has been made to the introduction of the white pig. On page 41 of the report the inspector states—

"British breeds of pigs are in principal demand in Queensland, and in the Large White and Middle White, Tamworth, and Berkshire breed some very choice animals are available, and numerous pedigree herds have been established."

I notice that in all these reports white pigs are dealt with, but it will be noticed that pigs which this State has stood by are well to the fore. The development of an export trade in bacon and pork is nothing new in Queensland. I came across a very old letter dealing with this phase of primary production, but it is unfortunate that the date should be torn off. It is a very old record, probably twenty years old, but it shows that in those days private individuals were prepared to make an effort to stabilise the pig industry without any assistance whatever from Governments. The letter is addressed to Messrs. T. G. Robinson and Co., a company that was carrying on business in Toowoomba at that time. I desire to pay a compliment to Mr. Robinson. If anyone has done anything in the interests of the man on the land on the Darling Downs it is this gentleman. He was not an expert but he was a man with practical knowledge, and he utilised his knowledge for the benefit of the primary producer. This letter was written to him probably twenty years ago, in the early days of the Murarrie factory—

"As you appear to be largely interested in this line, we cannot do better than give you the full text of what our friends write on the other side in respect to Queensland pigs. We may state that our agents are the best distributors on the other side. They have a most extensive connection of their own, and this particular line is one in which they are thoroughly up to date. They handle all the American pork (which is probably now in disfavour to the advantage of Australian), consequently shippers will have their goods placed straight away at best prices by experts. Anyway, we know for a fact they have obtained $\frac{1}{4}$ d. a lb. more than others for stuff sent by the same ship.

"They write as follows in respect to some of the heavy weights, 120 to 150 lb. :—

"We are pleased to say that the pigs turned out in an exceedingly satisfactory condition, quality very good

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indeed. We had quite a number of buyers inspecting them, and finally disposed of the whole shipment at 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. One manufacturer reports as follows:—

“ I split the pigs this morning; from the look of the pigs I feared they would cut fat, but on opening them both myself and foreman were surprised at the amount of lean meat. If they grow pigs of this class in Queensland there is a sure fortune for whoever gets in there first. I am curing some sides in pickle for rolls, and others as Wiltshire sides. We have no pigs here showing the same amount of lean meat for weight of the pig. These samples will beat best Canadian packed for leanness, and I think even beat Danish.”

“ The above pigs were consigned to us at Murarrie where we took charge of them and had them slaughtered for 1s. 6d. per head, and frozen and packed ready for shipment for another 4d. per lb. The freight to London is about 9/16 of a penny. Our agents can do with monthly shipments of 1,000 pigs or more, and as we make advances, say, up to 5d. per lb. on frozen weight, shippers are not long out of their capital. The surplus is handed to them in about four months, when we receive account sales.

“ Yours faithfully,

“ For Webster and Co., Limited,

“ F. GREEN.”

I have read that letter to show that at all times private individuals have been prepared to do their best to stabilise industries without any assistance from Governments. I only wish that we had more men of that type to-day. It is unfortunate that the legislation which is introduced by Governments to-day tend to make individuals rely on Governments for support rather than upon themselves. We seem to have forgotten the days when individuals were prepared to do their best for the country without regard to Government assistance. Hon. members opposite should try to recognise that men with capital are entitled to a reasonable return, and that they should not be harassed by unfair Industrial Court decisions. If hon. members opposite would only look at the matter in that light there would be fewer disturbances in industry.

I do not come very much in contact with the officers of this department. That may be my misfortune, but when I have had occasion to deal with them I have found, as is always noticeable with officers of Government departments, that they are always courteous and considerate. I compliment the department on the interest it is taking in the pig and calf clubs attached to schools in the country areas. These clubs are now controlled by the Department of Public Instruction. Recently in two centres in my electorate I had occasion to visit schools where calf clubs were in operation. The department was considerate enough to make one of its officers available to assist in the inspection of the work done. I was astonished at the knowledge these school children were obtaining in connection with the dairy cow. They were able to give an instructive lecture to the parents and others interested in the work of the school. It occurred to me that under this tuition they could really start life at a point where their fathers were finishing

after many years of very hard toil. It is of considerable importance to this State, particularly as we are a primary producing State, that we should instil into these children a desire to stay where they have been accustomed to live, that is, in the country, and not in the towns or city.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, *Barcoo*) [7.3 p.m.]: As I said last year, I am gratified to notice that the work being done by my department is, with few exceptions, appreciated not only by hon. members but also by the people outside Parliament. Certain hon. members told this Committee that this is the most important department of State. With all due respect to other departments I rather agree with that viewpoint, because I see no immediate future before Queensland except that future associated with primary production. As our future necessarily materially lies in the direction of the prosecution of successful agricultural pursuits, it is obvious that my department has a very grave duty to discharge to the people of this State. It can be said without fear of argument that the officers of my department are zealously and loyally discharging their duty.

During the debate some question was raised about the relative value of scientific education and practical agriculture. Certain hon. members have affected to despise the individual associated with the more or less scientific side of agricultural production. We have gone through a big gamut of expression in this regard. The ex-Secretary for Agriculture, the hon. member for Cooroola, paid a very glowing tribute—very well deserved—to the experienced technical officers of the department, but the hon. member for Murilla had apparently nothing but contempt for the man whose work he does not understand and makes no effort to understand. Between these two schools of thought—on the one hand a desire to eulogise the work of the scientific staff and on the other hand a desire to condemn unduly the work of that staff—is a very wide gap, and hon. members might orient their minds in the right direction and realise that the true work of those officers of my department who are the technical advisers and research men of the department is to reconcile scientific knowledge and agricultural practice. It is true that they can tell people what to do, but it is equally true that they cannot make them do those things; but so long as we have a staff of technicians who are prepared to inform the people of the most modern methods of agriculture, and who are prepared to prosecute research along these lines, I have no fear for the future of agriculture. I believe that, generally speaking, on the cultural side our practices are sound, but there is distinct evidence throughout the world—Queensland is no isolated example—of what might be termed a modern school of agricultural practice and agricultural thought. This new school of agricultural practice recognises that science is the hand-maiden of agriculture. It subscribes to the doctrine that agriculture is the oldest of the arts and the youngest of the sciences. That is abundantly proved, and in every country in the world, including Australia, rapid scientific development is evident in agriculture and stock husbandry. In our own sphere the Commonwealth Government some few years ago recognised the necessity of undertaking

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scientific investigation on definite lines. The organisation known as the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research was founded and that organisation has made very material and valuable contributions to the wellbeing of industry—in agriculture in particular. It is necessary that hon. members generally should realise that practical agriculture is dependent upon the work that is being done in the fields and in the laboratories, and I think the Department of Agriculture in Queensland, if measured by that test, will be found quite capable of favourable comparison with that in any other State in the Commonwealth or any other country in the world.

During the time at my disposal I propose to deal with the various points which have been raised by hon. members who have contributed to this debate. Last night the hon. member for Murrumba, in addressing himself to this Committee, made what I consider was one of the best contributions made during the period that the "Chief Office" vote has been under consideration. The hon. member spoke of the work that is being done by Mr. Lewcock, a pathologist, who is devoting his time to the investigation of problems associated with the incidence of disease in pineapples. Very valuable work indeed is being done by that officer, and it is to the credit of the organisation concerned—the pineapple section of the fruit industry—that it was willing to find some portion of the finance necessary to put this work in hand. I am constrained to say that I think the ex-Secretary for Agriculture showed considerable vision when he decided that it was necessary that this officer should be appointed. How different is the viewpoint of the hon. member for Murrumba from the viewpoint of other hon. members opposite who have addressed themselves to this question!

MR. FOLEY: They belong to different periods.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: If not to different periods, at least to different schools of agricultural thought. It is noticeable that the younger members of this Parliament—I refer to them in respect of age rather than in respect to period of service in Parliament—are those who subscribe most ardently to the new doctrine of agricultural practice. That is typified by the remarks of the hon. member for Murrumba, who considers it right that industry should make some contribution to the solution of its own problem, and who did not grudge the contribution being made by one section in that direction. Other hon. members opposite, addressing themselves to the problems of agriculture on the research side, have suggested that the taxpayer generally should pay for all the benefits that result from the prosecution of research work. That is an entirely wrong angle from which to view the question. For its own preservation industry must be prepared to bear some share of the cost of research associated with that industry, and because that is so I welcome the utterances of the hon. member for Murrumba, for I think they were some of the most significant utterances made during the course of this debate.

Some hon. members have addressed themselves to the question of thrip—more particularly the hon. member for Murrumba, who raised the question, and the hon. member for Gympie, who at a later stage addressed himself to that subject at some

length. It is useless to pretend that thrip is not a very grave problem. If it is not satisfactorily dealt with, I believe it will decimate the banana industry of Queensland and New South Wales. Its ramifications are probably much wider than we suspect at the present time, and it is necessary that we should pursue undeviating investigations into this trouble. It is true that one year bagging appeared to be some remedy, but the next year the results of bagging were by no means so satisfactory, and we do not believe that bagging is going to be the final solution of the problem. It is also fair to remark that the hon. member for Gympie introduced a deputation to me and impressed upon me the necessity of doing some research work in regard to thrip, and urged that I should appoint an officer for the purpose. The question arose as to where I was going to get a trained man capable of undertaking this investigation. I asked my chief officers to name an individual who was capable of undertaking the work, and finally I was told that probably the only man who had some knowledge of thrip control and who had investigated the cycle of thrip was then doing work in New Guinea. We got into touch with this gentleman by wireless, and finally succeeded in getting his services for Queensland. He is engaged at the present time exclusively on thrip investigation work, and from the conversations I have had with him I am satisfied that he, in association with other officers of the department, can find a remedy, but that the remedy will be very difficult to discover. It is a very real problem associated with a very valuable industry, and the prosecution of the investigation along those lines will be continued until some solution is found. Banana thrip control presents problems not presented by any other form of insect infestation.

The hon. member for Murrumba raised the question of the control of banana disease, and here again I would say that the hon. member belongs to the new school of thought rather than to that old school of thought which rather takes the attitude that "God's in his heaven, all's right with the world." The hon. member recognises the necessity of taking drastic action to deal with this question of banana disease control. I recognise that necessity, and if what I saw in certain areas in the Currumbin Valley were typical of the existence of bunchy top, then I can only say that I appreciate the value of the legislation which was placed on the statute-book by the ex-Secretary for Agriculture, which gives me power to deal with the situation as I find it. I supported him in the passage of the Act, although it involved taxation on the people concerned, and gave the Secretary for Agriculture through this Parliament very wide and extensive powers. I believe it to be necessary. My experience administratively has shown me the necessity of it; but I want to raise this point—that when the necessity arose when I was sitting in opposition I did not cavil at the incidence of new taxation, nor did I cavil at the incidence of new taxation when the hon. gentleman brought down the proposal to increase very materially the assessments on stock, because I believed that it was necessary; I gave him support in that direction. I did not cavil when he proposed to tax the humble bee, because I believed it was necessary to do so. As a matter of fact,

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during the three years that the hon. member for Cooroora was Secretary for Agriculture, although he brought down quite a number of agricultural taxation measures, "Hansard" will show that on no occasion did I or members of my party oppose them. We were not generous; we were just.

Let us reverse the situation. Time after time during the debate to-day we have been told that I have inflicted taxation to the detriment of the farming community. I propose on the appropriate votes to analyse that taxation to see just what is meant; but the sum total of fees that have been imposed on the agricultural and pastoral industries of this State by myself is a mere bagatelle when compared with the fees and taxes that were inflicted during the previous three years, when my friend the ex-Secretary for Agriculture was in the position that I now occupy.

Some questions have been raised about the nut industry. I think there is a misconception so far as the nut industry is concerned. There are tremendous problems to overcome. As Secretary for Agriculture I want to say emphatically that any person who believes that he can grow nuts by merely planting them in the soil is doomed to disappointment. Certain interested individuals have advanced claims to having secured good varieties, which are really of a cheap type of nut, and have been exploiting them. Many people who planted these nuts are doomed to disappointment. In the first place, the Queensland nut is notoriously untrue to type. You cannot rely upon getting trueness to type, and if you cannot rely on getting that trueness to type, much patient investigation in propagation is necessary. The question of the production of the nut generally involves the question of budding and grafting, in which there seem to be tremendous difficulties. From my own experience I have encountered no true to type nut; no other nut is so difficult to propagate as the Queensland nut. When planted the nut appears to do well for a year or so and then dies off. My experience in this direction is not singular. Many experiments have been made with only partial success, and we are still at the experimental stage.

Several hon. members have made reference to work that is being done at St. Lucia. Evidently, some hon. members are under the impression that St. Lucia is merely a training farm for boys. That is not the true position at all. I do not propose to deal with that phase of the question, but rather with the broader phase of the St. Lucia experimental work. I have found it necessary to have a plantation prepared under the immediate control of responsible officers, and we have planted an area at St. Lucia with different varieties of Queensland nuts, and there we propose to experiment with budding and grafting and other methods of propagating the nut and other problems associated with the production of the crop. In addition to that, I would remind the Committee that one of the terms and conditions under which St. Lucia was handed over to my department for five years by the University was that if that institution desired to do any experimental work there facilities would be placed at its disposal. I am sure the Committee—particularly the hon. member for Cooroora, who spoke of the desirability of having an experi-

mental farm in close proximity to the office—will agree that St. Lucia meets that requirement. The St. Lucia farm was established to meet that desire on my part and on the part of the ex-Secretary for Agriculture, in order that there should be some handy place where experimental work of a far-reaching character might be done. The advantage is this: That if necessary I can send an officer from the department out there in twenty minutes to carry out any necessary work. Instead of having experimental farms scattered over the length and breadth of the State, I can concentrate on experimental work, cultural, pathological, or otherwise, and can place that work in the care of a man whom I can trust and whose knowledge I respect. For that reason, St. Lucia is discharging an important and very valuable obligation to the department and to agriculturists generally.

The hon. member for Murrumba also raised the question of the cultivation of castor oil. He was very interesting in the hypothesis that he put forward, but I must admit that I do not know anything about the cultivation of castor oil. The data submitted by the hon. member is certainly worthy of investigation. I understand that castor oil is extensively used in infant practice. (Laughter.) I assure the hon. member that I will endeavour to investigate the question from the angle put forward by him last night, and if there are any commercial and economic possibilities in what he suggested, we will endeavour to realise them. The hon. member also raised an important question affecting not only castor oil but also quite a number of other agricultural products in Queensland. One thing that confronts us is that there are many different types of agricultural products which can be consumed in Queensland. Sunflower seed has been mentioned, for instance. If the department said that the production of sunflowers was profitable, the result will be that many people would grow them and more would be produced than could be consumed. The law of supply and demand would operate, and the net result will be the price will fall considerably. If any system could be evolved by which we could control the production of any of these crops, however, we would add materially to the wealth of the State. I do not know how members of the Opposition would regard a proposition to license a certain number of people to cultivate and produce certain products. That seems to be the only solution. If we could do that hundreds of thousands of pounds would be added to the wealth of our State. One day, when I am more optimistic as to the capacity of the Opposition than I am now, I may introduce legislation to give us that power with regard to certain specified crops, so that we can satisfy our State and Australian requirements, and at the same time avoid the danger of gluts in the market.

Mr. BRAND interjected.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I will do what I believe to be right. The duty of the Opposition naturally is to oppose anything. I have been long enough in Parliament to realise that they are the real factors associated with the people who are opposed to us.

During this debate I do not propose to particularise so far as individual members

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are concerned. There has been a tremendous amount of discussion concerning tobacco—from the pessimistic view that tobacco can never be satisfactorily grown in Queensland to the ultra-optimistic view that tobacco is destined to become one of the greatest industries of our State. Somewhere between the two extremes lies the true perspective. I believe that tobacco has a material future in this State, but I do believe that the boom that took place two or three years ago was one of the most disadvantageous things that ever overtook a new industry. The people believed that there was a fortune to be made in tobacco. We had not the necessary technical tuition available for growing tobacco. We adopted a system that lent itself very readily to the dissemination of diseases over the whole of our State, diseases that could under a proper system of cultural control have been confined to certain limited areas. The haphazard system which was adopted was one that might quickly have spread the diseases over the whole State. Another phase of development that I think is going to be a particularly serious one, more especially in regard to tobacco production in Northern Queensland, presents itself. Hon. members will recollect that early this year I spent a certain time amongst the tobacco plantations of the North. It is rather irksome to hear hon. members opposite and the press talk of Marceba tobacco as if Marceba were the only district capable of producing tobacco. On the occasion that I visited the North the Marceba tobacco was not equal to the tobacco of many other areas. The Secretary for Public Works said the other day that the tobacco that was being produced at Dimbulah was probably superior to the tobacco produced in other areas. When I visited the North I certainly carried away the impression that Dimbulah during that particular season and under the climatic conditions which prevailed at the time was a potential tobacco area, perhaps better than other areas that I visited during my tour. On the other hand there are cultural problems quite apart from the economic problem of marketing that have been discussed during this debate. First of all, we have to inquire into the question of disease control. I can assure hon. members that I believe that it will be necessary to introduce very drastic legislation if we are going to eliminate diseases and make tobacco a commercial proposition. On the cultural side we shall have to have the best varieties. I am informed by reliable correspondents that the varieties we are growing in Queensland are varieties that have been discarded in other tobacco-growing countries and that new varieties are being planted in those countries. There may be something in that. Colour is lent to the suggestion by the fact that early this year the United States of America prohibited the export of tobacco seed in other than experimental quantities. We have then another obstacle that must be overcome—that is, the question of soil types. Nobody could be satisfied with the rudimentary rule-of-thumb methods that were applied in selecting the tobacco areas now under cultivation in the North. My own personal impression in the North was that the land would probably grow tobacco satisfactorily for twelve months. In those tobacco areas that were virgin, good crops were produced, but it was a noticeable fact—my officers commented upon it as well as myself and resi-

dents of the district—that where the tobacco was being grown for the second year in succession the results were not nearly so satisfactory, and where the tobacco was being grown for the third year in succession we heard much adverse comment. That would seem to indicate the necessity for some research work so far as fertilization and general cultural methods are concerned. At the present time I have before me a scheme that I hope will meet with the requirements of the various districts. The Commonwealth Government propose to supplement the State staff by three men. These three officers may or may not be hard to find. They will be definitely allocated to tobacco culture and one of the prime necessities in this regard will be to have an experienced chemist, a man who has devoted a considerable amount of his time to the fertilization equation so far as it relates to Northern Queensland. As our plants mature it will be possible to send one of our experienced chemists, who has been specialising in the chemistry aspect of tobacco-growing, to Northern Queensland, and place him in charge of some very wide experimental work which is projected there. On the general question of tobacco, it is futile to visualise the future of the industry from one season's work. There is not one tobacco organisation in Queensland that has not suffered the pangs of adversity. The hon. member for Oxley asked me to be somewhat more lenient to the Bark Ridge people. The hon. member for Carnarvon introduced a deputation to me the other day in respect of some additional finance required by some people who are running the El Dorado syndicate of tobacco-growers in the Texas district. In every district in Queensland the Government are being approached for financial assistance by tobacco-growing companies. It is clear that we should not differentiate as between districts. Last year all districts met with adversity, and probably adversity will again be met with this year. If we can overcome some of the fundamental problems, and are prepared to face the questions of satisfactory fertilization, proper varieties, and proper soil types, particularly if we are prepared to drastically and resolutely face the question of disease in all its ramifications, we can establish the tobacco industry on a safe and sound foundation.

The hon. members for Rockhampton and Wynnham raised the question as to the duty of the Commonwealth Government in assisting the industry. I cannot feel that a mere contribution of £2,500 per annum for three or five years, as the case may be, represents the Commonwealth obligation to the industry in this State. The Commonwealth, apparently with the support of certain hon. members opposite, more particularly the hon. member for Murilla, regard import and excise duties on tobacco as being part of the revenue tariff. I cannot subscribe to that view. It is not reasonable that a revenue tariff should be inflicted on the industry. Hon. members opposite have told me ten thousand times during the period I have been in this Parliament that it is the primary producer who pays all taxation. If that be so—and we can only argue on this point from the viewpoint of hon. members opposite—then if the Federal Government propose to raise revenue by means of taxation on taxation, is it not the grower who ultimately suffers? There is no escape from that if the arguments put up by hon.

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members opposite are sustained by the facts of the case. The tobacco industry in Queensland, or in Australia, should not be the subject of revenue taxation. It should be allowed to have as clear and free a run as is possible until it is definitely established. Once it is established the position can be reviewed, but during its infancy handicaps of a formidable nature are placed on this industry with the result that they have made a material contribution to the adversity suffered by the grower to-day. The question is raised: Why is much of our Australian tobacco not being used while a huge volume of foreign tobacco is being imported? The hon. member for Wynnum stated it was necessary to import some percentage of tobacco in order to blend satisfactorily. That may or may not be true. The argument in support of the statement is that the soil types of America are somewhat restricted, and because they are restricted, frankly, it is necessary to import from other countries a small percentage of tobacco for blending. We have a greater number of soil types than they have in America, and we are producing a wider range of tobacco. While only experience can show us what we can do, my own personal opinion is that with vast areas of tobacco land, and with the tremendous disparity of soil types which lend themselves to the production of different types of tobacco required for blending purposes, we ought to be reasonably free after a certain period from the necessity of importing tobacco.

Mr. WIENHOLT: Would you place an embargo on imported tobacco?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I would not impose an embargo which would mean "sudden death" to imported tobacco, but I would favour an embargo which would lead to a diminishing quantity of tobacco being introduced each year. At the end of a certain period of time there should be a total prohibition of imported tobacco. If foreign tobacco is to displace our tobacco on the market it is obvious that quite a large volume of our tobacco is not going to be sold. Two very interesting facts emerge in this connection. Mr. Riordan, the member for the Kennedy division in the Federal House of Representatives, was informed by the Minister for Trade and Customs the other day that the tobacco manufacturing companies had refused to enter into a buying agreement with the Commonwealth Government. The following day a question was asked in the House of Representatives concerning the importations of foreign tobacco, and the answer is very illuminating and very definitely bears out the contention which has been advanced by hon. members on this side that the Commonwealth Government are not doing everything that they have been obligated to do in respect to the preservation of this industry. Mr. Riordan, M.H.R., asked the Minister for Customs what amount of tobacco was imported into Australia for the years 1931-32 and 1932-33, and the Minister for Trade and Customs replied that in 1931 the amount of unmanufactured tobacco imported was 15,119,305 lb., and in 1932 14,031,708 lb. The margins are altogether too narrow so far as Australia is concerned. I am not materially concerned about the price value of the import duties, but I am very materially concerned about the fact that the incidence of this taxation allows 14,000,000 lb. to 15,000,000 lb. of tobacco to

come into Australia, while the total consumption of tobacco in Australia is only 20,000,000 lb. It is quite obvious no industry can survive under those conditions, and it is also obvious that unless the Commonwealth Government are prepared to do something more than make a grant of £2,500 a year available to this and other Governments for three or five years, the tobacco industry is doomed so far as the Commonwealth is concerned.

Mr. MOORE: If we grow the quality?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am glad the hon. gentleman has raised that question. During the course of this debate the hon. member for Cook assured me we were growing a superfine tobacco. The ex-Secretary for Agriculture on one occasion made some very eulogistic references to the type of tobacco that was being produced at Beerburum. If my memory serves me rightly, the hon. member said that this was the finest tobacco produced in Australia, or so he was advised by his experts.

Mr. WALKER: The experts reported that.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That brings us to this question: We have demonstrated without fear of contradiction that we can produce the superfine tobaccos that are required. From my own personal knowledge I do not believe that the real difficulty lies in the production side, but rather in the manufacturing side; and I believe there are certain people who have done this State and the tobacco industry of the Commonwealth a very grave disservice in the type of tobacco they have placed on the market.

Mr. MOORE: There is no doubt about that.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: From time to time we have been confronted with glowing advertisements about the merits of Queensland tobacco and Australian tobacco generally. I think that in my position as Secretary for Agriculture I, like my predecessor, have sampled more tobaccos than any other hon. member. Sometimes I think these samples are given to me out of pure malice. (Laughter.)

Mr. MOORE: So that you will give up smoking.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I have sometimes thought that if I were condemned to smoke some of the tobaccos given to me as being typically representative samples of Queensland tobacco I would prefer to take on another diet altogether. On the other hand, I have smoked some very excellent tobaccos, more particularly some of the tobaccos being produced in North Queensland. Without naming any one tobacco rather than another, the tobacco produced by Mr. Bayliss in North Queensland is one of the best tobaccos I have ever smoked. It may not suit everyone's taste; but it suits my taste, and is comparable with the best of tobaccos that I buy from overseas sources.

The fact emerges that on the cultural, economic, and manufacturing sides there are diverse problems that have to be faced. There is this last burden of revenue taxation which has been inflicted by the Commonwealth Government, and is the last straw that has broken the camel's back, and I feel sure it is a very short-sighted policy on the part of the Commonwealth Government to insist on getting their pound of flesh, because

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the sum total result of that activity will be the breaking down of the industry itself.

The hon. member for Cook made some reference to the necessity for the establishment of agricultural training facilities in North Queensland, and while it is not very often that I agree with the hon. member I find on this occasion I very materially agree with him, as do the Government. At Kairi, in North Queensland, we have an institution that can be readily adapted to the purpose for which it is intended, and I can assure the Committee that it is intended in the near future to proceed with the scheme that has been outlined.

The hon. member for West Moreton made some remarks last night concerning the decontrol of potatoes affected with potato blight, and in a jocular fashion offered to give £25 to the Children's Hospital or some other institution if I could prove that potatoes infested with fly moth were not going to certain soup kitchens. I am not going to ask the hon. member to make that contribution, but I want to assure him that since he made that assertion I have caused inquiries to be made, and I find that potatoes affected with scab have on occasions found their way to the soup kitchens. No doubt the hon. member was confusing scabby potatoes with potatoes affected with potato moth.

Mr. MAHER: No; I stand by my proposition.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Then I will stand for the challenge I made to the hon. member last night that it is his obvious and bounden duty to supply me with the data of which he says he is in possession. I have caused some inquiries to be made during the day about the question of potato moth in the Southern States of the Commonwealth, and what the hon. member is actually asking me to do by decontrolling potatoes is to invite all the rejected potatoes from the other States of the Commonwealth to find their way to the Queensland market. If we decontrol so far as Queensland is concerned, we have to decontrol so far as the other States of the Commonwealth are concerned. Section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution governs the position in that regard. The net result of the advocacy of the hon. member, if it were put into operation, would be that every State of the Commonwealth would be able to send its rejects to the Queensland market. I am sure the hon. member did not give any material consideration to that phase of the question.

One very important question which has been raised during the debate is that associated with water conservation. I was particularly interested in the remarks of the hon. member for Mirani in relation to certain cultivation efforts which were being made in a pastoral area of Queensland, at Retro Station. Like the hon. member, I have had the opportunity of going there myself on more than one occasion and seeing the actual operations being engaged in. Mr. Allen is the manager of that station, and he has been very highly commended for the work he is doing there, but although Mr. Allen has demonstrated that these things are possible on Peak Downs, it is significant that other pastoralists on Peak Downs or on the Mitchell downs of the West have not followed suit.

Mr. SWAYNE: It is a psychological matter, I think.

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The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It may be. It is clear, however, that they have not followed suit. At one time I believed that the question of water conservation was such a big one that it should engage the practical attention of the pastoralists of the West, but my views have been modified in later years. I have lived in the pastoral country long enough to form a definite conclusion so far as water conservation is concerned. Practical men tell me that it will have to be done in a practical way. The hon. member will say they are doing it at Retro, but even though they may be doing it at Retro, further west we find climates that are not suitable for the growth of forage crops.

Mr. SWAYNE: I said within 200 miles of the coast.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It may be an excellent proposal within 200 miles of the coast, but the real point I wish to make is that hon. members during the course of the debate have reiterated from time to time "Hands off the farmer! Hands off the pastoral industry! Hands off this phase of the industry, and hands off that phase of the industry!"

Mr. MAXWELL: No wonder! You said you would make the pastoralists squeal.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not know that the hon. member knows much about the pastoral industry. The only time I have heard of the genial member for Toowong squealing was when he went out to the West to have a look at the conditions there, and they tell me that he squealed very loudly about the conditions the people were encountering. On the other hand, I believe that another hon. member came back with a very excellent impression of the West, and felt that he was in duty bound to represent the claims of the West in this Legislature, and I think that he does so. Hon. members opposite say, "Hands off all these undertakings!" Do they mean that in all the debate this afternoon that we have after all been engaged on an educational and propaganda campaign in respect to the virtue of water conservation rather than in an effort to do something practical? If they continue to say "Hands off this" and "Hands off that," and at the same time say "Conserve fodder," do they not leave the question in the air? Are they not engaging in an academic debate which has no merit? That is the impression I have gained. During the present debate the hon. member for Isis said that it was my duty as Minister to educate the people as to the merits of fodder conservation. We, as a department, have for over twenty years been educating the people on fodder conservation. Certain concrete and definite proposals have been put before the Bureau of Industry. Several recommendations have been placed before me in regard to the conservation of fodder, but whether those recommendations have anything to commend them or not I am not prepared to say at this juncture. I require a good deal more data before I can do so. But this fact does emerge. We have heard much about the intelligence of the average farmer, and I believe that he has to be intelligent or go to the wall, and if the question of fodder conservation has not engaged the serious attention of these people is it not obvious

that they do not regard it as being worthy of practical application?

Mr. WALKER: But they do.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: If they do the facilities of the Agricultural Bank are at their disposal. I assure the hon. member that if any person who has the security that is required under the Act passed by this Parliament will submit an application for an advance for the purpose of conserving fodder, he will get favourable consideration. I am not alone in that policy, because it has been the established policy of the Agricultural Bank for quite a number of years. I would like to see a tremendous drive made in the active conservation of fodder, because I know how much it would mean, not only to the individual but also to Queensland as a whole. But after all the responsibility does repose on the individual. If individual farmers are desirous of conserving fodder, the facilities that are available will be placed at their disposal. It may be that later—it might be ill-advised now—that the Agricultural Bank may say that the only security it can accept will be a security on which facilities exist for the conservation of fodder. It would be a right view to take, but I think it would be unpopular, and would be resisted because it would be said by the clients of the bank and by members of this Assembly that we were forcing certain things upon the farmers as the price of a loan from the Agricultural Bank. To sum up, it is essential that we should have a vigorous policy of fodder conservation, but we cannot do that until we have gained the co-operation of the farmers, and that will not be obtained until the farmers become seized of the necessity of proceeding with such work.

The hon. member for Isis also dealt with the question of the reduction of sugar prices due to the action of the Commonwealth Government. I rather think that the hon. member was out of order in discussing that question at this stage. It is most unfortunate that Southern people and Southern interests do not appreciate the merits of our great sugar industry. It is a tremendous pity that the Commonwealth Government were stampeded by the vociferation of the Southern people to the detriment of an industry that is of great importance to Queensland, and of tremendous importance to the northern portions, and insisted upon a reduction of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. in the price of sugar. It is to be regretted that, going over the heads of the operators in the industry and the Government, the Federal Government insisted upon that reduction. I might tell hon. members that it was the original desire that there should have been a still greater reduction. I attended some of the conference meetings, and I know what was being done. It was suggested that there should be a reduction of 1d. per lb.

One hon. member suggested that the Central Cane Prices Board levy of 1½d. per ton on sugar-cane should be reduced to 1d. I am sorry to say that if that were done the fund would steadily decrease, and at the end of six years it would be exhausted. I cannot subscribe to that view. We never know when something serious may overtake the industry and the fund will be required. While I do not desire to build up big reserves, I do desire to conserve this par-

ticular fund for the present. It has been suggested that the levy should be remitted for one year. Well, this has been a continuous levy right from its inception.

Mr. BRAND: Not the sugar-cane prices levy?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes; this levy has been imposed every year. One hon. member discussed the question of agriculture from a new angle when he said, in effect, that we should leave the sugar industry alone. I cannot conceive that it is possible to leave the sugar industry alone. Nobody desires to perpetuate a chaotic system, but if we were to leave the sugar industry alone it would not survive five years. The legislation concerning the industry is exceedingly complex and exceedingly difficult to understand. Probably there is no more involved phase of agricultural production than that associated with sugar production. The legislation that we have on the statute-book dealing with the industry tends in one direction alone—the preservation of the industry. I am convinced that any hon. member who would rise in his place in this Chamber and advocate a policy of *laissez faire* does not understand the principles upon which sugar is being grown in Queensland and does not understand the grave difficulties that confront the industry. We have reached the limit of sugar production in Queensland.

Mr. BRAND: What hon. member adopted that attitude?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member for Wynnum. One of the major duties of the Department of Agriculture will be to prosecute a vigorous research in an endeavour to discover agricultural production from a new angle in areas suitable for agricultural production, but in which sugar is king to-day. I refer, of course, to our tropical North, the most magnificent belt of agricultural country that I have ever seen, a real fairyland to those people who visit it for the first time. There are many areas in the North that I visited for the first time. I carried away from the North two very vivid recollections—first the illimitable agricultural possibilities under proper guidance of this rich and vast territory, and second, and no less pleasant, the hospitality of the good-natured people and organisations with which I came in contact. I had only one grievance when I returned to Brisbane. I was dined and entertained on so many occasions that I was robbed of a lot of sleep for which I was due. Anyone who visits the North for the first time carries away impressions of bounteous nature, of bounteous people, and illimitable possibilities. I desire to direct the activity of my department to the opening up of some very real pastoral and agricultural wealth in that northern territory. The major thing that did occur to me was the fact that sugar was king and that it was necessary to substitute some other form of production. That is why I desire to establish a tropical research bureau in the North. The North presents problems entirely different from the problems of the South. I believe that we have in the North a potential dairying area that will rival the South in output. On the Daintree River, far away in Northern Queensland, one finds the pioneers establishing themselves satisfactorily. There is no question of a poor type of stock. The stock on the Daintree River compares more than favourably with the

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type of stock in the older dairying districts of the State. Here we have a dairy factory functioning further into the tropics than any other factory in any other part of the world so far as I know. There they are acclimatizing their cattle, and in the process of acclimatisation they are following excellent butter-production practice. They will succeed in acclimatizing their choicest stock, and they will develop an export trade from that particular centre.

Some discussion has taken place during the day about our Eastern markets. We have a delegate leaving for the East in the near future, and we have a desire to investigate the possibilities of markets in the East. I cannot join with those hon. members who are so optimistic about finding an Eastern trade. The experiences of our department have not been very favourable towards the prosecution of a big Eastern trade. It is true, as the hon. member for Murilla says, that every little helps, but there are tremendous obstacles in the way of exploiting that trade. I propose to give an example how difficulties can intrude from an unexpected quarter. Some little time ago a consignment of grapes was sent to the East, but it did not appear to be very acceptable there. Inquiries were made from time to time to see what had become of the consignment. It was very difficult to obtain payment. Finally, the Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing was informed that the consignment of black muscatel grapes were not required in the East. They were not successful on the particular Eastern market that was exploited on account of the colour. The explanation showed that the people to whom these grapes were sent regarded with superstition the dark purple of the muscatel. They believed it was a mourning colour, and that it would be unlucky to take the grapes into their homes. That is one phase which was exploited. Let us take another phase. The hon. member for Cooroora and another hon. member suggested that we should export butter to the East. The hon. member for Hamilton answered that argument by saying that the purchasing power of the people of the East was very limited. Then you have the religious equation again intruding which would militate against the expansion of the butter market in the East. These difficulties may be overcome, but practices that are based on religious convictions or superstitions are very difficult to eradicate.

The hon. member for Nanango asked why certain pig experiments conducted at Yeerongpilly were not conducted at Gatton. The explanation is not far to seek. Why did the ex-Secretary for Agriculture not conduct pig experiments at Gatton instead of Yeerongpilly? The facts are that Gatton is not under the control of the Department of Agriculture. That is not an insuperable difficulty. The agricultural college at Gatton is essentially an agricultural college designed, rightly or wrongly, for the training of youths in the practice of agriculture. It is most difficult to prosecute extensive experimental work in an institution of that nature. The people who must do that work are those associated with the Department of Agriculture—namely, the veterinary surgeons, pathologists, and those officers who deal with the scientific side of industries. If we did this experimental work at Gatton it would be necessary to continuously send officers to Gatton. I prefer to send them to Yeerongpilly. It is cheaper to do this

work at Yeerongpilly, where I have a properly equipped staff of veterinary surgeons and others, who are competent and trained observers, and are capable of carrying this work through to a successful conclusion. I do not believe in duplicating functions. On the other hand, an agricultural college is not the best field for experimental and research work. There is a limit to the work which agricultural colleges can do in this direction. Their objective should be to train the younger men with aspirations in the direction of modern agriculture. To that extent Gatton is discharging a very necessary function.

The hon. member for Cunningham had something to say about the distribution of the Federal Wheat Fund. He is not the only hon. member who raised this question, and in spite of his assurance that it has been raised by people outside, I am constrained to say that I have had no correspondence on this matter, and only one organisation has raised it in the form of a deputation. If my memory serves me correctly, that organisation demanded payment at the rate of 24s. per acre to those people who had not succeeded in getting a crop. The hon. member apparently is under the impression that the Commonwealth Government handed us two sums. That is not so. The Commonwealth Government handed us one sum of £40,744, and asked us to submit proposals for the distribution of this amount. No division was made by the Commonwealth Government, nor was any division contemplated by the Government. What they asked us to do was to fulfil the requirements of the Act in that particular direction. The Act provides that this sum must be divided into two portions—the one portion being for the purpose of distribution for marketing, transport, and so on, not on a bushel basis; and the other—it is “and” not “or”—for the distribution of the amount on a necessitous basis. I called the Wheat Board together and asked it to discuss this matter with my officers and myself. We laid down a basis for distribution and informed the Commonwealth Government of the nature of that basis. The Commonwealth Government agreed to that basis being put into operation, but we found some unexpected difficulties. The hon. member seems to think that necessitous growers were deprived of approximately £1,916. The hon. member is assuming that it was possible to draw a clear line of demarcation between those people who produced wheat and those who did not produce wheat. I believe when we first drafted the scheme—as did all these associated with me in the drafting of the scheme—that it would be possible to draw a clear line of demarcation, but when it came to the allocation it was found that it was not possible to draw that clear line of demarcation, and in consequence some alteration had to be made. For the hon. member for Cunningham to say that approximately £2,000 less than was provided for was distributed amongst necessitous growers is based on the assumption that this clear line of demarcation did exist. It did not exist. What actually happened was this: Some people who fell into the category of necessitous growers received payments in respect to small quantities of wheat which they delivered and also payment in respect to the necessity that they had encountered. We show the amount that they received in consequence of the small amounts

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of wheat that they delivered under (a)—that they were necessitous growers. A man producing 4 bushels could quite conceivably be worse off if he harvested the 4 bushels than a man harvesting no wheat at all, and it was not necessary to distinguish the one from the other; but the explanation, as I assured the hon. member when he was speaking, is a very simple one—that many necessitous growers received assistance in respect of the small quantity of wheat they marketed and also in respect of their necessity.

Mr. RUSSELL: Why did you pay 3s. a bushel plus 8s. 3d. an acre?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Can the hon. member give me an instance where any person got 8s. 3d. an acre? I would be pleased to know. 8s. 3d. an acre would mean that a person would harvest 33 bushels per acre, and if a person harvested 33 bushels per acre we were under an obligation under the Commonwealth Act to pay an equal proportion to all growers in consequence of their production. As servants of the Commonwealth Government, we had to pay an equal amount in respect of every bushel of wheat that was produced. I think that disposes of the hon. member's argument.

Some questions have been raised in respect of the flour tax, and the attitude of the Government in this regard. The Government do not believe that a flour tax is an equitable solution of the problem confronting the wheatgrowers.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: You have a flour tax now. What is the use of talking rot?

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I would like to know in what direction a flour tax is operating. If the hon. member suggests that we have a flour tax in Queensland, then I am totally unaware of the incidence of that tax.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: You know that everyone in Queensland pays more for flour than in any other State of the Commonwealth.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Is the hon. member cavilling at the fact that I fixed an economic price for the wheat-growers which enabled them to get a higher price than was obtained by growers in any other part of the Commonwealth or in the world?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: No; I say it is a flour tax.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Is the hon. member cavilling about that?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I am not.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: If he says that that is a flour tax, it is beyond my conception of that form of taxation.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Of course it is a flour tax.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is absurd to suggest that that is a tax. I was prepared to give the wheatgrowers the highest economic price that could be given to them. I recognise that the consumer has to pay. Let me remind the hon. member that that system is vastly different from the proposal of the Commonwealth Government. Does the hon. member desire

to tax a necessary commodity so far as the people are concerned?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: You did that with the flour tax.

Mr. SIZER interjected.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Let me show what the two hon. members who are interjecting, both of whom are ex-Ministers, did in this particular case. When you were members of the then Government and responsible Ministers of the Crown, you raised the price of bread and imposed a flour tax. You admit that.

Mr. SIZER: Yes.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You went infinitely further than that. While you were passing legislation through this Assembly in order to bring down the incomes of the people—while you were insisting that there had to be the 15 per cent. or 22½ per cent. reduction, as the case might be—while you were doing those things so far as the people were concerned, and reducing their purchasing power by the very acts that you perpetrated—while you were doing those things you endeavoured to maintain a prosperity at an uneconomic price.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would ask the Minister to address his remarks to the Chair and not direct to hon. members opposite.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Those hon. members endeavoured to maintain an uneconomic high level for wheat at the expense of the consumers.

Mr. SIZER: And you are perpetuating it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am not perpetuating it. Although this Government were instrumental in negotiating a price between the millers on the one hand and the wheatgrowers on the other hand, and while we paid the highest price for wheat in any part of the Commonwealth or the world, yet we materially reduced the price of bread.

Mr. SIZER: You have not reduced the price of bread.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The price of any commodity must depend on the capacity of the people to pay that price. Hon. members opposite when they were a Government, in order to placate their supporters, consistently refused to observe that law. On the question of a flour tax, I have no information other than that which I have received through the press, but I say that unless Queensland's production is conserved to Queensland, a very unfair burden is going to be placed on the people of the State. Just let me show what a food tax will mean if there is unrestricted access to the Queensland market. It must be remembered that if no embargo is to be placed on the importation of Southern bread on account of their cheaper manufacturing costs, the bounty of the New South Wales Railway Department, and cheap shipping freights to Queensland, all of which place Queensland at a disadvantage, a material quantity of flour will come from the South to Queensland. I take it that the tax is to be gathered at the seat of gristing. If the Federal Government put on a tax of 1d. per bushel, it would mean a tax of £18,000; a tax of ½d. per bushel on Queensland's consumption would mean

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£25,000; a tax of 2d. would mean £37,000; a tax of 2½d. would mean £56,000; and a tax of 3d. would mean £55,000. I maintain that if that tax is to be placed on the people of Queensland, a Queensland commodity should be the vehicle upon which the tax reposes. I am not prepared to agree that it is desirable that we should have a flour tax, and this Government will most certainly oppose it. Do hon. members opposite want a tax on a necessary commodity? Our price level is comparable with the price level of any other State in the Commonwealth so far as bread is concerned, and the hon. member for Sandgate most certainly cannot run away from his responsibility in that direction.

Mr. SIZER: I do not want it. I think you do.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Another question which has been traversed during this debate is that of grass research and the utilisation of grass lands. I subscribe very largely to many of the things that have been said by hon. members opposite. When we come to consider that at least 70 per cent. of the requirements of our lives is derived from grass it will be realised how important this question is to us. While it is of great importance in the South it is of still greater importance in the North, and I believe a policy must be directed towards the utilisation of Northern lands for the purpose of producing suitable fodder grasses. Quite recently we have been giving considerable attention to experiments in this direction. Much has been said about certain grasses which might be suitable for development. I believe the hon. member for Cooroorra mentioned the blue panic grass last night. There seems to be some suggestion that the department discredited the blue panic. That is not so. It appears to be a good grass, but naturally the agrostologist of the department cannot put his seal of approval upon a grass as the result of one experiment. Before that can be done there must be a great deal more experimental work carried out. I am prepared to say that one swallow does not make a summer, and that one test is not sufficient to prove the utility of that grass.

Mr. KENNY: The grass seed is being sold throughout Queensland on the basis of the one test.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: An interested person having had a material degree of success in a particular direction might be inclined to think that a similar degree of success might be met with in another direction.

One of the last questions that I propose to deal with is that raised by the hon. member for Warwick concerning the incidence of rust in wheat and the economic loss that is occasioned by that disease. At the present time the department is trying out 2,000 varieties of wheat in the various known rust areas of the State—the areas particularly susceptible to rust. We have in our service, as I remarked last night, Mr. Soutter, who has been entrusted with this work. Very keen appreciation has been shown of the work done by Mr. Soutter in the past, and it is our intention to bring Mr. Soutter from Bungeworgorai so as to give him the full scope to which he is entitled. Not only are we conducting experiments with rust resisting wheat, but Mr. Soutter is keeping in

close touch with the most important rust research station in Australia, at Glen Innes. If my memory serves me right, Mr. Soutter has paid two visits to Glen Innes in recent times to ascertain the technique employed there.

The Leader of the Opposition has raised another question. I am sorry that I was not present in the Chamber when he was speaking. I must express my regret at my absence, but I was entertaining a very old and honoured member of the community, in the person of the president of the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade. I understand he made some references to the development of the early lamb industry. I am very pleased that he has raised that question. I have been endeavouring during the past twelve months to direct my officers to give attention to this question of an early lamb raising. Whilst some excellent lambs are being killed at the abattoir, such as South Downs cross—I understand that is the choicest cross that is coming into the abattoir—it is quite possible that other crosses may be of equal or of greater value. We have not experimented in Queensland with crossbreds to the same extent as has been done in the other States. At one time I was closely associated with experiments on seventeen different crosses involving crossbreds and merinos, and including English types and medium types. Some crosses are better than others. The Dorset-Merino is a good cross, and is giving better results in South Australia than other crosses. Then there is the Corriedale-Dorset cross. In other areas the Shropshire-Merino and the Comeback-Shropshire crosses are giving excellent results. I believe that there is a very great possibility for early lamb raising, not only on the lands referred to by the Leader of the Opposition but also on coastal lands generally in association with general farming practice. I look forward to the time when we shall be able to embark first of all on some modest experiment in order to determine the right types and the right crosses for various areas of the State. New Zealand built herself to greatness by young lamb production, and I believe that Queensland can make an equal contribution if we can prosecute research along the right lines. I agree very earnestly with the Leader of the Opposition that it is necessary to do something in this direction in order to determine the right cross.

The hon. member for Murilla made some strictures on certain officers of my department, but on reflection I think he will feel that he did not quite mean all he said. He spoke about officers of my department coming along one after the other harassing him, and particularly stated that one man, apparently a cotton man, did not know very much about cotton.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: It was during the cotton boom twelve years ago.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: As the hon. member would not give his name, I instructed my cotton expert to try to trace this man. We turned up the cards to see what cotton the hon. member delivered in order to see in what years he would be visited by our experts. I am rather inclined to think that the hon. member was carried away by his own imagination in that connection. If there was an officer such as the hon. member suggests during the years that he was growing cotton I take this opportunity of assuring him that if he was referring to

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a man associated with cotton culture he is definitely not referring to an officer of my department. I want to make that point quite clear, because in the years that the hon. member grew cotton or delivered cotton to the Cotton Board the British-Australasian Cotton Association was employing its own officers. It was an officer of that association that visited the hon. member during that period.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: They were coming from the Department of Agriculture.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Whether they were coming from the Department of Agriculture or not does not materially alter the issue. The hon. member said that he had dozens and dozens of officers from the Department of Agriculture, but when he is pinned down to facts we find that he is vaguely referring to one officer who was not an officer of the Department of Agriculture but was an officer of the British-Australasian Cotton Association.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: There were several officers.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They were not officers of the Department of Agriculture. I have a very keen recollection of the hon. member having had a discussion with a certain gentleman who gave him very good advice about cotton culture and the hon. member was most interested in the advice that was given him, and he expressed very great appreciation of the services of that officer, for the time being at least.

I want to conclude by saying that I am gratified to know that the work of the officers of my department is appreciated. It deserves to be appreciated. I believe that we have in the Department of Agriculture very loyal officers who have a keen understanding of the agricultural problems of Queensland, and they apply themselves very zealously to the solution of the many and diverse problems that confront them.

Mr. SIZER (*Sandgate*) [8.28 p.m.]: I want to take up the flour argument where the Minister left off. I make no apology for the action of the late Government, and the present Government should make no apology for continuing the same policy. Hon. members opposite, particularly those representing industrial centres, have, for political reasons, hidden the fact that on the very day that they entered into an agreement to pay the wheatgrowers a price in excess of the economic value of wheat—which meant that the consumers had to pay more for their flour and bread—a tax on flour and bread was agreed to. I must confess that it would be a very serious thing if the wheatgrowers of Australia were placed in a perilous position. Any action taken from an Australian point of view must receive very serious thought in view of the great importance of the industry to Australia. It is a very short-sighted policy for a Minister of the present Government to attempt to score politically off another Government by holding his hands up in horror and saying, "We shall not have a flour tax because we are not an exporting State," and then proceed to argue that the Queensland consumer may pay something towards that pool. The hon. gentleman opens up a very serious argument. Supposing the people in the wheatgrowing States say "We are tired of paying a tax to the people of Queensland for their sugar," where would we be? Would they not be justified in

furthering that argument if we became adamant and said that Queensland would not co-operate in giving any assistance to the wheatgrowers because we are in an isolated position through having no wheat to export? Where would this State and Government get to if that question were raised? The Minister should consider the question before raising the argument he has done. It is purely political propagandism for the purposes of placating the industrial members of his party, but the effect may be much more serious to those members than any other hon. member in this Parliament.

Mr. MOORE: We are sending cheese and other primary produce to New South Wales.

Mr. SIZER: We, as a State, have more to lose by raising the question of imports and exports as between States.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Why did your Government acquire all flour in Queensland under the Sugar Acquisition Act?

Mr. SIZER: The Government of whom I was proud to be a member did their utmost to protect the wheatgrowers when they took that action.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You did exactly what we did.

Mr. SIZER: I am not attempting to deny it. It was quite a good policy. A policy uniform throughout the whole of Australia is now being adopted by the Federal Government along those lines, but the Secretary for Agriculture wants to stand back and say, "No, we will not be a party to that arrangement," simply because the national Government are going to make what was a State scheme a national one. The hon. gentleman said that his Government do not stand for a tax on flour, but the moment the price of wheat is raised above its economic value the consumer has to pay a tax, call it what you like. The same position obtains with regard to the sugar industry. Some day the laws of this country will be tested, and the courts will put a puncture right into the laws that have this principle as their object. When we called the Sugar Acquisition Act to our aid in regard to flour I never had any illusions as to what would happen if our decision were questioned in a court of law. None of us did. We all knew that we would not have a leg to stand on, and we were able to carry the scheme only through the good graces of the people co-operating with us, as they realised that the wheatgrowers and associated industries would otherwise go out of existence. The time has come, and it is urgent, when all Governments in Australia should come down to facts and stop this continual snide method of breaking the Constitution in all sorts of ways. We are not the only State doing it. The Victorian Government have also done it. The Commissioner of Railways in Victoria has issued an edict that Queensland meat cannot be purchased by the State Commissioner for Railways. That is contrary to the Commonwealth Constitution. At other times we have said that no peanuts shall be sent out of the State except under certain conditions. We are only building up an edifice on a foundation of quicksand, and the moment it is attacked it must collapse. We all know that to be a fact. If the Minister and his Government persist in their attitude they may raise a very big constitutional question prematurely. I think it ought to be raised and argued, and settled, but if it is raised

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prematurely we might see some things tumbling down on his head so rapidly that one would not know how to collect them together again. It ill becomes the Minister to raise the point at this stage. From the political viewpoint we ought all to be candid; if it is a good policy to assist the wheatgrowers in their time of distress then all Governments should do so.

Mr. BRAND: Just the same as with sugar.

Mr. SIZER: Yes. On the other hand, if it is not a good policy, let us alter it. Having accepted the policy, why should the Government run away from it so shamefully? Why do that when the attempt is being made to secure a universal price—by which I mean an all-Australian price—that will be Queensland's security? If a general price were fixed we could then meet the competition of other States; but with varying prices in different States it simply means that the State with the highest price-level will be saddled with the cheap material from the other States. We have everything to gain from a general price, and it is a shortsighted policy for the Minister to say that he will not have a flour tax. Supposing the other States said that they would not have a sugar tax, cotton tax, or any other tax, we would be in a very foolish position indeed.

I have spoken to-night to point out to the Minister the awkwardness of raising this question, and to make my own position perfectly clear. For a long time I have felt that we have built up an unsound edifice, and that sooner or later we shall have to reconstruct. That can be done more easily now than later.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Then we will put a tax on everything.

Mr. SIZER: We are getting to the point when every activity will want the same thing, simply because we are trying to maintain a price-level that is above the economic level. We may call it stabilisation or something else. We raise the price of butter and make our own people pay more for butter than is paid overseas, but all that is gained is paid away.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The basic wage is fixed on the cost of living.

Mr. SIZER: Yes; and the cost of living is influenced by the basic wage. Immediately you increase the basic wage the cost of living goes up, because the price of butter and other commodities increase. Then, with an increase in the index figure, another application is made for increased wages. Thus the vicious circle! The worker may think that he is getting more wages, but he is only doing so nominally. We are placing ourselves in the position that we cannot compete with other countries. I would not mind raising prices internally so that we could live in a paradise, provided we could discharge our obligations overseas and persuade the people overseas to pay us what we think our goods are worth; but when we can do that we shall have reached the millennium. In the attempt, however, there will be many heartburnings, and most of us will be aged persons before it arrives. The whole trouble that I see is our neglect to get down to first principles, to clear off a lot of the statutes and administrative Acts that are tacitly or otherwise breaking the Constitu-

tion. Until we have a definite clear line as to whether Australia is to be a federation of States, a unified Commonwealth, or a series of independent States, we shall not know where we are. Although the Labour Party claims to be unificationist, the present Government Party adopt an argument of a most parochial nature.

Mr. W. T. KING: That is not correct.

Mr. SIZER: The hon. member has not even read the policy of the Labour Party.

Mr. W. T. KING: I have read it.

Mr. SIZER: He signed it, he has swallowed it, he preaches it, but he does not know what is in it.

Mr. W. T. KING: I know it means low wages from your point of view. I can understand you not wanting it.

Mr. SIZER: The petty, parochial attitude we have seen adopted by a Minister of this Government who claims to believe in unification is most remarkable. I do not know how the Minister reconciles his parochial attitude, which may be very damaging to Queensland, with his party principles.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS interjected.

Mr. SIZER: The Secretary for Public Works will go for the rest of his days blaming the Lyons Government. I give him credit for paying a lot of attention to his work, but the more he keeps blaming the Lyons Government the less efficient he is becoming. The Lyons Government are becoming a nightmare to him. He knows that his Government are finding the Lyons Government the most convenient excuse for their own mistakes. The present Government ought to go down on their knees every night and thank heaven that there is a Lyons Government which they can blame for everything, because they could never bear the responsibility of all the sins that could be heaped upon their own heads. It is very unfortunate for the hon. gentleman that the Lyons Government are doing such excellent things in Australia. Although the present Government are getting a share of the loan money available, they still blame the Lyons Government all they possibly can. The Lyons Government are taking a wide view of things, including flour and wheat, and that is very disconcerting to the Secretary for Public Works.

As one with a full sense of responsibility, I think it will be a bad mistake for Queensland to agree to unification. I think we made a bad mistake when we went so far as to go even for financial unification, and that is a very big step towards complete unification.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I must ask the hon. member to confine himself to the question before the Committee.

Mr. SIZER: I am coming to the matter of the flour tax, and to both those points I have mentioned which I think are vital. We as members of the federation derive many benefits from it. I think the Secretary for Agriculture is doing Queensland bad service. He is raising a dangerous point from a Queensland aspect when he says that the Government on behalf of Queensland will not be associated with the flour tax. I say that he is administering a flour tax to-day. His administration from a farming point of view I endorse so far as wheat is

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concerned; but it does raise the price of flour and bread, and I think it is justified. I am surprised at the Minister running away from his own actions.

Mr. LARCOMBE (*Rockhampton*) [8.48 p.m.]: The ex-Secretary for Labour and Industry, the hon. member for Sandgate—

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

Item (Chief Office) agreed to.

CHEMICAL LABORATORY.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, *Barcoo*) [8.48 p.m.]: I move—

“That £5,343 be granted for ‘Chemical Laboratory.’”

This vote shows an increase of £206 compared with the appropriation for 1932-33. The whole of the increase is covered by salary increments. The “Contingency” vote remains the same. One officer has been increased in salary and one new appointment made.

Item agreed to.

COTTON INDUSTRY.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, *Barcoo*) [8.50 p.m.]: I move—

“That £8,323 be granted for ‘Cotton Industry.’”

This vote is a decrease of £240 on the appropriation for last year. The “Contingency” vote shows a decrease of £80 in comparison with last year, whilst the salaries are £160 less.

Item agreed to.

DAIRY PRODUCE ACT.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, *Barcoo*) [8.51 p.m.]: I move—

“That £16,406 be granted for ‘Dairy Produce Act.’”

This amount shows an increase of £29 on the appropriation for last year, which is made up by salary classifications. The actual “Contingency” expenditure for last year was £5,195.

Item agreed to.

SLAUGHTERING ACT.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, *Barcoo*) [8.52 p.m.]: I move—

“That £11,791 be granted for ‘Slaughtering Act.’”

The amount asked for is £232 in excess of the appropriation for last year. The salaries show a decrease of £228, whilst the “Contingency” vote is increased by £470. Provision is made for twenty-seven inspectors as against twenty-nine last year. Provision has been made for the appointment of two additional inspectors, but they have not been appointed, and they are omitted from the Estimates for this year. That is consequent upon the Federal agreement whereby certain State officers have been performing duties for the Commonwealth Government.

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Mr. GODFREY MORGAN (*Murilla*) [8.53 p.m.]: I would like to say a few words in connection with this item. The abattoir has been in operation for some time now and much slaughtering of stock has been done. I think we fully recognise the benefits which have accrued to the people of the city as a result of the establishment of the abattoir. One result has been that all meat consumed in the city has been free from disease, and the city has benefited considerably by the old system having been superseded. Members of the Government when in opposition were opposed to the purchase of the abattoir, and made all sorts of accusations against the Moore Government. I think they must now have come to the conclusion that it was one of the best things that the Moore Government did during their three years in office. I do not think members on the Government benches would care to go back to the sad old conditions that were operating prior to the establishment of the abattoir. They recognise from experience the great benefit that has accrued to the city of Brisbane by the purchase of the abattoir by the Moore Government. I do not think that the stockowners have reaped any great advantage from the purchase of the abattoir. I am satisfied that the prices ruling for stock to-day would have been unchanged had no abattoir been established.

Last year I advocated the establishment of a weighbridge at the abattoir so that cattle owners could sell their cattle on a weight basis. Weighbridges are in operation in many of the large saleyards in other parts of the world—in America, Canada, and Argentina. Ten, twelve, or fifteen head of cattle are weighed at one time and sold on the live weight, which is announced by the auctioneer. When cattle are brought to the Royal National Agricultural and Industrial Association, in Brisbane, for exhibition purposes they are weighed, and when they are sold they are sold on the live weight announced by the auctioneer. This gives the owner of the cattle some idea of the amount that he will receive because it is well known that the live weight of prime cattle gives some indication of the dead weight. The matter was brought up for consideration by me last session, and the Brisbane Fat Stock and Produce Brokers' Association was asked for an expression of opinion. This is the reply:—

“WEIGHBRIDGE AT CANNON HILL.

“Further to my letter of 9th instant, I now desire to inform you that the sub-committee referred to therein reported to this association in the above regard at a recent meeting, such report being adopted.

“The proposal to install a weighbridge at Cannon Hill was fully investigated by the sub-committee, and the following decisions reached only after mature consideration:—

1. It would not be possible to weigh all the cattle in the time available;
2. If the cattle were weighed it would result in considerable increase in bruising;
3. The percentages of wastage would vary so much owing to the different pastures on which cattle are fattened, and to the length of time taken in transit

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to the saleyards, that such weights would be of very little use to buyers;

4. That the extra cost of handling the cattle passing through the weighbridge would not be justified, as same would be a further penalty on the growers."

"Yours faithfully,

"M. G. Hooper, Secretary."

I propose to deal with the objections seriatim. First of all, all the owners who consign stock to Cannon Hill would not require them to be weighed. They are all weighed after they are killed. It is unfortunate that at Cannon Hill store cattle and fat cattle are sold on the one day, but the Government would be well advised to induce the Meat Industry Board to stipulate that store cattle shall not be sold on the same day as fat cattle. The Royal National Association will not permit the exhibition of cattle that are not really fat, and a stockowner should not be permitted to sell his cattle on the fat stock day if they are not fat beasts. The Government would be well advised to approach the board with a view to preventing people from sending store cattle for sale on Mondays and Thursdays, but the auctioneers should be at liberty to sell store cattle on other days. It would be necessary to weigh the live stock only if the owners desired. The association points out that a system of weighing would result in a considerable amount of bruising. I do not think that there would be increased bruising if the yards were properly constructed. The cattle are weighed in other parts of the world without bruising. They are weighed at the grounds of the Royal National Association without bruising, and I can see no reason why they cannot be weighed at Cannon Hill without bruising. The association also points out that the percentage of waste would vary and that the system of weighing would be of little use to the buyers. They evidently do not understand the position. When the cattle come down they could be immediately run over the weighbridge instead of into pens, as is done now. There would be no wastage at all. The cattle would be sold within an hour or so of being weighed. If they were weighed at 10 o'clock in the morning and sold at 11 or 12 o'clock there would be little or no wastage.

As to the fourth objection, as a stockowner forwarding cattle to the abattoir saleyards for sale I am prepared to pay, say 3d. per head in order that my cattle may be sold on a live weight, and not a dead weight basis. This charge will not come out of the pockets of the selling agents; it will come out of the cattlegrowers' pockets. The institution of a weighbridge would be justified and self-supporting. The saleyards are the most up-to-date yards in Australia, but they lack weighbridge facilities. Such a facility would permit cattlegrowers to know exactly what they were getting for their cattle. We have no method now of determining whether the published quotations in connection with the fat stock sales are right or wrong. The selling agents desire to attract all cattle to Brisbane for sale. I do not blame them for that. When they send out circulars to the cattlegrowers they state, as an inducement, that cattle are bringing so much per 100 lb. They are inclined to exaggerate the price to attract all cattle to the Brisbane yards. We know when the quotations in the market are, say, 25s. per 100 lb. for beef cattle that

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we can always deduct about 3s. per head, because the market is that amount lower than the amount quoted by the selling agents and butcher. The reports for the press are furnished by a committee consisting of two butchers and one member of the selling agents' committee. After a sale they furnish the press with a statement that cattle brought certain values. That report may state that prime cattle brought 21s. per 100 lb., good cattle 19s., and inferior cattle 18s. That is our only guide as to prices. The cattlegrowers are prepared to pay for the weighbridge, so the abattoir will not incur any liability. It will permit us to check the selling agents, and the Commissioner of Prices will have a check on the price of meat. Everything then will be satisfactory from our point of view. The Brisbane Fat Stock Brokers' Association should not be allowed to rule the roost. They are only selling the cattle for a comparatively brief period, yet they receive profits aggregating nearly as much as the grower receives after he had kept the cattle two, three, or four years and fattened them.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Is not that the general story?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Why should these people whom we keep in a livelihood rule the roost? The Cattle Owners' Association have passed a resolution that they desire a weighbridge, but notice is taken only of the agents who are living on them. They seem to have the power to prevent a weighbridge being erected when the people who keep the yards and abattoir going cannot have their desires given effect to. That should not be. I am not asking for something which is not in operation in other parts of the world. The system of weighing fat stock also operates at the annual show of the Royal National, Agricultural, and Industrial Association. We are all discontented with what is happening in the matter and I ask the Minister to go into the matter and see if the request cannot be given effect to. To fit up a weighbridge would not cost more than £200. That is a mere bagatelle to the Government, but is something of great importance to stockowners—and something that the selling agents and butchers do not want stockowners to have. These people want to keep in obscurity the prices received; they want to mislead us into thinking that we are getting a greater price than we really are, with the idea of telling us that they are not making big profits out of the sale of our meat when, unfortunately, they are. For fourteen years the beef industry has been down and out. The wool people and the wheatgrowers have received good prices at various times, but the cattle industry, which at one time was worth from £4,000,000 to £5,000,000 and is now only worth a few hundred thousand pounds, has had no consideration probably because it has very little weight politically. Anything that the Minister can do to assist this industry will help not only those engaged in the industry but also the general development of the State.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Namango*) [9.10 p.m.]: The establishment of the abattoir has proved to be a great success, and I believe that, as time goes on, it will prove to be of still greater benefit to the beef industry of Queensland. In the face of severe criticism the Moore Government established that abattoir; but I believe a general recognition

of the good work of the abattoir has effectively disarmed all criticism.

I desire to refer to the small calf trade which is being fostered in this State at the present time. Mr. Sunners, the chairman of the Meat Industry Board, informed me on one occasion that the small calf trade was worth £1,000,000 per annum to New Zealand. Queensland stockowners are encountering some trouble in regard to permits for the marketing of calves. The chief inspector of stock, to whom I spoke on the matter, told me the difficulty could be overcome by giving a general permit for the number of calves that were likely to travel to a particular centre on any date. That might be unduly stretching the conditions under which the Act is operated; nevertheless it would be a great advantage to the people who market calves, and who have to travel the stock 10 or 20 miles. They may not know within a day or two that they are being brought. They have to obtain a permit for each occasion. There may be from 50 to 100 coming from different towns in one day. That would make a lot of work in the stock inspector's office.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I assume that the hon. member's remarks are leading up to the matter of inspections, with which this vote deals.

Mr. EDWARDS: Yes. How can they inspect those calves if the latter do not go down there to be slaughtered? I want the Minister to take that into consideration.

I want to ask the Minister another question. The senior inspector is paid £320 a year, the same as an ordinary inspector. As a matter of fact, the other inspectors are paid more than the senior inspector, and I would like to know the reason for that. While the Minister was speaking to-night one would think that nothing further had been done, and we were just in the same position as before so far as the employment of inspectors in looking after disease is concerned—that we have not got any distance forward, and the people should agree to have imposed upon them any taxation that the Government may wish to impose. The Minister emphasised the contention that people in any industry should not quibble about any taxation or impost that may be put upon them for the carrying out of their industry. It must be admitted that the taxation with regard to inspection is a pretty heavy burden on the people. I am not suggesting that these inspectors are not wanted, but I would point out that there is a senior inspector, £320; inspectors—twenty at £360, one at £340, one at £320, one at £300, and three at £260. That works out at practically £165 a week, and there are travelling and other expenses. It is absurd not to look after the slaughtering side of the industry, but the cost can become too heavy for the cattle producers to carry.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: All these salaries are paid from revenue.

Mr. EDWARDS: Who finds the revenue?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You are raising the question of taxation. These are not paid out of any special fund, but from general revenue.

Mr. EDWARDS: From the way the Minister spoke it looks as if the owners will be further taxed before they move much further. This industry has a fairly

heavy burden to carry at the present time. Although the inspectors' salaries are paid out of revenue, the people who provide the pigs and cattle at the abattoir go a long way to make up that revenue. I suggest that every assistance should be given to the cattle people.

Mr. NIMMO (*Oxley*) [9.18 p.m.]: While we recognise that the abattoir is functioning satisfactorily, naturally some things could be altered for the benefit of the community. Dairymen in the Brisbane area who have calves should be allowed to slaughter them on their farms. It seems to be a serious economic loss that hundreds of small farmers round about Brisbane are knocking their calves on the head and burying them on their farms.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I think you are exaggerating.

Mr. NIMMO: I am not exaggerating. There are a number of dairymen in my own area who are not able to send single calves to the abattoir. If they had truck loads they would do so.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: A truck goes through your locality once a week; there would not be any difficulty.

Mr. NIMMO: I am pointing out that this is an injustice to these men, and I hope the Minister will be able to see his way to have it remedied.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, *Barcoo*) [9.20 p.m.]: The question raised by the hon. member for Murilla is rather appropriate. He has made certain suggestions, but I would like to point out that when the Bill for the establishment of the abattoir was passed very wide powers were vested in the abattoir authorities, and neither this Assembly nor I have any power under that Act to vary those conditions.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: If you ask the board it will do it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I will place before the board the representation that has been made by the hon. member for Murilla, but I have no power to compel the board to do anything outside the Act. The hon. member for Nanango has raised the question of the senior inspector's salary. The senior inspector is on a salary of £320, whilst three other inspectors are receiving £360 per annum each. The explanation is a simple one. The senior inspector has reached the age limit, and according to the usual practice in the department, when an officer reaches the retiring age he is placed on the minimum salary. Mr. Cheesman has reached the retiring age, consequently he is now receiving the minimum salary. I am afraid that he will be leaving us. I shall be sorry. He is a valuable officer.

The hon. member for Oxley has raised a question of material importance, but I am afraid I cannot see eye to eye with him. He has asked that farmers be allowed to slaughter their calves on their farms. While I was definitely opposed in this Chamber to the financial methods adopted for the purchase of the abattoir I agree that the principal of centralised killing is a good one. I have always believed in that system because I know it is the only way whereby the people of the city can be supplied with pure and sweet meat. If the suggestion made by the hon. member for Oxley were accepted it

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would mean that a considerable number of stock would be slaughtered in the metropolitan and other areas—because it could not be confined to the metropolitan area alone—and stock so slaughtered would not be subject to the necessary inspection. My experience is that it is absolutely necessary to have central killing, and I think it would be departing from that principle if I agreed to the suggestion of the hon. member for Oxley. He has now discharged his duty in this regard. I might say that I reside in the same locality as the hon. member for Oxley, and there is no difficulty in despatching individual calves to the abattoir, since vehicles pass through the area at intervals and will pick up calves for people who desire to dispose of them. I cannot accede to his request because I believe the abattoir has vindicated the principle of centralised killing with the result that the people are supplied with purer and better meat than ever before. I have never denied the merits or the virtue of centralised killing. It will be remembered that while I attacked the principle of the State becoming involved in the purchase of the abattoir I maintained and reiterated on every occasion in the Chamber and outside the advantages of centralised killing, and that is the justification of the establishment of the abattoir. I believe in municipal activities in relation to health and food of the citizens. That is the right angle from which to view it, and it is the angle from which most countries approach it. I am sorry I cannot entertain the proposal made by the hon. member for Oxley.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) [9.24 p.m.]: The Minister was quite right when he said that the quality of the meat supply in Brisbane had been improved. It must not be forgotten that experiments are being carried out in connection with the export trade of chilled beef to England, and that seems to present the only salvation for the beef industry. The experiments have been successful, and it is now only a question of securing transport within the requisite number of days and properly refrigerated chambers to hold the cargo. The market awaits us. There is considerable amount of propaganda to the effect that by the establishment of the abattoir competition in the salesyards has been destroyed, but that is absolutely incorrect. There are now more operators than before, and it should be noted that there is a growing practice of selling meat as meat and not on the hoof. Meat is now being purchased in the meat hall after inspection, and the butchers are able to obtain carcasses or portion of carcasses according to their requirements. This method of selling will develop a desire to sell according to grade. It will improve the grade of cattle, and must materially improve our export trade. As a rule, cattle sold in the yards are sold on weight and not on quality, but the board and the State as a whole has been aiming for better quality. If meat can be sold in the meat hall on a quality basis the growers will be encouraged to provide quality beef. There are now five operators killing and supplying beef to New South Wales, including practically the whole of the Northern Rivers area. I hesitate to think what would have happened to the beef market had these operators not been there to purchase the requirements for New South Wales. They are now purchasing double the quantity of meat that was pre-

viously purchased. The inspection of the carcasses, particularly of pigs, is very carefully carried out, and brings home to one the risks that were run by the people of Brisbane when stock was slaughtered in the isolated slaughter-yards. There are comparatively few condemnations in comparison with the number of stock slaughtered, and the inspections are carried out so carefully that it is absolutely certain that the condemned portions do not go in consumption. The whole system makes for an infinitely better meat supply, which is undoubtedly to the advantage of the people of Brisbane. I am hopeful that another meatworks will be established on similar lines later on further up the coast. The industry has been improved beyond all knowledge in comparison with conditions which operated in days gone by. It is only a question now of obtaining a better price according to quality. The centralised system of killing has been justified. Of course, it must be recognised that in the control of a huge undertaking like this a tremendous amount of responsibility devolves upon the management, and we should be thankful that we have secured the most capable management in Australia. Success or failure depends on that fact. The success of the abattoir depended to a great extent on the efficient management, and entire separation of all departments in order that it could be established what the cost of each department was, and that it could be seen at a glance where any discrepancy might creep in. The results obtained show what efficient management can do. The operations are so remarkable that the profit in each section can be determined to a decimal point. Success has been attained at the abattoir, and it is only a matter of a continuation of the present careful management to make it a greater success.

Item (Slaughtering Act) agreed to.

STATE FARMS AND GARDENS.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, *Barcoo*) [9.31 p.m.]: I move—

“That £7,244 be granted for ‘State Farms and Gardens.’”

This vote is £1,088 less than the appropriation last year. The appropriation for salaries show a reduction of £281, while “Contingencies” disclose a decrease of £807. Salary classification increases amount to £109.

Item agreed to.

MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, *Barcoo*) [9.32 p.m.]: I move—

“That £6,000 be granted for ‘Miscellaneous Services.’”

The amount provided under this heading is £2,250 in excess of the appropriation last year. This increased provision has been made more particularly in relation to its experimental work. It is hoped that we will be able to embark on a much larger volume of experimental work this year than was the case last year.

Mr. WALKER (*Cooroora*) [9.33 p.m.]: I was wondering whether that portion of this vote dealing with the dairying industry and scientific investigations should not truly come under the Dairy Cattle Improvement Act vote from Trust and Special Funds, and

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whether this is not a question of the Government again evading a promise that was made last year. The explanation given by the Minister to-night was not very satisfactory.

We were particularly pleased at the information we got from the Minister. The "Agricultural Journal" has been kept up to a high standard of efficiency. It gives full publicity to the various experiments conducted from time to time, and items of interest in connection with research work, also the work of our technologists. This is of great help to the farmer. The great weakness of the journal is it does not reach the home of every producer. I suggest to the Minister—I tried to do it myself, but, unfortunately, the money was not available—that this journal be issued in a more practical form, and that it give greater information than at present.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: This vote has nothing to do with the journal.

Mr. WALKER: That might be done by securing more advertisements. In order that the journal might reach the farmers, I suggest that the butter factories forward that portion of the journal affecting the dairying industry to the dairymen with their monthly returns. That would cost little or no money at all.

During this session an attempt has been made on private members' day to indict the Federal Government on a charge of injuring our primary industries, such as the tobacco, banana, and cotton. I refrained from dealing with that subject on the vote for the Chief Office because I considered it was not a fair thing to take up the time of this Committee on the subject, but as four or five hon. members opposite have dealt exhaustively with that question, it is incumbent that I should explain what the Moore Government did for these industries in conjunction with the Federal Government. When the Moore Government were elected to office certain investigations into the tobacco industry were carried out in conjunction with the Commonwealth Government and the British-Australian Tobacco Company. The Queensland Government also carried out certain experiments. During the first term of our office it was suggested that something should be done. The experiments carried out by the Queensland Government compared more than favourably with the other experiments, and it was decided to inaugurate a scheme of tobacco settlement. We considered it wise not to rush into the tobacco industry—the present Government rushed into the Beerburum scheme. We selected certain areas for tobacco farms at Mareeba, and then selected twenty-seven men possessing not less than £300 capital each for those areas in order that they would not be a burden on the Government. We extended very generous treatment to these tobacco-growers. The land was cleared by the Crown and the men were placed on specially prepared land, which was made available to them at 2s. 6d. per acre, payable over a number of years. Due to the watchfulness of the department in sending three experts to the district—two of them were paid by the State and the third by the Commonwealth and the State in equal proportions—excellent tobacco was produced, and the experiment was successful. Surveyors were then sent to the district by the Government, negotiations proceeded between

the Department of Public Lands and the Department of Mines in regard to areas under the mining homestead system, and the scheme was extended. Tobacco-growing requires great care and an ever-watchful eye for diseases, including blue mould. At all stages of production particular attention has to be paid to plucking, curing, etc.; and one point which I noticed particularly when I visited the district was the success of those growers who had closely followed the expert advice. Some of these men, by efficient methods, made from £400 to £500 a year.

So far as the excise duty is concerned, we know there is another phase to consider—the question of the cost to the consumer. Can anyone rightly contend that we are getting cheap tobacco in Australia? We have a duty to look at that aspect of the matter. It is not a question of the tariff which is affecting the price, but a question of quality, due, amongst other things, to seasonal conditions and disease. An excise duty of 3s. a lb. may appear small—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! At the commencement of the debate on these Estimates hon. members entered into a contract with the Chair to have a general discussion on the Chief Office vote, and to confine themselves thereafter strictly to the vote under consideration. I would ask hon. members to keep that contract with the Chair.

Mr. WALKER: I recognise that the whole of the discussion is completely out of order; but the point is that statements have been made by the Secretary for Public Works and other hon. members, and I want to emphasise the unfairness of the whole business. However, Mr. Hanson, if you rule me out of order I shall bow to your ruling; but although the 3s. excise duty may appear small, we have also to consider freight, harbour and other charges before the tobacco reaches the consumer.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I cannot allow a repetition of the debate which took place on the "Chief Office" vote. I want hon. members to be fair, and to honour the contract made with the Chair. We are now discussing "Miscellaneous Services."

Mr. WALKER: And that provides for the "Development of agricultural, horticultural, and dairying industries and scientific investigations." Of course, if I am out of order I shall not continue to offend.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member will have an opportunity to deal with the matter on the resolutions reported from the Committee.

Mr. WALKER: I merely wanted to emphasise that the Moore Government did everything possible to foster the tobacco industry. The duty question was certainly a big one, because we had not only to consider the duty, but the carriage over here, and other sundries too numerous to mention.

We are inclined to be disappointed on account of the enormous quantity of tobacco which is coming to Australia from other countries. It is only a few years ago that we started the industry. At first tobacco was only grown in the Texas district. We have at present 956 growers, cultivating an area of 6,178 acres, with a production of 1,360,390 lb. of tobacco. That is a wonderful record. The Minister ought to be congratulated on his share of the achievement.

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We have to cope with blue mould and other pests in connection with the growth of tobacco from its infant stage; so that I think we have done remarkably well. We have a consumption in Australia of 20,000,000 lb. a year. However, if I continue on these lines I shall infringe your ruling, Mr. Hanson, and therefore I conclude my remarks.

Mr. KENNY (*Cool*) [9.43 p.m.]: I want to deal with the development of agriculture and scientific investigation, which comes under this vote. It is a phase of agriculture which is very important, and we should discuss the development of the industry and the effect of Government policy in that regard.

The tobacco industry in North Queensland has been investigated by a committee appointed by the Federal Government which went through the district and has made a report. I noticed a reference in the press to the report, and the Secretary for Agriculture commented on the report and said he was pleased to see that the Federal authorities were vacating the field of scientific investigation.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I said I would be pleased if they did, but there is no certainty of it.

Mr. KENNY: I hope that if they do the Minister will carry on and take advantage of the experience of the officers of the Federal Government conversant with tobacco culture in North Queensland.

There appears to be a wrong impression on the part of hon. members with regard to the tobacco industry. The Secretary for Public Works and the hon. member for Rockhampton took me to task for moving an amendment to a motion moved by the hon. member for Rockhampton concerning the action of the Federal Government with regard to the tobacco and other industries. I have no intention of dealing with that, because I consider those hon. members were out of order. They blamed me because I moved an amendment in order to show the effect of the policy on the development of the industry. This is an industry that must be very carefully handled, and while we are expecting the Federal authorities to vacate the field of scientific investigation the Government of Queensland must be prepared to carry on from where the Federal Government leave off. The development of this industry has been going on for a long period. Its inception dates back to the time when Labour was in power in the Federal Parliament. Mr. F. M. Forde, then Minister for Trade and Customs, referred the matter to the Tariff Board prior to the last Federal elections. The Tariff Board came to Queensland, taking evidence to see what could be done to develop the industry on a sound basis, but they did not go to North Queensland to investigate the position there. They gave the people in North Queensland two days to come to Brisbane to put the case of the tobacco-growers in the Mareeba district. After the Tariff Board made its report, it was adopted by the Federal Government. It was the Labour Government who put the tariff there and it was the Labour Government who would not give the people the right to put their case.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: What about the timber industry?

[Mr. Walker.

Mr. KENNY: I am dealing with the tobacco industry, but I will reply in a few words to the hon. member.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member for Cook will not be in order in replying to the remarks of a member on another vote. He must confine himself to the vote before the House.

Mr. KENNY: I just wish to show that people in the tobacco areas did not get reasonable facilities that they should have got, and that is one of the reasons why to-day the tobacco industry in the northern part of the State is in such an unfavourable position. The Tariff Board took this action under a Labour Government, and it is that action which has brought about the necessity for the investigation which has just taken place. It is too early, however, to discuss the Committee's report, but we have had an inkling of what it will be. In the course of the development of this industry it must be recognised that a number of people did pay high prices for land. While the Moore Government were in power and trying to develop the industry on a safe basis so that people would not go "broke," people with money wanted to get into the industry and develop it, and the Government had to open up land to give them an opportunity to do so, or they would have gone elsewhere with their money. That land was accepted by these people on a perpetual leasehold basis. As a result a number of people at present are on land which is over-capitalised.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Now you are supporting perpetual leasehold.

Mr. KENNY: The hon. gentleman is like a gramophone, and is trying to throw me off the track.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. KENNY: The Leader of the Government should set an example to other hon. members.

This is a matter of holding the tobacco-growers on the land, and that can be done only by the Queensland Government, as the Federal Government are vacating the field. It has been reported that tobacco cannot be grown in North Queensland under 2s. 2d. per lb. If that is so, it is going to be a very serious thing, not only for North Queensland but for the Government, because if they cannot produce tobacco under 2s. 2d. per lb. they will require to receive 4s. a lb. to enable them to remain on the land; consequently there is need for a larger vote in this department to enable the Government to carry out scientific development.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You will agree with that vote?

Mr. KENNY: I would agree with this vote if it was £10,000 greater than it is now. Scientific investigation of the industry is necessary, and the vote will have to be considerably increased if that work is to be carried out properly. If we are to believe that the cost of production will be 2s. 2d. per lb., with a return of 500 lb. of tobacco leaf to the acre, something will have to be done to show the people in the locality that tobacco can be produced at a cheaper rate. I have pointed out on many occasions that the Government will have to provide financial assistance to enable the tobacco-growers to investigate these matters for

themselves. The secret of their success lies in a reduction in the cost of production, and this can be achieved only by scientific investigation on the part of the farmers, seeing that it is not being done by the Government. Much has been said by the present Government about the actions of the Federal Government, and this is a question to be considered by the Federal Government and one over which this Parliament has no control.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have already told the hon. member that he cannot reply to speeches made on a previous debate. He must confine his remarks to the question before the Committee.

Mr. KENNY: Many people are under the impression that the difficulty will be overcome by an alteration in the Customs duty, but a greater factor is a reduction in the cost of production, the elimination of inferior leaf, and greater production of high-class leaf per acre, and this can be secured only by the expenditure of a large amount of money on scientific investigation. That money is not being provided in these Estimates. The work will have to be carried out by the farmer. No alteration of duty will assist the farmer to obtain a profitable price unless he is able to place an acceptable leaf on the market. North Queensland can grow good tobacco, and I regret that the Secretary for Public Works should have said otherwise.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I did not say that.

At 9.55 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN: Under the provisions of the Sessional Orders agreed to by the House on 16th August and 18th October last, I shall now leave the chair, and make my report to the House.

The House resumed.

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

Resumption of Committee made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

The House adjourned at 9.56 p.m.