

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 31 OCTOBER 1934**

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WEDNESDAY, 31 OCTOBER, 1934.

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

QUESTIONS.

UNFORESEEN EXPENDITURE, PUBLIC SERVICE SUPERANNUATION BOARD.

Mr. WALKER (*Cooroora*) asked the Premier—

“What is the reason for the large amount of unforeseen expenditure by the Public Service Superannuation Board in 1933-34?”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. P. Pease, *Herbert*), for the PREMIER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, *Mackay*), replied—

“(i.) Interest payments on contributions of certain retired officers, £928 15s. 3d.

“As it is in the discretion of certain aged-seventy contributors to take annuities or withdraw from the fund, it is impossible to estimate with any degree of accuracy what amount will be required annually for the payment of interest.

“(ii.) Actuary's fees and out-of-pocket expenses in connection with the recent quinquennial valuation of the public service superannuation fund, £735 1s. 8d.”

ROADS MAINTENANCE EXPENDITURE, 1929-1934.

Mr. WALKER (*Cooroora*) asked the Secretary for Public Works—

“What has been the expenditure on maintenance of roads under the control of the Main Roads Commission in each of the past five financial years—(a) Apportioned to the State; (b) apportioned to local authorities?”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. A. Bruce, *The Tableland*) replied—

Year.	Total.	Apportioned to the State.	Apportioned to Local Authorities.	
			£	s. d.
1929-1930 .. .. .	188,965 17 0	116,348 18 4	72,617	18 8
1930-1931 .. .. .	135,934 19 5	78,577 14 3	57,357	5 2
1931-1932 .. .. .	145,953 19 11	84,402 12 4	61,551	7 7
1932-1933 .. .. .	123,841 1 11	74,314 15 11	49,526	6 0
1933-1934 .. .. .	157,763 11 1	102,789 12 6	54,973	18 7

PAPER.

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

Forty-ninth report of the Registrar of Friendly Societies, Building Societies, and Industrial and Provident Societies.

SUPPLY.

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

ILLNESS OF CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Hanson, is unfortunately still

indisposed and is unable to attend the House. In his absence, therefore, I shall ask the hon. member for Ipswich, one of the Temporary Chairmen, to take the chair in Committee.

(*Mr. Gladson, Ipswich, in the chair.*)

ESTIMATES IN CHIEF, 1934-35.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

CHIEF OFFICE.

Question stated—

“That £64,635 be granted for ‘Department of Agriculture—Chief Office.’”

Mr. LARCOMBE (*Rockhampton*) [10.38 a.m.]: The Rockhampton electorate, which I represent, is in the heart of a very rich agricultural and dairying district as well as being an outlet for the important stock wealth of Central Queensland. For many years, too, I had the pleasure of representing the Keppel electorate, which is partly agricultural, partly dairying, and partly grazing, and I have always taken a keen interest in the primary industries in that district. I join with hon. members in proclaiming the importance of agriculture in this State. That is what may be called a truism: it is a truism. The importance of agriculture cannot be over-estimated and, as members of this Parliament, we know that statesmen, economists, and philosophers have joined in stressing its importance and in emphasising the value of men on the land. In one of his poems Essex Evans writes—

“ There's music in the axe's ring  
Swung by a strong right hand;  
The men that make the nation  
Are the men upon the land.”

We agree with that philosophy, thus poetically stated, and we as a party and a Government have translated it into practical effect. We can claim without exaggeration that we as a Labour Party and as a Labour Government have laid down the foundation of a sound and sane agricultural scheme and policy. Recently, Mr. J. E. Harding, one of the rural leaders outside of Parliament, speaking in the Central district concerning the Primary Producers' Organisation Act and similar Acts, said it would be a tragedy if this legislation were repealed. He expressed the fear that there was a move on hand by certain vested interests to bring about the repeal or the mutilation of that important legislation. That is an expression of opinion from a rural leader who is not associated with the Labour Party, for we know that Mr. Harding ran as a Senate candidate at the last Federal elections in the interests of the Douglas Credit Party. It is a very simple matter to assert that Labour is hostile to the man on the land; it is impossible to prove it. It is well known that during the regime of the Labour Government between 1915 and 1929 the amount of wealth production reached a record in this State—£730,030,030 worth of wealth was produced in Queensland in fourteen years under a Labour Government. Where can a similar record be shown or one that can in any way approximate it.

Mr. SPARKES: How much of that did your Government produce?

Mr. LARCOMBE: I am not going to make such an absurd or ridiculous statement that this Government produced the wealth, but we provided the legislation, the protection and the encouragement responsible for that production of wealth. We were responsible for many aspects of that enormous increase in production. Under the Labour Government the number of dairymen and cultivators of the soil increased by 17,000 during a period of fourteen years, whereas in the other States of Australia there was a decline in the number of people engaged in these occupations. If hon. members opposite would read the “Producers' Review” and the “Queensland Producer,” and their comments in 1929 just after the Labour Government were defeated, they would find

[*Mr. Larcombe.*

that the non-Labour journals to which I have referred paid a high tribute to the agricultural leadership and policy—

Mr. MOORE: Non-Labour?

Mr. SPARKES: They are the best advocates you have got.

Mr. LARCOMBE: Of course, they are the best advocates, from a non-party point of view. They realise that the Labour Party approximates nearer to a farmers' party than any other party in this State. (Opposition laughter.) They realise, too, that the best aid to progress and development, including agricultural development, is to be had from the Labour Party and a Labour Government. They criticise Labour, as they criticise hon. members opposite. We know that these papers are warm in their eulogy of Labour legislation and administration so far as land settlement is concerned, and were especially so when Labour was leaving office in 1929. We know that they have been just as severe in their criticism of Labour as they have been in their criticism of other parties in this State. Therefore, in stressing the importance of agriculture to the State I am justified in stressing also the close attention Labour has paid to its progress and advancement. The late Dr. Johnson said that if we estimated dignity by immediate usefulness then agriculture was the first and noblest science. Hon. members opposite will agree with that tribute paid by a great authority to agriculture. Dr. Johnson was not an agriculturist. One does not need to be on the land to appreciate the importance of agriculture and land settlement. It is an aspect of political economy that appeals to everybody, and not merely those on the land. The people in the cities realise the importance of agricultural problems just as much as hon. members who come from farming constituencies. Hon. members opposite claim a monopoly in the safeguarding of the interests of the man on the land, but they have not dealt on these Estimates with some of the real problems troubling the man on the land, which have been referred to by our rural leaders.

Mr. CLAYTON: One of those problems is the increased freights charged by your Government.

Mr. LARCOMBE: To-day I intend to refer to a few of those handicaps to agriculture and to the man on the land. First of all, I desire to refer to the problem of high shipping freights. Hon. members opposite have a lot to say about railway freights. There is this important factor to be borne in mind: the Railway Department is carrying fertiliser on the railways from the New South Wales border to Cairns at the rate of one farthing per ton per mile. Where does any shipping company offer such rates of freight to a man on the land? The Railway Department and the Government are not making great profits out of the man on the land. The money received by the Railway Department is not in excess of that required in order to carry the produce. Whilst hon. members opposite refer to the freights charged by our railways they are blind to the enormous profits made by the shipping ring throughout Australia. That is one of the problems that hon. members overlook.

Mr. NIMMO: They are not making profits.

Mr. LARCOMBE: Does the hon. member think that we are unaware of the methods adopted by these companies? Does he think that we know nothing of the watered stock

and bonus shares of these companies? The hon. member and his political party overlook some of the real difficulties of agriculture which have been emphasised by rural leaders outside of Parliament. Some of these problems are—

1. Extortionate shipping freights;
2. Taxation relief by the Federal Government, which has not been passed on to the working farmer;

For evidence of that fact I would refer hon. members to the "Telegraph" and "Courier-Mail" of March of the present year.

3. Tariff and excise reductions made by the Federal Government not passed on to the working farmer;

For evidence of that I refer hon. members opposite to the Rockhampton "Evening News," not a Government supporter of the present year.

4. The suggested limitation of the British market to the Queensland and Australian producer generally;

This is a serious problem and one which is likely to materialise to a dangerous extent in the near future, and yet hon. members do not discuss it.

5. The injurious effect of the policy of the Federal Government on Queensland agriculture and allied industries;

No reference is made to that factor by hon. members opposite, notwithstanding that they are quick to criticise the Labour Government and the policy of the Railway Department: they ignore the real problems of agriculture and land settlement.

6. The policy of the large financial institutions which is seriously prejudicing the man on the land.

All these points have been referred to recently by recognised leaders of agriculture, and publicity has been given to them by the anti-Labour press of this State. The Australian exporter pays over £10,000,000 annually in shipping freights. It can be seen, therefore, that this is a very important aspect of agriculture, a very important aspect of land settlement, and a very important aspect to the settler who is struggling under great difficulties.

Mr. NIMMO: Don't you think your industrial legislation has tended to make those high freights?

Mr. LARCOMBE: The hon. member for Oxley is entitled to his opinion in that respect and I have no objection to his voicing it, but at the present time I wish to refer to what I term the real problems. The point raised by the hon. member for Oxley is not a sound one. Results during a period of fourteen years proved that the Labour policy imposed no injury on the man on the land. (Opposition dissent.) Salaries and wages were greater, purchasing power was greater, exports were greater, Savings Bank returns were greater, and side by side with the progress of the industrial workers in the city there were progress and development in the country also. Satisfactory price levels are essential for the man on the land, and there is no real antagonism between our industrial policy and the interests of the producers.

Mr. MAHER: What about the last two years of Labour policy?

Mr. LARCOMBE: I shall gratify the wish of the hon. member for West Moreton A

clipping that I have in my hand from the "Courier-Mail" of 29th August, 1933, dealing with fruit freights, reads—

"UNFAIR ATTITUDE.

"*Growers' Appeal.*

"Allegations that the shipowners were unfair and high-handed in their attitude towards the fruit exporters were made to the Prime Minister, Mr. J. A. Lyons, to-day."

The deputation appealed to the Prime Minister and stressed the point I have mentioned, showing that the complaint is not a party political one, but is genuine and widespread, and that the producer in his own interests is compelled to protest against the unfair fruit freights that are charged. The Director of Fruit Marketing, Mr. Ranger, in a statement to the press published in August of last year pointed out that of 6s. 10d., which was estimated to be the average market price of a case of apples shipped to England, 4s. 1½d. went in freight, and that with the deduction of other charges actually resulted in many cases in a loss to the producers. He gave one instance where 5,000 cases of apples were exported and the freight was so outrageously high that the grower was called upon to pay £300 to meet a deficiency in the proceeds of his consignment. Here is one of the real problems we have to face. It is idle to talk about wages and salaries and the industrial policy of the Labour Party being responsible for any handicap suffered by the man on the land. Let us face the question of shipping freights. If we do that we shall then be focusing public attention upon a very vital handicap of the producer, and there may be some prospect of relieving him of the impost.

Mr. NICKLIN: What action would you suggest to reduce oversea freights?

Mr. LARCOMBE: We know what action Labour did take. Labour was responsible for the establishment of the Commonwealth shipping line. Those ships certainly showed losses in a time of difficulty, but as responsible leaders of the producers and others have frequently stated, it was a tragedy that those ships were sold, that the losses incurred by those ships were nothing compared with the enormous increase in freights that were made as a result of the abolition of competition. The farmers of Australia have paid through the nose because of the selling of that line, and the producers have been handed over again to the interests of monopoly.

Passing on from the fruit industry to the meat industry, we find the same complaint. On the 2nd June last, according to the daily "Telegraph," Mr. J. W. Allen, General Secretary of the Graziers' Association of New South Wales, complained bitterly concerning the freights on chilled beef. The newspaper extract reads—

"IMPOSSIBLE RATES.

"*Freight on Chilled Beef.*

"There is not the slightest doubt, the rates on chilled beef are much too high, particularly when endeavours are being made to increase this freight. As a matter of fact, the rates are such as to make it practically impossible for chilled beef to be exported on a commercial basis."

That is the statement of a leader of the grazing industry in Australia pointing out

*Mr. Larcombe.]*

how the chilled beef trade, which we are hoping to expand, is suffering severely as a result of high freight charges. Hon. members opposite ask by interjection what I would do. I pointed out what a Labour Government did, and I would point out further that if they would take up this matter with the Commonwealth Government, and if hon. members opposite would insist in and out of season that the Commonwealth Government should take action, a reduction in those extortionate freights would be brought about. But while hon. members opposite confine their outlook and their criticism to the Labour Government there is no hope of relieving the farmers of the real burdens that are pressing upon them.

With regard to the question of restriction of exports, a proposal that has been put forward seriously by vested interests, no doubt in a few months' time we shall find restrictive action being taken in connection with our chilled beef trade, as a result of which Australia will suffer. Now is the time for the leaders of the rural movement to take a definite stand and register emphatically their protest against the restriction of exports, which involves in turn a restriction of production. We do not challenge the right of the English farmer to cultivate for his own market; we do not attempt to dictate the policy of the United Kingdom; but we do say that Dominion exports should not be restricted whilst exports are pouring in from foreign countries. If hon. members will take up Federal "Hansard" of the present year, and read a speech made by Senator Elliott, they will find a complaint based on the same grounds. Senator Elliott asked the Minister in charge of the Senate if it were not a fact that the imports of certain foreign goods into England were increasing, and if that was a fact whether action would be taken by the Federal Government in an endeavour to limit foreign exports? The Minister in charge in the Senate replied that, so far as wheat particularly was concerned, there had been an increase of 45 per cent. in the imports of wheat from foreign countries during the first three months of the present financial year, as compared with the corresponding period for 1935. Yet hon. members opposite sit silent. They realise the danger, but "My party, right or wrong" is their motto. They will not criticise the actions of the Federal Government because that criticism may react against their own party. There is a time when all should be for the nation and none for the party. Let us protest now against this move, which is going to seriously react against the Queensland producer and the Australian producer as a whole. Half our public indebtedness is payable in London, and can be met only by exports of our goods, and how is Australia going to meet her interest bill in London if this sinister move to limit the amount of Australian exports is to be enforced? We should let our views be known to Mr. Malcolm Macdonald, who is representing the Imperial Government in this country. We told him in Rockhampton, we should tell every Government representative here and on the other side of the world that we are definitely against this policy of restriction of exports.

[Mr. Lacombe.

Another aspect of this important question lies in the fact that Queensland and Australia are part of the British Empire. If the Empire is to be strong in times of war it should be built up in times of peace. Yet we find that men who wave flags and roar "Empire" sit silent whilst exports are pouring into Great Britain from foreign countries in increasing quantities to the detriment of their own Australian producers, many of whom are returned soldiers. We want the rural leaders in Parliament to do what the rural leaders outside are doing, and to submit to Mr. Macdonald and other Government representatives our objection to this odious form of restriction, which is going to react against the Queensland producer.

Passing on to the question of the Federal Government's responsibility for the farmer's position in Queensland, I should like to mention this other aspect that hon. members opposite continually overlook. Hon. members will recollect that last year I moved a resolution of protest against the action of the Federal Government in relation to our Queensland primary industries. Hon. members opposite asserted that my action was party political propaganda. The Prime Minister said, in reply, that the resolution of protest carried by this Chamber was an exaggeration. But what happened? On the eve of the Federal election the Federal Government admitted the force and cogency of the resolution passed by this Parliament, and varied their policy. There was a modification of their rural policy on the eve of the Federal elections in relation to Queensland. That was an admission that the motion carried by this Parliament had force and weight and was not party political propaganda. The Federal Government admitted by their action that the motion passed by this Chamber was well timed and well framed.

In regard to the sugar industry, we know the producers of this State are losing £1,500,000 annually as a result of the policy of the Federal Government. We should never let up on that complaint. We should never allow the Federal Government, colloquially speaking, to get away with that robbery of our sugar industry. One and a-quarter million pounds withdrawn annually from the industry in this State at a time when our financial difficulties are great and when we are struggling desperately to balance our Budget or reduce the deficit the State was showing when we came into power! Yet the Federal Government enforced at the point of the political pistol an untimely review of the sugar agreement, and alter it in the way I have mentioned!

The action of the Federal Government extended also to the cotton industry. As a result of that action we find there was a serious decline in the production of cotton. The figures are as follows:—

1931-32	...	...	15,244,000 lb.
1932-33	...	...	6,270,000 lb.

In 1933-34 there has been a recovery, partly because a stable Labour Government was returned to power in Queensland and gave the industry much needed assistance. Still we are not out of the wood. We are placed in great danger. The cotton lint imported into Australia in 1930-31 was 370,800 lb., and in 1932-33 it had gone up to 3,820,000 lb.

We see, therefore, a serious increase in the importation of cotton as a result of the tariff policy of the Federal Government.

In regard to other primary industries also we find the same sorry story told by statistics. We find that the tobacco grower, as well as the cotton and sugar growers, has been suffering under this limited and short-sighted policy of the Federal Government. With regard to peanuts, we find the same melancholy story. In 1930-31 only 24,000 lb. of peanuts were imported into the Commonwealth. In 1933-34 the imports had increased to 3,712,000 lb. That increase has occurred during a few years owing to the changed Federal fiscal policy of the Lyons Administration.

Mr. RUSSELL interjected.

Mr. LARCOMBE: I have here the statement of the chairman of the Peanut Board. In his opinion the industry has received a knock from which it would be hard to recover, and he severely castigated the Federal Government on the eve of the Federal election for the dangerous policy of that Administration in regard to peanuts. The heading is "Poor Return."

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

Mr. RUSSELL (*Hamilton*) [11.2 a.m.]: I do not pose as an agricultural expert, but I cannot allow some of the statements made by the hon. member for Rockhampton to go unchallenged. It is habitual for him to pose as the farmer's friend and to abuse the Lyons Government for, as he says, having perpetrated various kinds of injustices against the primary producers of this State. We know the Scullin Government some years ago introduced a very high tariff. In the interests of various industries throughout Australia they imposed high import duties. There has been a great outcry in the South and while we, in Queensland, naturally desired that our own primary industries should receive the greatest protection possible we must, at any rate, grant this fact in favour of the Federal Government—that they are governing the whole of Australia. There are many interests opposed to this protection, which particularly favours Queensland industries. While it is quite popular for Labour members here to declaim against the Lyons Government in regard to industries that are specially Queensland's, we must remember that there is a big section of the people in the South—including a big section of Labour people themselves—who are very antagonistic to Queensland because they allege we have received undue protection. I am not at all backward in asking for the greatest protection possible for Queensland's primary industries, but it must be borne in mind that there are two sides to the question.

The hon. member just now mentioned peanuts. If he will turn to the happenings for the year 1933-34 he will find that the importations of peanuts took place with the consent of the Peanut Board to a limited extent. The protection afforded on whole peanuts is 4d. a lb., and on kernels 6d. a lb., and in the hon. member's own electorate of Rockhampton he will find the peanut growers are absolutely satisfied with the protection they are to-day receiving.

Mr. LARCOMBE: They are not.

Mr. RUSSELL: I know better.

Mr. LARCOMBE: I know better.

Mr. RUSSELL: I am not going to allow the hon. member to get away with the statement that the Lyons Government are the greatest adherents to a policy of restriction. We know that in the past not only he but also other members on the Government side have endeavoured to fasten on the Lyons Government a policy of restriction of exports to Great Britain. That is absolutely without foundation. We remember that Mr. S. M. Bruce revisited Australia and warned us as to the trend of British policy. What he told us then is quite true, because already restrictions have been imposed on the importations of frozen beef from Argentina. The fear was that restriction might also be imposed on Australian beef. We know that as a result of British policy a subsidy has been granted to the local beef producers to enable them to compete with the large importations of chilled beef, mostly from the Argentina. Australia is only on the verge of things in connection with the chilled beef trade, and there is no suggestion whatever of restrictions being placed on Australian chilled beef. At the same time I quite admit that we should be foolish indeed if we were to neglect to take into consideration the effect of restriction on our exports. There is no doubt that underlying the whole trend of British policy is the idea of restriction. We have to combat that, and I deny that the Lyons Government are advocates of restriction. I also deny that the Labour Government in Queensland were the first to lead the opposition against the policy of restriction. Every section of the people in Australia to-day is against a policy of restriction, and no one party can claim any credit for it. The whole of the people of Australia are well advised to oppose it, because we know very well that if restrictions are placed on our exports it will be disastrous to Australia. I say that every man who has the welfare of this country at heart must be against a policy of restriction. It is idle for the Labour Government to pose as the people who led the opposition against restriction. Every State in the Commonwealth is against restriction.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Were they before Mr. Bruce made his visit to Australia?

Mr. RUSSELL: Yes.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

Mr. RUSSELL: The Minister knows that every statement issued on the subject was against a policy of restriction. But, no matter what we say, we shall have to prepare our case, because it is impossible for Great Britain to absorb the enormous quantity of primary produce now going on to that market.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: What caused the Country Party to refuse to go in with the Lyons Government in the Federal arena?

Mr. RUSSELL: What has that got to do with the subject? I admit that we in Australia must frame a policy in regard to our exports. As I said recently, we have a good case. We have to meet our commitments, and we have to develop this country; and, what is more important than that, while there is an agitation in certain quarters in Great Britain for the imposition of restrictions on Dominion products as well as on foreign products, the sentiment in the old

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country is strongly in our favour so long as we are prepared to live up to our engagements.

There is a good deal of controversy over the Ottawa Agreement. The Australian manufacturer says, and the Labour Party says likewise, that the Ottawa Agreement was framed in the interests of British manufacturers. The British manufacturers say that the Ottawa policy was framed to keep them out of this country. Then again, the British producer says that he wants some protection against the Dominion producer, and the Dominion producer claims absolute preference in Great Britain. Between these conflicting ideas there must be some way out. We can get fair treatment in regard to our primary produce overseas provided we do not ask for everything and give nothing. We may enter the negotiations for this new agreement in a spirit of compromise, but we cannot expect to have everything our own way any more than we can concede to Great Britain the right to have everything that she wants. I rose to say that we absolutely refute the assertion that the Lyons Government were advocates of a policy of restriction.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR (*Enoggera*) [11.10 a.m.]: I am pleased to be able to congratulate the Secretary for Agriculture in asking for an increased appropriation for the Chief Office this year. It indicates that the department is fulfilling its duty in an efficient manner and that it is making for progress in this State.

One must bear in mind the recent remarks by the Under Secretary for the Dominions, Mr. Malcolm Macdonald, and one must not overlook the fact that no doubt that gentleman has visited this country with a view to ascertaining the position of our primary producers so that he may report to his Government should they find it necessary to impose further restriction upon imports in the interests of their own primary industries. Mr. Macdonald definitely stated that agricultural industries in England had declined because of the large importations of primary produce from the Dominions and foreign countries. We are faced with a very serious problem as regards our overseas markets. It must be recognised that every country in the world is developing its primary production and becoming not only self-contained but also a competitor in those countries where the primary industries are secondary to the manufacturing industries. It is a recognised fact that heavy manufacturing countries are our best markets for our surplus primary products.

We have reached an interesting stage as a result of the Ottawa Agreement. The Ottawa Agreement was very necessary. A review of the discussions which took place in the Canadian Parliament twelve months prior to the Ottawa Agreement indicates that the Canadian people at that time were not satisfied with the deal they were getting for their primary produce in Britain, and were considering linking up with the United States of America.

Mr. J. G. BAYLEY: Never.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: Discussions were taking place on the question, and press comments clearly indicated that the thoughts of the Canadian people were seriously running in that direction. It must be borne in mind that in addition to the British stock in

Canada there is a huge French-Canadian population. At the same time discussions were taking place at the primary producing conferences in this State, such as the local producers' associations, which forced the British Government to the conclusion that a conference of the Dominions was necessary to discuss primary production and the quota of primary imports into the United Kingdom. The British Government recognised that that method was the only one to stop such discussions, particularly in Canada, and decided that a conference should be held at Ottawa.

Allied with this question is another one concerning the investments of the British investor in primary industries in foreign countries. At the conference with Mr. Malcolm Macdonald, Under Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, which was held in this Chamber on Monday afternoon last, I asked a question which had greater bearing on the issue than hon. members conceded. It related to the manner in which the pressure from investors in Argentina was going to be taken by the British Government when it became a question of their investments as against the investments by another section of the British community in the primary producing interests in Australia. Hon. members are cognisant of the fact that millions of pounds of British money are invested in our wool industry. In fact, half the stations in this State are controlled by overseas institutions, such as Goldsbrough, Mort, and Company, and Dalgety and Company. When we realise that half of the land in this State on which wool is grown is controlled by investors in Britain, we get down to the basis of control.

Mr. SPARKES: Do you object to the British investor?

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: No, I do not. But I desire to point out that another section of British investors have more money invested in foreign countries, and that their interests must be considered when it comes to a question of the importation of primary produce from this country. That is the reason for my contention that we have a pretty tough fight ahead of us to find a market for the surplus of our primary products which is ever on the increase. We are fortunate in so far as we do not suffer from the extraordinarily hard seasons that confront primary producers in Canada. It has been proved that Queensland can produce the best butter in the world. Quite recently in England a factory in the Kingaroy district secured the highest possible award for butter imported from the Dominions. That goes to show that we can offer the British consumer the finest article the world can produce. Therefore, we should be treated differently from the producer in Argentina and other countries. That is one of the problems which not only this Parliament but every other Parliament in Australia and the representatives of the primary producers must solve. If the British Government desire the Dominions to remain as an integral part of the British Commonwealth of Nations then we should have first call on her markets for our primary produce. We gave our manhood of the first quality in the defence of the Empire, and in doing so paid a price that is one of the chief causes of the great burden of taxation from which we are suffering. After all, why

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do we want to worry so much about Argentina, a country whose primary production is carried on with cheap black labour? If we believe in the predominance of the British race, surely to goodness we can demand a predominance for British peoples engaged in primary production for the home markets? That is what we want.

Two questions are agitating the minds of all Australian Governments and of the British Government: How best can we retain the prestige that we enjoyed in the past, and how can we deal with the huge problem of unemployment? The Under Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs is giving this country the "once over" with a view to settling in the future some of England's surplus population on Australian land if it can possibly be done. That is the objective, not because Britain likes to do it—she does not want to get rid of any population unless that population is becoming a menace to the country—but undoubtedly the unemployed population of Britain is growing daily. The British Government recognise that if by the judicious expenditure of a few million pounds they can place some of their unemployed on land settlement in the Dominions they will not only assist the Dominions to provide an asset to the country, but in the event of the Empire being tackled in the Pacific will give them a population that would, perhaps, be able to handle the local situation. The only backbone in regard to that question is the primary-producing industries. No research is required to convince anyone that the main necessity of the primary industries is markets. We have almost reached a stage when the primary producers will have to be provided for in much the same way as suburban dwellers are assisted with transport facilities. In other words, a market must be provided before primary production can be increased. The fact that every country in the world is working along the same lines creates the problem. So long as we carry a large number of unemployed industrial workers, so long will a portion of the market of the primary producers be of no value. Our problem then is to get our men back into work. If the quarter of a million unemployed in Australia were an actual instead of merely a potential market for the primary produce of this country the surplus of primary production would be reduced, although increased land settlement might take place.

Mr. NIMMO: You heard Mr. Macdonald telling you that your policy was wrong.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: He did not say anything of the kind. I think it was in answer to the hon. member for West Moreton that Mr. Macdonald said that the British Government had introduced a system of tariffs which protected the industries in the old country to the extent that more unemployed were placed in work and a better market created for the primary producers.

Mr. KENNY: He also told you that the Labour policy in Great Britain was restriction.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: Mr. Macdonald also told the hon. member for West Moreton that the only solution of the difficulty was to get the unemployed into work, which he emphasised was the major problem of the British Government.

Mr. ANNAND: You are speaking about a confidential meeting which took place on

Monday, and you are attempting to get confidential information into "Hansard."

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: The attitude of the hon. member is that he can discuss it, but no one else can.

Let us deal with the woollen industry, which we know is one of our greatest primary industries. We find a desire on the part of certain importers to foster a trade in this country for cheap goods that are manufactured out of wood pulp. The people of this country should recognise that every time they purchase material made from wood pulp they are doing a good turn, not to their own people in this country, but to the Norwegian, Russian, and American peoples. With the aid of science we are able to make a finer woollen article than has been produced during the history of manufactured woollen goods. The controllers of our emporiums could at least afford the people the opportunity of purchasing these goods at a fair price, therefore enabling more sales to be effected than is the case when these goods are sold at the present prices in competition with rayon and other materials made out of wood pulp. The greatest obstacle confronting the woollen industry is the increasing production of synthetic goods, as a result of the application of science to industry. The purchase of cheap goods made from wood pulp and artificial silk is detrimental to our home industry. The importation of cheap foreign-made goods is a very unwise policy, because when one has to send money to other countries for goods they cannot be regarded as cheap.

Mr. SPARKES: You do not send your money out. You send goods out and they take yours in return.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: How much goods do the United States of America take from us? Has the hon. gentleman any idea of the figures relating to the trade between this country and the United States of America?

Mr. SPARKES: I have a big idea of the trade balance between this country and Japan, which is very much in our favour.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: Japan is, perhaps, the only country of which that can be said.

Mr. SPARKES: England, too.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: What we are prepared to sacrifice to-day will be to our benefit to-morrow. It would be much better for this country if we took the advice of the Under Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs and attended to the matter of our tariffs. If England, which was traditionally a freetrade country, was forced into the position of adopting a tariff preferential system, surely we can do the same!

I should also like to make a few remarks concerning the attitude of the Department of Agriculture in regard to milk production.

Mr. NIMMO: Isn't the Bill coming forward?

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: It will probably be just as forward as the hon. member himself. The question of a pure milk supply for the city of Brisbane deserves immediate consideration. The infantile mortality rate in Queensland is higher than it is in any other State in Australia. The reason for that regrettable condition is that the milk supply here is not controlled. The Department of Agriculture has inspectors and the Health

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Department also has inspectors, but owing to the archaic distribution system—

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Do you want more inspectors?

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: It does not require more inspectors. All that is necessary is a proper system of control. I am of the opinion that the cities of Sydney, Adelaide, Melbourne, and Perth would not have such a low infantile death rate were it not for the fact that they have controlled milk supplies. When their children were fed on pure milk, and not on milk taken from diseased cows, the infantile mortality rate was lowered. Our infantile mortality rate has not increased but the infantile mortality rates of other cities have been lowered, owing to the institution of pure milk supplies.

Mr. ANNAND: The people cannot afford to buy milk.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: The hon. member does not know what he is talking about. Milk is cheaper to-day than it has been for years. It is too cheap for the dairymen to be able to produce it profitably. When one can go out to a farm and buy milk from 5d. to 6d. a gallon, and when it is sold in the city for 4d. and 5d. a quart, it shows there is something radically wrong with the system.

Mr. ANNAND: They cannot afford to buy it to-day.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: Milk can be bought as cheaply as you like. The hon. member should recognise the fact that "Cheap goods are no good." That is the slogan the Australian people should adopt. Cheap goods make cheap people. Cheap people are of no value to a community, a nation, or anything else. The dairying industry, particularly in and around the Brisbane area, will in the very near future be able to congratulate this Government on having done it some good by the passage of a Bill through Parliament. I am living in hopes that the hon. member will be able to support it in the very near future. After that Bill becomes law the infantile mortality rate of the city will be reduced, and the milk producers will receive the right price for their milk supplied to the city of Brisbane.

Mr. SPARKES (*Dully*) [11.31 a.m.]: It is pleasing to find that the hon. member for Enoggera is departing from the policy of the Labour Party in regard to increasing the population of the country. A million or more people in Australia would be a great benefit to the Commonwealth, but that is not the general opinion of members of the Labour Party.

The question of restriction has been thrashed threadbare, but, irrespective of what the hon. member has told us, I think that if we were prepared to trade with England there would never be any mention of restriction. We have set up around us certain restrictive tariffs against the people in England who are able to manufacture certain goods. They have retaliated by asking that some method of restriction be imposed in their favour. In this country we have the conditions which enable us to produce the raw material, but England has the conditions whereby this raw material can be manufactured. The fact of the matter is that we in Australia to-day want to have the trade all one way.

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I rose to reply to the hon. member for Rockhampton in regard to high freights. I agree with him as to shipping freights. I should like to inform him, especially as he at one time was Secretary for Railways, that the railway freights on our cattle play a very important part in our charges long before they reach the ship's holds. Here is an instance. For 23 bullocks and 210 cows consigned from Kajabbi, North Queensland, to a Northern meatworks, the owner received £1 3s. 3d. a head and the Railway Department received £1 2s. 9d. There is the point. How in the name of Heaven is he going to send his cattle to the other side of the world and make his business pay? The hon. member criticised shipping freights, but he could do something as regards the lowering of railway charges. He cannot do very much regarding shipping. A return of £1 8s. 3d. to the grower for each beast and a return of £1 2s. 9d. to the Railway Department for conveying that beast to the works is a complete answer to the assertion of the hon. member that railway freights are not high.

Mr. NIMMO (*Oxley*) [11.35 a.m.]: I desire to say that so far as I am concerned the Department of Agriculture and Stock is fulfilling good work, but the policy of the Labour Administration in connection with the man on the land is practically ruinous to him. The hon. member for Rockhampton this morning dealt with shipping freights. We know that there was a time when there was much talk on the freight on wool from the Central district of Queensland to Brisbane. It was alleged that the Railway Department, by a system of tapering rates, favoured Brisbane, as against nearer ports. The Rockhampton people did their best to stop it, in order that the shipping people might load the wool here and carry to Brisbane. This showed that under fair conditions shipping freights are very much less than are railway freights notwithstanding the criticism of the hon. member. We would have very much cheaper freights in Queensland if it were not for the industrial legislation passed by the Labour Party, which is responsible, in some cases, for imposing impossible conditions on the shipping companies, and naturally is reflected in the freights charged. The two shipping companies—the Adelaide Steamship Company and the Howard Smith Company—have to pay income tax on their business in Queensland, and the rate imposed by this Government is terrifically high. This has to be paid directly by the shipping companies and indirectly by the primary producers. The primary producers making use of the ships thus have to pay indirectly the income tax charges levied by the Government.

The hon. member also said that the policy of the big financial institutions was harassing the men on the land, but has he forgotten that when the depression was experienced in this country the big financial institutions reduced their interest rates almost immediately? They were down to 4 per cent. whilst the Government were still charging the primary producers 5 per cent. and 6 per cent. through the Agricultural Bank. It was not until the hon. member for Cook gave notice of a motion dealing with interest rates charged by the Agricultural Bank that the Government were forced to reduce their interest charges, and even then they gave way unwillingly and stipulated that the farmers should not enjoy any reduction until

1st January, 1935. The big financial institutions reduced their interest rates over twelve and eighteen months ago.

It is true that overseas shipping freights are high, but the policy of the Federal Labour Government contributed in part to this. When the Scullin Government were in power in the Federal arena and Mr. Forde was Minister for Trade and Customs, a high tariff was imposed. Any industry that can function in this country on an economic basis is entitled to every protection, but we should not seek to bestow an over-generous measure of protection upon an industry that gives no indication of becoming an economic success. During the time that Mr. Forde was Minister for Trade and Customs the importation of plate glass from Belgium was prohibited.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the vote under discussion.

Mr. NIMMO: The action of the Federal Government was responsible for one-way over-sea traffic, and I contend that that aspect of our commercial activities can be discussed under this vote. That is one reason why the shipping companies had to impose higher over-sea freight rates.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I would remind the hon. member that the Committee is dealing with the vote for the Chief Office, Department of Agriculture and Stock. It permits of a very wide scope for discussion in dealing with primary products, but glass is not one of them.

Mr. NIMMO: It is one of the articles that can be exchanged for primary produce from this country, and in that way the primary producer could be assisted. The over-sea shipping companies were compelled to charge higher rates, because under the tariff policy laid down by the Federal Labour Government they had to visit this country with their hulls practically empty in order to secure the loading from this country for other parts of the world. One of our greatest troubles is that we have gone mad on economic nationalism in this country, and our primary producers are suffering.

I was glad to hear the hon. member for Enoggera inform the Committee that the Government contemplated the introduction of a Milk Bill this session. I congratulate the Department of Agriculture upon bringing that Bill forward, but I hope that a monopoly will not be created. We have long looked for such a Bill, and I hope that it will contain no objectionable features.

Mr. CONROY (*Maranoa*) [11.40 a.m.]: We all appreciate the importance of agriculture and the wonderful work that is being carried out by the department. It is freely admitted that the man on the land has many problems to deal with, and probably the most important one that cannot be avoided is that of dry seasons. Another matter that causes him serious concern is the low price level for primary produce. Another is the lack of markets. I have no desire to enter into the controversy concerning restriction of primary production. I had an opportunity of hearing the remarks of the Under Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, Mr. Macdonald, delivered in this Chamber a few days ago in connection with this matter. Wool commands an international market, but for the rest of our primary products we must rely upon the market in the United Kingdom.

A short time ago a delegation was sent by the present Government to the East with the object of ascertaining what likelihood there was of an increase in our markets in that part of the world. I read the report furnished by the delegation on its return, and I regret to say that there does not seem to be much prospect of this State's increasing its business there. The report, amongst other things, stated—

“Little prospect of early substantial increase of Queensland commodities. There were possibilities of extended trade in hardwood, leather, raw cotton, fresh fruit, dried meat, and fish products.

“Development must be limited, and must face keen competition and low prices.”

Our trade with Eastern countries is not large and is confined to foodstuffs. One of the troubles confronting an extension of our trade with Eastern countries is the low wages that exist there as compared with the wages paid in this State, and the consequent low purchasing power of Eastern peoples.

One or two hon. members have discussed the danger to our dairying industry from the competition of margarine. Apparently in other States, more particularly in Victoria, margarine is becoming a very big menace to the dairying industry. It has been found necessary in Victoria to introduce amending legislation dealing with its manufacture. I do not think there is anything like the amount of competition at the present time in Queensland between margarine and butter as there is in other States, but there is no gainsaying the fact that this real danger will probably increase in the future. In Victoria that competition has become a very serious problem. The “Queensland Producer,” of 17th October last, in dealing with this question, *inter alia*, states—

“A spurious and deleterious food product was being foisted on the public as something that was as good as or better than butter. It was coloured to resemble that valuable product, and essences were added to give it a real butter flavour so that the deception would be perfect.”

The articles proceeds —

“The utmost vigilance is therefore necessary on the part of departmental inspectors, and those directly engaged in dairying, to prevent a continuance of the serious injury that has recently been inflicted on the great industry in which they are engaged.”

Therefore, the position appears to be that immediately the price of butter increases the manufacturers of margarine get busy and place a larger quantity of that product on the market. The manufacturers are now able to produce margarine which even experts have difficulty in detecting from butter. Dairying is too important an industry to permit it to suffer by competition from such an article as margarine. Margarine has its uses, but when it comes into competition with butter, and seriously harasses our great dairying industry, it is time Governments took some action. Thousands of people are engaged throughout Australia in the dairying industry, which is an important factor in our export trade, and helps Australia to meet her overseas commitments. It has been found necessary

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in Victoria to amend the previous legislation with respect to margarine. Quite recently a Bill was introduced making the following amendment to section 235 of the Health Act:—

"Margarine shall not be coloured in imitation of so as to resemble butter." Then, in addition, the following words were added to the section:—

"And no liquid or material (other than natural animal fat) of a yellow-coloured tint or hue shall be used in the process or the manufacture of margarine, nor shall any colouring substance or liquid or colouring process be used in such manufacture or in the preparation of margarine for sale or consumption which may create a resemblance in the colour thereof to the colour of butter."

That would mean that margarine would be a different colour, probably just the ordinary white colour, and no trouble would be experienced in distinguishing margarine from butter. As a result the public would not be imposed upon by having margarine thrust upon them in the belief that butter was being purchased.

I also desire to touch upon the question of the employment of boys on farms. I think it was the hon. member for Coorooora who stated that he had been informed that it was difficult to obtain boys for farm work at a wage of £1 a week and keep. The establishment of the farm training school at St. Lucia was useful not only as a means of training boys in farm work but also for experimental purposes, for its close proximity to the departmental officers in Brisbane made it of especial value in that connection. The following remarks in the Governor's Speech may be noted:—

"The establishment of the farm training school for boys at St. Lucia and the scheme for rural training of youths direct by the farmer, both of which were launched last year, cannot achieve their real objective unless the parents themselves assist the Government by encouraging their boys to seize the opportunity so afforded."

Thus, the first difficulty is to obtain boys for training. The matter is also referred to in the October issue of the "Economic News," which states—

"It is appropriate here to note the operations of the school farm at St. Lucia, conducted by the Department of Agriculture and Stock. To the 30th June last, ninety-four boys had been placed on farms after the preliminary training given at the school, and fifty-one were then in attendance. The boys learn general farm work, fodder conservation, and the like, and such things as land clearing, grubbing, and fencing on land away from the school. The only difficulty is to get enough boys."

When that farm training school was first established many parents considered that a good opportunity was afforded whereby their sons could receive training in general farm work and later on obtain employment on farms. That is a very good objective and was the spirit of the Government's intention in the establishment of this school, but after the boys have received tuition at that school and are placed on farms, the question arises

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as to what the farmer thinks should be paid to the boys and what the boys themselves think is a reasonable remuneration for the work they do. It must be remembered that many of these boys have practically reached the age when in the ordinary course of events they would be leaving home. Their ages probably range from seventeen to eighteen. They are, therefore, young men, and after they have received six months' tuition at St. Lucia they consider they are entitled to more wages than the amounts that are offered. If the information given to the hon. member for Coorooora was correct and the wages were £1 a week, I do not think there would be any trouble, but according to my information, in many instances the wages offered to these boys vary from 5s. to 10s. per week. There is not much hope for a young fellow if, after having served for six months at a training farm—and anybody who knows anything about farm work knows that it is not easy—he is able to earn only up to 10s. a week. Naturally he becomes dissatisfied. There is no outlook for him in the majority of cases. In some cases young men are enabled to take up land and become farmers. Some farmers are in a position to pay more wages than others, but the majority of farmers are not in a position to pay the wages which these lads are entitled to. A certain number of boys will settle down with the idea that in the near future they will be able to become farmers themselves, but a number of boys will not have the idea of eventually becoming farmers, and they will expect more wages than are offered. A few days ago a letter appeared in the "Courier-Mail" above the signature "A Parent," in which the lack of jobs for boys on farms at £1 a week was mentioned. The parent who wrote that letter definitely stated that that was not the case. I presume that parent had a son who had attended the St. Lucia training farm, and was dissatisfied with the amount of wages offered when he went out to a farm, because the letter stated that the wages offered varied from 5s. to 10s. a week. That supports my contention that difficulties will arise in the future in regard to wages. Farm work is very healthy and beneficial if all other conditions are equal. I do not contend that the farmer should be compelled to pay a higher wage than he can afford. I know numbers of farmers, and I am aware that under present conditions they cannot afford to pay a wage of £1 a week, and I believe that applies to the great majority of farmers in Queensland.

I hope that my prophecy in this matter will not be fulfilled. I hope that the St. Lucia training farm will prove to be entirely satisfactory, and that the boys who pass through this institution will find employment on farms on a basis which will cause them to be contented and the farmer to be satisfied.

At 12 noon.

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

Mr. CONROY: When the boy is discontented, and the farmer is dissatisfied, the lad naturally drifts back to the city. His tuition of six months is consequently practically wasted. I sincerely trust I am wrong, and something may eventually be done that will be beneficial not only to the boy who receives this tuition but also to the farmer by whom he is engaged.

Mr. LLEWELYN (*Toowoomba*) [12.1 p.m.]: During the discussion this morning a great deal of reference has been made to the effect of the Ottawa Agreement. My conception of the intention of the conference at Ottawa was that it was called for the specific object of coming to some arrangement whereby there would be reciprocity in trade between the Dominions and Great Britain. It is very doubtful whether, after a trial of twelve months, the conditions agreed upon have borne the fruit that it

was expected they would. In this connection I desire to quote from the current year's Federal "Hansard" the questions asked by Senator Elliott of the Minister representing the Minister for Commerce in the Senate—

"(1) Is it a fact that increased importations into the United Kingdom from foreign countries during the first three months of this year, as compared with the first three months of last year, amounted to—

	Three months, 1933.	Three months, 1934.	Increase.
Wheat, from .. .. .	7,003,120 cwt.	10,333,764 cwt.	47.5 per cent.
Wheatmeal and Flour, from ..	544,701 cwt.	827,180 cwt.	51.8 per cent.

This is during a limited period of eighteen months after the Ottawa Agreement had been arrived at.

Mr. SPARKES: You do not believe in the Ottawa Agreement?

Mr. LLEWELYN: I am not expressing my opinions on the matter. I am endeavouring to show to the Committee, if the hon. member is intelligent enough to grasp the point, the percentage of increase. The second question is—

"If so, do these figures not suggest opportunities for closer trading relations with Great Britain?"

Senator Sir Harry Lawson replied as follows to the first question, "Yes"; and to the second—

"The Dominions enjoy preferences in the United Kingdom of 2s. per quarter on wheat, and 10 per cent. ad valorem on the other items. Those preferences afford protection to Dominion exporters, but the trade is, of course, affected by other economic factors."

I am not in a position to make any comment as regards the economic factors referred to, but from indications it looks as though Russia will be a very serious competitor with the Australian dairymen.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Do you object to that?

Mr. LLEWELYN: Do I object to it? I desire that the Australian dairymen should be protected to the fullest possible extent.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I thought you believed in the brotherhood of man?

Mr. LLEWELYN: I do believe in the brotherhood of man, but I am afraid the hon. member for Murilla has a lot to learn in that regard. The point is that Russia borrows money from Germany and sends her products to England, much to the disgust of Germany, of course.

Mr. KENNY: She borrowed money from England and repudiated the debt long ago.

Mr. LLEWELYN: That is so, too. Hon. members opposite who claim to represent the farming community in this State should be alive to these issues and should insist that their political friends in the Commonwealth Parliament see to it that the interests of the dairymen are protected.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: The Commonwealth members of Parliament never stole the dairymen's butter as the Labour members of Parliament did.

Mr. LLEWELYN: The hon. member for Murilla, who is so accustomed to using the word "steal" in this Chamber—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member for Murilla to withdraw the word "stole."

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I did not refer to the hon. member for Toowoomba as the hon. member who stole it. This was some years ago.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member for Murilla to withdraw the word.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Some years ago the Labour Government did steal the farmers' butter, but I am not referring to this particular party.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to withdraw the word.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: If you ask me to withdraw it, I will withdraw it, but there is no reason why I should.

Mr. LLEWELYN: The view is freely expressed that the Ottawa Agreement was designed in the interests of the motherland rather than of the Dominions, but if the motherland was keenly alive to the best interests of the Dominions she would see that the Dominions, including Australia, got a fair share of any increased markets for primary products in the old country.

Mr. BARNES (*Warwick*) [12.10 p.m.]: I have still five minutes of my time available to me, and I desire to make the very best use of it in referring to the wheat industry of Queensland. To-day the representatives of 45,000 wheatgrowers in Australia meet to give consideration to the unreasonable conditions that have existed far too long in this industry, and I wish to impress upon the Minister—perhaps no emphasis is necessary—the need for his getting in touch with the movement directly or indirectly in order that Queensland may participate in any good that may come. Any Australian-wide policy must have some application to Queensland, but seeing that Queensland has in the past done more than any other State and more than any other country in the world to protect the wheatgrowing industry, it is well that we should be to the forefront again in any movement for the wellbeing and the development of the industry in this State. The farmers are sore because the industry has not been a profitable one. Many conditions are responsible for that condition of things. The main consideration is the fact

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that the world price for wheat has dropped as a result of very depressing influences. It is not because we are growing too much wheat in the world; but because it is well known that many people are practically starving. The reason is that there is no real general trade between country and country. The aim of Queensland should be an all-Australian price for wheat. The price to be fixed should be one that will give a reasonable return to the grower whilst at the same time not imposing a burden upon the bread consumer. Our policy should be to fix a price for home consumption. I understand that 50 per cent. of the wheat grown in Australia is consumed in Australia, and in these circumstances it would be wise to fix a minimum price for home consumption at 4s. 2d. a bushel on rail to the local miller. I also feel that we should be following a wise policy if in respect of our export surplus we laid down a minimum price of 2s. 6d. a bushel on rails. Therefore, putting the two together and dividing them we secure a price of 3s. 4d. a bushel, which could, and should, be paid to the wheat-grower. That is a minimum price. We have no right to strike a lower average price than 3s. 4d. I do not know whether the Minister is in accord with my views or not, but I do say that the time has arrived when we should give consideration to this aspect of the wheat question.

Nor are we helping ourselves by our crude way of managing the industry—that is to say, we are not utilising our own market to the extent which we should, and are unscrupulously placing embargoes on industry. Those embargoes arise out of the erroneous idea that Queensland possessed a geographical advantage. There is no such advantage. That is where the evil creeps in. We must face our competitors on an equal footing. It is an absurdity that towns and districts, particularly in the wheat belt, should be subjected to the extreme competition that is now taking place through having to pay 4d. a bushel over and above Queensland values for their wheat. Wheat is sold in Brisbane at 1½d. a bushel on Darling Harbour rates. In other words, 2½d. a bushel is charged to the miller on the Downs over and above what is charged to the miller in Brisbane. That is absurd, because competition is keener in the country. What is the result? It has brought about the closing down of milling operations in those towns for weeks at a time, because flour is imported into such places as Warwick and Goondiwindi at rates which the local miller cannot compete with.

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

Mr. FUNNELL (*Brisbane*) [12.14 p.m.]: I take this opportunity of congratulating the Minister and his officials for their splendid and untiring efforts in the interests of the man on the land. In the work they have performed, the department is second to no other department. They have given every attention and service to the agriculturist and man on the land. As a matter of fact, they have, more or less, made themselves slaves in order that that section of the community should receive the best advice and assistance it is possible to give.

It is my desire to refer to some legislation, passed by successive Labour Governments, to which hon. members opposite have referred.

[*Mr. Barnes.*

That legislation was passed in order that the agriculturist should be efficiently organised to lift him out of the rut he was in when Labour came into office. I can recall that in a few years, when the previous Labour Government were in power, £87,000 was spent from the public purse in organising the farmers in their own interests. The Primary Producers' Organisation Act was introduced by that Government. It was founded on a constitution adopted by the Australian Workers' Union for many years previously, and provided machinery to enable the farmers to organise their various industries on a sound basis. I cannot recall a case where similar financial assistance was given by any previous Government to assist in the organisation of any section of industrial workers. I claim that in that respect greater consideration has been shown by successive Labour Governments to the man on the land than has been shown to industrial workers. Had it not been for the legislation and administration of Labour Governments the farmers would not have been organised in their various industries, and they would not be receiving the reward of their labours to the extent they do to-day. Labour legislation has done more to help the man on the land than legislation passed by any other Government in this State. That fact is greatly appreciated by the majority of farmers, not only in this State but also in other States of the Commonwealth. The legislation passed in the interests of the farming community has been amended from time to time to meet the changing needs of the primary producers.

That assistance is given to the primary producers in other directions is disclosed in a statement which appeared in the "Courier-Mail" of 10th November, 1932, where it was stated that since 1920 assistance by the Commonwealth Government to various primary industries had totalled £11,651,367, and that, according to the annual report of the Commonwealth Auditor-General, the amount paid in the year 1931-32 was £3,877,090. Thus, hon. members will be able to see the extent to which the primary industries have been assisted by both the Commonwealth and State Governments.

I claim the time is not far distant when the city and industrial workers will not be able to continue to pay for primary products the high prices that they have been able to pay to date. Much of the benefit derived by the primary producer has been made possible by the city and industrial workers, who at all times provide the best market for agriculturists. That fact should be recognised by hon. members opposite when they make disparaging reference to city and industrial workers and complain that assistance is not given to primary producers. The matter should be viewed in the right perspective and credit given to the city and industrial workers who are carrying the additional expense that enables primary producers to be paid the present prices for their commodities. Were it not for the very satisfactory home market made possible by the city and industrial workers, the position of the agriculturists of this State would be much worse than it is.

I should like to refer the Committee to the fact that the sugar industry, one of our largest industries in the State, produces more than is necessary for home requirements, and naturally has to find a market overseas for its surplus production. The

latest information available shows that Queensland sugar is being sold overseas at approximately £9 a ton, whilst in the city of Brisbane, and even in the towns that are right in the heart of the sugar industry, the worker is paying 4d. a lb. Moreover, Queensland butter, which is being sold overseas at 65s. a cwt., is sold to the Queensland worker for 136s. a cwt. These are two instances to prove the extent to which the city and industrial workers provide the best market for the producers. Not only hon. members opposite, but also men engaged in farming industries, should realise how necessary it is for the purchasing power of the city and industrial workers to be increased, because that increased purchasing power will enable the farmer to sell his primary products at a price to which no objection will be taken by the city and industrial workers so long as they receive reasonable treatment.

The question of the training of boys for farm work, particularly in relation to the farm training school at St. Lucia, is one to which I have given much consideration, and I have also heard the question discussed by hon. members on both sides of the Committee. I have very definite views on this question. The city lads will not be encouraged to accept occupation on the land unless reasonable rates of pay and hours of work are laid down. I understand that 127 boys have passed through the St. Lucia training farm, and fifty-seven are now in the course of training. A large percentage of the 127 have been placed in various occupations on the land, a small percentage have not been placed, and a few others have been returned to the city. The parents of lads will not advise their sons to accept positions as farm hands unless they are satisfied they will not be exploited in regard to wages and hours of work. No hon. member opposite and no member of the farming community would allow his son to be exploited unfairly. I can recall quite a number of cases where farmers owning their own land have sent their sons to grammar schools and high schools to finish their education, and at the same time they have employed lads on their farms to take their places. If farming is profitable enough to allow that condition of affairs to exist, then it is only just that reasonable rates of pay and reasonable hours of work should be laid down for the farm hand.

The tenant or share farmer is in a different position. Hon. members opposite refer to that class of farmer when they declare that the farmer cannot afford reasonable rates of pay. If he is not able to pay reasonable rates it is because the farm cannot provide a living for the owner of the land in addition to the share or tenant farmer, and also give employment to farm lads. If any industry can support the owner as well as the tenant or share farmer there is no need for any subsidy or grant by the Government. I claim that such conditions do exist in a number of farming industries throughout this State. A large number of farmers in this State are not the owners of the land which they are farming. There are many cases where the tenant or share farmer goes out and works in some other industry in order to supplement his earnings and he employs farm lads to take his place on the farm. I say very definitely that if hon. members opposite or the farming community desire to encourage city lads who have been

trained at the St. Lucia training farm, or at Riverview or at Gatton College, they should cause definite conditions to be laid down in regard to wages and hours of work. I see no reason why share or tenant farmers should be allowed to exploit farm labour to the extent they do throughout the State in order that they may add to their earnings by working at other occupations as well as on the farm. The farm lad is entitled to just as much consideration as is the son of the farmer. Whilst these circumstances exist we cannot expect the parents of the city lad, trained for farm purposes, to advise their son to accept conditions under which he will have to bargain with his employer as to his wages and the number of hours to be worked. If these circumstances were general throughout the State the farming community could not expect to receive even as much consideration as they are receiving at present.

In conclusion, I would state that it is only along such lines as I have suggested that hon. members opposite and members of the farming community can find a permanent solution to the problem.

Mr. BELL (*Stanley*) [12.31 p.m.]: Whilst there is much in this department worthy of commendation there is also much deserving of criticism. Whilst admitting that a great deal of advantage accrues to the primary producers through its administration, I realise also that very often the advantages gained are minimised by the destructive legislation of the present Government.

Listening to the arguments of members of the Government one can hardly understand their attitude in regard to the farmer. First of all we hear some hon. members eulogising the great work the farming community are contributing to the welfare of the State, and then we have an hon. member, such as the one who has just resumed his seat, putting forward the farmer of to-day as a "bloated capitalist."

Mr. WATERS: The hon. member must have a small degree of intelligence if that is the interpretation he puts on it.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BELL: The hon. member should realise the position of the farmers in Queensland to-day. He would then understand that the farmer cannot afford to pay the wages suggested by the hon. member for Brisbane. It is absolutely ridiculous for hon. members to address the Committee on a subject of which they know nothing. We have to face facts and meet the situation as it confronts us to-day. The farmer is "up against it."

As regards our youth going on farms, we have to ask the Government to face the situation and make the parents realise that hard work, in reason, never hurt any man or boy. In all my experience I have never heard such accusations against farmers as have been made by the hon. member who has just resumed his seat.

With regard to the congratulations to the department upon the increased expenditure, which appears to meet with the approval of all Government members, I would draw attention to the fact that the increase in the whole vote is £8,875, but the increases in salaries, £4,791, gratuities £1,631, and the St. Lucia farm £1,000, account for

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£7,422 of it. This means that the balance of the increase is £1,435, which is the amount of increase to carry on the work of the remainder of the department. Looking through the more important items, I see that in the pure seeds, fertilizers, and stock foods branch there is a reduction of £410. To my way of thinking this is one of the first items that should have been increased, considering the conditions of the State. Seeing that we hope to obtain an increase in our exports of chilled meat this is a very important item and I very much regret the reduction.

In connection with our export trade I feel that the facts must be faced. We blame Britain for not accepting all we can produce, but at the same time we are endeavouring to bolster up a false prosperity by the lavish spending of loan money. The Government must recognise that the primary industries of the State cannot succeed in coping with our competitors in our export trade under the conditions they are receiving from the Government at the present time. The sooner we face the situation the sooner will the State get out of the difficulties confronting her. As I said, in a previous speech, I hope the Minister will consider the advisableness of developing in every possible way the market for our chilled meat industry. It needs encouragement.

When hon. members refer to the benefits enjoyed by primary producers and urge that the Federal Government should do certain things, they should not overlook the responsibilities that are on their own shoulders. An enormous amount of taxation has been imposed by the present Government, but they are prone to evade their responsibilities by placing the blame on someone else, for instance, on the Federal Government, the shipping companies, or England herself. They should get down to tin tacks and realise that certain responsibilities rest on their own shoulders. I hope the time is not far distant when they will adequately cope with problems that are really the responsibilities of the State Government.

Mr. ANNAND (*East Toowoomba*) [12.38 p.m.]: I desire to offer some comment on this vote. I am inspired to do so particularly by remarks that have emanated from the other side of the Chamber. I frequently come in contact with the officers of this department, and I want to pay a tribute to them for their unflinching courtesy and for the thorough and practical way in which they do their work.

We are dealing with a department which caters for practical men—the agriculturists and other producers of the State—and I should like to remind hon. members that many people seem to forget that the only people who can produce new wealth in this country are the primary producers. We talk of our secondary industries, but let us not forget that the only people who can produce new wealth in this State and in Australia are the primary producers. This vote has not been criticised by hon. members on this side, because we agree that it is not a penny too much to spend on the advancement of practical agriculture in this State. But I should like to remind hon. members opposite that these producers are not all the fat-headed fools they were designated by the hon. member for Warrego. You will remember that in this Chamber the hon. member

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for Warrego referred to the farmers as fat-headed farmers. I want to remind hon. members that the so-called fat-headed farmers have devoted their time and attention to producing new wealth in Australia. Perhaps they are not men given to much talking, but they think deeply and they do their job thoroughly. The fact that they do their job well makes it possible for Queensland to be the cheapest State in Australia in which to live. I have had the honour of representing the so-called fat-headed farmers on the Darling Downs, who have done their job so thoroughly that Toowoomba is the cheapest place in the Commonwealth in which to live and rear families. I wish to emphasise that, because I have a very high regard indeed for the farmers. At the recent by-election in East Toowoomba Government members came up to woo the farmers for political support, and thus showed what value they placed upon their services. However, they were not successful in winning the election.

The hon. member for Enoggera practically forecast the introduction of a Milk Bill this session. I hope that I have not misunderstood him. I gathered the impression from his remarks that impure milk was responsible in the past for an increase in infantile mortality, but I should like to remind him that in 1929 Queensland stood fifth in the Commonwealth for infantile mortality, the rate being 46.1 per thousand, and that by the end of 1931 that figure had been reduced to 36.4 per thousand. It is not out of place to mention that we were told that between 1929 and 1932 the children were starved by the Government then in power.

Mr. WATERS: Your Government.

Mr. ANNAND: Yes. The last State election was won on a cry that the previous Government had starved the children, but we have not heard that cry much of late. (Government interjections.) I know that my remarks hurt hon. members opposite. We were told that previously the children were starved. Now we are being told they are not dying from starvation; they are dying from impure milk. Where is the logic of hon. members opposite? I offered a suggestion to the hon. member for Kelvin Grove, but he did not accept it and went further into the mire. It was that the people of Queensland cannot buy milk. Unfortunately, the people are earning so little that we cannot expect a man with a wife and family on £2 a week to buy sufficient milk to nourish his children. That is why Queensland has from 1931 gone from the second lowest place in the infantile mortality table to the highest in 1933. That should be food for thought for the hon. member for Kelvin Grove when the Milk Bill is being introduced.

The hon. member for Brisbane had some remarks to make about boys going on the land. I may be pardoned for introducing something personal into the discussion. It is my business and pleasure in private life to help everyone I can to get labour for the farm. I have had many opportunities lately of endeavouring to induce boys to go on the land. Unfortunately, the expressions one often hears in this Committee about the fat-headed farmers, and about the farmers being foolish men not able to conduct their own business, the hard times they are suffering, and the extremely long hours they work have prejudicially reacted against farmers getting labour to carry on their business. I want to remind hon. members that boys on the land

have a very excellent time and service as compared with boys in the city.

Mr. J. G. BAYLEY: They are better paid.

Mr. ANNAND: They are infinitely better paid. The boy on the land receives a wage of anything from 15s. to £1 a week, and £1 a week is not too much to allow for keep, because the Commissioner of Taxes permits the taxpayer to make that allowance.

Mr. WATERS: Do you say that is the average wage?

Mr. ANNAND: I can assure the hon. member that he can go along the streets of Toowoomba and see displayed on the boards outside agencies notices for boys for dairy farms at from 15s. to £1 a week and their keep. Therefore, boys of sixteen years and over are getting the equal of 35s. to £2 a week. Is there any industry in Brisbane paying boys at that age the same wage? They usually start at 12s. 6d. a week in the city, and they keep themselves. I have had some unfortunate experiences, and I will relate one to show the train of thought running through the minds of working men to-day. A man tried to get from me a pair of boots on the "bow-wow"—in other words, for nothing. I assured him that I could get him work on a farm. I offered to get him a position at £1 a week and his keep. He assured me that he had assisted in my return to Parliament. Of that I am doubtful. He said, "Me work for a farmer! Not now; there was a day when I would work for a farmer, but in those days the farmer worked with you. Now the farmer gets into his motor car, tells you to do the job, and drives off to town." What a mind that man had! I asked him if he expected the farmer to allow him to drive the car to town and tell the farmer what to do in his absence. Unfortunately, that line of thought has its origin in remarks made in this Chamber. The minds of men in the cities to-day are definitely poisoned against going to work on the land.

Mr. WATERS: Bunkum!

Mr. ANNAND: There is no doubt about it. The Minister knows it. It is an unfortunate thing.

Mr. WATERS: It is not a fact.

Mr. ANNAND: It is a definite fact. I am sorry to say those statements are the result of remarks made in this Committee, such as the reference to the fatheaded farmer, made by the hon. member for Warrego. Unfortunately, hon. members opposite have no knowledge of matters appertaining to the land.

Mr. WATERS: You have very little.

Mr. ANNAND: If the hon. member had done as much on the land as I have he would think a lot more of the man on the land. I recollect an interjection made, I think, by the hon. member during a discussion on taxation in this Chamber. This will show the attitude of hon. members opposite. I do not blame the Minister, because he knows the conditions of the man on the land. The attitude of mind of some hon. members on the Government side is revealed in the reference that one of them made to a man owning a huge block of land, which eventually was found to have an area of only 300 acres. Probably the hon. member concerned contrasted that huge block of 300 acres with the quarter acre allotment that he had

in the metropolis, little thinking that many men are starving on 300 acres of land to-day. We on this side of the Committee sympathise with the Minister in the introduction of this Bill. We are not criticising the Bill; we are criticising the attitude of hon. members with whom the hon. gentleman is associated towards the question of land settlement.

I hope the Minister will follow the advice given by the hon. member for Warwick. I would welcome a fixed price for wheat. I know men who have invested their all in wheat farming and who are struggling to produce grain, and will be faced with ruin if the crop this year is not a reasonable one.

Mr. WATERS: Let the Federal Government do something.

Mr. ANNAND: I have neither the time nor the inclination to refer to the circular issued during the recent by-election campaign as to what Labour did for the farmer, and I am sorry you referred to the Federal Government.

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

Mr. ANNAND: I address the hon. member through you, Mr. King, and I tell him that the reception the Federal Government received in Toowoomba was quite different from that received by the head of the Department of Agriculture when he visited a wheatgrowing area during that campaign. I would welcome a fixed price for wheat, as for any other primary commodity, knowing that the primary producer never receives one penny too much for the work he does in the interests of the country.

Mr. WATERS (*Kelvin Grove*) [12.51 p.m.]: The remarks of the hon. member who has just resumed his seat and those of the hon. member for Stanley are designed to create the impression that the lads who are in the employ of farmers are on a particularly good wicket, and that the discouragement of boys from going on the land has largely been brought about by statements made in this Parliament by members of this party.

Mr. KENNY: Quite right.

Mr. WATERS: I do not accept the hon. member as an authority. The hon. member for East Toowoomba has given us a statement of the comparative wages that farm lads are alleged to receive, but my experience of the wages paid to farm boys who have returned to Brisbane is entirely different. (Opposition dissent.)

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. WATERS: Members of the Opposition do not like the truth. (Opposition dissent.) They dislike the facts which I am stating. (Opposition dissent.)

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. WATERS: I am not going to allow hon. members opposite—

Mr. SPARKES: You are not going to allow—fancy you!

Mr. WATERS: I am not going to allow the political larrikin from Dalby to interrupt my speech.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to withdraw the statement "political larrikin."

Mr. WATERS: In deference to you, Mr. King, I withdraw. I want to say that the

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fact remains to-day that there are, unfortunately, in the country, quite a number of people who are definitely exploiting farm boys. I do not say that applies to the farmers as a whole, but, unfortunately, that is the case, and is one of the reasons why boys will not leave the city. (Opposition dissent.) Some of them had had the unfortunate experience of going out and not being rewarded in the manner that they should have been.

Mr. KENNY: What do you think they should get?

Mr. WATERS: What do you suggest?

Mr. KENNY: I am not making the speech.

Mr. WATERS: The point at issue is this: That the lad who leaves the city and seeks employment on a farm should get a reasonable wage and should not be asked to work more than a reasonable number of hours.

Mr. KENNY: What do you call "a reasonable wage" and "a reasonable number of hours"?

Mr. WATERS: It is no use telling the hon. member anything because he has not sufficient intelligence to assimilate it. I believe some tribunal should be established to prescribe such conditions of employment as would afford protection to these boys. The other day a man came to me and said, "My brother, whose age is thirty-three, had an offer of employment from a farmer of work on a dairy farm at 7s. 6d. a week." He said he no longer wondered why men stay in the hostels in the city.

Mr. SPARKES interjected.

Mr. WATERS: The hon. member for Dalby is an introvert who is incapable of appreciating anything, and contributions by him to debates in this Chamber have not been of any value to the electorate he represents or to the State; so I do not heed any remark he hurls across this Chamber. In order to encourage boys to go on the land I consider some tribunal should be established to draw up a set of conditions under which lads from the St. Lucia training farm and similar places subsidised by the Government would work. The fact remains that there is at present a disinclination on the part of parents to send boys out into the country.

Mr. SPARKES: Because you put such stupid ideas into their heads.

Mr. WATERS: The hon. member for Dalby stated that £2 for a seven-day week was quite enough for bush workers.

Mr. SPARKES: So it is.

Mr. WATERS: £2 a week and a seven-day week!

Mr. SPARKES: Nobody suggested a seven-day week.

Mr. WATERS: That wage might approximate to the desires and needs of hon. members opposite, but it certainly does not approximate to the desires and needs of those who have to do the work.

After listening to the tirade by the hon. member for East Toowoomba, during which he told a story of the man in the motor car and made a general attack upon the working class, one does not wonder why the largest vote was recorded against him in East Toowoomba, where that hon. member was well known, and he received a majority

in the farming areas where he was little known. He is now endeavouring to cultivate the farmer. He is posing as a friend of the farmer, but he is at best a new-found friend. He read a statement that was made by an hon. member on this side of the Chamber regarding the farmers. I think the hon. member who made that remark made it in the sense the farmers were fat-headed in choosing as their representatives men of the calibre of hon. members opposite and after listening to the diatribe of hon. members opposite and their attempt to discourage the development of Queensland, I have been forced to the conclusion that the remark by the hon. member for Warrego was justified, when one sees the bright bunch that sit on the opposite side of the Chamber.

At 2 p.m.,

Mr. GLEDSON resumed the chair.

Mr. DANIEL (*Keppel*): Seeing that 50 per cent. of the people in my electorate are on the land I cannot allow this vote to pass without saying a few words in their interests. I have always had the greatest admiration for those who till the soil, but unfortunately Governments, whether they be Nationalist or Labour, do not give to the man on the land the assistance to which he is entitled.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Nationalist Government?

Mr. DANIEL: Both species of Governments, irrespective of whether they are Nationalist or Labour. They do not give that assistance to the man on the land that his importance warrants. I will read to the Committee an extract from the "Maryborough Chronicle":—

"Mundubbera, 17th October.

"Pigs entrained at Mundubbera on Wednesday numbered 115, and the price was still firmly fixed at 6d. per lb. It was stated by one of the buyers that there was a very great demand at the present time 'for everything that squealed' owing to a brisk export trade and the preparation of extra stocks for Christmas.

"On expressing surprise at there being no calves, the representative of the Queensland Co-operative Bacon Association, Limited, Mr. C. Grevell, told the 'Chronicle' representative that there was every prospect of a good trade being developed with the calves, and that there seemed also to be promise of a good supply, as many as 1,400 being offered in one day, while the factory was only able to treat 600 per week.

"Railway freights constituted a severe handicap against the trade in calves, the average cost of transport amounting to as much as 5s. per calf in the majority of cases, more than the purchase price of the calf. The baby beef trade with England and the export of veal to China, where there was a remarkably good market for this product, seems to have suffered an unhappy reverse."

There is an instance of what I mean. It would pay the department and eventually the State to carry these goods for half the price, because they would receive more revenue from other sources directly. The department is pursuing a short-sighted policy. It should adopt the business principle of encouraging certain traffic, even though such traffic be

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carried at a loss, because the leeway will be made up in some other direction. During the first year of the administration of the present Government railway freights and fares were increased by £325,000 per annum. Who paid that increase? Who paid the biggest proportion of it but the man on the land? If the Government continue a policy of harassing the man on the land then the State will not prosper. If the man on the land prospers then everyone else in the State does likewise. There is no doubt about that. I trust the Government will give the matter consideration and review the railway fares and freights.

Cotton has been mentioned by one hon. member on the opposite side of the Committee. I do not think that any Government did so much to prevent the progress of that industry as the Labour Administration prior to the advent of the Moore Government. That Labour Government passed a Bill suppressing the ratooning of cotton. There is no doubt that as a result of that measure, thousands of pounds were lost. In my district some of the growers took their ploughs and ploughed out their crops, whilst people next door to them allowed the cotton to grow. A penalty was to be imposed upon any person who grew ratoon cotton, but the grower who defied the law was able to secure a profitable return whilst the honest grower who obeyed the law suffered a pecuniary loss. No action was taken by the Government to deal with the unscrupulous grower, who was allowed to succeed whilst an honest grower probably found himself in a precarious position.

Mr. FOLEY: Are you advocating the growing of ratoon cotton?

Mr. DANIEL: Of course I do.

Mr. FOLEY: The farmers will not grow ratoon cotton to-day because they find it is unprofitable.

Mr. DANIEL: That is untrue. The present Government were responsible for reimposing the rural award on the cotton industry, but they should be aware that all these restrictions have a stifling effect upon the progress of agriculture generally. The progress in the cotton industry was retarded by the reimposition of that award, and I warn the Government that if they impose this award on the dairying industry they will kill it.

I should like to draw the attention of the Minister to the rent charged for certain land. I am pleased to say that whilst the Moore Government were in power I was able to induce the Minister of that day to reduce the rent on some of the land in my electorate from 55s. to 25s. In some cases the rent was reduced on two occasions. This was a great boon to the people. The Government should bear in mind that the country would be far better off if landholders were called on to pay only a small rental.

The present Government have taken credit to themselves for the increase in the volume of primary production over the past two years, but they know full well that that increase is attributable almost entirely to the wonderful seasons that the State has enjoyed. The Scullin Government were not able to borrow one penny piece, but immediately the Lyons Government were returned to power they were able to borrow £8,000,000 in less than six months. That is one reason

why Queensland is in a much better position to-day. During the regime of the Moore Government this State suffered severely from droughts, and money could not be borrowed because confidence had been shattered by a Labour Government in power in the Federal sphere.

Mr. FOLEY: You would say anything after saying that.

Mr. DANIEL: I am not one who talks like a parrot on a box. What I say I mean. I am here in the interests of the people of Central Queensland in particular and of the State in general. I do not come here like some hon. members opposite to "swing the lead" and say things that are really untrue.

Mr. W. J. COPLEY (*Bulimba*) [2.10 p.m.]: Mr. Gledson—

Mr. SPARKES: Another leader in agriculture.

Mr. W. J. COPLEY: With all due respect to Bluebeard from Dalby I propose to exercise my right to speak on the vote for the Chief Office of the Department of Agriculture. I wish to raise in a very definite manner the question of restriction of exports from Australia. I express the opinion that following the very interesting lecture that we had in this Chamber the other day from Mr. Malcolm Macdonald, Under Secretary of State for the Dominions, there is every possibility and every likelihood that within the next few months restrictions on exports from Australia will be very much to the forefront, and that the industry that will be most seriously affected will be the meat industry. As I happen to have in my electorate the Brisbane Abattoirs and Borthwick's meatworks, which do a large proportion of the preparation of cattle for export, I urge upon the Minister the desirableness, which I know he realises, of fighting any proposal to restrict the export of meat from this State. Following the speech by Mr. Macdonald the other day, it seems fairly definite that within the next six months a proposal will be made to the Dominions for the restriction of the importation of meat into the British Isles. I recall the time when a Prime Minister of New Zealand, Mr. Seddon, visited Britain with the object of furthering a proposal of his Government to place New Zealand beef on the market in England. When he was denied the opportunity of doing so, and when he was sabotaged by the British authorities, he opened shops throughout the British Isles and placed New Zealand beef upon the market.

Mr. Macdonald dealt with the question of the Ottawa Agreement. I do not think there is any hon. member on either this or the other side of the Committee who does not believe that Australia was represented by the wrong representatives at Ottawa. Freetraders were sent to Ottawa to do a protectionist's job. We sent men to that conference of the type of Mr. Bruce, whose greatest interests are and have always been in England and in matters of an Imperial nature. The Federal people expected a far better deal on the other side from him and Sir Henry Gullett. Despite the Ottawa Agreement Mr. Bruce was brought to Australia by the Lyons Ministry prior to the last Federal elections to advocate this policy of restriction.

Mr. TOZER: Which is absolutely denied.

*Mr. W. J. Copley.]*

Mr. W. J. COPLEY: It was only because the Premier of this State was on his way to London, and because as Premier of this State he accepted his responsibilities in this matter, that the Federal Government sent Mr. Bruce back to England. Mr. Bruce made a rush trip through Canada to endeavour to get to England at the same time as the Premier. At the last election the Federal Government gulled the people into believing that no restriction of exports from Australia was in the air, but within a few brief weeks of the election we find the issue once again raised in the press.

Mr. SPARKES interjected.

Mr. W. J. COPLEY: If the hon. member continues to interject I will deliberately and flagrantly insult him by telling the truth. If he wants it I will let him have it.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member for Dalby not to interrupt the hon. member for Bulimba when he is speaking.

Mr. W. J. COPLEY: I do not desire to raise the matter in connection with the hon. member without provocation, but with any further provocation I will raise it. Mr. Bruce, so far as Australian interests generally are concerned, and in connection with the meat industry, particularly, must obviously be regarded as public enemy No. 1. More than 80 per cent. of the beef trade in Australia is centred in Queensland, and approximately 83 per cent. of the beef exported from Australia goes from Queensland.

Mr. ANNAND: And your Government, when in opposition, tried to stop the erection of the abattoirs.

Mr. W. J. COPLEY: As a matter of fact the hon. member for East Toowoomba would not be here only for the fact that his eligibility for membership was made possible by that Federal Government whom he desires to protect.

Mr. WALKER: Don't raise that.

Mr. W. J. COPLEY: The hon. member for Cooroora says, "Don't raise that." The hon. member looks for it, and the hon. member must get it. I did not desire to raise it but for the interjection. That is the only reason why the hon. member for East Toowoomba is here, and I do not think it is necessary for me to have to apologise for that.

The Lyons Government seem to have deliberately resolved that they will work in harmony with the Imperial Parliament and the Imperial Administration if restriction of exports from Australia becomes necessary in the British Isles. I want to make this point to-day: that if one day it may be necessary for Australia to default the only thing that will bring it about will be the result of this restriction policy. We have to pay our interest and redemption in London by exports from this country, and if Australia comes to the point when it has to default, and does default, the sin will not be Australia's—but the sin of the British Isles.

Let us consider the great competitor that Australia has. I refer to Argentina, which is comprised principally of half breeds. Those hon. members opposite who desire to discuss this matter sensibly and reasonably should look at some of the books in our library dealing with Argentina, which will

give some idea of the palatial hotels, homes, racecourse stands, etc., in Buenos Ayres. As a matter of fact, in surprising contradistinction to their treatment towards Australia in times of stress, is the treatment of the Imperial authorities in 1892 when a crash was threatened in Argentina. In that year, Baring Brothers, a London firm of bankers who had advanced large sums of money to, and who were the bankers of large investors in Argentina, found themselves embarrassed by the world-wide crisis of the day, and the Bank of England on that occasion advanced to Baring Brothers so much money that it had to import £22,000,000 worth of gold from the National Bank of France, in order to save the face of the national bank of Great Britain! Compare the attitude of Great Britain towards Argentina with the attitude of Great Britain towards Australia! I earnestly hope that if the question of restriction of exports does arise, the Imperial Parliament will not adopt the attitude of its national bank on a previous occasion, and extend better treatment to outsiders than to their own kith and kin.

The question of the restriction of exports so far as the meat industry is concerned is a very important matter. I earnestly appeal to the cattle-growers of Queensland to improve their pastures and to endeavour to provide for the home market beef that will compare with the product from Argentina. I should not be fair or honest if I did not say that at the present time Australia is not able to land its beef at Smithfield in as good condition as meat from Argentina. More particularly does this apply to the baby beef. Anyone who has studied the condition of beef when it arrives at Smithfield will appreciate that position. The Premier, when in London, took the opportunity of visiting that very important centre, and I have discussed with him the state in which beef arrives from Argentina and Australia. The Australian cattle-growers, I believe, are in this industry for good. We must stay in the industry. When this question does arise the Federal Government should take a very definite and very blunt stand on any suggestion which, if put into effect, would be likely to restrict the export of meat from Australia. I earnestly hope they will adopt such an attitude, and notwithstanding the cynical attitude of the hon. member for East Toowoomba, I believe this is a very important question as far as Queensland is concerned. If a policy of restriction is embarked upon it will result in a number of people who are at present employed at the Brisbane Abattoirs and Borthwick's being thrown out of employment.

Mr. CLAYTON interjected.

Mr. W. J. COPLEY: I can understand the hon. member talking about goats, because he is a milkman himself. I suppose the hon. member will adopt the same attitude on this occasion as he has on previous occasions in connection with the milk supply in his particular district. I do not know whether the hon. member has ever heard the story told by the Secretary for Mines in regard to the ventriloquist who threw his voice on to the goat. I would advise the hon. member for Wide Bay to ask him to tell him the story.

I wish to mention the great work of the officers of the Department of Agriculture in their administration of that important

[Mr. W. J. Copley.]

branch of the public service. In that department we have some of the most skilled officers in the whole of the public service; and some of the experts connected with that department could not be surpassed in technical knowledge or general ability throughout the Commonwealth of Australia.

In the administration of a department of this kind, which is an expenditure department, the administrative heads very often do not push forward the claims of officers for recognition to which they are entitled. In revenue producing departments the Public Service Commissioner or the Government of the day are often prepared to grant salary increases and higher classifications which they are not prepared to grant in expenditure departments, where the work is just as arduous, and possibly more arduous, and in some cases requires a great amount of technical knowledge. I trust that when the public servants' claim comes on for hearing before the Industrial Court that the Secretary for Agriculture will bear in mind that phase of the question as far as his department is concerned. The department is one of the largest in the State, and I am pleased to learn that the Minister is enlarging the building in order to house the Agricultural Bank staff under the same roof as the rest of the department. That will tend towards greater efficiency.

I wish to congratulate the editor of the Agricultural Journal, Mr. Reid, on the excellent production which is being issued at the present time.

Mr. WALKER: The best in Australia.

Mr. W. J. COPLEY: It is undoubtedly the best in Australia. I hope that the farmers will avail themselves to a greater extent than they do at present of the opportunity of having this journal forwarded to them at a cost of 1s. per annum to cover postage. It is to be regretted that farmers throughout the State do not avail themselves of the services of the experts employed by the department to a greater extent. The experts can be written to at any time, and the Minister is prepared to send them to any part of this State where their services can be of value.

Mr. CLAYTON: They never filled your vacancy when you went out. They did not think much of you there.

Mr. W. J. COPLEY: I refrain from saying that the hon. member is "a liar" because it is unparliamentary, and, therefore, I will only reply to him by saying that that is deliberately untrue. The only reason I reply is because the public of Queensland may not know what type of man the hon. member is, as we do in this Parliament.

Mr. CLAYTON: I have been here longer than you ever will be.

Mr. W. J. COPLEY: Yes, the hon. member has been here longer, but as that is a poor commentary on the intelligence of the people in the hon. member's electorate, I would not cast that reflection on them if I were he.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. W. J. COPLEY: The question of the restriction of exports will be raised within the next few months. Of that I am sure. I believe that the presence here in Australia to-day of Mr. Malcolm Macdonald is a preliminary step towards the definite restric-

tion of exports from Australia to Britain. His visit is an endeavour to create the right atmosphere for such a policy, and I hope that the Federal Nationalist Government will stand up to their job so far as Queensland is concerned. They definitely failed to do this during the three years prior to the last Federal election.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, *Barcoo*) [2.32 p.m.]: Perhaps the most gratifying feature of the protracted debate on this vote is the eulogy that has been paid by all hon. members on both sides of the Committee to the very excellent staff in the Department of Agriculture and Stock. As the Minister in charge of that department, I very heartily corroborate everything that has been said. Of course, there is nothing spectacular about the work that our officers are doing. The ordinary layman does not realise the research work that is being proceeded with, for instance. Such words as plant pathologist, entomologist, and agrostologist are to them but names. The men engaged in this particular phase of research are modestly personified, certainly not through any lack of capacity. They are infrequently brought in contact with the public. They are men of a calibre which ranks very highly in the scientific agricultural world of Australia. They are men of whom Queensland may well be proud. There is certainly a more generous recognition to-day of the work of these men in Queensland than perhaps was ever the case before. That corresponds with the alteration that is taking place in the public outlook in regard to primary production. There is not a member of this Committee who does not remember the time when the average primary producer was referred to in such terms as "cocky," "clodhopper," "wayback," and "rustic." Terms of that description carry some suggestion of a sneer, but fortunately they are falling into disuse. The economic factors of our national life are causing the public generally to view the farmer in his proper perspective, and while we know that that attitude has had little association with the social phases of agriculture, as a department, yet it is to the material good of the whole of the community that this change has taken place.

I have detected a new note creeping into the debate on this occasion, a note that I welcome, a note that finds a ready response in my own mind, that note being that with but few exceptions there is a more generous recognition on the part of members of the value of science in agriculture. Two hon. members suggested that the development of agriculture to-day was entirely a scientific matter. I agree, because if we review the question generally we find that practically every country in the world that has effected a progressive agricultural policy has solved the cultural problem within its own territory. The main problem is not, therefore, one of production, but of distribution. But associated with that question of production is always the question of the reduction of overhead expenditure by the application of new methods. It is true that the old maxim that was generally accepted, unfortunately, by the farming community a generation or so ago, "What was good enough for my father is good enough for me," has now been reversed, so that the average young progressive farmer realises the dependence on

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science of agriculture, the alliance between cultural operations and economic facts as apart from economic theories. These things have been recognised by the younger generation, who realise that agriculture will not reach its proper social, political, or economic plane until such time as there is a recognition by all sections of the community of their interdependence. The eulogy that has been accorded to the science officers of my department is very gratifying.

The ex-Secretary for Agriculture, the hon. member for Cooroora, remarked that it was necessary to bring about a decrease in agricultural expenditure during the time of the Moore Government. That, unfortunately, was the case, but the fact remains that it may not have been a desirable thing. If the hon. member had perused some of my speeches in this Chamber a little more earnestly than he appears to have done, he would have found that during the time I was in opposition I made special appeals, both to him and to his Government, not to reduce agricultural expenditure in this State, because I realised, as every other hon. member must have realised, that the time was not far distant when we should be looking for material expansion corresponding with the expansion of our population, and that that could only be made possible by the judicious and wise expenditure of money on agriculture. There are hon. members opposite who share this view with me, who believe that money correctly spent in this direction is an investment and does not create a liability. The policy of the Department of Agriculture is to get the utmost amount of money that it can get from the Treasury, and in return to give the Treasury an assurance that the money will be spent wisely and in the best interests of the agriculturists of the State, which in the final analysis means in the interests of all the people in the State.

The hon. member also made some reference to the absence of the annual report of the department. I know that he will accept my assurance that it is due to no fault of mine that the report is not available. In consequence of the recent Federal elections and other urgent printing jobs the Government Printer was unable and has been unable up to the present to complete that annual report. I rather regret that it has not been laid before hon. members, because my experience last session was that hon. members perused that report. It appeared to me to be one of the few reports that hon. members did peruse, and that many valuable suggestions and much valuable criticism arose out of that perusal. I can assure hon. members that it will be tabled so soon as it is possible to do so.

A good deal of reference has been made during the course of this debate to the "Queensland Agricultural Journal" and its place in the agricultural literature—I use that word advisedly—of our State. Queensland has new problems to face. Differences in climatic conditions, rainfall, and soil types are to be found in different localities. Therefore, we have had to evolve our own literature in connection with all branches of primary production. How well that evolution has been directed and what loyal support has been given by officers of the Department of Agriculture have been evidenced by the favourable tributes that have been paid to the editor of the journal and the staff

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who have contributed its articles; but I think that it will be agreed that there is one thing that is missing in the agricultural literature of our State. It is true that Ministers of all political parties have recognised the value of pamphleteering, but, after all, that has only a limited value; pamphlets go out of print. We have no classical productions on agricultural possibilities and agricultural processes in our State. I am sure hon. members generally will be pleased to hear that the officers of my department at the present time are compiling an agricultural handbook similar to the agricultural handbook published, I think, in every other State in the Commonwealth, and a handbook that will have special reference to Queensland conditions and will be an invaluable guide to farmers who require an immediate answer to the more perplexing questions with which they are confronted.

The question of wood taint in butter has been raised by the hon. member for Cooroora. I do not know if the hon. member desired to convey the impression that I acquiesced in the action of the Commonwealth Government in insisting on a casein formaldehyde spray being applied to all butter-boxes that were used for export purposes. I am conscious of the whole movement in this direction. Quite frequently Queensland butter has been prejudiced in London, not in consequence of the actual incidence of wood taint, but because of the suggestion that it is there. It is doubtful whether wood taint has ever been a problem so far as Queensland butter overseas is concerned; but it is true that implication has frequently been made, and the suggestion that Queensland butters have wood taint is the reason why this product has not succeeded as well on the London market as it would have succeeded had that not been the case. The Commonwealth Government insist on all butter-boxes being sprayed. The matter is beyond our control. I believe the dairying industry generally is antagonistic to this Commonwealth regulation; but the Commonwealth controls exports, and so long as the Commonwealth controls exports—and that, of course, will be as long as there is a Commonwealth—then we shall have to subscribe to the regulations laid down. If we do not agree with the principle, we at least have to acquiesce in it.

The hon. member for Cooroora raised the question of pasture improvement. Personally, if I were asked what I could eliminate from my department and if there had to be a progressive elimination, the last thing eliminated would be our work of pasture improvement. At this juncture pasture improvement is the most important work upon which we are engaged. It means, of course, the adaptation of grasses to different soils and climatic conditions. It means a more extensive testing over that long coastline that we have, and it means an intensive search for economic grasses over this area. The hon. member for Cooroora will be gratified to know that our pasture experimental work is guided by a very excellent pasture experimental committee embracing not only officers of the department but also experienced men recruited from outside the department to assist us by their guidance and counsel, and that it enlists also the active co-operation of progressive farmers throughout the State. These instruments are being used for an

intensive and vigorous pasture improvement policy. We have pasture improvement work in progress at Daintree, the most northern point in this State where dairying is engaged in. I am assured that Daintree, which is within the tropics, is the closest centre to the equator in the world where dairying is done. That alone is justification for embarking on experiments in that particular locality. If we examine the needs of every locality we find that each has some problems peculiar to itself. These problems have to be examined.

Some question was raised by the hon. member for Cook as to whether the department should not have taken over the Commonwealth tobacco experiment farm at Mareeba. This Committee is entitled to know why I refused to take this farm over. I was guided in my decision by the considered opinion of experienced agriculturists and experimentalists in all parts of the world. Hon. members will realise that at one time it was a recognised policy in Queensland to have centrally situated experiment farms in each division of the State. I think the hon. member for Cooroola must subscribe to my policy, because during his administration he got rid of two or three experiment farms. I frankly admit that I have got rid of experiment farms since I have been Minister. My reason is that, after all, an experiment farm generally only has one soil type. The result is that notwithstanding considerable expense to the State it may be of very little value in another district, perhaps not 100 miles distant. Experimental work, to be of any advantage, must deal with various soil types and a diversity of agricultural subjects, rather than with one soil type in one climate. It was because those reasons were uppermost in my mind, to which I ardently subscribe, that I refused to take over the Mareeba tobacco experiment station. Several years of experimental work had been done there. That work had not been materially successful. There was one phase, even if other phases did not exist, that induced me to reject the Commonwealth offer. It was a fact that after six or seven years' extensive cropping disease problems of outstanding importance would have hampered any cultural operations we were conducting. The Commonwealth Government have undertaken research work into disease problems in the tobacco industry, and have delegated to the State the cultural work that is necessary. If we are to undertake the cultural work it would not be fair to suggest that we should undertake that cultural work handicapped by having to use an old experimental station that in its earlier days had been saturated with disease spores that are difficult to control, as, for example, frog-eye and blue mould. Speaking from memory, we have twenty or thirty tobacco plots under experimental observation, and I think our present policy of having the tobacco experimental work scattered throughout the whole of the State is a better policy than its concentration in one area.

It is suggested that we should utilise an amount of money that the Commonwealth Government have placed at our disposal for the purpose of conducting this farm. That is a very short-sighted and selfish viewpoint. There are tobacco-growers in the electorate of Carnarvon. Would the hon. member for Carnarvon be prepared to see a Commonwealth grant of £3,000 or £4,000

being spent in the North? Or would the tobacco-growers in the Miriam Vale district of the electorate of Port Curtis gain any satisfaction from the fact that cultural work was being done in North Queensland? It would have but little value to them. I believe that the whole experimental policy of the department, not only in regard to pastures improvement work but also in regard to cultural experimental work generally, should be distributed over the widest possible area. There should be no centralised experiments for cultural work. Experiments for pathological observation and research on the other hand should be conducted within easy reach of the most highly skilled officers in my department, who are the men in control of the branches at the head office. That is a policy I have pursued. It is certainly an expensive one. All agricultural research work, indeed all research work, is expensive, but I view the question in this way—and my officers fortunately share my views—that it is not expenditure in the true sense of the word. Rather is it an investment, and if we did not strenuously continue an experimental policy in all its various facets then agriculture would decline instead of progress.

The hon. member also made some reference to the present position in regard to the buffalo fly. I can assure him that there has been a contraction of the areas that are affected by the pest. Whether that has been due to the hon. member's foresight in establishing a spraying works at Kajabbi I am not going to say; nevertheless it is fortunately true that a material contraction has taken place in the area affected by it. But that does not give us any license to relax the conditions imposed. It is true that the people in the buffalo fly area do not regard it as being a menace. It is equally true that the people outside the buffalo fly area regard it as being a very grave menace to them. We were told by a visiting scientist—and even scientists apparently make mistakes—that the buffalo fly would probably not succeed in proceeding down our coasts beyond Rockhampton. If I remember correctly a gentleman named Handschin, who had been engaged in special investigational work in relation to the buffalo fly, made that prediction. After all, however, predictions are very dangerous, and it has been discovered—this is a matter which concerns every country member, particularly members representing dairying constituencies—that during the past year a species of the buffalo fly very closely related to the buffalo fly that we unfortunately have in North-western Queensland has been discovered in northern China and has been inflicting a tremendous amount of devastation in that area. If the buffalo fly can become acclimatised in northern China I think that is a hint that we must continue to exercise the most rigid control over the movement of cattle from the infested area in Queensland. It is to the material advantage of the dairymen. It is true that the buffalo fly is more disastrous in the wetter climate, can breed more quickly—having more hosts in which to breed—and it is also true that the finer skinned and more highly bred dairy stock of the coast would be more susceptible to a vigorous attack or a big infestation of the buffalo fly, with the consequence that perhaps we should not require to discuss ways and means to convince the Imperial Government that restriction of exports is

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not a desirable policy—the buffalo fly would bring about all the restriction that was supposed to be necessary and a good deal more.

Therefore, in spite of a good deal of hostility and criticism levelled at me and my officers in this direction, I propose to continue the quarantine policy and the general policy we have adopted. We made it as easy as we could for the people concerned; but we are not going to take any risks. That is a policy that will commend itself to the dairying and beef cattle industries in this state.

Some suggestions were made about a guaranteed price for wheat. I am rather amused at some of the statements made. The hon. member for Cooroora was not a transgressor. Whilst dealing with this question I should like to survey the remarks made by hon. members generally. The suggestion was made by the hon. member for Cunningham that the Government with which he was associated not only succeeded in stabilising local prices but preserved more or less for the Queensland growers the highest price that was paid for wheat in Australia.

Mr. DEACON: In the world.

At 2.55 p.m.,

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

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I will admit all that. I do not desire to cavil about it; but the hon. member said to me, in answer to an interjection, "Why did you not do the same?" That was not fair criticism, and the hon. member knows that it was not fair criticism. Criticism of that nature coming from an hon. member who held Cabinet rank in the previous Administration and who must be acquainted with all the circumstances of the case is essentially unjust.

Mr. DEACON: I said you could do it in a different way.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member says I could do it in a different way. Let me outline what the past Government did and what this Government did in regard to this much vexed wheat question. We have on the statute-book the Sugar Acquisition Act. I remember the iniquity that was ascribed to the Sugar Acquisition Act in the minds of the hon. gentlemen opposite when it was first placed on the statute book. I remember hon. gentlemen opposite saying, "Another step on the way to Socialism. Another step on the road to Communism." The word "Sovietism" was not fashionable at that time. Time went on till one day, because the wheatgrowers were in a particularly parlous position, the hon. members who constituted the past Cabinet said, rightly and justly, "We must do something to protect our wheatgrowers," and they invoked the aid of this despised Sugar Acquisition Act and issued a proclamation under it; but there was always this reservation in the backs of the minds of those hon. gentlemen—"If this be challenged, well, we will not contest it." I am informed, whether rightly or wrongly, that it was not challenged because the then Leader of the Government, the hon. member for Aubigny, gave the wheat

interests in the South an assurance it would only operate for twelve months.

Mr. WALKER: No.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I say I was informed, whether rightly or wrongly. At that juncture I took control of the department, and—knowing all the disabilities and all the weaknesses of the situation, knowing as the Moore Government knew, that according to legal opinion the Government had not a leg to stand on, and having in mind the possibilities accentuated by the peanut case—knowing all these disabilities we did as the other Government did, we continued to use the Sugar Acquisition Act so long as it was not challenged. Everybody knew, the present Leader of the Opposition and the ex-Secretary for Agriculture and Stock, every Minister associated with the late Government and, I think, all private members, knew there was no legal authority for what we did. In other words, at this distance of time we can honestly say that we did something that was not legal. Realising the illegality of the Act, and being a Government that desired to continue constitutional practices, we would not agree to continue a system that would have meant the defeat of the Crown in court.

Mr. DEACON: After that you did nothing.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member says after that I did nothing. Can he suggest there is something that can be done? Instead of saying, "We did this and that," the hon. member will be afforded an opportunity at a later stage in these debates—perhaps when the next vote is being considered—to tell me what I am to do.

I have honestly searched for a solution of this problem. I realise that the wheat-growers of this State must be given every possible advantage, and I realise also that if any instrument can be employed to help them that instrument should be willingly employed by myself and by the Government. But let us examine the real facts of this case, quite apart from considerations of party advantage and parochialism. Let us examine the facts on the broadest possible basis, that is, that under section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution, as the hon. member very well knows, there can be no restriction of trade as between the various States of the Commonwealth. Wheat is the subject of trade. The hon. member desires to obtain a high price for the wheat obtained in Queensland. I am anxious that the growers shall have the highest possible economic price for their endeavours. Let us take the level indicated by the hon. member for Warwick, who knows more about the wheat question than any other member in this Committee. Suppose I said the wheat level shall be 4s. 2d. a bushel—that was the price suggested by the hon. member, was it not?

Mr. BARNES: Yes.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Suppose I agree with him and for the incoming harvest I say, "Very well, the authorities in the industry, after checking up the cost of production, advise me that 4s. 2d. a bushel is the price that should be returned to the grower." I then go along to the Commissioner of Prices and say to him, "Fix the price of wheat at 4s. 2d. a bushel." Suppose the price of wheat at Darling Harbour was then 3s. a bushel and the cost of landing that wheat in Brisbane

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enabled a price to be quoted in the vicinity of 3s. 6d. a bushel. Would the millers pay 4s. 2d. a bushel? They might be actuated by patriotic motives and say, "We will pay this 4s. 2d. a bushel and use Queensland wheat." If they were idealists they might purchase that wheat, but could they sell their flour in competition with flour made from wheat at 3s. a bushel? To the degree that you raise prices in Queensland above the cost of bringing Southern wheat into Queensland, you invite an influx of Southern flour into Queensland and quite obviously defeat your own ends.

Mr. BARNES: Give an all-Australian price.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I shall come to that. There is no solution that can be found separate from the Commonwealth solution to this question; no solution—after examining every method, after obtaining the advice from the best wheat men, both on the milling and production side, from all the authorities, after getting my marketing officers to examine this question, after legal advice, after chasing all sorts of shadows in the hope that some solution would be offered to this wheat question that the Government very earnestly desire to solve. My advice was that, if we interfered in any way it might be attractive on the surface but in the final analysis of such interference or readjustment of market prices it will have a disastrous effect and to the degree that you continue it will be your carry over of wheat.

Mr. WIENHOLT: Very true.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is true. I entirely agree with that. Section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution—an apparently harmless section when printed—tells me I cannot make any shadow of an adjustment that would be of material lasting benefit to the wheatgrowers of the State. On the other hand, I do not believe the wheatgrowers of Australia should be thrown, shorn and naked, to the wind. I believe the principle that we are adopting in the dairying industry should be extended to the wheatgrowing industry of the Commonwealth and not confined to that of the State. I believe that an all-Australian price is the logical, reasonable, and inevitable solution of this question. Some hon. members opposite, I know, do not believe in that doctrine. The hon. member for Wynnum and the hon. member for Fassifern have formed an alliance on this question. They have very definite views on the economic phase of agricultural production.

Mr. WIENHOLT: The law of supply and demand.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member believes entirely and exclusively in supply and demand.

Mr. WIENHOLT: For everything.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: In the old days of unrestricted law of supply and demand the farmer was at the mercy of many things that should not have been allowed unrestricted sway. He was exposed to all sorts of costs that were not reasonable and in many instances were not legitimate.

Mr. WIENHOLT: He is exposed to them now.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member says he is now exposed to them. If he is still exposed to them, then,

to that degree, is not the law of supply and demand defeated?

Mr. WIENHOLT: No.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Is not the law of supply and demand defeated to that degree, inasmuch as unreasonable charges are being placed on him and the law of supply and demand—the shrine at which the hon. member worships—is admittedly, on his own interjection, not giving the farmer a fair and reasonable control of his own product. The hon. gentleman says that the law of supply and demand should operate. Let us examine that law.

Mr. WIENHOLT: For everything.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Let us examine it in its application to the wheat question, which is the specific issue with which I am dealing.

Mr. WIENHOLT: For everything.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I shall deal with his stipulation that it is to be "for everything" if the hon. member so desires. For the moment I want to deal with this most important question, one that is of vital importance to all policies of all Governments in Australia. It is of such vital importance that it may make or unmake our present Commonwealth Government. The indications are that this question is going to be the vital political question in the Federal sphere between now and the conclusion of the present Parliament. Recognising that, must we not also recognise that the labourer is worthy of his hire, and must we not also recognise that overseas parity—

Mr. SPARKES: We all believe in it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We may all believe in it, but we do not always recognise it.

Mr. SPARKES: Yes, we do.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No, we do not. Must we not recognise that overseas parity is not a fair determination for local price. If the law of supply and demand in all its hideous nakedness is to operate, we say, in effect, that the overseas parity shall be the price to be paid to the producer here—there is no intermediate course—and because a big population is being supported directly and indirectly by the production of wheat, possibly, our national losses would be infinitely greater if we failed to recognise the urgency of these equations than would otherwise be the case. If we allow things to drift in that way, then obviously the overseas parity is going to bear us down to the overseas level. You cannot have it both ways. You cannot have overseas parity and a high standard of living.

Mr. J. G. BAYLEY: We did a few years ago.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You cannot, and never can. You cannot have overseas parity under normal conditions and have a high standard of living. I believe that every man in this Parliament does stand for the payment of a reasonable living rate, however it is gleaned, whether it be wages or other earnings for the man who is engaged in wheat production. I cannot see any hope for the wheat industry unless we have Commonwealth stabilisation. I believe that a bread tax and the levying

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of bread taxes are repugnant, because bounties are paid from consolidated revenue.

Mr. WIENHOLT: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I believe in the final analysis that that is a slur on the wheatgrowers and a slur on Governments. Finally, it means that the wheatgrower is being practically told that through no fault of his own he is unable to carry on, and that he is to be given the charity of the Commonwealth. I do not want that position to be maintained. I do not believe that any organisation or any body of producers should be in receipt of the charity of the Commonwealth or the charity of the people of the Commonwealth; I believe that our agricultural policy should be so directed and so maintained that the word "charity" will not enter in at all. I believe that the solution of this question is a Commonwealth wheat pool with a Commonwealth parity of equal value in all the capital cities of the Commonwealth. I believe that that is the only solution of the question. I believe that it is inevitable, but I recognise that even under that scheme Queensland may have to make some bargain or insist upon some adjustment that will duly recognise Queensland's peculiar position in the wheatgrowing industry. I repeat, it is true that no State unaided can do anything to help its wheatgrowers, but the States combined, with the blessing and sanction of the Commonwealth Government, can do the things that have been indicated. I believe that the public generally will willingly agree to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to recognise the value of the contributions that the wheatgrowers are making to the solvency of our States and of our Commonwealth by the trade balances that naturally follow.

The hon. gentleman raised another very important question, the question of the certification of milk. He suggested that the scheme had been in operation for a couple of years. I should not like to suggest to my friend that he may possibly have been doing the Rip Van Winkle act in that he fell asleep just when the regulations governing certified milk were promulgated and awakened again, believing that a period of two years has elapsed. The regulations governing the production of certified milk have not yet been in operation for twelve months. It was necessary to make a most careful survey, and this involved a good deal of laboratory investigation and research, because I did not desire to prescribe a standard that was not equal to what a certified milk standard should be, nor did I desire to prescribe a standard that was too high of attainment.

It took a good deal of work. I must congratulate Dr. Coffey, Mr. McGrath (my own dairy expert), and Dr. Gifford Croll for the interest they have taken in this work. I thank them for the material assistance they gave me in launching this scheme for the certification of milk. It is obvious that you cannot certify milk until the herds are certified. We announced the conditions under which we would certify the herds, and immediately commenced testing herds. We have several herds ready for final survey. Three herds have been finally surveyed and the certificates are in the course of preparation. We have seven herds now undergoing final survey, and if everything is satisfactory they will in turn get their certificates. One

hon. member in this Committee recognises the value of this work.

Mr. WALKER: Who is he?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Perhaps his modesty will prevent me from mentioning his name, but he is quite at liberty to stand in his place and say it refers to him.

Mr. CLAYTON: You will be telling the Committee soon.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is a very excellent thing that a member of Parliament should recognise the value of this work. It is certainly a lead to other people worth while following. Some of the most progressive dairymen in Brisbane are in possession of a certification of their herds. While I do not believe for one moment that certified milk can be milk for general consumption, I do know from the advice the British Medical Association has given me in regard to this matter that certified milk not only in Brisbane but also in every area in Queensland is a very excellent thing and will provide a medicinal milk above suspicion for nourishing delicate children and will make some excellent contribution to the maintenance of infant life in our State. I may take another step in that direction in the near future.

Most attention has been directed during this debate towards markets and marketing. The economic equations surrounding marketing have never been more difficult of solution than they are at the present time. My department is consciously growing under my direction from a department concerned chiefly with crop cultural methods and the raising of stock to a department very much concerned in the economics of agriculture. Two or three of our young men at the present time are engaged in the study of agricultural economics. In the process of time the Department of Agriculture will have attached to it, because it must, an economic branch, the foundation of which exists to-day in the marketing branch. We find that these problems are more difficult and more acute than they ever were. The clamour for markets is intense. Every nation to-day has developed a policy of economic nationalism. In an economic sense they have erected barbed wire entanglements around themselves. How long that will last remains to be seen. I do not desire to pose as a prophet, but already I can see material indications that while the policy of economic nationalism may make some temporary contributions to the economic life of a people, finally it will defeat itself. Already I can see indications that economic nationalism is proving itself to be uneconomic internationalism. The longer I live and the more I see of economic problems of this description the more I realise that countries are less and less capable of being self-contained and independent. That brings us face to face with the question of markets. The East has frequently been mentioned. Let me give hon. members one little experience we have had with the East. We were told that a good market for grapes existed in China. The Committee of Direction shipped grapes to China to test out the market. The result was that we discovered after a great deal of correspondence, in which my department had to participate in order to safeguard the rights of the Committee of Direction, that the black grapes shipped were not acceptable to the Chinese

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and had not been consumed. We had to find out why black grapes were not acceptable to the Chinese. We were informed that the Chinaman will not take black or purple into his house because it is a sign of death.

So you have superstitions and religious bias and prejudice to overcome. For instance, among certain sections the cow is regarded as sacred, and a storekeeper storing butter would be boycotted by the members of a particular religion, who would consider that they would lose caste and fall from grace if they entered his shop where the product of the cow was stored. Such individuals are a very large proportion of the peoples of these Eastern countries. The more I see of these questions the more I am convinced that there is but little opportunity of the development of any material trade in butter, cheese, pork, etc., with the East. We sent over a trade delegation to Eastern countries, and one of the members of that delegation had specific directions to inquire into any questions which he believed had any agricultural importance. Hon. members know the result of that delegation's visit, for the report has been printed. It seems to me that although we may aspire to a share in Asiatic markets and believe that they should be cultivated, I do not think there is very much possibility of any material development in that quarter.

One hon. member chided me for that in a debate some years ago on legislation concerning diseases in stock I made certain remarks. Of course, it is permissible, although embarrassing, to recall the injudicious remarks that the hon. member made many years ago; but the hon. member stated that I criticised his Administration because nothing was being done in sheep research work in Central Queensland, and desired to know what we were doing in this regard. We are doing a considerable amount of research work in the pastoral areas of our State. At the present time an officer attached to our department in a semi-official way is making a survey of grasses, and our laboratories are engaged in investigational work associated with soil, salt licks, control of buffalo fly, and such general nutrition problems as should come within the ambit of the Department of Agriculture. Material progress in that direction is being made, and already we have been able to indicate to the pastoralists in many parts of Queensland certain desirable lines of practice.

A final matter mentioned by the hon. member was the question of herd testing. In 1929-30—the hon. member will recognise the year—415 herds only, comprising 13,920 cows, were under test in this State; in 1930-31, 397 herds, comprising 12,000 cows, were under test; and in 1931-32, only 272 herds, involving 10,393 cows, were under test. It obviously became necessary to do something to stimulate herd testing and recording of results; those figures were an indication of a general decline and a failure to appreciate the value of herd testing. In 1932-33 we recovered ground and tested 400 herds, comprising 12,000 cows, and in 1933-34, when we vigorously pursued this question, we tested 982 herds, totalling 29,521 cows, and thus showed an increase of over 100 per cent. on the previous year. These figures are being maintained with an ever-increasing volume of requests for herd testing.

The hon. member for Gympie made the statement that, unfortunately, the cotton

industry was not making the expansion that it should have made, but this year shows an increase in acreage of 43 per cent. over previous record crops; so that the Cotton Branch is doing very fine work in the expansion of the industry. It is true we have come face to face with some very great problems in connection with our cotton.

I am rather amused when I read in the English press, as reported in our own press, that Lancashire is taking very violent exception to the cotton policy of the Commonwealth Government. The facts are these: Here was an industry representing the investment of a great deal of capital, and the return to the grower was obviously not sufficient to maintain him on his holding; and it became necessary to readjust the Commonwealth fiscal policy in such a direction as to permit him to remain on that holding. That was what was done. Now the British Government, or a certain powerful section in that country, are taking the viewpoint that this is a violation of the Ottawa Agreement, inasmuch as the Commonwealth has readjusted its fiscal policy in order to build up an uneconomic industry. A moment's reflection will show that a country like Australia, and a State like Queensland, must quite obviously offer the fullest possible protection to an industry established within its borders. If it is true—and I challenge it—that we have engaged in an uneconomic policy through the Commonwealth in relation to cotton, and thereby we have violated the Ottawa Agreement, it occurs to me very forcibly that Britain has violated the Ottawa Agreement in respect of her cattle policy, which involves a subsidy of £3,000,000 to the producers there. We all know that the English cattle industry is not an economic industry if we measure it by the yardstick of economic production. The British Government desire to perpetuate the existing cattle industry in Britain. They agreed to give a subsidy of £3,000,000 in order to do so. The fact that that subsidy was necessary demonstrates conclusively that the cost of production was greater than the retail price; in other words, measured by the yardstick our critics have used, it was uneconomic production. Our problem was the same, and our solution was not vastly different. We must maintain our cotton industry, and is there a justification—assuming that we have violated Ottawa, and England has violated Ottawa—for the pot to call the kettle black? These agreements must be read with discretion, and read in conjunction with that recognised national sentiment that expresses itself in a desire to perpetuate existing land settlement and extend it wherever possible.

The hon. member for Gympie desired to know why an increase of £1,631 had been provided in respect of gratuities. The gratuities that are incumbent on the department to meet are in respect of Mr. Cheeseman, a very excellent officer with whom we are very sorry to part, £358; Mr. Watson, £350; Mr. McGrath, another very excellent officer whom it will be exceedingly difficult to replace, £477; Mr. Brooks, £280; Mr. Orr, £380; making a total of £1,825.

Mr. KENNY: A very foolish policy.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You continued it.

Mr. KENNY: We did not, we raised the retiring age to seventy.

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The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There is an addition of £675 for unexpected retirements owing to breakdowns. The hon. member for Gympie raised another interesting question. I know the personal implication in regard to it. I know there is an individual in the hon. member's electorate who is always telling the hon. member he has discovered a cure for this, that, and the other. He bombards me with letters. The tallest file in my department is the one that contains the letters written by that gentleman.

Mr. EDWARDS: He has broken a record.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He has. In every instance he asks the Government to give him some amount, a mere £5,000, sometimes £10,000, and sometimes £20,000 before he will disclose what he has to say. Recently he wrote to me and offered, if I gave him a job for twelve months, to work for £2 per week. The department is deluged with letters from people who believe they have discovered some remedy for some disease or pest. I will quote a case in point. Only yesterday I received a letter from a man who, I imagine, carelessly left a dose of patent medicine about because he was called away to attend to something else, and suddenly remembering that he had not taken the medicine, returned to discover a few fruit flies round the bottle.

Two or three were drowned in the medicine. The consequence was he immediately wrote to the department suggesting we should recompense him for this discovery, make arrangements with the people who were marketing this proprietary medicine and subsidise both the manufacturer and the discoverer. These are not isolated cases, they occur every day, and if I were to instruct my officers to investigate all these cases it would be impossible for them to do their legitimate work. Where the department has, under special circumstances, investigated these cases, or these alleged cures, it has been found that they have been based on wrong premises.

Mr. EDWARDS: There is a lot in your suggestion, but the same thing would be found out without investigation by your officers.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am not disposed to agree. I know, on the other hand, that many of the hon. member's suggestions have been investigated and have been found to be like these alleged cures. The thing occurs in any vegetable, pathological or insect control. Up goes the stock of cures and this produces another very prolific crop of suggestions. Last session Parliament discussed a Veterinary Medicines Bill, which brought to light some most astounding things. It showed the farming community were being ruthlessly exploited in many directions, and it may gratify hon. members to know that at the last conference of Ministers of Agriculture every State in the Commonwealth undertook to place similar legislation on its statute book. We have eliminated the quacks. We have eliminated the sale of worthless preparations. From the volume of complaints I have received from the men whom we have refused to license—the men whose medicaments we have refused to appreciate—I believe that the Act is achieving its purposes in a very worthy manner.

Another hon. member suggested legislation for compulsory dehorning. I recognise the

value of that practice. I see one hon. member interested in cattle immediately paying particular attention to this matter. Hon. members have frequently told me that there should be no interference at all with the producer. I believe that a very valuable service would be given to the cattle industry of the State if all cattle were dehorned, and a very valuable addition to their practice would thus be embarked upon. Many do not agree with me. Cattlemen raise all kinds of difficulties in connection with dehorning, but I can assure hon. members that if a representative section of the industry is prepared to ask me to make regulations for dehorning and accept the responsibility for it I am prepared to give favourable consideration to that request.

Mr. KENNY: Leave them alone. Let them do it themselves if they desire to.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: "Let them do it themselves," is my attitude at the present time.

The hon. member for Isis raised some quite interesting points. The most interesting thing that I find in his contribution to the debate is his very frank statement that restriction was practised in the sugar industry. I do not know if I have correctly interpreted his remarks, but the impression I gained was that he asked: if restriction was to be practised in the sugar industry, why not practice restriction in other industries?

Mr. KENNY: Do you not believe in restriction in the sugar industry?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I will answer that question in my own way. It is quite obvious that the sugar industry regulates its own affairs. That industry has definitely embarked on a policy of restriction on account of the peculiar and particular circumstances surrounding it. If the industry had not embarked on that policy it would be extinct, and instead of having a virile white population in the North there would be military camps and machine guns. The sugar industry presents an entirely different problem from those associated with the general policy of restriction. I say quite definitely that we could not afford to associate ourselves with a policy of restriction. If we were to do so it would be a policy of national suicide. Australia, whatever the future may hold for her, is at the present time distinctly an agricultural country.

There cannot be any expansion in secondary industries until there has been an expansion in primary industries. I believe that the policies of all Governments should be in the direction of the adequate protection of all pastoral and agricultural endeavour, and falling in behind that there can be secondary development. I do not believe that there can be secondary development until there has been agricultural development, and in refraining from developing agriculture you are also refraining from developing secondary industries unless, of course, you engage in a punitive expedition, a policy of retaliation, which would say in effect "England has restricted our markets. Therefore, because our purchasing power in England has been restricted, we will build up secondary industries in this country to the extent of that restriction." If that were done, is it not obvious that in the final analysis the position would be worse than the existing one? Is it not obvious that England, instead of achieving her desire, would find herself still

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further handicapped in her pursuit of agricultural and economic restoration?

Mr. EDWARDS: So would we.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That may or may not be so, but I believe that we would.

Mr. KENNY: It is happening to-day.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I do wish that the hon. member for Cook would keep quiet. He has no knowledge of the equations that I am discussing. The position would be that Australia, whether she desired or not, would be obliged to embark upon a policy of retaliation and that would have a grave effect on both England and Australia, and a graver effect on the relationship of the two countries.

I am particularly amused—if one may be amused in respect of very serious questions of public import—about many matters that are advocated by people in our State. I do not wish to refer to individuals, but there have been suggestions that Australia should be prepared again to embark upon a policy of migration. There has already been some kite-flying in the matter. A policy of migration can be successful only if there is work for the people, if they can be satisfactorily and economically employed when they come here. Nobody wants to bring people from overseas to feed them at the expense of the residents of our State. That would be the maddest of mad policies. We hear quite a lot of talk about restriction of export, but what does restriction of export mean? It means the restriction of production, wrap it up in whatever chocolate coating you may, and restriction of production means that fewer people will be engaged in the processes of production than are engaged to-day. If we were forced to agree to any policy of restriction, how could England turn to us, and, through her ambassadors and representatives, suggest to us that we should co-operate in a policy of migration—which means expansion—bearing in mind that agricultural expansion is the only expansion possible at the present time and at the same time contract the use of our agricultural resources? The two questions present a paradox that cannot be resolved. I believe that in the final adjustment England will have to recognise that a policy of restriction will have a grave effect upon her domestic and international policies and also a grave effect on Australia. Personally, I am entirely opposed to restriction. I can see no future for Australia but a primary-producing future, and because I believe that primary production must be encouraged and must be developed, and because I believe that our boys are better employed in agricultural pursuits than they are in graduating in the most vicious of all schools—the street corner—or being participants in the bounty of the State, equally demoralising—

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Because I believe these things I earnestly hope that the policy of the Commonwealth Government and the policy of the Imperial Government will be on all-ours with the policy of this Government, which means a vigorous expansion of agricultural endeavour, a vigorous development of all our lands, a vigorous expansion of our population, and a recognition of the fact that we can only survive by a vigorous progressive

agricultural policy. If the day ever comes—I hope that it will not—that Australia is told that she must restrict her primary production, then I believe that day will sound the death knell of the cordial relationship that exists at the present time between Great Britain and the Commonwealth. To me restriction of primary production appears to be unthinkable.

Mr. WIENHOLT: Then why restrict the export of stud rams?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member has got on to quite another question. It is not involved in the matter we are dealing with, but I will deal with it if the Temporary Chairman permits me. The export of rams is entirely under the control of the Commonwealth Government. The Commonwealth Government reviewed the position. What was it? Our pioneers, men of vision and thought—not fatheaded men—pioneered the sheep industry and built it up to its present greatness. They realised that adjustments and continual care were necessary in order to evolve that magnificent type of merinos we now have, and to evolve a distinctive wool such as is found in no other part of the world. They discovered in that process that only merinos could be raised in certain areas. Over 150 years of conscious effort, sometimes meeting with success, sometimes meeting with adversity, sometimes encountering fire, flood, and tempest, these pioneers proceeded to develop their industry and evolve a type of sheep that could only be raised on the plains of Central Queensland and corresponding territory in other parts of the Commonwealth. It is our heritage—a heritage handed down to us from our forefathers and fathers. It is a heritage that we are justified in protecting. Then jealousy entered into the industry, and other nationals looked at our 60's, 64's, and 66's merinos and said, "We can grow these in our land." They proceeded to purchase, not only our choicest merinos, but also to obtain our stud masters. They did not rely on their own individual effort. The people in these countries discovered that there was a perpetual retrogression in wool counts over a number of years. For instance, a sheep going over 66 when it left Australia deteriorated in two or three years to 60's. I believe there were instances when merinos deteriorated below the 60 count, actually as low as 56. So it became obvious that they came to Australia and asked Australia to bolster up an industry that they could not maintain themselves. In view of all those circumstances, Australia was eminently justified in saying, "You have our stock; we have evolved our types; these types are the result of 150 years' work, and we are not prepared to give you, our most formidable competitor, the result of our work."

Mr. SPARKES: The breeders did not say that; the politicians said that.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The people who were betraying the Australian wool industry by selling our sheep overseas, and the would-be advisers of the Australian Government, were the men who were reaping material benefits for themselves. Ask the woolgrowers to-day, not the men who were exporting, but the men engaged in the industry for the production of wool, whether they want the embargo raised or not. They will definitely and emphatically

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assure us that they do not desire the embargo lifted. Nor should it be lifted.

The hon. member for Mirani raised a very interesting point, and one which interests me as a western member as well as in my capacity as Secretary for Agriculture. The conservation of fodder is one of the most important questions that can be discussed in this Committee. We have discussed it for years. We have never, however, succeeded in interesting the farmer in any material degree in it. The question can reasonably be asked whether the farmer did not conserve fodder through neglect or ignorance, or whether he regarded it as being uneconomic in the long run.

Mr. EDWARDS: It is more difficult than you think.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I know how difficult it is. I have reviewed it from every angle. If the farmer desires knowledge in the conservation of fodder, he should first get technical guidance and direction from my department, and then finance, if he requires it, from the Agricultural Bank.

The hon. member for Cook raised the question of the stabilisation of butter. I do not know why he should do so. At least, he must be satisfied with the stabilisation of butter that is in operation.

Mr. KENNY: What did I say about it?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member said very little about it except that we had accomplished stabilisation in the negative sense. Does the hon. member regard stabilisation as a permanent achievement?

Mr. KENNY: What did I say?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is what I want to know; what does the hon. member think about it? The hon. member also said that we were not herdstesting at Kairi. We are.

A very important question has been raised by various hon. members—the question of farm schools and farm training. Bearing in mind, as one must, that agriculture is most important to the development of a State and must be most jealously guarded, I am at a total loss to understand any hostility to any scheme that plans the training of boys. Hon. members opposite have criticised the St. Lucia farm training school. I know of no hon. member opposite who has visited St. Lucia. St. Lucia is only three miles from town, and we have the queer position of hon. members opposite criticising the school and never having been there to inspect the work that is being done. I have sufficient faith in the St. Lucia school and in the work being done there to extend a courteous invitation to any member of the Opposition, including the most ardent opponent of boy training, to come with me and see the work that is being done. I am quite prepared to place every facility at the disposal of hon. members, because I believe St. Lucia is doing work of very great importance. That school was established with the idea of training boys who had no other opportunity to learn the rudiments of agriculture. We do not attempt to train boys in the higher branches of the calling, but we do not send a boy out to a farm until he can milk a cow, harness a

horse, and plough and harrow at least in a straight line.

Mr. EDWARDS: Why should he not learn that on a farm?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I shall tell the hon. member why sometimes the boy does not. In the first place the parental equation has to be considered—we have parents who would agree to send their boys to such a school, but who would not agree to send them direct to a farm. But another and even more important phase has to be considered. A raw town boy goes out to a farm. Probably he has never had his hand on a horse or cow. The farmer says, "Bob, catch that horse and bring it up here." Down Bob goes and his employer calls out, "Throw the harness on him"—it never occurs to the farmer that Bob could not harness a horse. You see, the farmer has been doing that all his conscious life, but when the raw town boy comes on the farm and cannot do these things he is regarded as useless by the farmer, whose life is so full that he has neither the time nor the patience to teach the boy, and the boy becomes discouraged at the continual rebuffs he gets. Let me give a case in point. Recently in a local hospital I sat alongside the bed of a boy who had taken a bottle of poison. The employer sent the boy to kill a sheep, but the boy being inexperienced could not kill the sheep properly, and the employer was obviously irritated because the boy had butchered the sheep instead of killing it properly. Two or three other little happenings of that nature caused the boy to become dispirited and downhearted, and he swallowed poison and nearly lost his life. That may be regarded as an isolated example or an extreme case.

It certainly is, but it has established the fact that it is better that a boy should have some preliminary knowledge of agriculture before he goes out to the hurly-burly of farm life. I do not say that I agree with everything that has been said by hon. members on this side of the Committee or on the other side of the Committee. Some suggestions have been made that the farmer is a pretty poor type to work for and he is not prepared to pay decent wages. There are black sheep in every fold. I frankly admit there are farmers who sweat boys; but that type of individual is not peculiar to the farming industry. My experience is that the average farmer treats the boy who is working for him with decency, and fathers him if he has come to the bush for the first time. If I had a boy I wanted to place in a position, and the alternative to placing him on a farm was to place him in a city industry, I would unhesitatingly place him on a farm. The St. Lucia boys are particularly well circumstanced. We have many requests from employers to send boys and we are able to check up the individual. We could place three times the number of boys that go through St. Lucia. Farmers repeatedly write and tell us they will not take boys who know nothing; they require boys who are relatively useful from the start. They have not the time, inclination, or patience to train them. Owing to the big volume of applications we are able to sort them out and ask our officers to make inquiries as to the individual and the type of farm and the salary the boy will receive, and when the boy does go out we keep in touch with him as far as possible. I have

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here a voluminous file of letters from boys who were trained at St. Lucia.

Mr. SPARKES: Do you think it could be justly said that a boy was sweated if he were being paid £2 a week?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: If the boy were getting £2 a week and his keep, and was not compelled to work the clock round, and was given proper time for recreation and proper meal times, I would say £2 a week and keep—if the hon. member means that—

Mr. SPARKES: Of course.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I consider that would be an excellent wage for a boy, provided other things were equal.

Mr. KENNY: How many hours do you think would be a reasonable number for him to be asked to work per day?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member knows one cannot answer a question in relation to hours; and he is not going to induce me to enter into an argument along those lines. Hon. members, however, must not think that I believe the average boy going out to a farm gets £2 a week. The average boy who goes out, if he has satisfactory corresponding conditions, and is not worked under starlight or compelled to hurry over meals and that sort of thing, and gets reasonably humane treatment—

Mr. SPARKES: That class of employer is the exception.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That type of employer was the exception but unfortunately some of that type still exist. We do not send boys from St. Lucia to that type of employer if we are aware of his characteristics. If hon. members will work it out, the average wage will be found to be somewhere in the vicinity of 15s. a week, and allowing 15s. a week as the value of his keep, the total amounts to 30s. a week. He has no tram fares to pay. He gets up on the job and goes to bed on the job; and he is usually treated as a member of the farmer's family. The decent type of farmer—and there are many thousands in the State—sits him down at his own table and treats him as a member of his own family if he is a decent type of lad. That is the usual experience I have had, and I believe that is the general practice.

Mr. SPARKES: Some Government members do not think so.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Hon. members are entitled to their views. It is true I do know cases similar to those referred to by one hon. member, but I am not going to say that one swallow makes a summer, and I am not going to disparage the average farmer—who is a decent sort of a chap—because there is a scallawag who also is farming. I mean the scallawag who exploits labour whether it be boy labour or other labour. It seems to me that the healthy life of the average farmer, a boy getting the equivalent of 30s. a week, not requiring to dress elaborately, having to pay no train or tram fares, participating in the recreations of the family, going to town quite frequently in the slacker periods, is more advantageously circumstanced than is the boy of the city. I believe that if parents would realise their responsibilities in this regard and remember that sooner or later they would have to part from their boys in

order that the latter may seek employment, if they would realise the value of an institution such as that at St. Lucia where boys are trained in the rudiments of agriculture and from which they are found jobs with suitable and satisfactory employers, they would be less disinclined to send their boys into rural pursuits. I would say to parents that the alternative to sending their boys into rural pursuits is a life not consecrated to its full value in the cities of the Commonwealth.

The hon. member for Cook made some reference to development of lands in the Cooktown area. I wish he would come to my office and tell me where those lands are to be found. I failed to discover them during a week's sojourn in Cooktown.

Mr. KENNY: I will do that.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I should be pleased to know. I was unable to find any real agricultural land.

Mr. KENNY: They took you out in a motor car.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I was a hero to travel by motor car on some of the roads I went over.

Mr. KENNY: Will the hon. gentleman tell us something about the Kairi College whilst he is on this vote?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I will tell the hon. member that later. I now desire to discuss a very important question which has been ventilated on both sides of the Committee—margarine.

Mr. MAHER: It is a double day to-day. You are making a marathon effort.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: When hon. members discuss a vote for three days surely they do not expect me to reply in an hour! Of course, if the hon. member does not want to know something about margarine I am quite willing to refrain from telling him.

Mr. MAHER: I am only admiring your effort!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Margarine has been the subject of a very long debate in this Chamber. The hon. member for West Moreton advocated the total prohibition of the manufacture or sale of margarine. During the last Government there was an opportunity for him to achieve that end, but it was not taken and there must have been some reason why the late Government refused to agree to the request for the total suppression of the sale of margarine that was then being made. Hon. members must not confuse two issues. There are margarines and margarines. One is the product of animal fat and is quite an excellent commodity. It contains vitamins and in fact is fairly palatable and a fairly good foodstuff.

Mr. MAHER: It is in no way comparable with butter.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It is in no way comparable with butter, I will admit, but the food unit value of animal margarine and the food unit value of butter are fairly well balanced, that is, if butter were 1s. 6d. a lb. and good animal margarine 9d. a lb., 2 lb. of that margarine would be equal in food value to 1 lb. of butter. I have no quarrel with animal margarine. I believe it is essential. It makes a very material contribution to the

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welfare of the cattle industry. We ship our fats overseas and receive a high price for them. The abattoirs obtain a very good income from the sale of animal fat suitable for conversion into margarine. I do not think anybody is hostile to animal margarine, and I certainly would never do anything that would impede that contribution that it makes to the wellbeing of the meat industry. The hon. member in effect asks me to chop off the head of the industry. How many times have the hon. member and other hon. members in this Parliament told me that the Government should not interfere with private enterprise? The fetish of hon. members opposite seems to be to sustain private enterprise, no matter what the result might be. Time after time every hon. member opposite has preached the doctrine of the sacredness of private enterprise.

Mr. KENNY: Quite right, and a very sound doctrine, too.

**THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE:** The hon. member for Cook is at variance with his colleague, the hon. member for West Moreton, who comes into this Chamber and says, in effect, "Never mind the beef cattle men, they do not count. I represent a dairying constituency; therefore interfere with private enterprise and wipe out the margarine industry and all that it stands for." I have dealt with the animal margarine, and I now propose to deal with the vegetable margarine, which falls under two headings—the margarine manufactured from the products of Queensland and the margarine manufactured from oils that are imported. The hon. member for West Moreton wants me to wipe out this margarine, in addition to the animal margarine. Let me deal first with margarine manufactured from oils produced in Queensland. The hon. member will admit that the cotton industry has been in a rather parlous condition for a number of years. The late Government asked their Secretary for Agriculture to investigate the cotton industry, and I think that, as a result, he recommended that the Government should make available a sum of £15,000 for the actual sustenance of the people engaged in it. The cotton industry requires all the assistance and all the bolstering up it is possible to give it without exceeding economic bounds. Last year the cotton industry sold 400 tons of cotton seed oil to the margarine industry.

Mr. MAHER: Only a mere bagatelle compared with the tonnage of butter.

**THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE:** The proceeds went into the pockets of the people engaged in the production of cotton. The cotton industry is an expanding industry, and cotton seed oil has a food value. Is the hon. member going to suggest that I should wipe out a source of income to the cotton people, who are in a parlous position?

Mr. MAHER: The greatest good for the greatest number!

**THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE:** Would the hon. member preach that doctrine if he were representing a cotton constituency? He shrugs his shoulders. Evidently geographical position determines politics in this Chamber and not the principle of the greatest good for the greatest number. Now let me come to the final consideration, that of vegetable margarine manufactured by a

precipitation from coconut oil. Can we prevent that? Suppose that I did introduce legislation designed to prevent that. What is to prevent the factories engaged in the manufacture of this type of vegetable margarine from utilising their Queensland factories to supply Sydney and utilising Sydney factories to supply Brisbane? I am sure that the hon. member is aware of section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution, which provides that there shall be unrestricted trade between the various States of the Commonwealth. We could not close our borders to margarine manufactured in New South Wales, nor could New South Wales close its borders to margarine manufactured in Queensland. My view in connection with margarine is this: If the people want margarine, if there is a market for margarine, and margarine is sold at its food value, then the public should be entitled to the fullest possible protection, and they should know that they are buying margarine and not butter.

Mr. KENNY: How will you fix the food value in the price?

**THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE:** If the hon. member knew anything about computing values he would know how easily they are computed. It should not be our policy to declare a vendetta against margarine. We should not endeavour to eliminate any desirable forms of margarine, but we should endeavour to eliminate those undesirable forms that have crept into the industry. Perhaps the butter industry itself, relying on its own resources, may be able to make a very excellent contribution to the solution of the problem. It is obvious that we can go no further than we have gone. There has been no loophole in my administration of the Margarine Acts. We cannot deal with the question except on a Commonwealth basis. If the Commonwealth are prepared to do something in the matter then we are prepared to discuss it with the other States concerned. Do not hon. members think that the butter industry itself may be able to do something in this regard? The butter industry fears that vegetable margarines are a dangerous substitute for butter, and I agree with that contention, with certain qualifications. Certain vegetable margarines are a dangerous substitute for butter, and are barren foods, because we do not know the value of some of the foodstuffs. I have seen an advertisement stating, "This margarine is a particularly good foodstuff, because its calorific value is so high." To the housewife that might mean that it has a high food value, and therefore it deceives her. If this margarine is so injurious to the butter trade, and if it can be demonstrated that it is injurious to the butter trade, is it not the bounden duty of the butter trade to point out the merits of its commodity, the food value, and, above all, the vitamins it contains, and thus influence public opinion in favour of butter and against margarine? That would restore the lost prestige of the butter trade, if any has been lost. The sales of margarine have not materially affected the sales of butter. If they have materially affected the sales of any commodity, it is dripping. The sales of butter have maintained a fairly constant average.

Mr. MAHER: Do you think that any blending of butter with margarine is going on?

[Hon. F. W. Bulcock.]

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member for West Moreton was a member of a Government who bequeathed to me the Margarine Act Amendment Act to administer. I have not proposed its repeal. The Act provides a penalty in the event of blending. I can assure the hon. member that quite frequently I press my button and send one of my senior officers off to look round the margarine trade. It never knows when we are descending on it. Our laboratory is continually making tests in an endeavour to confine margarine to its legitimate channels and not allow it to usurp the place of butter.

Mr. MAHER: Would you legislate to prevent margarine from being manufactured of a colour similar to the colour of butter?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That involves another difficulty, a difficulty which the hon. member should understand. It is not a question of colouration.

At 4.15 p.m.,

Mr. GLEDSON resumed the chair.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Let me outline the process which two or three years ago was not known in the margarine trade. It is a recent evolution. When the ex-Secretary for Agriculture passed his legislation this method of making margarine without casein, that is, without skimmed milk, was unknown. It will be remembered that the hon. member for Coorooora inserted a clause in his Bill which provided that skimmed milk could be added in certain quantities, indicating, at that time, that he had some knowledge of the new process that was coming along. That new process consists of two materials. Certain oils are taken and treated in a retort, and instead of skimmed milk being used certain other oils (which are imported) are used. These oils will bring about a precipitation, and in converting these two classes of oils a margarine of a golden yellow colour is produced. That is a very difficult matter to deal with. The Commonwealth have taken counsel's opinion on the matter. Hon. members will recollect that at the Premiers' Conference the year before last I moved a resolution on the lines that the hon. member for West Moreton suggests—that margarine should be coloured distinctively. Every State agreed to this distinctive colouration of margarine. The matter was referred to the Commonwealth, which, through some process I do not profess to understand, found some excise difficulties in the way. The colouring of margarine is not artificially obtained, and its colour is due to a certain process of manufacture. That being so, it was held that no action could follow. I understand that many States in the Commonwealth are discussing this matter with the Commonwealth Government. At the present time letters are passing between the Commonwealth Government and myself. I do not know what the result of these negotiations will be, but it is quite obvious that I cannot, and would not at this juncture, introduce legislation prohibiting the manufacture of margarine in Queensland and thus deprive some of our people engaged in the industry of work. That would also automatically throw the doors open to the manufacturers in the South to send their margarine on to our market. The question is one bristling with difficulties and has to be considered cautiously.

Mr. MAHER: Have you investigated the legal question whether we can prohibit the sale of margarine in this State?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That cannot be done. The hon. member should look at the interpretation of section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution given in a recent judgment of the High Court which goes much further than the hon. member suspects. What it really does is to affirm the bald principle of section 92 of the Constitution, that there shall be no restriction of trade between the various States of the Commonwealth. So far as the implication of the judgment goes, actually quarantine restrictions have been questioned in relation to that judgment.

Mr. MAHER: Could we not legislate that margarine must not be sold in competition with butter?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: In the case of margarine from the Southern States, it is quite obvious that we should be acting in restraint of trade if we legislated in that way, and the person or firm supplying the margarine would immediately seek an injunction against us. It is no good for us laymen endeavouring to solve this problem. I have had the most experienced counsel in the Commonwealth advising me on the matter, and I am not prepared to set their advice on one side and say that I can "buck" the Commonwealth Constitution, because that is what the hon. member is really asking me to do. Neither he nor I—neither this Parliament nor our courts—have power to do so.

The hon. member for Nanango made some reference to tick control. That is being pursued steadily and satisfactorily, and there is no reason to believe that the policy laid down is not giving the result that we desire.

Mr. WIENHOLT: Have you still got that wonderful tick council?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Does the hon. member mean the Commonwealth Tick Council?

Mr. WIENHOLT: Yes.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes; I am not in any way associated with it.

Mr. WIENHOLT: It is worse than the Loan Council!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I should not be prepared to say that. When certain things happen and when the position is reversed, that tick council will find money for Queensland, and it may be worth while keeping a kindly eye on it for that purpose.

The hon. member for Wide Bay raised the question of the value of science in agriculture. I entirely agree, and congratulate him on his conversion. The matter of maize prices which he raises is an exceedingly difficult one, and I think the hon. member for Cook and the hon. member for Fassifern would perhaps get me out of a long intricate economic argument by saying that the law of supply and demand is the determining factor in that regard.

The hon. member for Carnarvon and the hon. member for Murrumba made reference to the distribution of veterinary surgeons, remarking that it was not desirable that they should be centred in Brisbane. The limitation imposed by number is the only

*Hon. F. W. Bulcock.*]



reason why they have been centred in Brisbane ever since there has been a Department of Agriculture. Recently, however, we have decentralised our veterinary surgeons, having stationed one in Toowoomba, and in the near future we intend to station one at Rockhampton and one at Townsville.

I am glad that the hon. member for Murrumbidgee has raised the question of budding trees, and I shall rely on his loyalty when this question is raised, as it is being raised. It has been construed in the Southern States that I introduced this bud wood scheme in order to exclude stocks from the South. I know, as every other hon. member interested in the fruit industry knows, that stocks were condemned in Queensland. I got sick and tired of telling my officers to take possession of stocks; then the firms who had forwarded the stocks would protest, and, in order to satisfy myself, I would have the stocks brought to Brisbane. At times I have seen my office littered with stocks that one would not plant, and it did become necessary to protect the grower. On the one hand, we knew the prices being charged for these stocks did not indicate that they were stocks from selected trees. In other words, undesirable stocks were being dumped here. The man who embarks on the founding of an orchard waits six or seven years before he knows definitely what trees he has. Think of the unscrupulous nurserymen who would condemn an unfortunate man to six or seven years of incessant toil, only to find at the end of that time that he had been sold trees that had not been budded from a free-bearing prolific forebear. These consequences were experienced in many instances throughout Queensland.

We have to protect our fruitgrowers. To protect our fruit culture Mr. Barnes evolved a scheme and to him must be given the credit for enunciating the most advanced budding scheme in existence in Australia. I sent Mr. Barnes to the other States to tell them what they wanted to know. At a later date the Ministers for Agriculture in the other States raised the question in conference and I again had to tell them myself what the position was. Our scheme does not aim at the exclusion of satisfactory stocks from the South, but it does aim at the preservation of the standard we are setting in Queensland, and we cannot agree to depart from that standard at the behest of merchants and others in the Southern cities of the Commonwealth. I think that is the position and I hope the hon. member will stand behind the scheme and point out to those people that this scheme is one that probably means the preservation of many of our citrus producers in our State.

Mr. NICKLIN interjected.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The fruitgrowers are realising it now. The fruitgrowers are not opposed to it when they know what it means. When I first introduced the scheme, the Director of Fruit Culture on many occasions came to my room and discussed the matter with me and he was a bit doubtful about the reception it was getting and would get. That indicates the value of the educative process and the progress that can be made in an advocacy of something that is essentially worth while in the primary industries of our State.

The hon. member also raised the question of the Mandarin Growers Relief Bill passed

[Hon. P. W. Bulcock.

in the Federal Parliament. I was sufficiently interested to send for a copy of the Act referred to. It is the shortest I have seen. I wish this Chamber passed measures like it. The governing condition is that Queensland gets £935 as against £8,515 for New South Wales, and Western Australia gets £126! The clause upon which we depend for distribution is as follows:—

“Any money granted to a State under this Act shall be so granted upon condition that it is applied by the State for the benefit and assistance of growers of mandarins.”

That is a very broad charter. I should be happy if the hon. member would discuss the matter with me in my office. I think it is a very small sum but it may reasonably be used in a desirable direction. The hon. member's suggestion as to the way in which it may be used is perhaps not the best. A bounty has been made necessary owing to excess production. They are talking about destroying the trees in the South. Does the hon. member suggest we should use the money, which I believe has been made available to assist the people who do not get a satisfactory income, so that at some future time they may have a satisfactory income? The question I would have to raise with the Commonwealth Government would be in regard to whether this money is to be used for some prospective achievement or whether it was to be used for the immediate alleviation of cases of distress.

Mr. NICKLIN: The position of the mandarin grower in the Southern States is different from his fellow in Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is a matter I will discuss with the Commonwealth Government.

The hon. member for Hamilton raised the question, amongst others, of the restriction of bounties. He said the peanut growers were satisfied with the protection they were getting. On the other hand I recall what the hon. member for Rockhampton said, and I agree that they are not satisfied with the protection they are getting. I can quote instances of where peanuts have been dumped on wharves in the various capital cities in the Commonwealth at £12 5s. a ton, which means less than ½d. a lb. to the unfortunate Chinese growers. Our growers find it most difficult to compete with these importations, and the prevention of dumping is obviously necessary.

Mr. EDWARDS: You should be fair and admit, as the hon. member for Rockhampton admitted, that much of those peanuts were brought in by the Peanut Board.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am prepared to admit that. I admitted that by way of interjection to the hon. member for Hamilton. I will tell the Committee the facts. At my suggestion the Peanut Board asked that they should control the importation of peanuts. In the early stages it did control the importation of peanuts, but something went awry and it did not continue to exercise that control.

Mr. KENNY: It asked for the importation.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It asked for the importation of 200 tons.

The final question that I desire to deal with is that which was raised repeatedly

during this debate. Our progress in the chilled beef industry is going to be limited by the Imperial Government. There is no doubt that there is an atmosphere of uncertainty in the minds of cattle growers at the present time. That can be seen everywhere. We know we shall be able to have continuity of supplies. We do not require visitors to tell us that we can get continuity of supplies—that is obvious—but cattle-growers generally at the present juncture are not prepared to acquire the stock that will give us this continuity of supplies, the quick maturing of the early yearling carcass, and until we receive a definite pronouncement we are handicapped in that direction. I think some tribute should be paid to the people who pioneered this industry. At one time it was a mere vision. Later we were told we could not do it. Continuously it was said that it could not be done. Drs. White and Vickery were detailed to do special research work, and after a number of investigations they finally decided that it could be done. It is being done, and only this morning I received a report on the last shipment that reached London, and that report indicates that the meat sold at prices comparable with Argentine and Brazilian prices. It is a very excellent tribute to our Australian people, who have been engaged in this research work, that they were able to evolve this process when other countries, seeing the failure of frozen meat, have evacuated the citadel and left us to our own resources. We have to-day pioneered an industry that is worthy of consideration. That industry in Australia is associated with experimental work in stock feeding and in fact with every phase of agriculture; from the time the calf is dropped in the Gulf country till it is brought to the pastures here for fattening purposes, passes to the abattoir and so to the foreign consumer. We have given special attention, in association with the abattoirs management, to this question.

Mr. EDWARDS: Yet you condemned it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I never condemned that.

Mr. EDWARDS: Of course you did. Read your speech.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member says I condemned it. That seems to be very specious. Will the hon. member turn up my condemnation? Let me recall to mind what I did do in regard to these abattoirs. I think if I were confronted with the same position to-day I should make exactly the same remarks and cast my vote in precisely the same direction. Let us recall what I did say. I said, in the first place, that I believed that abattoirs should be a municipal undertaking. I said I believed in the establishment of abattoirs in the way that abattoirs were established in other big cities of the world, under municipal control. I visualised this—that we pledged the credit of the State to acquire those abattoirs.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: In the interests of the State.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member says "in the interests of the State." Allow me to put the other equation. Suppose the abattoirs were a failure—there were people in the State who would never eat meat treated in the abattoirs—was it not, therefore, obvious that a charge

was being inflicted on people who would gain no benefit from it? And I believe that the people who gain a benefit from a thing should make a contribution to it.

Mr. KENNY: Do they not?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Therefore, I still maintain that the abattoirs should have been a municipal enterprise, but I am not narrow-minded enough to refuse to give credit to the abattoirs for the very excellent work they have done. I say, and I have said in public, that the abattoirs made the most material contribution to the wellbeing of the meat industry of Queensland of any single unit of organisation that has ever functioned in Queensland, but they would have made that contribution had they been on a municipal basis instead of on the basis on which they are at the present time.

Mr. KENNY: No, they would not.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Would they not function in precisely the same way? And the undue risk inflicted on the people would have been avoided. The day is not very far distant when claims for other abattoirs will be put forward and we shall have to consider the question *de novo*. Hon. members know, and have always known, in spite of what they may say to the contrary, that my opposition to the abattoirs was not opposition to abattoirs as abattoirs, but was an opposition to the financial policy that the Government adopted for the acquisition of these works. Now, I would ask the hon. member who interjected to turn up my speeches in "Hansard" on this question.

Mr. MAXWELL: The policy outlined was for the continuance of a supply of meat free from disease.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is true, and that is their justification from my viewpoint. The main function of abattoirs is to secure an adequate disease-free meat supply. That is why I advocated the establishment of abattoirs long before they were acquired by the Moore Government.

There is just one other question that I should like to touch upon, and I am sorry that the hon. member for Dalby is not in the Chamber just at the moment. He made reference to two or three bulls that were imported and died at Yeerongpilly. He also said that the present management was less efficient than the past management.

Mr. MOORE: We are not allowed to discuss that.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I think it is unfair that a statement in condemnation of one of my valued officers should go out to the people of the State without my being given an opportunity to state the facts. I do not ask for an opportunity to discuss the matter. This man is a very valued officer of mine, a man who is doing very good work in this State. The hon. member for Dalby said that the cattle mortality had increased very considerably during the time that this person, Mr. Rudd, was in charge. I rang up Mr. Rudd, and asked him to give me the mortality figures for the final year under Mr. Pound's control.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The Minister will not be in order in discussing that matter on this vote. It can be dealt with on another vote.

*Hon. F. W. Bulcock.]*

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am sorry that I am not allowed to discuss the matter. I do not wish to challenge your ruling, Mr. King, but it is unfortunate that the hon. member for Dalby should be prepared to make statements in this Chamber that disparage the work of this valued officer. I have in the file in my hand a complete answer to all the statements that he made.

Mr. MOORE: Can you understand why he reported that the bull was doing well after it had been dead for two days?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Who did that?

Mr. MOORE: Your officer.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is not so.

Mr. MOORE: That is so.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is not so, and the hon. member knows that it is not so. I have with me all the reports on the matter, and that report does not appear on the file. If the bull was reported as doing very well two days after it was dead—

Mr. SPARKES: It was dead two days before. (Laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: If it was reported as doing very well two days before it was dead, then it probably was doing very well two days before.

Mr. SPARKES: Do you know that the insurance companies will not insure the bulls there now?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: If I were permitted I could tell the hon. member the rotten story that lies behind that, and the coercion on the part of certain people who endeavoured to induce me to do something that was wrong.

Mr. SPARKES: Give me a chance—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I will give the hon. member a chance, and I will also tell him that certain people wanted me to do something that was improper and wrong, and that was the whole difficulty.

Mr. SPARKES: They won't take the risk.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: If I cannot discuss it, then I cannot discuss it.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I cannot permit the debate to develop into a dialogue. Hon. members are becoming altogether too unruly. I have already ruled that the matter cannot be discussed on this vote, and any interjections concerning the subject are also out of order.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I very much appreciate the high opinions that have been expressed by hon. members concerning the officers of my department. I express the hope that the department will continue to function in the way that it has functioned—

Mr. SPARKES: Then God help the cattlemen!

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: And that it will continue to make the excellent contributions that it is making to the welfare of the agriculturists of this State.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

[Hon. F. W. Bulcock.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*) [4.40 p.m.]: Mr. Gledson—

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

Mr. SWAYNE: Mr. Gledson, I inquired of your predecessor in the chair what time I had left, and he said that I had eight minutes to go.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member has exhausted his time, according to the time record book.

Item (Department of Agriculture—Chief Office) agreed to.

#### CHEMICAL LABORATORY.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, *Barcoo*) [4.41 p.m.]: I move—

“That £5,847 be granted for ‘Chemical Laboratory.’”

The amount asked for this year is £504 in excess of the appropriation last year, the whole of the increase being on account of salaries.

Mr. WALKER (*Cooroora*) [4.42 p.m.]: There is one point in connection with the Chemical Laboratory, I should like made plain. I do not know whether there is any co-ordination between the soil surveyor who was appointed some years ago and the Chemical Laboratory. The soil surveyor was appointed by the late Government through the Waite Institute. At that time we thought a soil survey was a very good proposition, particularly in connection with soils that had become more or less used. We also recognised that a soil surveyor should be able to report from time to time through the “Queensland Agricultural Journal” upon new land, in order to let farmers know what this land could grow. It was also thought that the soil surveyor could be utilised by farmers who had doubts as to the possibilities of their soils for production of certain crops. Is there any co-ordination between that departmental officer and the Chemical Laboratory, whereby assays and analyses of various soils can be made with a view to seeing exactly what can be done with them? I do not know whether the idea is a practical one or not, but I believe it would be, considering that the department has greater accommodation. The chemical branch, especially in the early days, was cramped for room. The work of that branch requires close attention not only in the day-time, but also at night-time, in order to ensure that certain methods are continued. The Chemical Laboratory is under a very able officer, and the Minister might inform me whether these services to the farmer can be carried out, and at what cost. Is it possible that these services can be obtained almost free? At the present time the farmers are doing an enormous amount of experimental work of their own, and cannot afford to pay £1 ls. or £2 2s. for soil analyses.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, *Barcoo*) [4.45 p.m.]: Two officers are engaged in the soil survey work—Mr. King, to whom the hon. member has referred, and Mr. Carter. Both these officers are now engaged in soil survey work, a large proportion of the chemical side of that work being done in the Chemical Laboratory, Brisbane. Mr. King has been

stationed at Bundaberg for some time, and a fair share of his soil analysis is done in the laboratory at Bundaberg. This work does not entail any cost to the farmer and there is close co-ordination between the Chemical Laboratory and the other officers of the department.

Mr. NICKLIN (*Murrumba*) [4.46 p.m.]: The methods of testing lime-sulphur spray by the department is not one that shows the true efficacy of the spray. The year before last considerable difficulty was experienced by orchardists in my district because the departmental tests gave one result, and the practical tests showed that the spray involved was of no value whatever. I suggest that instead of testing the lime-sulphur spray on the Baume principle the percentage of sulphur in it be utilised as the standard. With the Baume test salt can easily be used to increase the gravity of the spray solution, whereas if the sulphur content were made the standard the growers would be assured that the spray they used would do the job effectively.

Item (Chemical Laboratory) agreed to.

#### COTTON INDUSTRY.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE  
(Hon. F. W. Bulcock, *Barcoo*): I move—

“That £8,472 be granted for ‘Cotton Industry.’”

Mr. FOLEY (*Normanby*) [4.47 p.m.]: I wish to take the opportunity on this vote to pay a compliment to the officers in charge of this sub-department. The amount of work, particularly field work, performed by these officers no doubt tends to increase the remuneration of the cotton-grower in the future. Although I have not visited the Biloela Experimental Station, I have heard very pleasing reports of the authorities in charge and have also read some rather interesting reports of farmers who have visited that research station and taken advantage of the advice given by the management, not only in regard to cotton culture but also in reference to the cultivation of grasses suitable for that district.

The cotton industry, particularly in the Dawson Valley, Callide Valley, and Burnett districts, has assumed very large proportions, and, notwithstanding the setback it received as a result of a succession of bad seasons, which tested the average farmer almost to the limit of his patience, the industry has come to stay in those districts. Assistance is being rendered by the Government in the form of farmers' relief, and there is no question that with one or two favourable seasons, plus the assistance that is being rendered by the Director of Cotton Culture and his field officers, considerable benefit will be achieved. New varieties of cotton have been introduced. It is most interesting to read the articles contributed by the Director of Cotton Culture, Mr. Wells, published in the “Central Telegraph,” which circulates in the Callide Valley. No doubt similar information is circulating in the Dawson Valley and Burnett districts. Certain it is that if these articles are studied by the average farmer they will go a long way towards helping him to become more successful in the cultivation of cotton in future.

I have already mentioned the difficulties of the cotton-grower, but no doubt as time

goes on, with some assistance from the Commonwealth authorities in regard to imported yarns that compete with Queensland cotton products, the industry will become stabilised. I have no desire to raise the political issue on this matter, which is one of immense importance to Queensland, and particularly to those who have expended all their savings and a considerable amount of labour in developing the industry, but it is a hardship on these people that the Commonwealth Government should have tinkered with the policy instituted by the Scullin Government, which had the effect of practically guaranteeing a price to the whole of the cotton crop of Queensland. The interference with the Scullin Government's policy in this matter created a panic in the cotton areas, and undermined the confidence of those who were trying to develop the industry successfully.

To-day we have to export much of our cotton overseas, whereas previously we had a definite guarantee of a price per lb. for raw cotton that was profitable to the farmer and enabled him to pay a satisfactory wage to the cotton-picker. Immediately the new policy was laid down by the Lyons Government what do we find? Confidence undermined and panic reigning in the cotton-growing districts, and it was not until considerable agitation was raised by the cotton-growers themselves that some modification of that policy took place, resulting in a little improvement in conditions. Even to-day the price the average cotton-grower is receiving through the Cotton Board is not equivalent to what he was receiving as a result of the policy adopted by the Scullin Government. It is to be hoped that the authorities will take a more sympathetic view and give consideration to the stabilising of this industry, or, at least, assist it to such an extent as will allow the farmers the stable price of somewhere about 5d. a lb. for raw seed cotton, and thus enable them to give the workers engaged in that industry fair remuneration in addition to enjoying some degree of security themselves. To a certain extent it would be a form of subsidy; but we are subsidising many other industries, and have done so previously, in order to enable them to get on their feet, and the least we can do is to assist this industry to become well established. Take the Callide Valley area as an illustration. In that district the settlers had not a fair opportunity to become established. The low price, combined with bad seasons, meant privation, not only to the farmers and their children, but everyone concerned in the industry. I feel confident that with sympathetic consideration by the Federal authorities, combined with the splendid work that is being done by the men in charge of the development of the cotton industry in this State under the Department of Agriculture, we shall have very little to fear in regard to this industry in the future.

Mr. WILLIAMS (*Port Curtis*) [4.58 p.m.]: The hon. member for Gympie, when speaking on the Chief Office vote, remarked that the industry was not progressing as one would like to see it progress. The hon. member is apparently not aware of the actual facts, because the industry is an expanding one. When speaking on the Chief Office vote I mentioned the fact that the output of cotton at the close of the present season was likely to be in the vicinity of

*Mr. Williams.]*

20,000 bales, representing a return to the grower and those associated with the by-products of that industry of something like £600,000. Those figures are slightly astray. I understand the output is likely to be somewhere near 18,000 bales, and the value will thus be lower than the amount I stated. The prospects in the cotton industry this season are much brighter than they have been of recent years. Up to the present the applications for seed compare favourably with those received at this time last season. A quantity of seed sufficient to grow 72,000 acres was applied for last year.

On looking at the vote I find the field assistants have been reduced by two, and the instructors in cotton culture increased by one. I should like to see the staff increased as much as possible in that sphere of operations, in the interests of the industry, particularly in view of the fact that the prospects during the coming season are so bright. An extra field expert to advise the cotton-growers in the State might be helpful.

I should like also to see the term of the relief grant extended. It should be longer than twelve months. At the present time the grant has to be returned at the end of twelve months, and an extension of time would be of great assistance to the grower himself and to his creditors, on whom he has to rely during the period that the crop is growing. I agree with the views put forward by the hon. member for Normanby, whose electorate adjoins mine. Our districts are the ones in which most of the cotton is grown. The authorities concerned might reasonably be expected to give as much assistance as possible so that the industry could be stabilised and the growers placed on a better footing than they are at the present time.

Mr. KENNY (*Cook*) [5.2 p.m.]: I was very interested to hear the remarks of the hon. member for Port Curtis. I recognise the cotton industry has a future in Queensland. When speaking on the Chief Office vote I suggested that experimental work should be undertaken in the Marceba district with the view to finding another crop that could be grown in conjunction with tobacco. The Minister has not replied to my suggestion, and therefore I again draw attention to the matter. I realise that if that part of Queensland is to be developed another primary industry must be developed with tobacco growing. Cotton appears to me to be a fitting subject for experimentation in that district. I consider that the hon. member for Port Curtis put forward some very good suggestions, but I desire to add another—the abolition of the rural award in the cotton industry. I do not for one instant consider that the award operating to-day is functioning in the interests of the cotton grower, and I would certainly abolish that award. If we want to develop our young industries we have to protect the people in those industries. The cotton industry is one that can be developed, but it will certainly not progress under the rural award at present operating. I should have liked the hon. member for Port Curtis to make that suggestion, because I realise it is one of the most vital things operating to-day to the detriment of the cotton grower. I should also like the Minister to express his views on this phase of the question. I understand that many people would grow

cotton in many parts of the State if they were assured they would not be brought under the rural award operating in that industry—the harvesting award.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not in order in discussing industrial awards under this vote.

Mr. KENNY: Mr. Gledson, I recognise the industrial award does not come under this vote, but the cotton growers have to put up with the award, and while we are seeking to develop cotton in this State and an award is operating in the districts affected by that industry I think I am justified in pointing it out to the Minister. I should like to have the viewpoint of the Minister on the effect of the award in this industry. If the Minister can say quite definitely that the award will not be continued for ever or for a long period, then we could hold out encouragement to the people to go ahead.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! That matter comes under the vote for the Department of Labour and Industry. The Estimates of that department will supply an opportunity for the hon. member to discuss it.

Mr. KENNY: I take it that if I am allowed to talk on the cotton industry anything detrimental to that industry may be discussed. However, I have raised my point, and I do not wish to come in conflict with your ruling, and I realise the Minister knows exactly what I mean, and the information I desire.

Mr. WALKER (*Cooroora*) [5.5 p.m.]: In connection with cotton growing, I would point out that some years ago, when the Scullin Government were in power, I as Secretary for Agriculture, with Mr. Webster, the present manager of the Queensland Cotton Board, negotiated with the Commonwealth Government and a bounty system was established. For the benefit of those hon. members who spoke on this system I should like to say that the agreement entered into expires during the present year. The cotton grower has never been on a better footing than at the present time. Considering the hardships encountered by the cotton growers in the Callide Valley and elsewhere, however, I think that a little more assistance might be extended to the growers. I am sure that the people of Australia would not object to paying an extra 6d. a shirt or any other garment so as to assist them to establish a virile population in various parts of the State. It is only fair to point out that at the present time the cotton growers are enjoying a wonderful season, the best season they have experienced for a number of years, and that they are also reaping the benefit of the economies following upon the acquisition of the gineries by the Cotton Board during the regime of the Moore Government. It is only fair also to point out that the net price to the grower has perhaps been increased by the manufacture of such by-products as cotton seed meal and cotton seed oil. I am satisfied that the net return to the grower would be reduced if these secondary industries ceased to operate.

During my time as Secretary for Agriculture I had to rely upon the advice of my officers regarding the varieties of cotton suitable for production in this State. I

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am not unmindful of the fact that these varieties were subject to very severe tests, and that even after the use of sulphuric acid it was possible for certain plant diseases to be introduced. I should like to know from the Minister if any diseases have been introduced with the new staple variety. Of course I realise that diseases will break out from time to time and that it is the duty of the department to isolate them. There is a great difference of opinion between the growers and the officers of the department as to whether the shorter staple should be produced. I should like to know the result of the tests so far carried out and in particular whether the Durango type is still the fashionable type.

I notice that the staff has been reduced by one officer. If my memory serves me right I believe that during my time a pathologist was appointed to assist the growers to combat various plant diseases and I feel bound to state that the work carried out at the experiment farm at Biloela was carried out in an excellent manner. I am satisfied that from the point of view of cleanliness, economy, and efficient supervision this farm could not be equalled by any other farm in the State. The work that has been carried out has been of considerable benefit to the cotton industry. I should like to know from the Minister what has been the result of the experiment, and in particular whether any dangerous diseases have been introduced with new types.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, *Barcoo*) [5.9 p.m.]: The experiment work suggested by the hon. member for Cook in the Mareeba and Dimbulah areas has been in operation for the past twelve months and an extensive series of new trials has been arranged for this year. We do intend to pursue a vigorous policy of cotton experimental work in the areas in which the hon. member is interested. He knows as well as I do that the Standing Orders will not permit me to discuss the incidence of the rural award on this vote. I hope that I can disabuse his mind of any conclusion that he may have that this award will be lifted from the industry.

Mr. KENNY: It will be continued?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Of course it will be continued. The hon. member for Cooroora has raised some more important questions. He desires to know what happened when we imported certain varieties of cotton. The position is that fashions have altered and that long staple cotton is no longer fashionable. The spinners were demanding medium staple cotton and the growers were demanding the big boll type. The department did excellent work in the evolution of the varieties, but its operations were not extensive enough nor had there been time to enable it to provide standardised varieties on a commercial plane. The Durango type was the fashionable cotton in the past, but as the ex-Secretary for Agriculture knows we encountered quite a lot of difficulty when the spinners said that they wanted a short staple variety. Rather than allow the spinners to complain to the Commonwealth Government that the Queensland cotton industry could not supply them with proper varieties of cotton, I made arrangements for the importation of such varieties as Mebane, Lone Star, and Cliett—satisfactory medium staple varieties—from America.

We imported several tons of seeds of these varieties and distributed them under quarantine conditions throughout the most appropriate parts of the State. I am glad to be able to say that during the last planting season we were able to release this seed from quarantine and embark on a most extensive policy in that connection. The yields have been satisfactory. The cotton has met the requirements of the cotton trade and has excited favourable comment. There has been a great deal of condemnation of the longer staple varieties, in favour of the Mebane, Cliett, and Lone Star varieties, which are being grown at the present time. Mr. Wells, who had charge of the importation of these seeds, made special arrangements and special precautions were taken. The seed was purchased from stud blocks in the United States of America. We got the very excellent cooperation of the Department of Agriculture of the United States Government, but it was like a game of chess to get the seeds out of the various States. Some States would not allow seed from one State where one particular disease existed to be carried through their territory. One State ordained it should be triple-bagged, while another State required the seed to travel along one road only. We practically had to rail the seed in a zig-zag fashion all round America before it could be got to a satisfactory port. We did it, and imported several tons on two occasions. That seed was duly treated in the way it should be treated with alcohol and sulphuric acid, and planted out in quarantine. The result was there was no sign of disease being introduced, or any new difficulties, and we certainly did succeed in giving the spinner the type of cotton he was clamouring for.

I take this opportunity in saying that the cotton staff have done excellent work in selecting the varieties required, making arrangements for their transfer to Queensland, and subsequently superintending the quarantine operations. All these steps were so thoroughly taken that no disease manifested itself in this State.

Item (Cotton Industry) agreed to.

#### DAIRY PRODUCE ACT.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, *Barcoo*) I move—

“That £17,238 be granted for ‘Dairy Produce Act.’”

Mr. WALKER (*Cooroora*) [5.15 p.m.]: The appropriation provides for one additional inspector. I do not think that appointment was necessary. When I was in charge of the department arrangements were being made whereby dairy inspectors should also do the duty of inspecting piggeries on dairy farms. That was with a view of cleaning up that side of the dairying. Is that being carried out? The cleaning up of piggeries attached to dairy farms would be beneficial to the industry. To-day I visit places which at times are far from nice. Expensive buildings are not required to keep pigs clean. The piggery and yards can be constructed out of bush timber, but it is a question of keeping the piggery clean with a view to eliminating disease. Most piggeries are kept about 100 yards from the dairy, although the Act says the distance must not be less than 50 yards. Clean piggeries reduce the possibility of any disease arising in the

*Mr. Walker.*]

dairy. Many of the duties of inspecting dairy farms can be carried out by one inspector. There is no occasion for two or three men to be engaged on inspectorial work on one farm. It can be done more efficiently and more economically by one man. I am sorry to see the increase provided for, as there is no occasion for it. The roads are now so good that travelling can be accelerated. Most of the inspectors are provided with motor cars and get accommodation at the farms in the country. It would greatly facilitate inspection and lead to economy if all the inspection work on a farm was delegated to one man. Some check should be made on the actual work of these inspectors to ensure that they actually visit the places that should be inspected.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, *Barcoo*) [5.18 p.m.]: It has been my policy as far as possible to amalgamate duties in the way suggested by the hon. member for Cooroola. At one time a slaughtering inspector was a slaughtering inspector, a dairy inspector was only a dairying inspector, and a stock inspector carried out only the duties of his position, so that these inspectors might be criss-crossing the same territory, each carrying out his individual work. During the last few years we have amalgamated these duties so that one inspector in a given district is discharging all the duties required, resulting in efficiency in inspection and economy in administration.

The hon. member made some reference to the inspection of piggeries. The satisfactory inspection of piggeries was not possible until the Pig Industry Act was passed last year. Following on the passage of that Act dairying inspectors are required to associate themselves with the pig industry, the latter being an adjunct to the other industry. That work is proceeding very satisfactorily indeed.

The hon. member made some reference to an increase in the number of the inspection staff. No doubt his experience is quite the same as my own. Every dairying district in Queensland wants an inspector, and the department is literally besieged with requests. Last time I visited the hon. member's electorate—I think the hon. member was with me—I had a deputation at Nambour asking that we appoint an inspector there. That matter is still under consideration. With the expansion of the dairying industry it becomes necessary at times to realign districts and make further appointments. I can assure the hon. member that these appointments are only made when it is absolutely necessary. I believe the best interests of the dairying industry would be served if we could appoint more men, not to act as inspectors only, but as guides, philo-sophers, and friends, to help the farmers in the difficult pathological questions that confront them from time to time.

Item (Dairy Produce Act) agreed to.

#### SLAUGHTERING ACT.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, *Barcoo*) [5.20 p.m.]: I move—

“That £12,466 be granted for ‘Slaughtering Act.’”

Twenty-seven officers were provided for last year; twenty-nine officers are being provided for this year, the additional two

[*Mr. Walker.*

officers having been officers of the department for several months past. The Commonwealth Dairy Produce Export Act and our own Acts require that meat shall be inspected in the factory. Hon. members know that with the opening of the Doughboy factory it became necessary to comply with both Acts and to appoint inspectors to supervise the killing at Doughboy.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN (*Murilla*) [5.21 p.m.]: Could we not reduce the number of inspectors if we had legislation to provide that meat for overseas consumption need be inspected only by the Commonwealth authorities? The hon. gentleman said it was necessary to appoint two inspectors at Doughboy owing to the fact that the State must also inspect the meat in the same way as the Commonwealth does.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We are doing the inspection for the Commonwealth at Doughboy and the Commonwealth is doing the inspection for us at the abattoir.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: It seemed to be silly to have two sets of officers doing the same work.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We had until two years ago.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: What we want to do more than anything else is to reduce overhead costs as much as possible so that people engaged in the breeding of cattle for export will get any benefit that is to be had, and that money will not be expended largely in working expenses.

I draw the Minister's attention to the most unsatisfactory conditions existing at the abattoirs. They are not the fault of the Meat Industry Board. Last Monday week 1,500 cattle were yarded and slaughtered and on Thursday 3,500 cattle were placed in the yard for subsequent slaughter. Owing to the fact that there is limited accommodation, we find the number of cattle sold at the slaughter-yards for slaughtering purpose—

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

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: It seems to me the Minister is not satisfied with being Minister in charge of these Estimates, but he also wishes to be Chairman of Committees as well.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I followed the argument of the hon. member for Murilla until I satisfied myself that he was dealing solely with the question of the abattoirs.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I resent any interference by the Minister with the Chairman of Committees. What I was going to refer to was a matter of great importance from the point of view of the stockowners in this State. I was about to point out to you, Mr. Gledson, to this Committee, and to the people generally, that cattle are kept starving for eight days before they are slaughtered. Cattle that were brought to the yards last Thursday will not be slaughtered until next Friday, and in the meantime they are kept in small paddocks without food, and the result will be the meat will be considerably affected and a greater proportion of it will be condemned than otherwise would be the case. I desire to

draw the Minister's attention to the experience of inspectors in regard to the prejudicial effect on beef caused through confinement in small yards without feed for days. Certain men are appointed for the purpose of inspecting the slaughtering of stock at the abattoirs, and I want to know whether the yards are of such dimensions that the meat cannot be treated within one or two days rather than that these cattle should starve for eight days in small yards where there is no food but only water. Some of the cattle sold last Thursday will not be slaughtered until next Friday, which demonstrates there is no organisation in regard to the number of cattle that are yarded.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is getting away from the subject under discussion.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Surely the inspectors should have something to say as to whether the cattle are humanely treated or not! Surely their duty should not commence and end at the time of slaughtering! I am sorry that the Standing Orders will not permit my saying what I would like to say. It was my intention to give the Minister some information that would be beneficial to his department and to the people whom I believe he is honestly endeavouring to help in this State—the cattle-owners. They are not getting a fair deal and are being robbed right and left. Everybody has control of the cattle with the exception of the cattle-owners themselves.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: How are they being robbed?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: They are being robbed right and left, because there is such a trust existing at present that the people sending the cattle down are not getting a fair deal.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The question under discussion is the inspection of meat slaughtered for human consumption.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: A meeting was held last Monday with the object of trying to bring about better conditions with regard to the slaughter of cattle and sheep at the meatworks. All parties were represented with the exception of the owners of sheep and cattle. The United Graziers' Association and the Cattle Growers' Association did not receive invitations to attend the meeting.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What meeting?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: The meeting which was called last Monday by the Meat Industry Board.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must confine his remarks to the vote under discussion.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I will have to abide by your ruling, Mr. Gledson. This matter is of such importance that I should like the opportunity of having a general discussion on it, and I hope the Minister will assist to that end. I feel that the Minister is out to assist the industry in every way possible, and there is something that needs altering in regard to the marketing of cattle at the abattoirs.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member will have an opportunity

of discussing that matter when the resolutions are under consideration.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: You should know as well as I do, Mr. Gledson, that we shall never get to them. I have had a long experience in these matters, and when a Chairman tells me I can deal with a question on another vote, I know I cannot. I have said sufficient to open the eyes of the Minister. I hope he will endeavour to bring about a better condition of affairs.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*) [5.30 p.m.]: There is one matter on which I desire to speak. I refer to the slaughtering of young calves for human consumption. I do not think that the meat from young calves is really wholesome, but be that as it may, these young beasts are consigned to the abattoirs, and they have to travel long distances in the train. Days elapse between the consigning and the killing of them. They arrive in a starved and shocking condition, and cannot be wholesome meat. They are detained, and sometimes have to remain in the yards over the week-end before being slaughtered. If better conditions cannot be provided, then I consider the trade should be prohibited. The delay constitutes cruelty to animals. I hope the Minister will make some inquiry and use his best endeavours to see that better provision is made and better conditions enforced.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, *Barcoo*) [5.31 p.m.]: I would inform the hon. member for Murilla that at the abattoirs the Commonwealth does the inspecting for the State, and at Doughboy we make the inspection for the Commonwealth. There is no duplication of staff. The subject matter of a Bill introduced by me last session and passed by Parliament made this arrangement possible. Although I am aware that we are exceeding our rights in discussing the question of the handling or holding of stock at the abattoirs, Mr. Gledson, I take the opportunity of informing the Committee that I will cause the fullest possible inquiries to be made in connection with the statements made by the hon. members for Cunningham and Murilla, and on receipt of the reports will determine what action should be taken.

Mr. WALKER (*Cooroora*) [5.32 p.m.]: I regret very much that there has been an increase in the number of stock inspectors. I do not think the increase is warranted, considering that the establishment of the Brisbane Abattoirs has concentrated the work in the metropolitan area. I would also draw the Minister's attention to the fact that if he proceeds along lines such as that he will undo the good work that has been done in the past in our endeavours to make the fund solvent. We were able to make a reduction in the grant from year to year, and that at a time when the amount of work that had to be done made it very difficult. The fund is in debit to a considerable amount, and at present there appears to be no prospect of improvement. Certainly, there is a very small reduction in the amount of the grant, but this is conclusive proof that economies can be effected. It is well worth while acting on these lines until the fund is solvent. If the same amount be granted year after year, irrespective of whether it be necessary or otherwise, we shall revert to the old condition of affairs.

*Mr. Walker.*]



The remarks of the hon. member for Cunningham about young calves are perfectly true. The matter has been ventilated through the press, and I am surprised that the Minister has not moved in the matter before now. It would take a great deal to convince me that a sick beast is not suffering from some disease, and there must already be legislation under which the Minister could act in the matter. One can see young calves being transported over the railways. I do not know about their being held for eight days before being slaughtered, but I know that it is six days before they are actually killed. These calves range from about two days to about two or three weeks in age.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: The abattoirs adopted new regulations within the last two or three days.

Mr. WALKER: I do not know about that, but I think it is cruelty to animals, and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty should move in the matter.

Item (Slaughtering Act) agreed to.

#### STATE FARMS AND GARDENS.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, *Barcoo*): I move—

“That £7,325 be granted for ‘State Farms and Gardens.’”

Mr. KENNY (*Cook*) [5.34 p.m.]: On the Chief Office vote I mentioned the establishment of an agricultural college at Kairi to take the place of the State farm there. I have spoken on this question for several years. Each time I have been advised that it is going to be done. When I raised this question on the Estimates for the Department of Public Instruction, I was told to bring the matter up when the Secretary for Agriculture was present. When I brought forward the question on the Chief Office vote the Minister said he would reply. He did not favour me with a reply, and that is the reason for my bringing forward the matter now. I ask the Minister how soon he intends to establish an agricultural college at Kairi.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, *Barcoo*) [5.35 p.m.]: I am not aware that I made any suggestion as to establishing an agricultural college at Kairi. I have repeatedly made suggestions about establishing a training farm at Kairi. I do not want to duplicate Gatton College in the North. I know that there is an excellent case for the training of boys in Northern agriculture in the North, and it is the definite intention of the Government to utilise Kairi for the purpose. During the past few months we have been circularising every possible organisation and making inquiries from every possible source about the prospect of getting boys for such an institution, and I am sorry to say that a similar institution operating in the North at Abergowrie, with accommodation I understand for some thirty students, has succeeded in attracting only four students.

Mr. KENNY: A training farm.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: An agricultural college.

Mr. KEOGH: That is not true. Abergowrie had twenty-five students when we were up there.

[*Mr. Walker.*

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It has four students to-day. If the information of the hon. member is correct then the information supplied to me by my officers is incorrect. Two officers of my department have been reporting on the possibility of getting boys for training in the North and they both refer to the fact that Abergowrie has now only four resident students. I very much hope that the information is wrong. We have circularised every centre, every school, and the leader of every organisation, such as the Rotary Club and the New Settlers' League, where it functions, and kindred bodies throughout the North, asking them to act as recruiting agents and to advise me on the matter. They have advised me in a rather negative way and until I am assured of a supply of boys, obviously there is no advantage in establishing the farm in the North. If I can be certain of a supply of boys I assure the hon. member that the Government are prepared to establish that training farm. If we cannot succeed in getting those boys then obviously it will be futile to establish it. These inquiries are still in progress, but so far as I can see unfortunately there does not seem to be much prospect of securing the boys. I regard agricultural education as being a very essential form of education, and if the hon. gentleman can give any impetus to this movement, which aims at the establishment of a training farm in the North, I shall be very glad of his co-operation.

Mr. KENNY (*Cook*) [5.38 p.m.]: The Minister has definitely changed his view on this subject during the past two years. He stated in North Queensland that it was the intention of the Government to establish a training college.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Not a college.

Mr. KENNY: Yes.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I never used the word.

Mr. KENNY: I cannot quote the Minister's exact words, but I do know that His Excellency the Governor on his return from North Queensland made a similar recommendation—that an agricultural college should be established at Kairi—and in reply to that statement the Minister said that it was the intention of the Government to do so.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I said that it was not the intention of the Government to establish an agricultural college. I have a very lively recollection of that.

Mr. KENNY: I am not going to get into an argument with the Minister. Speaking in this Chamber yesterday the Secretary for Public Instruction said that it was the intention of the Government to establish this agricultural college in North Queensland as early as possible and when funds were available. Evidently these two Ministers of the Crown do not know where they stand on this question, and evidently the promise was made only with the intention of pulling the legs of the people. I can quite understand the attitude of the parents towards a proposal by the Minister to enrol children for farm training. At the present time the parents concerned send their children from North Queensland to Gatton to enable them to obtain the agricultural

diploma and to pass the University junior examination. If the institution to be established in North Queensland is to confine its attentions to imparting only farm training then naturally it is not going to receive the warm support of the people in that part of the State. What is required in North Queensland is an institution similar to the institution at Gatton, where the children can obtain a training in both sides of education.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The vote under discussion does not deal with the administration of the Department of Public Instruction.

Mr. KENNY: I am dealing with the vote for "State Farms and Gardens," and I am endeavouring to induce the Minister to change his present attitude towards the establishment of an institution in North Queensland. This matter has been raised and replied to on this vote on more than one occasion in the past. However, I have no intention of clashing with the chair. I content myself with saying that the need of a college is there, and I will give the Minister any help I can with a view to establishing that college. The conditions obtaining at Abergoon are not applicable to the Atherton Tableland, because there is a dissimilarity in the soil and climatic conditions of the two districts.

Mr. CONROY (*Maranoa*) [5.43 p.m.]: I observe that the manager of the Roma State farm holds the dual position of manager and wheatbreeder. The Roma State Farm is in reality a wheatbreeding station. The manager, Mr. Soutter, has evolved practically every type of wheat that has been successfully grown in this State. The two most recent types of wheat evolved are the Sea Foam and Three Seas. The particular work engaged in at the farm at the present time is the breeding and selection of rust-resisting varieties. It is pleasing to notice that Mr. Soutter's duties are to be extended to the Downs. The department possesses in Mr. Soutter an official who has given a great deal of his life and attention to experimenting in breeding the types of wheat required for this State. He possesses all the qualifications for that work, is reliable and conscientious, and puts his heart and soul into his duties. The Roma State farm is not revenue producing, but it has been the means of adding materially to the wealth of this State by assisting the wheatgrowing industry to grow the right types of wheat. The wheat grown in Queensland is recognised as the finest type in the Commonwealth, and to a great extent the success achieved is due to wonderful research work by Mr. Soutter. Dr. Miles, who had the opportunity of thoroughly examining Mr. Soutter's work, paid a tribute to what Mr. Soutter has accomplished. As a wheatbreeder, Mr. Soutter has made a wonderful contribution to the wheat industry of this State. I rose with the object of paying a tribute to this official, who is recognised not only by the department but by the wheatfarmers also as a man in whom the utmost reliance and confidence can be placed. I am sure that as his work proceeds on the Downs the farmers there will also place confidence in him. If Mr. Soutter is able to produce a rust-resisting wheat for the Downs the confidence reposed in him by the department will be amply justified.

Mr. WALKER (*Cooroora*) [5.45 p.m.]: The only provision on the Estimates for the Kairi State Farm is the salary of the manager. It would help hon. members a great deal if the Estimates disclosed what staff exists. I know that an increase in the staff could be provided for under Miscellaneous Services without hon. members being any the wiser.

I endorse the remarks of the hon. member for Maranoa respecting Mr. Soutter. I have personally visited the Roma State farm and can testify to the valuable experimental work he carries out there in wheatbreeding. Mr. Soutter has accomplished wonders. He leads the Australian States in the types of wheat he has evolved. He is an official who is always to be found on his job. Now that an additional area of land has been included in this State farm a little extra appropriation should be provided to enable Mr. Soutter to carry out experiments in regard to crops that may prove invaluable in semi-dry areas. A wonderful variety of grasses is growing there, and gives some idea of what the West can produce. Dr. Hirschfeld has been carrying out an enormous number of experiments, and similar work should be carried out by Mr. Soutter. I should like the Minister to conduct these experiments, because the work of pasture improvement is not out of the question in such an area as the Roma district. Apart from all these matters, experiments could be conducted in respect of quite a large number of varieties of fruit, some of which, although not commercially profitable, would prove a boon to inhabitants of the West.

I notice that the same number of men are employed in the various gardens in and around Brisbane. The staff for the Government House grounds, "Fernberg," seems to be out of all proportion to the number actually required. Of course, the late Governor, Sir John Goodwin, was particularly keen on carrying out experimental work, but if the present Governor is not of similar disposition—His Excellency appears to do more travelling than his predecessor—then the time has come when the gardeners not required should be transferred to other places.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*) [5.50 p.m.]: We are all agreed as to the value of the work carried out at the Roma State Farm, and upon the ability of Mr. Soutter, as manager and wheat breeder. One doubt I have is as to whether Roma is the best site for a farm at which to breed wheat. Mr. Soutter does conduct experimental plots on the Downs—and very successfully, too—and those plots show better results than at Roma. It must be remembered that Roma and the Downs are two different classes of country, and that the bulk of the wheat in Queensland is grown on the Downs. To prove their suitability for the heavier soils and the totally different climate of the Downs, the wheats have to be grown in experimental plots all over the Downs. Is not a certain amount of time lost by Mr. Soutter in establishing that the wheat propagated at Roma is suitable for the Downs country? I think it was a mistake to establish the wheat-breeding farm at Roma, and that it would have been better to have established it on the Downs, for nearly all the wheat in Queensland is grown on the Downs country and it is unlikely that the Roma district will be a success as a wheat-raising

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area on a large scale. Of course, wheat has been grown for a good many years at Roma, but not a large amount has been grown and the results are not the best. I should like Mr. Soutter's opinion on the point I have raised. I shall pay more respect to his opinion than to my own, for I recognise that he knows more about the matter than I do; but it does occur to me that it would be better to conduct the breeding experiments on the country where the wheat will be grown later on. Very many valuable types of wheat have been bred at Roma, and very many types that have promised well are now growing on the Downs, and the farmers there are very much interested in those crops; and many go to see them—more than Mr. Soutter is aware of. The farmers on the Downs are interested in the different types of wheat and appreciate the value of Mr. Soutter's work; and they are very ready to grow the wheat recommended by him. I should like the Minister to make inquiries from Mr. Soutter on the point I raise.

Naturally, the hon. member for Maranoa would like to see the State Experimental Farm remain at that centre. I can understand his point of view. No doubt he is of the opinion that it is the most suitable place for it; but I consider this matter to be too important to be decided to suit the desires of anybody. This work is of great value to the State, and if the establishment of a State experimental farm at Toowoomba would result in the saving of time, and if it would be better to experiment in that area where the bulk of the wheat is grown, the Minister should seriously consider the question of removing it to that centre.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Locate it at Cunningham?

Mr. DEACON: I do not care where it is so long as it is situated in the best place for testing wheat.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*) [5.56 p.m.]: The question raised by the hon. member for Maranoa and the hon. member for Cunningham in connection with the breeding of wheat is a very important one. The history of wheat-growing in Queensland leads one to the conclusion that there is something radically wrong with that industry. When we look back over a number of years we discover that we have not made great strides in the improvement of the types of wheat or the growing of it in increasing quantities. I understand that the present crop is anticipated to reach about 3,500,000 bushels, and in Western Australia and Victoria they harvest 56,000,000 bushels. In view of those figures it is apparent that if we are to make a success of wheat-growing in this State we shall have to work along different lines.

In my opinion the hon. member for Cunningham is perfectly right in saying that experiments in wheat breeding should be conducted on the same soils and under the same climatic conditions in which the wheat will be grown; therefore, it may be a wise policy to carry out those experiments on the Downs. I have read the reports of Mr. Soutter in connection with the working of soils, and I believe that is a matter in which considerable improvement could be made. I recollect that in my early days in Victoria and the Southern States they could only grow from 6 to 8 bushels to the acre, but at

the present time, owing to experiments in wheat breeding and the careful working of the soil at different periods of the year, they are harvesting an equivalent number of bags to the acre. It is our duty to ascertain whether it is possible to improve both the quantity and quality of our wheat. It seems astonishing that twenty or thirty years ago we were growing the same quantity of wheat as we are growing to-day.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Did you say quantity or quality?

Mr. EDWARDS: Quantity. That indicates there is something radically wrong. Either our State is not adapted to wheat-growing or the types of wheat are not suitable, or sufficient attention has not been paid to the working of soils.

One recalls the enormous amount of money and the very capable practical wheatfarmers that were attracted to Queensland many years ago. I think it can be said that as much money was invested in wheat as in any other farming product of the State. There seems to be something wrong with the experiments that were carried out in the past in connection with wheat-breeding. I understand Mr. Soutter is making careful experiments with a view to combating rust in wheat, which hon. members are aware plays a much more important part in the industry of Queensland than in the other States. Queensland is growing wheat under semi-tropical conditions and the moisture in the atmosphere is much greater than in the wheatbelts of the Southern States. It is therefore necessary that serious thought should be devoted to the combating of rust. I recall to mind one year on the Darling Downs—I think it was 1903, the year after the terrific drought of 1902—when many of the crops could not be harvested although the wheat was grown to perfection and reached eight or nine bags to the acre. Owing to the great prevalence of rust the wheat could not be threshed; it broke off immediately it was hit by the drum of the threshing machine. During the intervening years we do not seem to have made much progress, although we have taken some little step forward in connection with the quality of the grain; although considering that much new land has been placed under wheat and encouragement given to farmers to plant wheat, we have not gained much even in that direction. I hope that this experimental work will be continued with a view to finding a breed of wheat that the farmers will be able to sow and reap earlier. That appears to be one of our greatest difficulties; the harvesting season occurs too late in the year. As hon. members are well aware, harvesting operations continue towards the wet season, and if the farmer has not been successful in getting in his crop before its arrival or before the general summer storms, he finds himself in difficulties. Last season, I believe, one large wheat farmer on the Downs expended something like £800 in cash to purchase sacks for the storage of his wheat, but he did not harvest any wheat at all. Other farmers were pulling their tractor around the wheatecrops with a number of poles behind them in order to extricate the tractors when they became bogged—so heavy was the rain. This happened in the Cecil Plains and the Mount Russell area. We should continue our investigation with a view of discovering a breed of wheat that could be sown earlier in the year. As a matter of

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fact, I would suggest that we even go further than this and endeavour to produce a breed which to a certain extent would be frost resistant. It is a well-known fact that in the early stages of flowering the wheat crop has been ruined on the Darling Downs owing to frost. Along the lines I have mentioned, I think there are great possibilities from the scientific point of view, and greater assistance should be afforded to that end.

We have not made the strides in wheat production in this State that we might have made. Two years after Western Australia launched out in wheat production she was producing three times as much as we were. The Darling Downs is a wonderful wheat-producing centre. Is it any wonder that Southern people were attracted to this part of the State to expend large sums of money in an endeavour to make wheatgrowing there the success that it is in the South? We have not been able to evolve a type of wheat that can be harvested in between the heavy rainfall months of the year, and I trust that some consideration will be given to that problem. If we are not able to increase the yield of wheat per acre then we should encourage the growers to embark upon other kinds of agriculture, as adjuncts to wheat production. I am of the opinion that there is a very encouraging outlet for young lambs raised in conjunction with wheat production.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Hear, hear!

Mr. EDWARDS: I know that lamb-raising in conjunction with wheat production has been conducted very successfully to a certain degree in the Southern States, and I am satisfied that with the heavy moisture content of the soil in Queensland during the summer months there is every possibility of providing a heavy crop of feed for lambs and sheep with the possibility of harvesting a clean and easy crop of wheat at a later stage of the season. Therefore, I firmly believe that there are great possibilities of development along these lines. I understand that at one time the wheat-growers in the Southern States produced wheat without resorting to fallowing, but some years afterwards they discovered that fallowing was essential, and later again they were forced to realise that a successful wheat crop could not be produced without the aid of fertilizers. Ever since that time fertilizers have been continually in use, and step by step the production has increased until now they are able in the light of their past practical experience to produce payable crops from year to year. I dare say that the Minister is aware of the fact that in some of the Southern States to-day a system of summer fallowing is adopted. That is to say, the farmers simply strip the crop and set fire to the stubble. The sheep are sometimes turned in on the stubble for a few weeks and then the plough or cultivator is used. The ground is turned up throughout the year until the sowing season arrives the following year. It is then considered that sufficient moisture has been conserved to produce a payable crop. This system is carried out to conserve the moisture and sheep are fed on that fallowed land throughout the year. Whilst feed may not be apparent to persons passing the farm, still it is a fact that sheep can be grown and fattened on these areas where seemingly little feed exists. When the land is

cultivated in this way the feed produced is sweet and nutritious and is of astounding benefit not only for the growing but also for the fattening of sheep.

I hope that the Minister will give some consideration to the matters that I have mentioned. With my experience in the Southern States I was astounded on coming to Queensland to think that the wheat-growers in this State could not obtain a better return, and when I saw the Mount Abundance country I was more than ever astounded to learn that the wheat-growers in that beautiful belt were not more successful from year to year.

I notice that in this vote provision is made for three men to attend to the Queen's Gardens, next to the Executive Building. I should like the Minister to state whether those three men are employed there all the year round. If so, all I can say is they must have a pretty good time, and find it difficult to keep out of one another's way.

Mr. BARNES (*Warwick*) [7.13 p.m.]: I support the establishment of an experimental farm on the Downs for the purpose of breeding a wheat suitable for our climatic conditions. On a number of occasions reference has been made to the manner in which rust affects wheat. Last year I quoted a newspaper article dealing with the subject. For some years the wheat-growers on the Darling Downs have not suffered from rust to the same extent as heretofore, but last year rust played considerable havoc with the crop. This year the weather has been particularly cool, yet evidence is not wanting of the presence of rust, and that trouble will undoubtedly affect the returns of wheat-growers. The idea of establishing an experiment station amidst surroundings where wheat is extensively grown is a wise one. The value of the proposal would be enhanced if Mr. Soutter himself also directed the work on this experimental plot, which, no doubt, would be a smaller area than the Roma State Farm he now directs. If the idea developed satisfactorily it might become a permanent farm. Failing the establishment of an experiment farm, trial plots should be substituted. Success depends on the individual chosen to carry out the work. Strange to say, in wheatgrowing, as in other industries, you may have side by side the successful and unsuccessful man. On Saturday morning last I passed a farm on Bennett's Hill, overlooking Sladeville, and remarked to a friend, "There is an extraordinary farm. For years and years it returned nothing. It then changed hands. The man who has made a success of the farm took it over a few years ago, and had made wonderful progress." In the year that this individual acquired the property he took over twelve bags of wheat to the acre off it. That is what is going on in every district. My knowledge of the Warwick district extends over a period of sixty years. Wheat has been grown there every year, and I can name men who have never failed. They have always had a crop, sometimes a few bags to the acre, and at other times a big yield, but never have they had to face a complete failure. I would suggest to the Minister that when the experiment farm is established the experimentalist should exchange notes with Southern experimentalists. Inquiry amongst farmers now will show what wheat is found

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to be most rust-resistant. Success in wheat-growing on the Downs and the name which Queensland wheat has acquired as compared with other States are due to the fact that efforts have been concentrated on a hard wheat such as the Florence and Flora varieties. In the South the variety known as Federation is by far the best wheat grown, but no success has been achieved with it here. It is in this connection that experimental work might be successful, for, apparently, there is something in what has been advocated this afternoon that possibly better results would attend the efforts of Mr. Soutter if he also gave some attention to an area of the State in which wheat has been grown successfully for years.

The hon. member who has just resumed his seat made reference to maize growing. Because of the advent and growth of motor transport, maize growing has to some extent had to take a back seat, so that people will be compelled to concentrate more on wheat growing. It is for that reason that we strongly emphasise the advisability of striking out in some new direction. The cost of harvesting wheat is cheaper to-day than in the days when a price of 5s. or 6s. was needed by the wheat growers to make a profit, and I feel sure that if a minimum price of 3s. 4d. a bushel were assured we could in a few years double our area and increase the production of wheat. The estimated harvest this year of 3,500,000 bushels falls far short of the State's requirements of 6,000,000 bushels. Since 1920, when the wheat pool was established, approximately £10,000,000 has been paid to wheat growers. That sounds a lot of money, but spread over a number of years is not such a great sum, and it certainly could be increased. Realising the importance of the wheat industry and the necessity of supplying our own requirements, I hope the Minister will make some response to the ideas put forward by the hon. member for Cunningham, if only in a minor way. I do not wish to labour the question, but I could if necessary give the Minister the names of experienced men who would gladly co-operate with any experimental work that Mr. Soutter might deem advisable on the Downs.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, *Barcoo*) [7.22 p.m.]: Dealing with the minor matters first, I would inform the hon. member for Nanango that, although three gardeners are provided for under the vote for Queen's Gardens, Brisbane, those gardeners are also responsible for maintaining the lawns and grounds of the public buildings in Brisbane, such as the Supreme Court and other buildings. Quite obviously the three men are never at work at the Queen's Gardens at the one time.

The question has been raised of reducing the number of gardeners at Government House. My experience has been that our present Governor desires quite a lot of work to be done there and from time to time I have obtained men through the Department of Labour and Industry to undertake the work of remodelling the gardens at Government House. I do not think the Governor or Lady Wilson would readily agree to any reduction in the staff at their home. Those questions are disposed of in that way.

The hon. member for Coorooora takes exception to the fact that the salary of the manager of the Kairi State Farm is provided on the Estimates and that apparently

no provision is made for the balance of the employees there. The custom followed on this occasion is the custom the hon. gentleman himself followed when framing his estimates and submitting them to this Chamber. It is the practice to allow for labourers under "Contingencies." The hon. member suggests I might be tempted to employ a man without the knowledge of Parliament. The limit of my vote is the limit of my capacity to pay. The vote restricts the number of individuals I can employ. There has been no variation of the system, which, I understand, has been the practice since we have had responsible government.

I shall now deal with that important question of the wheat-breeding policy of the State. I am delighted to hear the tributes that have been paid to Mr. Soutter. It has been said that a prophet is not without honour save in his own country; and it is also true that a man may make very great contributions to the prosperity of an industry and yet be unknown while he is making those contributions. That recalls to my mind the late William Farrar, the father of plant breeding, the man who converted the plains of New South Wales from sheep walks to granaries, the man who made more contributions to the production of wheat in Australia than all other individuals combined. Yet he had to die to achieve remembrance. We have a man in Queensland, Mr. Soutter, whose work compares more than favourably with the work that is being done by all the plant breeders in other parts of Australia, more particularly the Southern plant breeders. A suggestion was made that there should be some interchangeable information, some opportunity for Mr. Soutter to check his work in the light of experience of breeders in the South. Believing Mr. Soutter was one of the most valuable officers in the department, almost immediately after I took over the department I sent for him and arranged for him to check up the wheat-breeding work which was being done in other States in the Commonwealth. He went as far afield as Western Australia and saw the work that was being done at the institute in South Australia, visited Victoria, checked up at Canberra in New South Wales, and ultimately, after visiting the Glen Innes rust-resisting experimental station he returned to Queensland. He is not an egotistical man. If he has one failing it is the extraordinary modesty that one encounters in getting him to talk about his work. When he returned I sent for him and asked him how he fared. He told me he had instinctively followed the lines of work that were being covered by men in the Southern States, and, as far as achievement was concerned, our work compared favourably with the work they were doing. It is true that, as a result of that tour, he did learn something of the methods of charting and recording, with which he was not familiar and which he is now employing, saving thereby a great deal of clerical work. The fact remains he is not without honour in his own country in his own lifetime; and I am delighted to know that it is so. It might interest hon. members to know that 50 per cent. of the total wheat sown in Queensland during the past three years has been Soutter wheats or of Soutter origin. There has been a decline in the growing of imported wheats, even of the Farrar types,

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in favour of the wheats Mr. Soutter has evolved. We may take his latest types, Three Seas, and Sea Foam, two definite rust-resisting varicities that are giving excellent promise in certain localities. That brings me to the question of the justification of the continuance of the Bungeworgorai Station. Hon. members have suggested that it should be shifted nearer to the coast. I will frankly confess that was a question that intrigued me some time ago. When Mr. Miles, who was sent overseas to graduate in agricultural genetics, returned to this State, I sent him to Roma to check up the work that was being done by Mr. Soutter. Let us remember that Mr. Miles was the latest recruit to the genetic branch of my department and had been trained in the best universities in England and the most up-to-date experimental stations in the world—Cornell, London, and Rothamstead. He came to Queensland fresh from triumphs in the field of agricultural genetics and he went to Roma and came back to me and said, "You have an invaluable officer in Mr. Soutter. Do not allow his work to be lost." I asked him to investigate this question of the transfer of the Roma experimental farm to the wheat areas. I also discussed this matter with Mr. Soutter. Let me put the facts clearly as they present themselves to me. It is true that if there is to be any expansion of wheatgrowing it will be in the drier areas of the State, west and north of the Downs. The type of wheats that we urgently require are the types that could be adapted or would adapt themselves to these new wheat localities.

Mr. MAHER: Did the hon. gentleman see that a man at Theodore had got a crop of twelve bags to the acre?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, I know of that. If that be the case, is there not a strong argument in favour of the retention of our primary breeding activity at Roma? I agree that there is a great capacity for work to be accomplished on the Darling Downs; and because I agree I have translated my view into actual practice. Hon. members who have addressed themselves to this question apparently do not know that during the last two years Mr. Soutter has not been attached exclusively to the Roma State Farm. He has been doing experimental work on the different soil types and in different climates throughout the wheat-producing areas of our State. I believe that is a satisfactory compromise. The original crosses are made at Roma. There are very definite genetic reasons why these crosses should be made at Roma. It is obvious that if one can produce successful crosses under the rigorous conditions that do prevail at Roma, one will have more success with that wheat when it is translated to the Downs. The policy we are following at the present time and have been pursuing for the past two years is that the cross-breeding work shall be done at Roma. So soon as the crosses are established they are tried out in the various localities on the Darling Downs. In this connection it is only fair to say we have had the very hearty co-operation of certain growers in our endeavour to acclimatise these wheats and adapt them to the Downs. In that direction, I believe, lies the success of our wheat-breeding policy. So far as I know, no State in the world is breeding its wheat exclusively in one area. It has been found that wheats are particu-

larly susceptible to climatic variations. Hon. members will remember that when Mr. Farrar produced Federation, he believed he had produced wheat of a fixed quality type, but it was not very long before three distinctive varieties of Federation were to be found possessing different milling qualities and different habits of growth, due entirely to the influences of different climates on the original type. So it has been with the many other varieties. The difficulty is to maintain standardisation. Mr. Soutter is doing that in an admirable way.

The question of rust has been raised. Mr. Soutter was aware that this was one of the most difficult of questions and demanded urgent solution, and he proceeded to work almost entirely for a year or so on rust-resistant varieties. The way had been pioneered, but, unfortunately, Mr. Farrar, to whom I made reference earlier, who was engaged on some elaborate experimental work in regard to rust, did not live long enough to conclude his work. Unfortunately, too, Mr. Farrar did not inform anybody of the method upon which he worked. The consequence was that on the death of that gentleman the whole work had to be undertaken again. Mr. Soutter has been able to make the longest survey of rust-resistant wheats. Hon. members should know that it takes at least seven years to stabilise a variety. He has stabilised more than one variety that show distinctive promise so far as rust-resistant qualities are concerned. We have every reason to believe, and certainly every reason to hope, that Mr. Soutter will be associated with the Department of Agriculture in his very great undertaking for many years to come. I propose to continue the scheme that I have outlined. Mr. Soutter will be less and less at Roma and more and more on the acclimatisation, selection, and testing campaign on trial plots and different soil types throughout the State.

Another question that has been raised in this connection is one of plant breeding. Plant breeding is one of the most interesting questions that hon. members can discuss. Let us remember first and foremost that every plant and vegetation, in whatever form, is the result of evolution. These things have been adapted to man's use. The fact calls to mind the celebrated caption over the portals of the Los Angeles nursery conducted by the celebrated Luther Burbank, "We are helping God in teaching nature to toe the mark." Luther Burbank said that anything was possible, given skill, application, and zeal. We believe it. He produced a bush—one might term it that—that grew potatoes under the ground and tomatoes on top. He crossed various berries and produced a commercial article such as the loganberry. He improved the strawberry, he grew forests of plants, and he made contributions to forestry policy. These things indicate that although Nature is a hard taskmaster Nature can be constrained to toe the mark, and intelligent direction will yield the desired result. In Queensland we have an illimitable opportunity for plant breeding; we are just touching its fringe. We have a territory lying away to the north which the pessimists say cannot be used for anything but the growth of sugar cane on the coastal belt, with a little bit of dairying and maize production on the Atherton Tableland. The time will come when the plant breeder will adjust vegetation in such a way that the Northern areas

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of our State will be amongst the most productive, as they are at present amongst the most fertile. I hope that every hon. member in this Chamber is seized of the importance of a vigorous policy of plant breeding and selection in order that we may evolve types that are necessary for the safe conduct of agriculture in Queensland.

The hon. member for Nanango made some reference to fat lambs in conjunction with wheatgrowing. We have given a good deal of attention to this question during recent months, and hon. members may or may not be aware that about this time last year, in order to demonstrate whether there was or was not a capacity within this State for the raising of fat lambs, Mr. Carew, of my department, went South and acquired a variety of English rams, including the Border Leicester, the English Leicester, the Shropshire, and the Dorset Horn. These were distributed to suitable people throughout the prospective lamb-raising areas of the State. We are carefully obtaining data and tabulating it as a result of those experiments. Mr. Summers, of the Abattoirs, assures me that Queensland is quite capable of producing a very large quantity of high-grade lambs. Therefore, the question is worth preserving with. We all know that wheat production in conjunction with lamb-raising has been a very satisfactory industry in the Riverina and many other parts of the wheat-producing areas of the Commonwealth.

Mr. BARNES: It is practised to some extent on the Darling Downs.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I admit that it is practised on the Darling Downs, but if any hon. member were to ask any farmer or any group of farmers what was the best type, the most economical type, and the quickest maturing type of crossbreed he would get a variety of answers, based on the limited experience of the individuals concerned.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: They know all about it in the Southern States.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Different districts use a different type of crossbred sheep. For instance, the Riverina district utilises the Border Leicester—Merino cross very frequently. In the New England district they utilise the Southdown—Merino cross, and coming nearer the coast there is used the Corriedale—Dorset Horn cross. Some districts require one type, whilst other districts require another type, and it is our task at the present time to find out just what is the proper type to be utilised in fat lamb raising in this State. Already we are coming practically to the conclusion that the best types to be utilised in this State are the Southdown—Merino and the Dorset Horn—Merino crosses.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Any of the crosses that you have mentioned will do well where lambs can be raised.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is not so. I shall give the hon. member another example. In South Australia, where they have a certain set of climatic conditions, they are using the Merino—Dorset Horn cross, but in districts in New South Wales they do not like the Dorset Horn because it is not economical. Our problem is to ascertain what is the most economical crossbreed and the quickest maturing crossbreed to be used in the various agricultural

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districts of this State. That work will be prosecuted with vigour, and I hope that we shall be able in the near future to submit some data to the lamb raisers and other people interested in the matter in this State.

Item (State Farms and Gardens) agreed to.

#### MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, *Barcoo*): I move—

“That £7,000 be granted for ‘Miscellaneous Services.’”

Mr. WALKER (*Cooroora*) [7.42 p.m.]: This vote includes an appropriation for the St. Lucia training farm for boys. This farm was established to train boys to engage in farm work, but in my opinion the institution has now gone far enough. It has proved to be a failure. At the present time we have officers of the department endeavouring to get boys to go to St. Lucia to learn the rudiments of farming. The establishment of this training farm for boys never appealed to me as a great innovation where boys could be taught country life. The best way to give boys a knowledge of country life and teach them the work of a farm is to select a certain number of farmers and place a number of selected boys with them. It would be the duty of these farmers to educate these boys in general agriculture and dairying pursuits. Care could be taken in the selection not only of the farmers but also of the boys, and even if the expenditure was as great as is now incurred at this training school, the Government would have the satisfaction of knowing that the boys would be getting a land education. The training of these boys could take place under the supervision of an officer of the department. This officer could be deputed to visit the farms at various times, inspect the work being done by the boys and a book in which the nature of the boy's work could be entered, and in every way give encouragement for the education of the boys for the land. Such a scheme would be preferable to the present one. It would result in the boys' land education being more complete. For instance, the mixed farmer would be one who did not engage solely in wheat or dairying production, but one who engaged in general farming in addition. Boys would get a very complete land education on such farms. If at the end of a period it appeared as if the education of the boy was backward it could be continued for an additional period on the farm or he could be transferred to another farm. This scheme of training could be worked in conjunction with the Department of Public Lands, and when the boy was old enough and it was considered that he was fit to start out on his own account, the department could see that he was allotted a certain area of land. At St. Lucia a boy will learn less about the land than a man would, and neither will learn as much in a given period as he would on a mixed farm. Under my suggestion the boys' minds would be moulded in the right direction and they would be ultimately adapted for the land. In actual farm work they would learn how to plough, and how to grow crops in addition to all the necessary work about the farm, such as the splitting of timber, the falling of trees, and the erection of fences.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He is taught all those things at St. Lucia.

Mr. WALKER: That may be so. I saw an illustration of a gate built by a boy at St. Lucia, and that illustration showed that the stay rod had been fixed the wrong way. Another illustration depicted the brace placed in the opposite direction.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The boy must have been a left-handed boy.

Mr. WALKER: That shows that the instruction has been left-handed. I want to see these boys placed on farms with practical farmers in order to get practical instruction, and at the same time be under the oversight of departmental officers so that they will be fully protected. St. Lucia has given the boys a certain amount of information and has served its purpose. It is preferable that a more practicable scheme should be inaugurated so that at the end of two or three years the boy-learner will be fitted to go on a farm of his own.

Provision is made in this vote for the development of scientific investigations. That brings us within the category of the Yeerongpilly Animal Health Station. I mention this in order to give the Minister an opportunity of replying to certain statements which have been made in this Committee—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I would remind the hon. member that there is a special vote for the Animal Health Station.

Mr. WALKER: The Minister desires an opportunity of replying to certain statements. The Yeerongpilly Animal Health Station is connected with the scientific side of the dairying industry. Therefore, I take it I shall be in order in discussing this matter. I should like the Minister to state when he is making his reply how many bulls treated at this station have died. Numerous complaints have been made during the last month regarding the number of animals that have died.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must know that there is a special vote for the matters which he is now discussing.

Mr. WALKER: I am really only doing it to oblige the Minister. (Laughter.) I really think that a fair trial having been given to the Farm Training School at St. Lucia the time has come when the Government should say that the first loss is the last loss. It is a fine ideal for the Government to educate boys for farm work, but the experiment at St. Lucia has failed. Let the boys be placed with farmers of respectable character, men who play the game and have been successful. Let the boys also be supervised by the department, for I have no wish that they should be sent out indiscriminately. If what I suggest were done, I venture to suggest that after two or three years' experience on mixed farms the boys would be 100 per cent. efficient.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN (*Murilla*) [7.49 p.m.]: I am one of those who have had a fair amount of experience in regard to boys, not only in securing employment for them in my own electorate, but also during the last twenty-five years in employing boys on my own property. Many of my neighbours, too, have had boys from Brisbane and from the old country, and whilst it would be impossible to get 100 per cent. of farmers to treat their boys exactly as they should

be treated, I am satisfied that in 95 per cent. of the cases which came under my notice the boys had been exceptionally well treated. The boy has been taken into the home of the farmer with whom he was working, slept in that home, had meals at the same table, and enjoyed the same fare as the farmer and his family.

It was stated this afternoon from the other side of the Committee that on account of the low wages received by boys working on farms, they have very little opportunity of ever becoming farmers. I could give the names of forty or fifty boys who have been employed on farms and stations in the Murilla electorate and who to-day own their own properties. They saved their money, and remember that the farmer does not have a picture show to visit every night. With the exception of the amount spent on clothes and the expense of attending the local show or sports in their own district, the boys on the farms have very little need to spend money. Many farmers pay the boys every six months; in fact, some settle up every twelve months. In my own particular case the boy is paid every week if he so desires, but my experience is that they prefer to allow their money to accumulate until Christmas or New Year, when a settlement takes place. In the intervening period any clothing that the boys may require is obtained as cheaply as possible by the farmers concerned and debited to the accounts of the boys.

Mr. W. T. KING: No one has accused the hon. member of not treating the boys properly.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I am refuting the suggestion made from the other side of the Committee that boys are not treated properly. Very often the boy who is receiving 15s. a week and keep will have saved £25 to £30 per annum. In my own experience I have advertised for boys and some thirty or forty have come to interview me at the city hotel where I have been staying. I would talk to them and eventually select the boy that I thought was healthy, strong, intelligent, and likely to make a good farmer's boy. For the first week or two of his stay on the farm the boy might be somewhat downhearted, probably because it was his first absence from home, but generally the farmer's wife takes an interest in the boy and bestows every care and attention on him. After six months or twelve months on the farm the boy may revisit his home in Brisbane, but in many cases not a week elapses before he wants to get back to the farm. He comes down to town and renews acquaintance with the conditions under which he lived for years. He visits his parents or friends, and, although he may have two or three weeks' holiday, in the majority of cases he returns to the farm after a week. I do not say that there are not cases where the boy dislikes farm life, and returns to the city. A boy who does not like the farm life is better in the city. The majority of boys do not wish to return to the city after they have spent six months on a farm.

It has been stated by hon. members opposite that the wages that are offered to these boys are not such as would attract them to go to a farm. Even if they start at 10s. a week, it is better than working in a factory or any other job in the city, other than a position in the public service. In the

*Mr. Morgan.]*



majority of instances the boy who enters employment in the city receives 12s. 6d. In the country he starts off at 10s., 12s. 6d., or 15s., and in most cases 15s. a week, with keep. The boy is able to utilise the whole of that 15s. in order to provide himself with clothing. Farmers are allowed an amount of £1 a week by the Commissioner of Taxes for the keep of these boys; so in most cases the boy is receiving a wage of £1 15s. a week. A boy of fifteen or sixteen years of age will eat as much as an adult. In addition, the washing is always done for these boys. They are also provided with comfortable sleeping quarters. I think £1 15s. a week is a very good wage for a boy who comes from the city and who is not conversant with farm work. In some cases a cow's leg may be broken owing to the fact that the boy has forgotten to take the leg-rope off before he opens the bail to let the cow out; but the farmer puts up with it all because he is training the lad, and eventually that boy is capable of doing useful work. That is a different picture from the one that was painted this afternoon, when it was suggested that the boy was worked like a slave. I admit the boy is asked to get up at daylight, because that is the hour the farmer and his family rise; but although he gets up at that hour he does not work all through the day. If it is a wet day—unless he is working on a dairy farm—he does not go out in the bush to work, but he may do a little work in the shed oiling the harness. The boy may sometimes assist at a muster on Sundays; but if he goes away for a day to attend the show or races, or returns to his home for a holiday of a week or a fortnight, the majority of farmers do not deduct anything from his wages. Generally speaking, the people on farms and grazing properties are of a decent type and treat the boys exceptionally well. There may be odd cases of people who are not fitted to exercise supervision over a boy; but one swallow does not make a summer. Speeches such as were delivered by some hon. members opposite this afternoon will have harmful effects by causing parents to regard farmers as unfitted to be trusted with the supervision of their boys. The Minister has enough difficulty at present in getting boys to go to the training farm. I do not object to the Minister giving these boys a certain amount of training—teaching them to ride, for instance—but I suggest that he work in conjunction with the State schools at the large centres of population.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I am doing so.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: Perhaps not in this direction; in order to teach boys to ride, there should be a riding class at every City State school.

At 8 p.m.,

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

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I should like to see every boy in this city able to ride. Riding is good recreation and a great experience, and the lads in the city should be able to go once a week and ride a horse. It would do an enormous amount of good. The training the boys are getting at St. Lucia is a commencement to a farming career, and, no doubt, it does help them.

[*Mr. Morgan.*]

A number of the lads coming from Great Britain have had no training at all in the industrial towns in which they were reared. They have not had the opportunity of even seeing cattle. I remember one instance of a young Scottish lad who did not know that bulls could not be milked. I was present and heard the remark myself. Five or six cows brought in to be milked and were followed into the milking-yard by a bull. When the milking operations were finished the lad asked whether they didn't milk the bull. That is exactly what occurred. Coming from an industrial centre he had not had an opportunity of seeing cattle of any description. That shows hon. members the class of boys we obtain, but the peculiarity is that such lads generally make the best farm hands, because they have not been spoiled. For myself, I would sooner have a boy who was unable to ride a horse or milk a cow than one who has been in one of these institutions where they have been trained in the wrong way. One can train the raw lad as one desires. Once a boy has been trained in the wrong method it is difficult to correct his faults. His faults become a habit. The opportunities of making good on the land are equal to those that obtained twenty or thirty years ago, if a boy or a man has the ambition to become the owner of his own property. Because the Darling Downs country has all been developed is no reason for saying that there is a lack of opportunity. We have millions of acres of better land than the Darling Downs where the ambitious young man can make good. Every opportunity that existed years ago exists to-day. And speaking of the opportunities of the past, I remember a man coming to Queensland from Victoria at the same time as myself. He had just sufficient money to pay his way over. He got work splitting posts at 12s. 6d. a hundred. Eventually he took on the fencing of certain property. With his savings he started on a small property of 1,200 acres. He then went in for the ballot of the Saltern Creek lands and was fortunate enough to draw a block. He sold out his property for something like £4,000 or £5,000 and took up the property he had drawn. To-day that man is worth something like £20,000. This shows that there were opportunities in the past, and similar opportunities exist to-day.

The Minister has complained of the difficulty of getting boys to take up the course of training provided at St. Lucia. I warn him that it will be of no avail to entice country boys to that training centre. The country lad would secure a better rural training on a farm. At the present moment I would have no difficulty in placing fifteen or twenty boys, fifteen to seventeen years of age, absolutely ignorant of farm work, on farms at 10s. to 15s. a week. I am receiving letters constantly from people requesting me to find them lads. There is any amount of work in the country for the right class of boy, the lad who is prepared to rough it a little. It is not all "beer and skittles" for a lad when he goes to work in the country. He has to rise early in the morning. Whilst he may have to get up with the fowls he generally goes to bed very early; he is healthy and strong, and able to do his work. I can recall an incident of a man who worked on a farm, and after being there for two or three weeks he asked the farmer's wife where she got

the eggs, and upon being told that they were laid by the fowls on the farm he expressed astonishment, and replied that he had never seen a fowl on the place. He had been accustomed to rising and retiring at such hours that he failed to see any fowls about. In my own case, when I go home I like to retire at about half-past eight, but when I am in the city I am not in bed until a much later hour. (Laughter.) Whilst I am in the bush I am unable to sleep after daylight, and immediately the sun rises I must jump out of bed. In the city it is all so different. We want the boys to lead the good, healthy life of the country, and I hope that the Minister will succeed in getting many boys to go to the country where they can lead this healthy life.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*) [8.8 p.m.]: I think that we are all agreed that one of the greatest problems confronting us to-day is what to do with our boys as they approach manhood. Apparently there is a difference of opinion as to the methods that should be pursued in properly catering for the boys. I understood the Minister to say that he was of the opinion that the best method was to pass them through a Government institution, perhaps to become socialised to some extent, whilst on the other hand hon. members on this side hold to the view that it would be best in the interests of the boys if they were sent direct to work on the farms. I cannot help feeling that the latter view is right, and I am fortified in that opinion by a number of illustrations that I am about to give. I know of two young men at the present time who went direct from Brisbane to jobs on sugar farms. Their first work was to assist about the kitchen, to milk cows, etc., for which they received 10s. a week; but in the course of a few weeks they were able to engage in work on the farm, for which they were paid a wage at sugar workers' award rates in addition to the 10s. a week for other duties. The first lad, who had been engaged in this work for three years, has reached the age of nineteen years, is in receipt of £3 19s. 6d. a week, less £1 3s. 6d. a week for his keep, and is working for another farmer. I can recall to mind the case of another lad sixteen years of age who was employed in a drapery establishment in Brisbane before he was retrenched. He was entirely ignorant of farm work, he had never milked a cow, and I do not think he had even looked a horse in the face. When he first came on to the farm he received a wage of 10s. a week, which was afterwards increased to 12s. 6d. a week. Later on he was able to engage in the work on the farm for an hour or two each day, for which he received the award rate of pay. At the present time he is working as a contract cane cutter earning up to £15 and £16 a fortnight, less £1 3s. 6d. a week for his keep. Will the Minister contend that he could have done better than that with these boys? I doubt very much if he could have done as well. I know of another case of a young lad working on a farm who did not want to be a farmer. At the end of his term on the farm he had saved £50, and, with the aid of some money contributed by his parents, he was able to pay for his articles in a solicitor's office. He is now one of the most successful solicitors, and has one of the best practices in Queensland. These lads went

out in the first place entirely ignorant of farm work, but in three or four years they were able to work themselves into remunerative positions. One is now receiving the award rate, one is earning £15 to £16 a fortnight at canecutting, and the other is a solicitor.

These boys came direct from Brisbane to the farm without any experience obtained in a Government institution like St. Lucia. The trouble, I am afraid, is that many of the boys in Brisbane loath anything of the nature of country work. The employers of the second lad I spoke of, the one who is now getting £15 or £16 a fortnight, desired to engage another boy. They wrote down to an employment agency in Brisbane and the reply was that the Brisbane boys did not like to go so far North; yet the two boys who went North previously are earning upwards of £4 a week and £7 or £8 a week respectively. Those are the possibilities open to a lad who cares to take on a job on a cane farm. If they prove themselves to be steady industrious lads then the moment they get too big for their first jobs they can either become canecutters or obtain a weekly job on the farm at award rates.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*) [8.13 p.m.]: We are passing through a period of which the Minister should take very careful notice. He has sent an officer of his department among the parents on the North Coast to induce them to send their sons to the St. Lucia training farm. We are now approaching the busiest months in the dairy industry and mixed farming. Therefore, there is a great demand for boys for mixed farms. Even if St. Lucia training farm has been of some advantage I suggest to the Minister that he get into touch with the inspectors of the Agricultural Bank, who know a very big percentage of the farmers in the districts where they are working. In fact, they know the farmers from one end of the district to the other, whether they are clients of the bank or not. They can furnish the Minister with information as to opportunities for placing boys with farmers, and how the boys will fare with them. I suggest that he should hold his hand for the time being in respect of the St. Lucia training farm, otherwise he will lose a splendid opportunity of placing a large number of boys on farms. If he places a number of boys on the St. Lucia training farm just now, at the end of six months when their period of training expires the winter months will be approaching, which are the slackest period of the year on a farm. He will not then have the same opportunity of placing boys in positions and in good homes as he now has. When a boy was placed with a farmer under my suggestion the bank inspector could interview the farmer in order to see that the boy's welfare, both on the farm and in the home, was looked after in every possible way. This is a means whereby the Minister could help the farming community and the State also by getting unemployed boys placed in the country. If these boys did not desire to remain in the country the knowledge they gained would stand to them in good stead in after life. Their experience in the country would develop initiative.

If the boy on a farm gets lost in a paddock he has to find his way out, and if he has difficulty in mounting a horse he has to overcome that difficulty. In that way he develops self-reliance and independence

*Mr. Edwards.]*

that will be an asset to him throughout his life. I do not believe in pampering boys at every turn, although some hon. members on the Government side apparently think otherwise. Consider any of the men who have made their mark in the world and you will find that their early training has contributed in no small degree to making them the real men that they are. The boy with independence does not want to be pampered and humbugged. The opportunity is awaiting the Minister to do something in regard to settling these boys on farms, and the opportunity should be seized at once, because when the crops are harvested and winter comes the opportunity may not be present. The Minister would do well to try to encourage parents to allow their sons to take positions on the land, and if their employment is supervised by the Agricultural Bank inspector of the district in which they work all difficulty will be overcome. Once the boys get accustomed to life in the country they will love the open air life and the healthy natural conditions under which they work; there will be no fear of their returning to the cities.

Mr. BRASSINGTON (*Fortitude Valley*) [8.20 p.m.]: To listen to the remarks of hon. members opposite, one would imagine they had a monopoly of consideration for the welfare of the young people to whom employment is given on farms. Before I proceed to deal with several points raised by hon. members opposite, I desire to congratulate the Minister personally, and also the Government, for the very fine scheme inaugurated at St. Lucia. It is highly desirable that the best training should be given to boys so that in the battle of life they may face fearlessly the problems that require solution, first in their own interests and secondly in the interests of the State. Whilst the scheme at St. Lucia is one to be commended I wish to add that perhaps the Minister could investigate the possibilities of first training these boys for a life on the land, and then at the completion of their period of training settling them on suitable areas of land throughout the State. The Government might well give consideration to that suggestion.

Mr. EDWARDS: Put them on to Beerburum, as you did the others!

Mr. BRASSINGTON: Apparently the vision of the hon. member is so restricted that he can see only a comparatively few miles from the city. I have in mind thousands of acres of excellent country in the western districts of the State, and I commend the advisability of trained boys being given the opportunity to demonstrate the practicability of their knowledge.

It is noteworthy that despite the criticism of hon. members opposite Victoria recognises the excellence of the scheme now in operation at St. Lucia, as the following extract from the "Courier-Mail" of the 14th June last will indicate:—

"RURAL TRAINING FOR BOYS.

"QUEENSLAND'S LEAD.

"*Victorian Project.*

'Melbourne, 14th June.

"Following Queensland's example, Victoria is preparing to launch a comprehensive system of rural training for boys under the aegis of the State Employ-

[*Mr. Edwards.*

ment Council. The training will be for six months—similar to that in the northern State—in one of the following rural industries, dairying, dried fruits, fruit-growing, mixed farming, wheatgrowing, or sheep farming. After the completion of training, the employers will be invited to engage trainees for a further period at such wages as may be further agreed upon between the movement and the employer.

"Farmers, orchardists, and others who are willing to train boys between fourteen and twenty years will be invited to apply to the local vocational committees. Generally the scheme follows the principles laid down by Queensland in regard to housing, board and lodging, and other details."

Hon. members opposite, particularly the hon. member for Murilla, on every possible occasion, not only in this Committee but also in the House, make a point of comparing Victoria with Queensland; and the hon. member for Murilla at any rate always decides in favour of Victoria. If that State is as progressive as the hon. member suggests, I recommend this statement from the daily press to him as demonstrating that the arguments he has put forward to-night are not justified.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I never mentioned Victoria to-night.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: The hon. member was Minister for Transport in the last Government, and, instead of giving preference to a local man, he went to Victoria to engage a high official for the management of a certain branch of the railway service. The point I am making is this: why indulge in cheap political propaganda for the purpose of discrediting this very fine institution at St. Lucia? Why not be fair and honest and admit that this scheme is so sound and successful that the State from which the hon. member came is now adopting the idea?

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: I did not condemn the St. Lucia training farm.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I have a word or two to say on the points the hon. member stressed to-night. The hon. member painted a rather rosy picture of the conditions obtaining on properties in Western Queensland. I desire to join issue with the hon. member. Owing to the practical experience I have had in the direction he has referred to and the memories that remain with me of the things I have experienced, I cannot whole-heartedly support the hon. member. I am familiar with the conditions that the hon. member endeavours to suggest are perfect.

I know the conditions that have operated for years past, and I know they are still operating despite what hon. members may say to the contrary, and the fact that the conditions remain is sufficient argument why the Industrial Court in this State should operate in the interests of those employed upon properties throughout the West. It is all very well to advise the Minister not to be too keen in connection with the conditions under which these boys should be engaged after they have completed their training. I urge upon the Minister the necessity for careful scrutiny of each agreement covering boys who leave that farm for employment

on farms and stations throughout Queensland.

Mr. EDWARDS: Anybody can see that you do not want the boys to go out on farms.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: The hon. member says I do not desire that the boys should go out on farms. I say here to-night to any young man in the city that if he is seeking opportunity my advice to him is to go out to the West or the North. I am in favour of young people going out to carve out their own destiny; but at the same time I contend that they should have ample protection and a fair deal. Hon. members opposite have sought at all times to misrepresent the Government's policy. I desire to remind hon. members opposite that for years they have asked that boys be trained, but they forget the important fact that after such boys had worked for a long period and received little in return for their labour, and when they were fit to take the place of men, hon. members opposite were so concerned for their welfare that they abolished the Industrial Court award covering their conditions throughout various industries. That is an indication of the concern felt by hon. members opposite for these boys after they have worked on farms and stations for a number of years.

Mr. RUSSELL: Your party is doing very little for the boys.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: The hon. member says this party has done very little for the boys. There are many men who are enjoying decent wages and protection from the Industrial Court and were it not for the efforts of this party that court would not be giving them the protection they are enjoying to-day. I would join issue with hon. members when they say we are not desirous of giving the boys a chance. I certainly stand for a higher principle than that of hon. members opposite, when they passed the amendment of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act that provided that after a boy had served his period of apprenticeship and as a practical tradesman, he should have to work for eighteen months at a rate lower than that paid to artisans. These are the gentlemen who to-day claim to be the friends of the boys. I ask hon. members of this Committee and the people outside to judge them on their past record and effort. They will remember that hon. members opposite, who professing to be the friends of the boys to-night, are the very men who in the past made every endeavour to break down industrial conditions and keep wages as low and hours as long as possible. It is no use their endeavouring to wipe out definite facts.

Mr. DEACON: How many men do you employ?

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I will be quite fair and candid. Owing to employers of the calibre of the hon. member who has interjected, throughout my early life I never had the opportunity of making enough money to be able to employ anyone, even in later years. Owing to their definite policy of low wages and long hours I never had an opportunity of being able to employ anyone, and consequently am the target for their sneers and their boasting to-night.

Mr. KENNY: Many men that had only the same chance made good.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I would say that whilst I never had the opportunity of making

money, neither would I stoop to some of the mean, despicable practices that are to-day indulged in to make money. I am pleased to be in this Committee to say a word on behalf of men who had to undergo the same conditions as myself during my early years in the west of Queensland.

Mr. KENNY: You were too busy agitating.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: Admitted. I was too busy agitating. Whilst conditions were bad and the working men were not receiving their just dues, I aligned myself with them and made every endeavour in my power to obtain better conditions. So long as it is possible for me so to do, I will make every effort to right any wrong and if the conditions of which hon. members opposite are boosting to-night are ever again imposed I will continue that agitation. I conclude by asking the people outside this Committee not to be drawn from the issue by the statements made by hon. members.

Mr. EDWARDS: You know pretty well they will not take much notice of you.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I admit that, perhaps, people of intelligence of the hon. member would not. I am appealing to the intelligent section of the community. When the opportunity comes to the people they will endorse the policy of this Government and they will remember the ruinous policy put into effect by hon. members opposite. They will keep them where they deserve to be for all time, in the cold shades of Opposition.

Mr. FOLEY (*Normanby*) [8.34 p.m.]: It is quite evident from the remarks of hon. members opposite who have spoken on this matter that they have no intention whatever of giving any credit either to the Government or the Minister for initiating the St. Lucia Training Farm for Boys. From their tone it is quite evident that they do not want the farm. The fact that the Government have established the farm and are turning out much more useful boys than they otherwise would have been is apparently very distasteful to hon. members opposite. The hon. member for Coorooora argued that the better thing would be to "scrap" the farm and allow the boys to take their chance and get out and rough it, put up with the hardships of the bush, and eventually they would be broken in and become useful bush workers. I take it that the average farmer in Queensland to-day appreciates what is being done by the Minister and the Government in an endeavour to give instruction in the rudiments of farming to the young boys who are nominated to the St. Lucia farm, so that at least they will have some training which will enable them to take up their duties with some farmer in this State. I take it that is the main object that the Government had in establishing this farm.

Surely to goodness hon. members opposite will be fair enough to recognise the fact that after a boy has had six months' training in a school like this he is much better fitted to take his part on a farm than a lad who goes out to a farm without any previous experience and does not know at what end of the cow to commence milking or what end of the horse he should start to harness! I know that the custom in the past has been to allow the boy to take his chance, and that with many employers he has generally had a pretty rough time. I have been through the mill. I was reared in a country

*Mr. Foley.]*

district. I had some knowledge of riding, axe work, and other bush occupations in station work.

Mr. EDWARDS: Did you ever break any horses into the shafts?

Mr. FOLEY: Yes. I have broken in more horses than the hon. member, and I have broken them in both for riding and harness. I have done more classes of bush work, and I have done it more effectively, than any member of the Opposition. I advise them not to cast any sneers at me, but to try them on someone else. I have some knowledge of the subject that I am discussing, because, as I have stated, I have been through the mill. Despite the fact that I had a fair knowledge of the work required on a station, I as a lad received all the rebuffs and all the abuses one could possibly receive from that hard old pioneer in the northern part of the State, Mr. J. H. Clark, of Laurenceleigh Station. No matter how early you got out of bed, he considered that you should have been up earlier, and no matter what you did or how effectively you did the job, it could have been done better. I do not say that every farmer would act like that towards the boys. There is no doubt that there are some very good farmers in Queensland; but I hold that a lad who has received a rough training for six months in an appropriate school has a much better chance of carrying out the job for the average farmer.

Hon. members opposite have stated that after the average boy has received a wage of 10s. a week and his keep for a number of years he eventually will be able to start on his own. I know of the case of a young lad who has been through that period of training. He was reared in the vicinity of my home at West End, but his home is now at Coorparoo. The Minister can have his name privately if he requires it. This lad has just completed seven months on a farm, and, according to the story told by his mother from letters written by the lad, he is not receiving that measure of treatment to which hon. members opposite have referred. He has to commence work early in the morning, and he finishes at 8 o'clock at night. His wages are 10s. a week, not 15s. or £1 a week as hon. members opposite suggest. Whilst he was there he received a letter from Canon Garland, asking him to save his wages whilst he was working until he had saved £200. When he had saved £200 he would be able to purchase a farm for himself with the aid of the various schemes launched by the Government for the purpose. A wage of 10s. a week means only £26 per annum, and after allowing £1 for spending money, a period of four years would elapse before he had saved his first £100.

Mr. GODFREY MORGAN: His wage would be 10s. a week to start.

Mr. FOLEY: I admit that his wages would probably be increased; but from my experience they are increased very slowly indeed. He would start at 10s. a week, then the wage would be increased to 12s. 6d., and probably to 15s. after he had been there a long time. In this particular case the lad sent home his wage of 10s. a week; but it has cost his parents more than 10s. a week to provide clothes and other incidentals, including pocket money, for the boy during the seven months that he has been in this job. I have had some experience of work-

ing for 10s. a week. I had to be up at daylight in the morning to hunt up the night horse, which meant walking through the wet grass.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Every lad has to do that.

Mr. FOLEY: I do not object to that nor did I object at the time, but I should like to remind hon. members that a boy cannot purchase boots, trousers, and other clothing out of a miserable 10s. a week and have anything left at the end of the year. A lad who goes out morning after morning through the wet grass would naturally wear out his boots and trousers much more quickly than otherwise. Those are factors not taken into consideration. That is partly the reason why many boys cannot be induced to go on farms and why parents withhold their consent. Those are the actual facts of a case that was brought under my notice within the last few weeks. Every parent cannot afford to subsidise his son's wages by renewing his clothes, and keep him supplied with incidentals and pocket money.

I wish the St. Lucia training farm the best success. I suggest to the Minister that when making agreements with farmers he should endeavour to secure a wage of at least £1 a week for a boy who has had six months' training on the farm.

Mr. RUSSELL: What age would that boy be?

Mr. FOLEY: Sixteen years and upwards, after he has had six months' training at St. Lucia. He would have gained a fair knowledge of fencing, learned how to use the axe and split timber, learned how to plough a straight furrow, how to harness, milk, feed poultry and pigs, and do all the elementary work about the farm. If that lad is not worth £1 a week to the average farmer we might as well abandon the St. Lucia training farm. These lads who go out at 10s. a week work from early in the morning till late at night. That wage is not sufficient to keep them in clothing without taking into account a little spending money when they go to town occasionally. Consequently, it is not surprising that the average lad turns down offers of employment. If a minimum wage of approximately £1 a week and keep were offered to boys a better response would follow. To expect the average lad of seventeen or eighteen years to accept 10s. a week is asking a little bit too much. The St. Lucia training farm provides opportunities for boys, particularly those from the city, to secure that rough training that is necessary for the land. I was reared in a country district and possess a fair average experience in riding and rough bush work, and naturally I was more useful than the average boy. I was always able to make a success of any average bush job. The lad in the city has not the same opportunity for he hardly sees a horse or stock, or knows what is required on a station or farm, consequently the St. Lucia training farm fits such a boy for the duties required of him. At the same time, it is doing a service to the farmer who will not require to watch his lad at every turn as if he had come direct from the city.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*) [8.47 p.m.]: After hearing hon. members opposite it is quite easy to see why the St. Lucia training farm is not a success, and why boys do not go there for training. It is quite evident

[*Mr. Foley.*]

that hon. members opposite are doing their best to quietly discourage boys from going to the farm and making it a success. They are also doing their best to prevent the farmer from getting labour by pointing out the hardships that the boy must undergo even after he has had his training. I suppose parents interview the member for the district and ask his opinion as to what is required of boys on a farm after they have finished their training.

After hearing the hon. member for Normanby and the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, would any parent send his boy to St. Lucia to be trained as a farmer? Is it any wonder that the scheme is not a success? Another point is that the training that the boy gets there does not fit him for all the work on a farm. He may be taught to handle a couple of horses and a single-furrow plough, and to milk a cow. Probably the milking is the only thing that makes him useful in modern farming, but he can learn to milk after a few days on a farm. Handling a couple of horses is no use, because on a farm of any size a couple of horses are never yoked. The team of horses would probably number four, five, or six.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: Don't you put the harness on a fifth horse in the same way that you put it on the first one?

Mr. DEACON: The hon. member claims to have been on a farm at one time, and he might have handled a couple of horses, but let him go to a farm where he expects full wages and ask the farmer to trust him with a big team of horses and an expensive plant. The fact is that farmers have to know the capabilities of their employees before they will trust them in that way. I have had boys working for me at different times. I trusted one lad with a team of horses, and his inability to handle the team cost me £25 before the day was out, because the horses got away from him. Every farmer knows such a thing is possible with an inexperienced man. You cannot expect a farmer to take a lad from the training farm at St. Lucia and give him the wages of a trained hand, because the small training he has had at St. Lucia does not make him useful enough.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You don't call £1 a week wages for a trained hand, do you?

Mr. DEACON: Let the hon. gentleman consider the wages of the farmer himself. His business is not a payable one at all at the present time. Wheatgrowing is a dead loss. You cannot grow wheat at 2s. 6d. a bushel, which is all the wheatgrowers have received so far this year. A good many wheatgrowers have not even received that, for damaged wheat, used as feed wheat, has only netted them 1s. 6d. a bushel. You cannot make a profit on that. What is the good of talking about high wages when you are only paying low wages to the farmer? The average price that the farmer receives for butter will not warrant high wages, and the same remarks apply to maize, chaff, and, in fact, anything that is produced on a farm. How can you pay high wages when low prices are received? Machinery is dear, for the mechanics in manufacturing industries are paid award rates—high wages—that are added to the cost of the machinery. In the last fifteen years the price of machinery has more than doubled,

as has also the cost of raw materials—iron, wire, etc.—used on the farm. At the same time you find that the prices of primary products have been cut in half. In the face of all these circumstances, what is the use of asking the farmer to pay high wages? Let any hon. member opposite see if he can make a profit under these circumstances. It is not possible. If the Government are going to train boys as farmers let them tell them that they will be working for people who themselves receive low wages, and that it is not possible for the boys to get any more. How can the fruitgrower, the poultry raiser, or how can any primary producer pay high wages if he is not getting high wages himself? It is only an existence.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: Can you tell us why they do not make wages?

Mr. DEACON: Because they are producing more than the market can take.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: Why did you slaughter the market by putting the industrialists out of work?

Mr. DEACON: Let the hon. member bear in mind that this slump in prices still exists. The Government of whom the hon. member is a supporter have been borrowing millions of money and spending it in an endeavour to create an industrial market; but it has not increased that market. Surely hon. members opposite can add two and two together.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR: It makes twenty-two sometimes.

Mr. DEACON: That is where the hon. member makes a mistake in dealing with these questions. It does not make twenty-two, but he thinks it does. It would be much better to abolish the farm at St. Lucia because the lads are discouraged to go there. Hon. members opposite do not favour the farm. They are carrying it on to make a show. It is a make believe that they want the lads to go on the land. If hon. members do not want them to go on the land, why not tell them so? There are some openings for lads on the land, more openings than there are lads applying for admittance to the training farm. The farming industry can be carried on without these lads; so far as that goes it might be better for the farmers if there were no new farms, for they would get better prices for their products. Why all this humbug about the welfare of the boys and putting them on the land when hon. members opposite do not believe what they say?

Mr. P. K. COPLEY (*Kurilpa*) [8.57 p.m.]: I wish to congratulate the Minister on the stand he has taken in regard to the St. Lucia Training Farm for Boys in making available £1,000 and also in making available the sum of £6,000 for the development of the agricultural, horticultural, and dairy industries and for scientific investigations.

I listened with a great deal of interest to some of the statements made by hon. members opposite; and it appears to me that hon. members opposite are endeavouring to fasten the blame on the Government for the fact that a sufficient number of boys are not applying for positions on the land. I do not accept that statement as representing the true state of affairs. I agree with the remarks of certain hon. members on this side of the Committee that the Minister should exercise great care and caution in allowing

*Mr. P. K. Copley.]*

boys to leave the training farm to go on farms outside. I say that for the reason that the experience of some who have gone to work on farms has not been a very happy one. Objection has already been made to the statement that 10s. a week is quite sufficient for a boy who is working on a farm. That wage is a great improvement on the sum that was paid to farm hands years ago. About two years ago such a case came under my notice, and the facts relating to it were published in the press during the 1932 election campaign. It was the case of a lad who was deprived of his father very early in life, and whose mother was compelled to seek work, with the result that she was not able to look after the child, who was taken under the care of the State Children's Department. At the age of thirteen he was sent out to a farm and was indentured for five years, and at the end of that period he was returned to his mother. Inquiries elicited the fact that the amount of £7 stood to the boy's credit at the State Children's Department. An amount of £5 was made available to him to purchase a clothing outfit. When that purchase had been made the boy and his mother, having no fares to go home, proceeded to walk across Victoria Bridge, and when doing so his hat, which was the only one he had possessed since he left the care of the State home, was blown into the river.

At 9.2 p.m.,

Mr. GLEDSON resumed the chair.

Mr. P. K. COPLEY: The boy came back, but could obtain nothing from the department by way of a further advance. This lad stated quite frankly that during the five years he was on the farm he never wore a pair of boots and, although he was eighteen years of age, when he arrived back home he had to endeavour to get into the clothes with which he went on to the farm. These conditions could not obtain to-day—it would be a sad day for Queensland if they did—but that incident shows what did obtain in the past. Many of our citizens realise the slavery they had to undergo when commencing on a farm, and it is no wonder that they will not allow their offspring, even though unemployed, to go out on to farms, because they fear they may have to undergo the same treatment and perform a scandalous amount of work under slavery conditions that they themselves had to do.

Mr. MAHER: Hard work never hurt anybody.

Mr. P. K. COPLEY: I am not raising any question regarding hard work killing anyone, but there is a difference between a man doing work and a growing boy doing it. The latter requires care and needs to be nurtured so that he will grow into the man that every male adult in this community hopes to become, with an alert mind in an able and robust body. Many conditions are attached to the boy on a farm. He has to rise early on a winter's morning and get out into the frosty air. He should not be asked to do that in tattered clothing with his little body unprotected, or protected to such a degree that he receives very little or no shelter from the elements.

Mr. KEOGH interjected.

Mr. P. K. COPLEY: These are all things that have to be considered. It is not the present Government who are jeopardis-

[Mr. P. K. Copley.

ing the St. Lucia farm, but the farmers themselves. The latter are not prepared to pay a decent wage. In the industrial arena, where the apprenticeship scheme is applied, there is a graduated scale of payment for apprentices which probably could not be applied to the man on the land or the farm. He may not be able to pay that wage. The hon. member for Cunningham put forward his best argument from his point of view regarding the prices obtained for maize, butter, and other things, but it is of no avail to say that every farmer or man on the land is not earning even wages. One has only to look at statistics and see the taxation that some of these people are paying, people in the fruit industry and the dairying industry. It is no use hon. members opposite crying "poor mouth" on behalf of every person engaged in primary industries. There are, no doubt, instances where men commencing on the land, owing to the poor nature of the soil or shortage of finance, have not been able to make a success of their undertaking. There may be some other reason for the failure, such as inability to procure the latest implements for the particular industry. These things have to be considered, and I quite realise that in some instances hardship is occasioned, but the same thing applies to the apprenticeship scheme. Some employers find starting out on their own a hardship. The same set of conditions apply to the man on the land as apply to the one in the city, but I cannot allow hon. members to say that the present Government are endeavouring to kill the scheme. As I pointed out, it is being jeopardised by a lack of interest on the part of hon. members opposite and those whom they represent, the moneyed class and the farmers and others. If they took a keener interest in the well being of the boys, and we were able to prove to the parents that such instances as were raised by the hon. member for Normanby could not exist under the present Administration, the parents would not be so loth to let their boys go to the farms. I hope the Minister will persevere with the scheme, but I sound a note of warning that he must take very great care to see that the boys are well looked after and are visited, occasionally, by an inspector of his department. We must not return to the conditions obtaining twenty-five or thirty years ago, which were scandalous.

Mr. MAHER (*West Moreton*) [9.5 p.m.]: I think I heard the hon. member for Merthyr interject that the farmers were a lot of scoundrels.

Mr. KEOGH: I did not say all of them. I said some of them were.

Mr. MAHER: The hon. member said the farmers were scoundrels.

Mr. KEOGH: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member for West Moreton has made one of his usual statements or one of his usual charges in an endeavour to "put in" another hon. member. When I interjected I did not say that all farmers were scoundrels. I said some of the farmers are scoundrels and have exploited some of the boys that had been sent out to them. "Some" of the farmers, and the hon. member for West Moreton knows that, too, so that I ask that he withdraw his statement.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member for West Moreton must

accept the denial of the hon. member for Merthyr.

Mr. MAHER: I am capable of interpreting the remarks of the hon. member, and I have a very keen set of ears. I certainly heard what the hon. member said. I only wish to remind the hon. member that he comes from a country that has furnished the world with some of its best farmers, and I can just imagine what sort of a reception he would get at the Irish Club if he were to repeat the same statement there, where most of the members are the descendants of Irish farming stock. The hon. member for Normanby and the hon. member for Fortitude Valley endeavoured to show that the farmer was some kind of ogre and that the boys who secured employment with the farmers in Queensland would have a pretty rough time. On this subject I wish to place in the witness-box no less a person than the Premier himself. I have by me a copy of the "Queensland Times," which I secured earlier in the day for another purpose. It contains a speech delivered by the Premier at Gatton College on diploma day, and it is relevant to the debate under discussion.

Mr. W. T. KING: Were you not present at that function?

Mr. MAHER: I was. I heard the speech, and this is what the Premier had to say—

"It had been suggested to him recently by the Brisbane Chamber of Commerce that arrangements should be made for the Department of Agriculture to send competent lecturers to schools to impress on boys in the senior classes the opportunities offered by the life on the land, went on the Premier. That had been done.

"But I am satisfied that it is not the boys who require the lectures, but the parents. I regret exceedingly to state that openings for employment actually are available, but cannot be filled from Brisbane at present. Unfortunately, parents will not allow their children to leave their care for fear that conditions might not be satisfactory.

"To them I wish, in all sincerity, to give this message:—

"Most of the people I have met in rural areas in Queensland are good, honest-to-God people who will at all times give boys the care and attention to which they are entitled, so that from the standpoint of decent conditions, the employment that is offering may be accepted with confidence. Furthermore, it must be realised by every parent that the most critical period in a boy's life is that between the ages of fourteen and twenty-one years. It is essential then that their training should be in the direction of building sound characters as our future citizens. The best habit they may be urged to cultivate is that of industry. It is horrible to contemplate the number of those growing up in the community who are not trained in the habits of industry, who are not absorbed in professions, and who are living under conditions subversive of their future. When parents consider these matters they should seriously think of their boys' prospects."

That was a very commonsense speech delivered by the Premier at Gatton College

and it illustrates how unthinking was the interjection made by the hon. member for Merthyr reflecting upon the farming community. He has stated that there are scoundrels amongst the farming community. The speech by the Premier also goes to prove that the fears expressed by the hon. member for Normanby and the hon. member for Fortitude Valley have no foundation in fact. The Premier has stated that the farming community in this State are good honest-to-God people to whom parents may entrust their boys with confidence that they will be properly cared for whilst on the farm.

Last year I asked the Secretary for Agriculture the following questions:—

"1. What amount of money has been expended at St. Lucia farm school on— (a) Salaries; (b) machinery, horses, harness, and general requirements; (c) erection of buildings, cost of furnishings and equipment; and (d) miscellaneous expenditure not provided for in the foregoing?

"2. How many boys have been trained and placed on farms?

"3. What was the actual cost to the State finances for each boy so trained and placed?

"4. To what fund are those outgoings charged?"

The Minister's reply to the first question was—

"1. (a) £210 7s. 2d.; (b) £465 13s. 5d.; (c) £1,030 8s. 3d.; and (d) £1,091 12s. 11d."

That made a total of approximately £2,760 for the capital expenditure and expenses generally up to that date, August, 1935. The answers to the other questions were—

"2. Fifty boys were enrolled at the opening of the institution. Thirty-six, who have completed their training, have been placed on farms. It is anticipated that the balance will shortly be placed. More applications from employers are being received for these boys than can be filled.

"3. Approximately £20.

"4. Commonwealth-State Loan—Relief of unemployment."

It will be seen that the average cost of training boys at that time was £20 each. It would be far better if the Minister abolished the St. Lucia training farm, saved the State the capital and overhead expenditure involved in its maintenance, and subsidised selected farmers £20 each to educate a boy under true farming conditions. The object of the scheme is to provide boys with farm training. What better farm training could a boy have than under true farming conditions under the direction of the farmer himself? If the State is able to bear a cost of £20 for each boy who goes through the training farm school, would it not be better to subsidise a farmer with a first-class farm to inculcate true farming principles into a boy, with a promise that when the period of training expired he would find him a position on the farm? That would be a better means of encouraging youths to go on the land than the one offered by the Minister. In my experience it is not necessary to even go thus far. The Minister, on his own admission, is unable to get a sufficient supply of boys for the

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St. Lucia training farm school to cope with the demand from farmers. In other words, there are a great many more vacancies on the farms than there are boys offering. That state of affairs produced the condition which caused the Premier to make that speech he did last year at Gatton on diploma day. When there is a demand for boys, why not let the boys secure their jobs directly from farmers? They will then be able to secure training in the ordinary way, as has been the practice hitherto? My suggestion is a much better business proposition.

I should like to ascertain from the Minister what fund is maintaining the St. Lucia training farm school. From his answer to me last year it appeared that the school was being maintained and equipped from loan funds. For the first time we are called upon to vote £1,000 in these Estimates for the maintenance of the school. Will that sum cover all the requirements of the school, or is that amount to be subsidised from loan funds? The Committee should know what amount of money is required for this purpose.

In my experience farmers pay in wages to their employees the amount which they are able to pay according to the ruling prices of their products. If times are good, and high prices rule for wheat, they pay a fair wage to all their employees. If prosperous times exist in the dairy industry, and the farmers receive a fair price for their butter they, in turn, are willing to pay their employees a high wage. Every hon. member who takes an intelligent interest in the affairs of the country knows how badly our producers are faring and how difficult it is for them to pay a high wage scale. My principle always has been that industry should pay to those engaged in it what it can afford to pay, no more and no less.

Mr. KROGH: You believe in exploiting the boy?

Mr. MAHER: I do not believe in exploiting anybody. My principle is a fair deal to all. I have always adopted that principle in my relationship with men who have worked for me. It seems to me that if I were placed in the same position as many dairy farmers are in my electorate—many of them are not earning as much as many relief workers and much less than the basic wage—it would not be a question of what I should like to pay, but what I could pay. You must cut your suit according to your cloth, and the farmer is in the predicament to-day that he can only pay a low wage. I know of cases where lads are employed in the West Moreton electorate at 10s. a week and keep, and are very glad to get the training at that wage. Nothing that we can do by awards or statutes can alter the conditions, for the prices are so poor that farmers are unable to pay a higher wage scale. In this instance the State would do better in the general interests by abandoning the training farm at St. Lucia and either adopting my suggestion to subsidise the farmers to take the boys on the basis of £20 a head with a promise of a job thereafter, or allow matters to remain as they were—that is, to allow the demand for farm boys to be supplied from the farming districts and from the city of Brisbane through the channels which have always been recognised and used in Queensland.

[Mr. Maher.

Mr. G. C. TAYLOR (*Enoggera*) [9.20 p.m.]: I cannot allow this vote to go through without replying to some of the statements made by some hon. members opposite. It was indeed humorous to listen to the discourse of the hon. member for Cunningham, who recited a miserable tale in his efforts to decry the action of the Government in preparing the younger generation for what Opposition members have always maintained is the be-all and end-all of life in this country. The hon. member suggested that the tuition received at St. Lucia was not in keeping with the requirements of the average farmer who requires boy labour. In an attempt to prove his case the hon. member used the illustration that at St. Lucia a boy was taught to yoke up two horses and handle a single-furrow plough, a form of education that the hon. member suggested would be of no value to him in after life on a farm, because the boy would probably have to yoke up six horses and use a four or six-furrow plough. Anyone possessing even the rudiments of farm education knows that to handle a team of horses successfully you must first be able to handle one horse. I take it that even the hon. member for Cunningham knows that a person who can handle a single-furrow plough successfully can, when he is able to handle three to six horses, use a four or six-furrow plough, as the case may be. It is easier to plough with a disc plough than with the ordinary old type plough. I have been behind the plough under circumstances that probably the hon. member for Cunningham has not experienced. I guarantee it is harder to plough on a three-in-one batter than it is to plough land in a paddock for fallowing or sowing purposes. I have had experience in tank sinking propositions, and I do not think the hon. member would deny that a person who can handle a single-furrow plough would not be able to negotiate successfully the fifth and sixth horses when he is taught to work horses abreast. So far as the harnessing proposition is concerned, the collar goes on the fifth horse in much the same way as it goes on the first one, and the reins and the breeching fit in the same manner. In all the circumstances the Government are to be commended for their efforts in the direction of training boys for farm work.

We have heard the cry from the Opposition that boys are demanded for farm work, yet to-night the hon. member for Cunningham admits that not too many jobs are offering. The hon. member advances arguments diametrically opposed to those previously adduced by him in an endeavour to convince the Government that they should abolish the St. Lucia Training Farm for Boys. There are many lads in the City of Brisbane who, if given the opportunity by their parents, would gladly avail themselves of the opportunities offered at St. Lucia training farm and later on go out to work on farms; but unfortunately the tragedy of the whole thing is that the parents are to blame. I am sorry to say that in nine cases out of ten that is the state of affairs. It would be much better if the parents recognised the fact that the secondary industries to-day do not offer the same opportunities of employment to the rising generation. If that fact were recognised by parents, they might induce their lads to go to St. Lucia. Taken as a whole, the farming fraternity are of a splendid type; but you will get

flack sheep in every flock; and unfortunately the actions of a few always appear to be in the forefront when a matter affecting the whole is under consideration. I know that the St. Lucia training farm provides boys with an elementary knowledge of farming which is very essential. On one occasion I accompanied the Minister on a visit to the institution, and I had the spectacle afforded to me of boys cutting down trees for the purpose of obtaining rails. Their instructor was apparently conversant with bush work, because he was able to instruct the boys on the type of tree to select for the purpose of getting the posts and to look for the grain in the timber in order to obtain the best split. That knowledge is essential to a farmer as well as any other individual who goes to live in the bush. If a man takes up virgin country he has to be able to split his own posts and fence it. After the boys receive instruction in this type of work they are taught to handle pigs and they are made conversant with the characteristics of the different breeds, they are taught to handle horses and to separate milk. That elementary tuition is necessary for a young lad who intends to go on a farm. A knowledge of cattle is also necessary. It is only natural that a boy reared in the city will probably not adapt himself to the conditions of farm life as readily as a boy who is bred on a farm. A boy who has had six months' training at St. Lucia is worth a wage of 10s. a week, and is deserving of fair treatment which in ninety-six cases out of a hundred he gets. When I was a boy I had to handle an axe and build a yard to put the bullocks in. I have gone at four o'clock in the morning to catch a horse to round up the bullocks. That is a phase of country life that the modern boy will not have to experience; because horses and mechanical devices are now used instead of bullocks. The tuition a boy receives at St. Lucia will equip him for the life that he intends to follow.

Whatever the cost of this farm, whether £2,000 or £3,000, is quite beside the point. Hon. members opposite may criticise the Government for the expenditure of this amount of money, but I claim that if the Government are able to place fifty boys on farms each year and keep them there, thereby taking them away from the city, they will do a service to the State worth more than £3,000. After all, that is the point we have to consider. It is a well known fact that the conditions obtaining on farms to-day are different from what they were thirty or forty years ago. In fact, all the conditions surrounding the employment of youth are different. In past years, in order to enter one of the skilled trades such as engineering or carpentering, the parents of a boy had to pay a premium. In most instances the lad had to work for nothing for six months. It was, probably, because of the prevalence of such conditions in the secondary industries that more of our youths were forced into the rural industries than otherwise would have been the case. Parents could not afford to pay the premiums demanded, nor could they allow their sons to work for nothing during six months. Consequently, many of the lads were sent to work on farms at a wage of 5s. a week and keep. In my young days that was considered a fair wage, but thank goodness the Labour Party came into existence and conditions have been improved. It is only because of the agitation of men such as members

in this Chamber on the Government side that improved conditions of employment for youths, as well as adults, were brought about, and we will see to it that the boys who do go out to farm receive a wage of at least 10s. or 15s. a week and keep. The problem facing the nation is the employment of the youth of that nation, and if the present Government expend £5,000 per annum and increase the number of students at the St. Lucia training farm and get them out on to the land, then that money has been well spent and the Government are to be commended.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, *Barcoo*) [9.54 p.m.]: I was somewhat surprised to find that certain members on the opposite side of the Committee apparently resent an expenditure of £1,000 as a small contribution towards the solution of the problems surrounding the unemployment of the youth of our State. I have heard all kinds of opinions during the day concerning the desirability or otherwise of training boys. I have heard hon. members opposite speaking of the intricacies of farming. I have heard them saying from time to time that a very definite training is necessary in order to become a successful farmer. I agree with that view, but when the State embarks on a scheme for which Parliament is being asked to vote £1,000 for the current year, then we find hon. members grudge that expenditure. Is their opposition based on fair argument or does it arise out of a selfish consideration of the realisation that a boy going out from St. Lucia is under the control and jurisdiction of the department and we are capable of seeing to it that that boy receives satisfactory treatment?

The greatest problems we are facing to-day in our State are those associated with unemployed youth. I can visualise no future for a nation that does not make some contribution towards the education and absorption of that youth in satisfactory forms of endeavour, and I know of no more satisfactory form of endeavour than work on the land. I am really shocked to discover that hon. members opposite, or some hon. members opposite, resent the voting of £1,000 towards the solution of a question that is of outstanding importance and if not solved may easily wreck the social structure not only of our State but also of the world generally. Do you think, Mr. Gledson, that the adolescent is going to be content with relief work, that he is going to be content with the things that the city offers, without employment?

Mr. DEACON: I rise to a point of order. The Minister has stated that hon. members on this side object to the expenditure of £1,000 on St. Lucia. Neither I, nor any other hon. member on this side, has objected to this expenditure. I ask that the Minister withdraw that remark.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order. The Minister is entitled to reply to the remarks that have been made.

Mr. DEACON: He is not entitled to make an untrue statement.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: The Minister did not say that the hon. member for Cunningham objected to this expenditure. He said that some hon. members on my left objected to the expenditure.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Allow me to be a little more specific. I

*Hon. F. W. Bulcock.]*

have no desire to wound the tender susceptibilities of the hon. member for Cunningham. I am delighted to know that he has been converted to a supporter of the St. Lucia scheme. I am glad to know that he approves of this expenditure of £1,000, but I wish that he would convince the hon. member for Cooroora, the hon. member for West Moreton, and other hon. members opposite who advocated the closing down of the St. Lucia training farm. The closing down of the farm at St. Lucia would mean that we would not spend this meagre £1,000, which is altogether too small a sum to expend on a problem that is confronting us. The suggestion has been made that we could train the boys on the farms. May I remind hon. members that that scheme is in operation and is maintained by my colleague, the Secretary for Labour and Industry? But that scheme has not met with the success that it deserves. There are parents with whom I repeatedly come in contact who realise that it is necessary for the boy to have some fundamental training before he goes into the bush. There is a physiological and psychological aspect of this question. The physiological aspect of the St. Lucia farm is that there we determine whether a boy has the capacity and liking for farm work, and from the psychological aspect we decide whether the boy has an instinctive desire to go on the farm or will become depressed by the fact that he is absolutely inefficient and unacquainted with farming processes and likely to abandon his intention to become a farmer and return to the city, there, unfortunately, to find no work.

Much has been said by hon. members on both sides of the Chamber about the need for having the right type of employer. I take this opportunity to assure parents that no effort is spared by my department to find the right type of employer. We receive more applications from farmers for boys than we have boys available, and we are able to pick and choose and send the boys to the best type of employers. We have a satisfactory guidance in that regard by the useful service of our estimable Mr. Holmes who is associated with the Immigration Department. I understand that he has been responsible for placing some 400 boys in employment under another scheme. He does not lose contact with the employers and he can tell us at any moment whether an employer is a desirable one or not. I can assure hon. members that I regard it as part of my personal duty to see that these boys obtain satisfactory employment.

Some suggestion has been made that the wage of 10s. a week is inadequate. I again remind hon. members that that wage is not the average wage and that many of our boys are receiving a great deal more than 10s. a week on the farms on which they are working at the present time. Hon. members opposite have stated that we should go back to the old haphazard scheme under which a boy who required a job went along to a registration office or to the Labour Bureau. Under that scheme he would probably go out to a job, become dissatisfied, and return to the city. It is suggested by hon. members opposite that we should adopt that scheme in place of an organisation for the enlistment of boys in the service of agriculture. St. Lucia has given us that organisation, and St. Lucia is tending to create landmindedness. It has attracted attention as an organisation throughout Brisbane. The New

Settlers' League, the Rotary Club, and kindred bodies are behind the Government in this movement. I have never closed the door of St. Lucia to anybody who desires to see what is being done there.

Hon. members opposite have criticised St. Lucia. I do not desire to make any wrong statements to this Committee or do anyone an injustice, but as a result of inquiries I can honestly say that with the exception of the hon. member for Toowong, who was present at the opening of the farm at St. Lucia, no member of the Opposition has visited St. Lucia, or made any endeavour to discover just what is being done there. Does that provide a fair basis for criticism? Is it fair to criticise an institution which is definitely attempting to make a contribution to the solution of a problem of gigantic importance to the State without taking the trouble to go out there and see what is being done? I repeat that I shall be happy to extend an invitation to any hon. member of this Committee—this is a question greater than a party question—to go to St. Lucia and see what is being done there, and also to visit the bush camp at Moggill, where boys are being prepared for a farming career.

Hon. members on this side of the Committee have been at St. Lucia. They have explained what they saw there. I realise one cannot do everything. Someone suggested that we equip St. Lucia with everything that the boys required, and that when they went on to a farm they would find they were handicapped because the equipment they were accustomed to was not available for them. That is not a fact. St. Lucia is run on the principle that the things we have there shall be the things possessed by the average farmer. I have steadfastly resisted all attempts to put expensive equipment on St. Lucia. We have essentials—and no more than essentials—there. Because we do that we can honestly say that when the boys go out they will have the facilities on the average farm that they had at St. Lucia. Everybody is prepared to accept Canon Garland as being a very earnest worker in the cause of youth. I have come in contact with Canon Garland in connection with the St. Lucia scheme, and he has given me a tremendous amount of encouragement and help. He realises the value of these problems, and realises that they must be solved in one way or the other, satisfactory to the State by training boys, or unsatisfactory to the State by allowing them to continue in cities or encouraging them by the absence of any other inducement to remain in cities to become less efficient citizens than they would become in the more robust life associated with farming life.

An hon. member made the statement that many boys who completed their training at St. Lucia did not go into farming pursuits. I say quite definitely that if boys who go to St. Lucia and complete a six-months' training do not go into farming pursuits, then they to that degree take an unfair advantage of the finances of the State. I will not tolerate any boy going to St. Lucia who will not go into a farm occupation. When the statement was made in this Chamber that these boys were not going into farm occupations, I thought it wise to check it up. I checked it up through

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three sources, first, through my departmental officers who oversee the welfare of the boys in the districts to which they go, secondly, through Canon Garland, and thirdly, through the Immigration Department per medium of the genial Mr. Holmes. Listen to what Canon Garland has to say in this regard:—

“With reference to our conversation about Mr. Nimmo's statement in the House that many of the boys who had completed their training at St. Lucia had soon returned to the city, I am not aware of any who have so returned. It would be interesting to get the ‘many’ names to which Mr. Nimmo refers that inquiries be made. I keep as far as possible in touch with the lads going from St. Lucia and have not heard of any so returning, but on the contrary I have letters from lads in their employment with farmers showing how appreciative they are of the training they receive and how happy they are in their jobs.

“A case the other day was that of a boy who loved city life until he had his period of training at St. Lucia. I then sent him to a job in the far North Queensland, where, according to a report I have from someone who visited him the lad is very happy indeed, and his employer writes to me expressing his satisfaction with the lad and confirming the report I received about him.”

I asked Mr. Holmes, who is not an officer of my department, but who is a good citizen and who does recognise the gravity of the unemployment problem in the State, to have a look at St. Lucia. Mr. Holmes has co-operated with me in obtaining employment for boys ever since we established St. Lucia.

Mr. RUSSELL: How many boys have you there now?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Fifty-four at the present time, which is four in excess of the total number I really should have taken, but that is all to the good. Mr. Holmes says—

“In reference to the question raised regarding the number of St. Lucia lads still following a rural occupation, I have to advise that I carried out my promise to communicate with all parents residing in Brisbane. So far I have received thirty-six replies.

“So far as I have been able to ascertain, of the eighty-five lads placed, twelve are not now in rural work. However, out of that number, five do not appear to be inclined to take further work on farms. The rest of them as far as I can see, from the letters received, will take further employment, but evidently they do not understand that this office is prepared to secure such work for them. I have written to the parents in each case where they have not definitely informed me that their son is not prepared to again take rural employment.

“You will note that a number of the lads sent out in the first draft are still in their original positions. I have not been able so far to ascertain whether eighteen

of the total placed are still on farms, but in the absence of information regarding them, I think that we would be quite justified in assuming that they are still on the land.

“In any case, the letters received prove that St. Lucia has more than justified its existence, and after observing the methods of training at St. Lucia and the results on farms, I am quite satisfied that there is room for an institution of this nature, even in the best of times. Gatton College serves its purpose, but its mission is quite a different one from St. Lucia.

“I understand the New Settlers' League intends now to take action to keep in close touch with these lads in the future.”

That bears out the statement made on both sides of the Committee that many of these boys are happily circumstanced and placed on farms.

It might be interesting for hon. members to hear some of these letters. For example—

“Mrs. Coleman telephoned that her son, who was sent to the employ of Mr. G. Dore, Hillview, via Dalveen, by this office, is now in the employ of Mr. Dore's brother with wages at the rate of £1 per week and keep. He is very, very keen on the life on the land, and she does not think that he is ever likely to leave it.”

A letter addressed from Nundah to the officer in charge, Farm Lads Bureau, reads—

“I am pleased to say that my son is still in employment in rural occupation to Mr. Eccles, The Gums, via Dalby.”

Another letter reads—

“I desire to inform you that my son is still following the rural position obtained for him by your department and getting on well.”

Another communication states—

“I wish to advise you that . . . is still employed in rural occupation. . . . Thanking you for your kind interest.”

Another correspondent reports—

“My son who was at St. Lucia is employed by . . . in the employment to which he was sent by your department on 25th June, 1934. I have had a splendid report from the lad's employers, which is very pleasing. . . .”

Another letter reads—

“. . . I am pleased to say, in reply, that my son is still employed by Messrs. McGeehan Bros., of Kairi, North Queensland, that position having been found for him by you. I am also glad to say that the knowledge and experience gained by him at the St. Lucia Training School has been of great value and help to him.”

Another letter reads—

“My son Thomas is still with Mr. Lang, of Texas. I am very pleased to tell you he likes his place, and Mr. and Mrs. Lang are very good to him. I know they have a very nice, active, and

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willing worker. As he gets his money he puts it into the bank. He is a very saving lad. I hope Mr. Lang does not let him get into bad company.

“Wishing you all success for the trouble you are taking for the welfare of the lads.

“Hoping they will be as fortunate as my son Thomas.”

Another letter reads—

“ . . . I wish to advise that my son is still employed on the land.”

I do not wish to quote all these letters, but one letter here is worth quoting, because I think parents should know just how things stand in regard to these boys. This is a letter which is typical of the outlook of an earnest parent and his conception of his duty to his son, and his son's duty to the State—

“I am happy to state that our son, John Dovovan, late student of St. Lucia, is still engaged in rural work; he is working for a Mr. Skinner at Jandowae, and he is very happy there. He is not overworked and he is well fed. This is his second place. His first place was at Grantham, but he left to better himself. He has been at Jandowae nearly a year.

“Mr. Donovan (John's father) met Mr. Skinner, who said that the St. Lucia training must have been very thorough and comprehensive—judging by John's knowledge of technical points and scientific facts—useful knowledge that takes a lad years to acquire if he has had no previous training such as St. Lucia offers; however, he has one drawback, that is his lameness. He finds 10s. a week enough now, as he is only nineteen; but though he is willing and intelligent, he is hardly hefty enough for a farmer; but he is very happy where he is at present. We, his parents, are grateful to St. Lucia for the training our son has received there, and we consider he's far better off morally, physically, and financially than if he were hanging about round town waiting for something to turn up.”

Those letters are typical of the letters we are receiving from parents. I want to look after these boys, and I want these boys to avail themselves of the opportunity offered to them. I can assure parents of our care and thought for the welfare of the boys in the direction of doing everything we can to help them to make a success of their lives.

At 9.55 p.m.,

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Under the provisions of the Sessional Orders agreed to by the House on 29th August and 3rd October, I shall now leave the chair and make my report to the House.

The House resumed.

The TEMPORARY 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.

[*Hon. F. W. Bulcock.*]