

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

FRIDAY, 11 NOVEMBER 1938

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The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT
(Hon. J. Dash, Mundingburra) replied—

“No; this matter can be considered by the Transport Board.”

RUNNING OF BRISBANE-CHARLEVILLE MAIL
TRAIN.

Mr. YEATES (East Toowoomba) asked the Minister for Transport—

“Does the Commissioner for Railways intend to take action to accelerate the running of the Great Western mail train between Brisbane and Charleville in time to be included in the ensuing public time-table? If so, will he give me a copy of the suggested time-table of the chief train and also the “sweeper” between Brisbane and Roma for service en route for my perusal?”

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT
(Hon. J. Dash, Mundingburra) replied—

“Yes; a copy of the poster can be secured on application to the office of the Commissioner for Railways, or to the Tourist Bureau.”

SUPREME COURT JUDGES ON PENSION.

Mr. YEATES (East Toowoomba) asked the Attorney-General—

“1. Will he give a list of retired Supreme Court judges who are drawing pensions from the State?

“2. Will he take steps to pass legislation to provide that retired judges will not be paid retiring allowances while acting as judges for the Commonwealth or any other State, or while the Commonwealth or any other State is paying such judges a retiring allowance?”

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

“1. Hon. William A. B. Shand, Hon. Lionel Oscar Lukin, Hon. Thomas O’Sullivan, K.C. This information may be found on page 3 of the Estimates for the year ending 30 June, 1939.

“2. This is not necessary, as by section 4 of The Judges’ Retirement Act of 1921 pensions for judges appointed after that Act came into operation were abolished. The pension rights of Mr. Justice Lukin (to whom, no doubt, the hon. member refers) were conferred by the Constitution of Queensland and The Supreme Court Acts, 1861 to 1903, and secured by the commission issued to him in His Majesty’s name.”

FRIDAY, 11 NOVEMBER, 1938.

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

QUESTIONS.

PARKING OF MOTOR CARS AT TOOWOOMBA.

Mr. YEATES (East Toowoomba) asked the Minister for Transport—

“Will he place before the Governor in Council a recommendation for approval of a regulation under the State Transport Act to give any local authority the power to decide the method of parking motor vehicles on the streets or roads within its own area? Or, as an alternative, will he agree to do this in the case of the city of Toowoomba?”

PUPIL TEACHERS IN STATE SCHOOLS.

Mr. MORRIS (Kelvin Grove) asked the Secretary for Public Instruction—

“How many pupil teachers are at present employed in the State schools of Queensland?”

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. T. A. Foley, Normanby), for **The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION** (Hon. H. A. Bruce, The Tableland), replied—

“None.”

BAROONA ELECTORAL ROLL.

Mr. MORRIS (Kelvin Grove) asked the Attorney-General—

“In view of the fact that 1,600 names have been erased from the roll for the electoral district of Baroona within the last two weeks, will he institute inquiries into this matter, and state why they were not erased before 2 April of this year?”

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

“The statement that 1,600 names have been removed from the roll of the electoral district of Baroona during the last two weeks is absolutely false, and is evidently intended to mislead the electors of that locality. It would be appropriate to inquire how the hon. member obtained his false information. Alderman Crampton died on 20 October, 1938, making a by-election in the Baroona ward necessary. The erasures on the Baroona roll between that date and the issue of the writ were only 38. The total erasures for the period 1 January, 1938, to 10 November, 1938, were 1,608, made up as under:—

1st Jan. to 7th Mar.	8th Mar. to 30th June.	1st July to 30th Sept.	1st Oct. to 26th Oct.	27th Oct. to 10th Nov.	Total.
636	243	652	66	11	1,608

It will be seen from the above figures that only 11 names were removed from the roll during the two weeks named by the hon. member, and that only 77 erasures were made from 1 October to the present date. All electorates, particularly metropolitan electorates, are subject to change of electoral population. For instance, for the nine months ended 30 September, 1938, there were 2,035 erasures in the electoral district of Brisbane, and in each of 13 other metropolitan electorates, the erasures exceeded 1,000 for the period mentioned.”

Mr. POWER (Baroona), without notice, asked the Attorney-General—

“Has the hon. gentleman’s attention been drawn to the false and misleading statements published in this morning’s ‘Courier-Mail’ by Mr. J. J. Butterworth, Campaign Director of the sectarian party in Baroona Ward, and particularly to his question why about one-seventh of the population of Baroona have changed their addresses by either leaving or coming into the electorate this year?”

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

“Yes. The Baroona electoral roll is as clean as it is possible to make it, and there is nothing unusual in the fact that one-seventh of the electors go on or come off the roll in one year. In fact, alterations in rolls range between 25 per cent.

and 41 per cent. per annum for the whole State and Commonwealth and have run as high as 80 per cent. in metropolitan electorates. For confirmation of this statement I refer the hon. member to pages 4 and 5 of the report of the Joint Select Committee on Commonwealth Electoral Law and Procedure, 1926-27.”

RELIEF WORK AND RATIONS, TOOWOOMBA DISTRICT; FAMILY INCOME COMPUTATIONS.

Mr. YEATES (East Toowoomba): I desire to ask the Secretary for Labour and Industry whether he has an answer to the following question, which I addressed to him on 18 October:—

“1. In respect of the Toowoomba District—(a) how many persons were—(i.) on intermittent relief work, and (ii.) drawing ration relief, in the week ended 17 September last; (b) the corresponding figures for the week ended 15 October, 1938; (c) what new work to absorb the unemployed in full-time employment has been started since 1 September last?”

“2. Will he explain briefly the method adopted in computing the relief allowance where there is some family income?”

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. T. A. Foley, Normanby), for **The SECRETARY FOR LABOUR AND INDUSTRY** (Hon. M. P. Hynes, Townsville), replied—

“The information has not yet been collected.”

RELIEF AND INTERMITTENT RELIEF WORK.

Mr. BEDFORD (Warrego), without notice, asked the Premier—

“What amount has been expended this year on relief and intermittent relief work?”

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Mackay) replied—

“The amount provided in the Estimates for ration relief assistance, wages, and intermittent work, &c., is £1,148,291.”

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. MAHER (West Moreton) (10.35 a.m.) by leave: I wish to make a personal explanation. Yesterday afternoon when I was speaking on the Income (State Development) Tax Bill I stated that the expenditure from the Loan Fund and Unemployment Relief Fund for the months of July to October this year was £344,458 less than in the corresponding period of 1937-38. The Premier interjected that my figures were not correct.

I have in my hand the issue of the Queensland Government “Gazette” dated 9 instant containing a comparative statement of the expenditure from all funds for the quarter ended 30 September, 1937, and the quarter ended 30 September, 1938. I have also the return published in the “Telegraph” of 3 November, 1938, containing the State

Treasury returns, which show the expenditure from all funds for the month of October, 1937 and 1938 respectively. I have also the Votes and Proceedings of this House dated 9 November, 1938, showing the expenditure from the Unemployment Relief Fund for October, 1937, and October, 1938.

These documents prove that the expenditures in question for the first four months of 1937-38 and 1938-39 were—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I think the hon. gentleman is going beyond a personal explanation.

Mr. MAHER: I was charged by the Premier with dishonest advocacy. That is a very serious charge and I should like to have the opportunity of justifying my statement.

The Premier: Your dishonest advocacy was on the £650,000 transfer.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MAHER: I was coming to that.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman is not expected to debate a personal explanation. If the House gives the hon. gentleman permission to make a statement he may make it, but it cannot be debated. I fail to see how the hon. gentleman can proceed in his present strain. He is exceeding his leave to make a personal explanation.

Mr. MAHER: I will forgo that section of it and come to the main point in connection with which I was definitely charged by the Premier with dishonesty advocacy.

Later, the Premier stated that an additional fund of £1,720,000 had been made available this year for special development works and that I had been guilty of dishonest advocacy in this matter. I say definitely that the items included in that amount and shown on page 131 of the Estimates are also voted under other headings and that this alleged new fund is only a duplicated entry. Take one item to illustrate this. An amount of £220,000 is voted for the Stanley River Dam in the Loan Estimates (page 141)—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MAHER: I have almost finished, and I might still be permitted to read an extra line.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. gentleman realises that I have given him considerable latitude—latitude exceeding his privilege on a personal explanation.

Mr. MAHER: I think I should be allowed to justify the facts of the case.

The Premier: If you want to make your offence worse go on. So far as I am concerned you can go on. You are only making your offence against the House worse.

Mr. MAHER: No, that is not so. I want to justify my statement.

The Premier: No, you want to withdraw and apologise to the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. member for West Moreton will not proceed

in his present strain. He knows he is exceeding his privilege on a personal explanation.

Mr. MAHER: I insist and state that instead of dishonest advocacy there has been a duplicated entry and that the facts and figures which I gave in the Legislative Assembly yesterday afternoon were absolutely correct.

PERSONAL STATEMENT.

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Mackay) (10.40 a.m.), by leave: Mr. Speaker, on page 128 of the Estimates of Expenditure from Trust and Special Funds, Department of Labour and Industry, the second last item is—

Amount to be transferred to Special Fund for full-time employment	£650,000
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An amount cannot be transferred to a fund unless that fund has already been opened—that is quite obvious. That vote, as passed by the Committee of Supply, means that the existing trust fund at the end of the year will be closed, and the balance, estimated at £650,000, transferred to the special fund for full-time employment. On page 131 there is opened a new fund entitled "State Development and Public Works Organisation Act Special Employment Works Fund." That fund is made up as follows:—

Main Roads	£700,000
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That comes from the proceeds of the taxation Bill passed yesterday.

Mr. Brand: The whole £700,000?

The PREMIER: Yes. The other items are—

	£
Forestry	284,000
Public Estate Improvement ..	330,000
Brisbane River Improvement Works	50,000
Stanley River Dam	220,000
Sundry Works	136,000
Total	£1,720,000

That figure of £650,000 will be added to that amount. Further amounts will be added under the headings set out in the Bill, which is due for third reading to-day.

Those are the facts of the position, and no amount of quibbling can alter them. A fund cannot be transferred to another fund unless that fund is already opened. The Leader of the Opposition made a mistake in his calculations of only £1,250,000.

Mr. Maher: Do you say that £700,000—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Maher: Came from—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The personal explanation and statement have now been completed.

CESSATION OF BUSINESS FOR
ARMISTICE DAY.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to announce that to-day being the twentieth anniversary of Armistice Day, at 11 o'clock the bars of the House will be closed and the customary two minutes' silence will be observed.

PRIMARY PRODUCERS' ORGANISATION
AND MARKETING ACTS AMEND-
MENT BILL.

INITIATION.

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

“That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend The Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Acts, 1926 to 1935, in certain particulars, and for other purposes.”

Motion agreed to.

SALARIES ACT OF 1930 REPEAL BILL.

INITIATION.

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Forgan Smith, Mackay) I move—

“That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to repeal The Salaries Act of 1930, as read and construed with, and as amended by The Financial Emergency Act of 1931, and to repeal Part 2 (being section 3) of such lastmentioned Act, and for other purposes.”

Motion agreed to.

INCOME (STATE DEVELOPMENT) TAX
BILL.

THIRD READING.

Bill, on motion of Mr. Smith, read a third time.

MILK SUPPLY BILL.

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF
DEBATE.

Debate resumed from 10 November (see page 1667) on Mr. Bulcock's motion—

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

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) (10.51 a.m.): When I was dealing with the wisdom of granting the Minister power to appoint the chairman of the Brisbane Milk Board, the Minister stated by way of interjection that he already had that power in that he had power to appoint the chairman of the Butter Board if he so desired.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: And of any board.

Mr. MULLER: That is so. I desire to point out, however, that, with the exception of the Wheat Board, that has never been done.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: Yes it has.

Mr. MULLER: I should like to point out, too, that to grant that power under this Bill would be more drastic than it would be in respect of either the Wheat Board or the Butter Board. The constitution of the proposed Brisbane Milk Board makes this practice objectionable. The proposed board is to be comprised of three producers' representatives and three wholesalers' representatives. On the Butter Board there are seven members, six of whom are producers' representatives. I say emphatically that to give the Governor in Council power to appoint the chairman of the Brisbane Milk Board would virtually nullify the efforts of the board. The hon. member for Murrumba pointed out yesterday that the producers' interests and those of the wholesaler are so far apart that it would be very unlikely that those two sections of the board would agree. If the Minister is to be given power to appoint an independent chairman—a Government representative in this case—there is really no need to appoint a board at all; the Government nominee could act as the sole Commissioner to administer the Bill.

I object also to the powers that it is proposed to vest in the chairman. I notice by this Bill that the chairman is to have power to fix the price that the producer shall receive as well as the price that shall be paid to the wholesaler. In addition to that he has power to allocate supplies.

I agree with everything that the Minister said about distribution. I believe that it is essential that overhead costs should be cut down wherever that is possible and that good results could be achieved by reducing the number of vendors. It will be beneficial to have control over both production and the number of vendors who may operate. If I was asked to act as a member of the board I should refuse to do so if I was not given power to control the production of milk as well as the number of vendors who might distribute it.

I am sure that it will frequently occur that the Government nominee—the chairman in this case—will be called upon to exercise his decision over the heads of both producers and consumers.

There is another very important point to be considered. I notice that it is proposed to ask the chairman to allocate supplies with a view to eliminating any danger that may arise from having a surplus of milk. I think that the Bill is incomplete. I believe that additional powers should be included in it to encourage the establishment of some co-operative association to receive and to pass this milk on to the retailer. In that way they could equip themselves—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member cannot discuss that aspect of the matter at this stage of the Bill.

Mr. MULLER: I am not discussing it at all. I am just making reference to a weakness of the Bill that I believe we should overcome.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will not be able to discuss that on the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. MULLER: I indicated the matter earlier, and the Minister did likewise, and he suggested that if the Bill was not perfect he would welcome any advice we might be able to give. I am endeavouring to do that, and I am hoping that the opportunity will be given on the second reading. I understand, according to your ruling, that we shall be able to discuss the clauses of the Bill only in Committee, but I feel that if we had an opportunity to make a suggestion now the Minister might be able to meet the situation. Any person who has experience of milk distribution, particularly in the South, will tell you that one of the great problems arises in regard to surplus milk. Under this Bill—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I cannot help what any Minister may have told the hon. member. I am bound to carry out the Standing Orders of this House.

Mr. MULLER: I accept your ruling, but I believe it is the duty of every hon. member to help as much as he possibly can.

Another matter I am concerned about is the powers given to this board in connection with uneconomic runs. A fund is to be created, at the expense of the cold milk producers, which the Minister estimates will have an income of about £5,000. I object to the spending of this money on runs that are economically unsound. My suggestion is that those that are economically sound should be licensed as is done in regard to other things. Under the Dairy Produce Acts Amendment Act passed a few years ago controlling the delivery of cream to butter factories, a number of uneconomic runs were eliminated. We did not set ourselves out to buy them, but we licensed those that were economic. That general principle was followed also in regard to the abattoirs. The Queensland Meat Industry Board did not compensate all the owners of small slaughteryards in and around Brisbane. They were told that the whole of the killing would have to be done at the abattoirs.

After all, an uneconomic run is worthless. The Minister's reference the other day to diseased beasts applies here. The value of a diseased beast is virtually nothing, and the value of an uneconomic milk run is no more. In its Brisbane marketing scheme, the Butter Board had to adopt a similar practice in regard to uneconomic distribution to the one I am advocating this morning. We have adopted a system of licensing wholesalers who we think are useful to the industry. Those who have not a business worth licensing do not get a license. The same procedure has been adopted by the Australian Dairy Produce Board. We have licensed a number of agents to handle our produce in London, but we are not obliged in any way to license all and

sundry, nor are we obliged to buy a business that we think is uneconomic. I cannot see the wisdom of spending producers' money in this way.

ARMISTICE DAY.

At 11 a.m.

In accordance with Mr. Speaker's announcement at the opening of the sitting, business was suspended for two minutes, during which hon. members stood in silence.

MILK SUPPLY BILL.

SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. MULLER: I am very seriously concerned about what will be regarded as warm milk and what will be cold milk. The Minister said that every effort would be made to distinguish between them by a system of licensing and by defining certain areas. I also understood him to say that the milk producer within the Brisbane area would be regarded as a producer of warm milk, so that, naturally, producers outside the Brisbane area would be described as cold milk producers. The point that concerns me is how we are going to police the law. A producer outside the metropolitan area will still be at liberty to bring milk into the city and supply it to the wholesale or retail distributor, and I can see nothing in the Bill to enable the Brisbane Milk Board to guard against any such irregularity. The whole difficulty arises from the fact that the board will not have power to control all the milk supplies and so long as we exclude the warm milk producer from the jurisdiction of the board we shall have trouble.

I am also concerned about the wholesalers' holding their own carrying licenses. I understand that to-day a number of wholesalers do their own carrying.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: Can you not trust the board to do the right thing?

Mr. MULLER: I do trust the board. That is my case.

I should like to confer even greater powers on the board and I was coming to that point when the Minister interjected. Experience has taught us that it is virtually impossible to deal with a situation like this with the limited power conferred in the Bill. I should like to remind the Minister of the experience of the Butter Board prior to the exercise of greater control of butter supplies in the city. No doubt the Minister is well aware of the trouble that it had. Before the Butter Board undertook the control and sale of all butter on the Brisbane market it was discovered that butter was being patted in Brisbane for nothing and that we could not get 56 lb. out of a 56-lb. box. Nevertheless, we discovered that a great deal of butter was being patted and we were told that it was being patted for nothing.

That butter was patted in Brisbane and sent to Ipswich, where it was sold at a lower price than the factories operating in Ipswich could afford to take. That state of affairs had to be dealt with. It is necessary that the Brisbane Milk Board should deal with this sort of thing. How can it be dealt with?

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: Finally, who dealt with it?

Mr. MULLER: We dealt with it.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: Who gave you the power?

Mr. MULLER: We got power under the regulations. That is what I am asking for here.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: Who gave you the regulations?

Mr. MULLER: You did. I am asking that the Government give us that power in this case.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MULLER: We had to take control, and I am asking that power be included in this Bill to give the board that control. I am afraid that a certain position will arise with these carriers going out into the country, and it will be very difficult for the board to police their operations. The board should be given power to police the whole of the supply.

It may be advisable to compel the wholesaler to pay to the board the cost of the whole of the milk he receives, and for the board in turn to pay the producer for the whole of the milk he supplies. It may be said that this procedure would be rather costly and would necessitate setting up an office with a staff to keep a number of accounts.

At 11.7 a.m.,

The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. Hanson, Buranda) relieved Mr. Speaker in the chair.

Mr. MULLER: The cost of establishing that office would be money well spent. It is not a bit of good establishing a Milk Board unless we are going to do the job properly. I am not suggesting that people will go out of their way to beat the board, but it must be remembered that we are dealing with human nature and as competition is going to be keen—it has, in fact, been keen in the past—any of these outside practices might be indulged in. We should devise precautionary methods against such a happening. I am deeply concerned about the constitution of the board. If we had a producers' board, with one Government nominee, there would be a greater possibility of dealing with a situation of that kind. On the board as constituted under the Bill, the wholesalers will have equal representation with the producers. That being so, its efforts to deal with a situation of that kind will be virtually nullified. I implore the Minister to consider this point, and endeavour to meet the situation if it is at all possible.

A great many of these anomalies can be dealt with by way of regulation, but how are we going to obtain those regulations if they do not suit all concerned on the board? Fifty per cent. of the interests of the proposed board will not be concerned about that part of the business. We must guard against such possible irregularities.

I am concerned too, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about the vending part of the business. It is generally admitted that the cost of vending milk is anything from 10d. to 14d. a gallon, which is altogether too high. If we can effect a saving at this end of the business it should be done. The Minister said that one method of dealing with this phase of the industry is to repurchase uneconomic runs. It could be dealt with by delicensing the unsuitable vendors. Licensing will play a big part in controlling vending costs.

The Bill will be of very great assistance, particularly the system of insurance to indemnify producers against the possibility of bad debts, because only honest licensed vendors will be prepared to take out a fidelity bond, but the question of complete control again arises. It will be almost impossible to exercise complete control over vendors unless the board establishes its own office and does the whole of the work I have described. In that way it would be able to keep a very close watch on all the vendors and see that no vendor went on the road unless his creditors were properly protected by an insurance policy. Duplications can be dealt with in many ways, but if you leave it to the producer to supply the wholesaler and to the wholesaler to supply the retailer without keeping any records, you will soon be in trouble. I take it that the establishment of the board represents an honest attempt to improve the conditions of the people who produce the milk and at the same time to ensure that the consumer will get a good article, but unless you clothe a board with power to control the business from one end to the other, you might as well leave it alone.

Another very important section of the Bill is that dealing with the granting of franchises in other districts to persons or companies that will undertake to pasteurise milk. I am not quite clear on the powers of district boards. I should like a further explanation from the Minister as to the nature of these franchises in order that we may have an opportunity to consider the matter and frame amendments that might improve the situation. For instance, I should like the Minister to say whether a producer in a district covered by a franchise would be allowed to send his milk to the city of Brisbane area. The Bill is somewhat vague in that regard. The Brisbane Milk Board deals with milk producers from within its area, and if another milk district is established it would appear that all the milk produced in that area would require to be sold in that area. If that is so, it will inflict a serious hardship on many producers. I think it would be unwise to prevent the people who are now supplying the Brisbane market from continuing to send their milk to that market. It would create hardships if the people in an outside district where a franchise

was granted had to sell their milk in that district.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: You know that is not contemplated.

Mr. MULLER: I do not know. You can read many things into the Bill. I know the Minister is sincere in his efforts to frame a Bill that will be entirely suitable. I am pointing out an anomaly that may arise.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: You mean that if there is a franchise area the producer in that area will not be able to send his milk outside it?

Mr. MULLER: That is so.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: I say definitely he will be able to send it outside; I never contemplated anything else.

Mr. MULLER: I am glad to have that assurance. A number of these districts will be big supply districts where the consumption will be rather small and there would be insufficient market for the whole of the milk produced in the area.

In conclusion, I wish to express my disappointment that the Bill does not confer greater powers on the board. I repeat that the only way to ensure the success of any commodity board is to include the whole of the commodity; if a percentage of the commodity remains outside the control of the board a serious difficulty inevitably occurs.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: Do you want to conscript the warm-milk suppliers?

Mr. MULLER: I think milk is similar to any other commodity.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: You are for conscripting the producers into the Bill without their consent?

Mr. MULLER: I think, without allowing the question of conscription to enter into it, it would be impossible to get 100 per cent. of the producers of any commodity to favour a commodity board. You take a ballot and because you have a majority in favour of conscription—if you like to use that term—a board is established. You have a majority of milk producers in favour of the establishment of a board. On the figures given by the hon. gentleman last evening—his own estimate—30 per cent. of the milk distributed in the city area is warm milk and 70 per cent. cold milk. It naturally follows that if we have a majority asking for it—and I think I am safe in saying at least 50 per cent. of the warm-milk suppliers would prefer to be brought into the pool, too—

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: We took a ballot on one occasion and they turned it down, you know.

Mr. MULLER: Perhaps that can be explained by pointing out that the Minister intended to levy on the cold-milk sellers and not on the warm-milk sellers. Moreover, he is going to provide a bounty for the warm-milk sellers at the expense of the cold-milk sellers.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: That is absurd.

Mr. MULLER: That is quite wrong. I impress upon the Minister the fact that the Commissioner of Prices allows an additional 4d. a gallon to the warm-milk sellers. Moreover, the cold-milk sellers are to pay a levy of ¼d. a gallon. This is saved by the warm-milk sellers. It costs the cold-milk producer 1¼d. a gallon to deliver milk in Brisbane, and they have therefore received 5¼d. a gallon for that work.

The suggestion that there is a possibility of the Brisbane City Council's pushing city dairies further out into the country areas does not count. I think it will have the opposite effect to that which is expected. Before very long, instead of there being a diminution in the supply of warm milk, it will be increased. If the additional concession is to be given to warm-milk suppliers they will increase the number of their cows. The city is not growing at such a rate that it is impossible to get enough land to establish suburban dairies. Within 5 miles of the city there is still good land suitable for the grazing of dairy cows. The land is not a great deal worse than that further down the coast from which milk is supplied. The belief that the warm-milk vendors will automatically diminish is quite wrong. The opposite will be the effect.

(Time expired.)

Mr. JESSON (Kennedy) (11.19 a.m.): The hon. member who has just resumed his seat has shown a total disregard of the consumer in every possible way and in my opinion made an excellent speech on behalf of the Queensland Farmers' Co-operative Association.

The Bill may be called a long-sighted one. It has been sorely needed for many years.

Mr. Macdonald: Long-sighted!

Mr. JESSON: The hon. member, being Scotch, cannot understand English. The Bill has been planned gradually to bring under control over a period of years the milk supply of Brisbane and the larger cities for the benefit of the consumer and the producer.

Speeches so far made by members of the Opposition have contained nothing at all of value. The hon. member for Murrumba yesterday put up a number of Aunt Sallies to be bowled over, and that delivered by the hon. member for Fassifern this morning is a very poor contribution to the debate from the point of view of dairymen. He should recognise that the number of warm-milk suppliers will gradually decrease as the years go by, if the cold-milk suppliers do the right thing and the milk is distributed through the metropolitan area and country centres in such a way as to eliminate waste and overhead expenses. We have the spectacle at present of half a dozen distributors serving one street. It will be the means of eventually abolishing the yodeller and others whose operations react to the detriment of the farmer.

Warm milk suppliers certainly will be controlled as to the price they can charge for

their milk and the Government would be doing wrong to give the whole control of the milk supply to producers and retail vendors at the present time and to have only one Government representative, the chairman, on the board.

In the course of time it will be seen clearly that the Government are doing right in introducing a Bill framed along the lines of the one we are discussing. The operation of other Acts that have been passed by this Parliament, those dealing with the agricultural section of the community in particular, have proved their worth time and again.

It is probable that in time the supply of warm milk will be brought within the ambit of this Bill, that uneconomic runs will be closed under some scheme of compensation and that those who are at present wasting time fooling about will go out of the business. From my investigation I am certain that as a result of the operations of this Bill the consumer will get milk at a cheaper price and the producer will be paid more for his product. I have been in close touch with both producers and consumers for quite a long time now and both sections have pointed out to me that it costs from 2½d. to 3d. a gallon to deliver milk. The yodeller and others of his type have had a serious effect upon the milk business in that people in the metropolitan area, in particular, will get milk for a fortnight from the regular man, then when he calls for his money will tell him that they "do not want any to-day" and get their milk from the yodeller who may be passing down the street. It is well-known that many wholesalers are not in a healthy financial position, and no doubt the same may be said about the producers who supply those wholesalers.

When one considers all the factors that must be taken into consideration, one cannot help admitting that the Government are deserving of credit for framing such a long-sighted Bill as this.

One factor that the Opposition have studiously avoided mentioning is that if all warm milk supplies were brought under this Bill immediately, it would mean that between 500 and 600 men who are now making some kind of a living from selling milk, who are keeping themselves out of mischief in an endeavour to support their families, would be thrown out of work, and hardship would be inflicted not only upon them, but also upon those who are dependent upon them.

The Bill has been framed to protect these people so that they can gradually be absorbed by the Milk Board, and in the short space of a few years the milk supply control system will operate as in other cities of the world.

Mr. MACDONALD (Stanley) (11.26 a.m.): At a certain time of life we have all memorised proverbs. Among those that I remember are—

"Speech is silver, silence is golden."

Another trite saying is—

"The more I see of some people the more I think of my dog."

I would indicate my approval of such proverbs, especially those dealing with speech, another of which says—

"He who maintains his silence cannot betray his folly."

I should like to add a few remarks in regard to the Bill now before the House. In my area there are quite a number of suppliers of milk to Brisbane, consequently, last Sunday, I carefully read through this Bill—which was departing from my usual custom of keeping to light reading; at least I thought it would be, but it was not. The Bill was very light reading, and in fact contains nothing of very great value.

Experience has led me to expect a Bill coming from this department to be the child of intelligent thought and foresight. Despite the Minister's assertion that this Bill was not framed in a hurry, I offer the opinion that it is so badly conceived that it must have been born out of lawful wedlock. That is the most polite way I can put it. In other words, if you will grant me the use of the vernacular, it is a gin of a Bill.

We are all agreed upon the need for a Milk Supply Bill, but not one couched in the terms of that at present before the House. The Minister has said that this is the most important Bill he has handled for many years, and that it has given him untold worry and thought. I well believe that, and my one regret is that he will not be free from worry and trouble if it goes through in its present form.

When the hon. member for Murrumba was speaking he pointed out an error that ought to be patent to anyone with any knowledge of the industry, in the non-inclusion of warm milk. All milk should come within the ambit of this Bill. The Minister gave the proportion of warm milk supplied to Brisbane as 30 per cent., and it will be an ever-increasing proportion. In rebuttal of criticism of the Bill, the Minister said by way of interjection, that the warm milk interests did not want to come under the Bill. Surely it will become such people to usurp the duty of the Minister! Parliament, in its wisdom, should decide what legislation is to be enacted.

The Minister in his speech last night also said that he had seen an army of deputationists besieging Country Party members in and around Parliament House, and thought that their interests were in conflict with one another. That is as it may be, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I can assure the Minister that the members of the Country Party sympathetically listen to the complaints of all interests, do their own thinking, and are actuated by a regard for the welfare of the whole community and not for the selfish interests of any section.

In passing, let me say that the Bill is a reaffirmation of the existing indenture plus additional powers conferred almost solely on the chairman. That is all the more disappointing as we could have benefited by drawing upon the experience of other capital cities in Australia and elsewhere that have Milk Supply Acts.

I do not want to take up much time discussing the Bill. The hon. member for Murrumba and the hon. member for Fassifern covered the whole of the subject, but it is my belief that Brisbane deserves the best and richest milk it is possible to give it. Other towns in Australia have got it; why should we not have it?

The object of the Bill should be to give the people the best possible milk at the lowest possible price and to give the producer an adequate return for his labour and investment—the Minister himself said that the labourer was worthy of his hire. If the warm milk supplier is left out of the control by this Bill it will mean that he will benefit at the expense of other suppliers. The hon. member for Fassifern said that at the present time the warm milk suppliers had an advantage of approximately 5½d. a gallon.

I believe that all milk should be sold as certified free of disease, but I do not think that the cost of inspecting and testing the herds should be borne by the milk suppliers. It was not until recently, when the Sugar Experiment Stations Act was amended, that the onus of bearing the cost of any work in the industry was thrown upon the producers. The Department of Public Health should bear the cost of pathological and bacteriological examinations of milk.

There is plenty of evidence that could have been used in framing a good Milk Supply Bill. At least we have figures showing the cost of milk distribution and collection of accounts. We have also the costs and basis of payment. Some payments are made on weight alone, others on weight, plus quality. Quality is grade, and butter fat.

I was rather surprised to hear the Minister say that high butter-fat content did not necessarily mean good milk.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: Nor does it.

Mr. MACDONALD: All things being equal, it does mean good milk.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: But all things are not equal.

Mr. MACDONALD: Otherwise the Minister is denying the value of butter.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: I am not denying the value of butter.

Mr. MACDONALD: What has been the experience in New Zealand? There the milk is graded on a butter-fat basis, and the result is that the people are now enjoying a much better, richer, and purer milk supply than they had before, and it does not pay the supplier to adulterate his milk, as was done only the other day in Brisbane. Since butter-fat content has been taken as the basis of payment in New Zealand, the number of prosecutions for adulterated milk has fallen from 35 per cent. to 2 per cent.

The New Zealand producers are paid on a butter-fat percentage. The public health standard in New Zealand is 3.25 per cent., whereas here it is 3.3 per cent. As a Jersey

breeder I am most emphatic in saying that it should not be broadcast to the world that a milk containing high butter-fat content does not necessarily mean a good drinking milk.

Altogether, as I said before, to use a colloquialism, this Bill is "up to putty."

Mr. COLLINS (Cook) (11.35 a.m.): I must commend the principles contained in this Bill. After listening to the speeches of hon. members opposite on the initiatory stage I thought the Bill was not comprehensive enough, but on calmer reflection I realised that the Minister has been very wise in introducing it.

The introduction of any Bill to control any commodity, particularly such a necessary commodity as milk, must upset established interests to a greater or lesser extent. The more gradual we can make the operation of a Bill of this kind the less will be the general upset. This Bill aims at gradually bringing the milk supply, not only of Brisbane but of all country towns where the population is sufficient to warrant it, under better control with a view to improving the conditions in the industry.

The Bill aims at the better control of the industry from the production as well as the distribution end. The consumer is entitled to a better milk supply than he has had in the past. I am a little surprised that hon. members who have participated in this debate have not given greater consideration to the interests of the consumer than they have. I have listened very carefully to their speeches, and in hardly one instance has the consumer's point of view been emphasised. One could be pardoned for assuming from their remarks that it was the producer's interests they had mainly in mind. I am not in any way oblivious to the requirements of the producer—I, too, recognise that the labourer is worthy of his hire—but the consumer also is entitled to have his interests protected. This Bill is designed not only to give better conditions to the producer, and probably a better price for his commodity, but also to improve the quality for the consumers without increasing the price. As it has been said, milk is one of the most important essentials in diet, particularly of very young and growing children. It is a very necessary commodity in all the domestic sphere. For that reason it is very necessary to see that the cost is such that consumers will be able to buy it in the quantity needed. I should definitely condemn this Bill if it would decrease the price to the producer or increase it to the consumer.

Mr. Plunkett: You think present prices are reasonable?

Mr. COLLINS: I am not saying that the present price to the producer is reasonable. The Bill is designed to give the producer a better price without increasing the price to the consumer. That is the principle underlying this measure.

I was surprised to hear the hon. member for Murrumba say that he thought the source of the supply of the milk should be prescribed,

in other words, that they should be districted as it is in New South Wales. I am opposed to that idea. I should not like to be a member of a board that had the job of determining the districts to supply milk to Brisbane or anywhere else, and in the process denying to some districts the rights that they are entitled to under common law. Who will say that my district for instance, should be favoured with this more profitable section of the dairying business while an adjoining district is denied the right to engage in it?

Mr. Nicklin: How can new suppliers come in as the Bill stands, under the quota system?

Mr. COLLINS: I think economic conditions will determine where the supply will come from. It must be remembered that the Brisbane Milk Board is not like an ordinary board set up to control primary products generally. You have boards to control butter, wheat, pineapples, fruit, maize, and pigs in certain districts, but those boards control the whole of the commodities they respectively deal with. It would be clearly absurd to give a board complete control over the whole of supplies of milk in the Greater Brisbane area or in the south-western portion of Queensland, because only a small part of the milk produced in that area is used to supply the city of Brisbane.

Mr. Plunkett: This Bill only deals with consumption within the Greater Brisbane area.

Mr. COLLINS: It deals with the consumption of milk in country areas as well. It makes provision for the supply of milk in country areas. The hon. member must recognise that milk supplied to a town or city represents only a small quantity of the milk produced in the district, consequently a milk board must be differently constituted to the ordinary commodity board. The hon. member for Fassifern and the hon. member for Murrumbidgee would be right in saying that the ordinary commodity board should be composed of producers only because they have only one interest to protect; their job is to have the commodity of the producer graded and marketed in an organised manner at as low a cost as possible in order to create public demand and thus ensure the producer a reasonable price. The duties of this board cover a wider field.

There are four sections whose interests have to be recognised. First there is the producer; secondly, the wholesaler; thirdly, the distributor, and last, but the most important of all—the consumer. I think the Minister has shown wisdom in providing that the board shall consist of an equal number of producers' representatives and distributors' representatives with an independent chairman to guide the board.

There is a considerable school of thought in farming communities that believes that the farmers should continually increase the price of their commodities. While I agree that the farmer is just as much entitled to a good reward for his labour as any other section of the community—I have always fought for that right for the farmer and I shall continue

to fight for it—at the same time I recognise that his efficiency as a producer has to be taken into consideration, and one of his greatest problems is the capacity of the consuming public to buy his commodity. What would be the good of increasing the cost of his product if by doing so it was put beyond the power of the consumer to buy it?

Here, on the one hand, is a board constituted in the producers' interests, and on the other hand charged with caring for the interests of the distributors, with a chairman who must take into consideration the interests of the consumers. I cannot agree for a moment with the contention that this board should consist of six representatives of producers and one Government nominee. Such a board would be entirely unbalanced and unworkable and even in the last analysis harmful to the interests of the producers. Unless distribution is very carefully considered, the Bill will not reach the objective aimed at by the Minister.

The burning question exercising the minds of hon. members opposite who have already spoken on this Bill concerns the non-inclusion of the warm milk supplier. At first I thought it was undesirable to leave him out, but I am now thoroughly convinced that it is better to leave the position as it is in the Bill. If, as has been suggested, he becomes an increasing quantity and weakens the control of the board and damages the interests of the cold milk supplier, consideration will have to be given to the point raised by hon. members opposite, but at the present time it appears that the numbers of such suppliers are gradually decreasing as the metropolitan area is developing and the population is increasing. For proof of that one need only read the comments by the health officers of the Brisbane City Council. It is the intention of the council to eliminate a number of those who are included in the 30 per cent. of warm milk suppliers.

To-day a warm milk supplier is a suburban dairyman with a few cows and his own means of distribution. As a rule, he is not what can properly be called a wholesaler. He has his dairy and his milk cart, and distributes his own milk in his own area. Earlier in the session the Minister introduced a Bill providing for a closer inspection of these dairies and for the better health of the stock from which is called fresh milk is produced. Personally, I believe that is the best form of milk—milk warm from the cow, delivered almost immediately to the householder—if it is properly inspected. No better supply can be obtained than that. There are consumers who do not want cold milk, but warm milk from a dairy close at hand, and I think it is a wise move for the Minister to eliminate such suppliers from the ambit of this Bill.

If the cold milk vendors thought the warm milk supplier was a serious competitor, one would naturally expect them to have objected to his exclusion from the Bill, but that is not so. It was at the Minister's conference last year that the essentials of this Bill were more or less framed and the cold milk vendors had

no desire to eliminate the warm milk supplier. They contended that he did not matter to them as his was only a small percentage of the total milk supply. He was regarded as a diminishing quantity and the cold milk vendors preferred that he be left alone.

Under these circumstances, what good purpose would be served by going out of our way—as the word has been used—to conscript him—make him come under the operations of the Bill?

I should have no objection to bringing the warm milk supplier under this Bill if it was essential to the wellbeing of the suppliers of milk as a whole. Obviously, if it was necessary, the first to raise that matter would be the cold milk suppliers, who, hon. members opposite say, are the people who are going to be injured if the Bill remains as it is. It is clear, therefore, that we need fear no disruption whatever from that source.

The hon. member for Fassifern said that the Minister should not have power to appoint the chairman of the board. As hon. members know, that power is contained in every Act that deals with commodity boards. As a general rule, the Minister accepts the person who is nominated by the board. I do not know of any instance, except that of the Wheat Board, in which the Minister has appointed an independent chairman. The appointment of an independent chairman of the Wheat Board was due, in my opinion, to the fact that there were two distinct factions on that board, that it was equally divided, and, as a result, the board could not operate satisfactorily. Very frequently, these commodity boards control very big businesses, and, unless we adhere to strict business principles, the boards, as well as the producers, must suffer.

Mr. Moore: The Government allow some boards to elect their own chairmen.

Mr. COLLINS: I have just explained that, as a general rule, the board decides who its chairman shall be, and the Minister agrees to his appointment.

Mr. Moore: The Wheat Board, of course, was divided.

Mr. COLLINS: I have explained that, too. I believe that the Minister should be very careful about interfering with the choice of the chairman, because, even though the boards may make a mistake, they often learn more by making mistakes than they would if they were prevented from making them. I am very much against any interference by the Government with the working of the commodity boards, unless it is clearly in the interest of the board itself.

I do not know much of the controversy about the Wheat Board, but, from what one reads in the Press, it seems that there are two factions in it equally and sharply divided, that there can be no hope of any working agreement between them, and that, therefore, it is to the interests of the industry as a whole

that the Minister should appoint an independent chairman.

On the Brisbane Milk Board both the producers and distributors will be represented. The chairman will have a great deal of responsibility, and it is essential that he be a man of capacity. If he has enough capacity he will be able to preserve a proper balance between these two more or less conflicting interests, and in that way benefit both sides.

The purpose of the Bill is to eliminate any unnecessary links in the chain of distribution. That must be the guiding principle of all our commodity boards. In the distribution of nearly all our commodities, there is far too great a difference between the price paid to the producer and that paid by the consumer. Any legislation that is designed to remove some of these unnecessary links must be commended equally by primary producers and consumers. Under the Bill, it is proposed to license all those who are making a living out of the milk business to-day. Of course, this will not be done immediately.

As the City of Brisbane expands—and its population is increasing at a greater rate than that of any other city in the Commonwealth—if those men stick to their business they will have profitable runs in a few years. If a run is unprofitable and the owner wants to get out, it is quite reasonable that the board should take up the run, without delicensing the person concerned. I think it would be entirely wrong to license only those runs that are profitable at the present time—in other words to sacrifice the man who is trying to establish a business, probably only in a very small way.

Mr. Moore: They all started in that way once.

Mr. COLLINS: That is what I say. Are you going to sacrifice that man?

Mr. Power: They undercut one another to do it, too.

Mr. COLLINS: These men have had the courage to strike out on their own, but we have to take a sensible and long-sighted view of the distribution business. If there are too many people in the business of distribution none of them are making very much out of it. The prices to the consumer tend to increase all the time and they try to reduce the price to the producer. What we want is a properly balanced system of distribution, and in the licensing of these milk runs we are heading in the right direction for the rational distribution of yet another commodity.

I heard hon. members opposite condemn that principle very severely when a Bill to license sawmills was introduced by this Government a couple of years ago. They said it would create a monopoly. The principle is right, and another commodity in respect of which it could be adopted advantageously is fruit. If the principles in this Bill were applied to a greater extent in the distribution of primary commodities it would be all

in the interests of the producer and the consumer.

Mr. Plunkett: You say that it would be better for both producer and consumer, and yet you want the warm milk producers left out.

Mr. COLLINS: I do not think warm milk should be included, because the cold milk suppliers do not want it and the warm milk suppliers do not want to come in, and in the process of time the warm milk suppliers will probably be eliminated. If they are willing to face the competition of warm milk, which I think hon. members will agree is the best class of milk that can be distributed and therefore unlikely to be prejudiced by lack of public demand, why should we interfere? Since it is one of the essentials of life we must be careful in any action we take in respect of milk distribution.

Mr. Moore: There are even some persons who have to get milk from only one cow.

Mr. COLLINS: That is true. I had that in mind, but I realised that it is pretty hard for anyone to name the cow to the milkman from which he wants the milk, so I did not use the argument. I know cases where children have done well on the milk of one cow but not on the milk of a number of other cows. That is one reason why I commend the attitude of the Minister in introducing the Bill and support his wish to create as little dislocation as possible, while at the same time he is designing a distribution system that will deal with an increasing proportion of the supply. Control is important from the point of view of the consumer, and in the interests of public health and the welfare of the distributors themselves, not to mention the profit of those responsible for milk production.

I was rather surprised to hear the hon. member for Stanley say that butter fat was the only thing in milk that matters, apart from its cleanliness.

Anyone who knows anything about milk knows that as a rule it contains more solids other than fat, and that they are just as necessary from a health point of view as the fat. Recently, the best American thought has been in the direction of believing that the Holstein cow provides a greater number of non-fat solids in milk than any other breed, although it probably has the lowest butter-fat content, and that this is the best milk for a city supply.

Mr. Moore: The Holstein holds the record for the world.

Mr. COLLINS: In solids other than fat?

Mr. Moore: Yes.

Mr. COLLINS: That is so, and as a breed it stands out from all other breeds in this respect. That is why it is very largely used in cheese-making districts. It is recognised that these solids other than fat are often as necessary as the fat itself.

These are all matters to be taken into consideration in dealing with a milk supply, but

at present I believe we have not enough data in this country on the subject of production of milk, its content, and the influence of climatic conditions on the various breeds to determine what is a pure milk supply having regard to solids other than fat.

I cannot agree with the hon. member for Stanley that the Milk Board should have greater powers than those conferred by the Bill. I think that it will be clothed with ample power to do all the things that it is designed to do—to improve the supply, bring about an economic arrangement between the producer and the consumer in connection with the regulation of distribution, and protect the health of the consumer. I agree that the chairman will have to shoulder a great deal of responsibility, and that being so I impress upon the Minister that he must be a man of considerable capacity if he is to do the job properly in the interests of the people affected by the Bill.

The Bill is perhaps overdue, but I do not blame the Minister for that. I am told that it has occupied the attention of several Governments. The distribution of milk is a very knotty problem and the Minister has been wise in dealing with it in the gradual way that he has adopted in the Bill, with the hope that eventually it will supply a long-felt want. I hope that it will give the people a better and cheaper milk and a more regulated supply, that it will eliminate the unnecessary links in the chain of distribution, and will mean an increased price to the producer.

Mr. PLUNKETT (Albert) (12.3 p.m.): No-one would be more anxious than I to support a Milk Supply Bill that would be of benefit to the people concerned, but I want to say frankly at the outset that I am disappointed with the Bill from every angle.

We are considering a scheme to control the distribution of a perishable product, one that is used in every household every day. It deteriorates very quickly. It is an important food; in fact, it is nature's perfect food, and it is food that everyone requires. It should therefore be wisely controlled so as to give both the producer and the consumer all that they require.

Queensland is the last State to adopt a Milk Supply Bill. I am opposed to the proposed constitution of the board, but I shall deal more fully with that matter later on. The greatest weakness in the Bill is that it goes only half way in dealing with the problem in that it is designed to control only a certain part of the milk consumed in Brisbane. There are two sources of milk supply to the metropolis and both have been available for many years.

One set of producers are known as the warm milk suppliers, and the other as the cold milk suppliers, who have been selling cold milk in competition with warm milk for a number of years. The distribution methods of the two interests very often came into conflict. Difficulties arose some little time ago and it was unfortunate that they led to a partial shortage of milk in the metropolitan

area. The Minister then became involved in the dispute. I give him credit for the part he took in it.

As a result of a settlement of that dispute a committee was formed representative of certain interests in order that the supply of milk to the metropolitan area would be continued as usual. It appears to me that this Bill only legalises what was done at the conference at which that dispute was settled, and the legalising of the decisions arrived at by that conference does not give to the people, as well as the producers, what was expected from a Bill of this nature—namely, control of the whole of the milk supply of the metropolis.

It is necessary for me at the outset to show exactly what this Bill seeks to control. It states—

“ . . . this Act shall extend and apply and have operation and effect with respect to all milk and cream for consumption or use or intended for consumption or use within a district comprising the area of the city of Brisbane as set forth in the schedule of this Act and with respect to all milk and cream for consumption or use or intended for consumption or use within each and every other district constituted by the Governor in Council from time to time by Order in Council published in the ‘Gazette’:

“Provided that this Act shall not extend or apply or have operation or effect with respect to—

(i.) Milk or cream which is sold by retail directly to the consumer or user thereof by the person who produces such milk or cream; or

(ii.) Milk or cream produced within a district and sold wholesale and delivered at the place of production directly to a retail vendor by the producer thereof and which is sold by retail in such district directly to the consumers or users thereof by such retail vendor; or

(iii.) Milk or cream used for the manufacture of butter, cheese, condensed milk, dried milk, or ice cream. . . .”

That virtually exempts all the warm milk produced within a given area. In doing so it places penalties on the cold milk supplier, and it will encourage the greater production of warm milk. We can all agree that people prefer warm milk if they can get it, especially if it is pure, and the competition I mention will place the warm milk supplier in a better position than he was ever in before in comparison with the supplier of cold milk from outside the metropolitan area. It is the cold milk supplier who has to carry all the burdens imposed by the Bill. Let me enumerate some of them.

He must still carry on in competition with the warm milk supplier, who now has an advantage of 4d. or 5d. a gallon in price. He will be subject to the penalties prescribed if he fails to give 14 days’ notice of his intention to divert his supplies. That being so, the person receiving the supplies should

be subject to the penalty prescribed if he fails to give 14 days’ notice of his intention to change his supplier. That has been one of the difficulties of the cold milk supplier for a number of years.

Then, the cold milk supplier must sell at a fixed price. He cannot supply a greater quantity of milk or cream than the chairman allocates to him. He must pay a levy. He must also make provision for the establishment of a laboratory and the appointment of a bacteriologist or pathologist to enable analyses of milk or cream to be made. He must also make provision for the inspection and/or testing of dairy herds, dairy produce premises, and the destruction and/or treatment of cattle infected with any one of a number of specified diseases. He must also provide all costs and expenses, fees, and allowances of board members as well as the salaries, wages, and other costs of the staff and the expenses for the election of a board. Then he may have to provide for veterinary surgeons and other qualified officers for inspecting and testing dairy herds and dairy premises. If all those responsibilities are cast on one section of the trade, what hope has it of successfully competing against the other section who carry no responsibility at all? It is not fair or reasonable that the cold milk supplier should be called upon to shoulder all these responsibilities and compete with a supplier who is completely unhampered. If I were a warm milk supplier I should be tickled to death with these provisions, which would inferentially protect my interests.

The Minister said that the policy of the Brisbane City Council in regard to dairies in the Greater Brisbane area would have the effect of diminishing the supply of warm milk in that area, but this Bill will encourage the production of warm milk at the expense of the cold milk supplier. Is there any equity in that? None at all. If the Bill included the whole of the suppliers of milk in the Greater Brisbane area, whether warm or cold, I would support it, but I cannot support a Bill that asks the cold milk supplier to carry all the responsibility.

The constitution of the board is not equitable. Why should the wholesale vendors have three representatives on the board—a number equal to that of the producers? The producer has to provide the land and the stock, and do all the work connected with supplying the milk; surely the man who is selling the milk is not entitled to the same representation on the board?

The hon. member for Cook talked about the rights of the consumer. I should prefer to have a consumers’ representative on the board in place of one of the wholesalers’ representatives. I think there is room for one on the board. I would eliminate one of the wholesalers’ representatives because they have not the right to have the same representation as the producers. To make it more equitable I would have three producers, two wholesalers, and one consumer.

Everybody talks about the consumer. We realise that the consumer is the man the

producer relies on for the sale of his product; and the producer realises that if he increases the price too much the consumer will not be able to buy it. Everybody knows that the producer realises that the man who consumes his product cannot afford to give more than a certain price. There is no difficulty about the price. Under the Bill the Milk Board has not the power to fix the price; the chairman fixes the price. What is the good of having a board if it is only given the outside work to do, and if it has no say in the most vital question—the matter of price? The price must not be more than the consumer can afford to pay, but at the same time it must be sufficient to enable the producer to keep on producing and improving the quality of his product.

For years the cold milk suppliers round Brisbane have been carrying on without any degree of stability. They have been taking whatever price they were offered. They were "knocked off" without getting a week's notice, let alone the 14 days' notice they must give to the other fellow under this Bill. It seems to me that under this Bill the cold milk supplier has to carry the whole of the burden, yet the price he is to receive for his product is to be decided by the chairman of the board. The board—which I repeat is not constituted equitably—should have some say in the price, and if anyone is dissatisfied he should have the right of appealing to the Commissioner of Prices. That is a fair and reasonable way to do it. Why entrust the livelihood of many of these cold milk suppliers to the one man—the chairman of this board—who cannot discuss the matter with the others?

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: That is a mis-statement. He will discuss the matter with the board.

Mr. PLUNKETT: The Bill does not say so.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: Is there any prohibition in the Bill against it?

Mr. PLUNKETT: No, but I am dealing with the Bill as I find it. I have no quarrel with giving the chairman a good deal of power. In the distribution of a perishable article, and one that everybody must have, such as milk, great powers should be given. In fact, I go further, and say the board should have greater powers than the Bill gives them, if they are to do equity to all.

The Bill deals with half the problem only. The Minister is taking two bites at the cherry. The chairman should fix the price. He is to determine from time to time the price to be paid to the producer for the milk supplied. Why does he not fix the price the consumer must pay? That is a very important point.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: Have you not heard of price-fixing legislation? That governs that source.

Mr. Taylor: None are so blind as those who will not see.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. PLUNKETT: First of all, the price of the product is fixed. Naturally it is to the producer's interest to see that his product is sold to the consumer as cheaply as possible, because if it is cheap the consumption will be greater and thus the producer can extend his business. If the chairman is to fix the price of the product of the producer he should go further and fix the price to be paid by the consumer.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: He already has that power.

Mr. PLUNKETT: The chairman is to determine the maximum quantity of milk and cream that every producer may supply. He can say to the producers, "I want you to supply so much and you so much." It is necessary to give that power to somebody, but to give it all to one man, the chairman of the board, will mean that he will have to work overtime to do his job properly.

At any time the chairman may serve on a wholesale vendor a list of the producers showing the maximum quantity that may be supplied by such producer and prevent him from accepting milk or cream from any other supplier.

At 12.18 p.m.,

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. PLUNKETT: If it is desired to constitute another milk district, application must be made to the chairman, who sets up a tribunal. The chairman has wonderful powers and a wonderful job, and when all is said and done he is dealing only with the cold milk suppliers. All the milk consumed in the Greater Brisbane area should come under the Bill. It is unfair to make the cold milk suppliers compete with the other suppliers who are untrammelled in any way. One can imagine what would happen if only half the traffic in Queen street was controlled. What an impossible position the remaining half would get into!

The constitution of the board is wrong and the board with the chairman should have more power than it is given. The exclusion of the warm milk supplier is also wrong. I can see a quantity of milk produced outside the district being smuggled in and sold as warm milk. If I understand the Minister aright I think he said they would still be allowed to sell warm milk in the area. If that is so, the quantity of warm milk sold in the Greater Brisbane area will increase. To set up such an organisation for the control of such a perishable article as milk is only playing with the business.

It seems to me that this Bill is not going to do the right thing at the start, that it is more in the nature of an attempt to bring about a desirable result gradually. To me, it seems to be more a matter of political expediency rather than an attempt to benefit the consumer or producer. It is just a Bill introduced to pacify this or that section.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: Do you want the Bill, or don't you want it?

Mr. PLUNKETT: I do not want it. I do not think that the cold milk suppliers are going to be any better off. If they are not going to be any better off, what is the good of my supporting it? If the Minister includes all suppliers of milk then I can support any of its provisions.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: But you don't want the Bill?

Mr. PLUNKETT: Under present conditions, I say that it is of no use to the milk supplier.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: I am perfectly willing to withdraw the Bill.

Mr. PLUNKETT: I am giving my opinion. The responsibility is the Minister's; he brought it in. As I said before, I am satisfied that this is more in the nature of political expediency than an attempt to do something for either the producer or consumer.

Much has been done in the other States of the Commonwealth. We know what their difficulties have been, and we should profit by their experiences. This Bill does not do that at all. On the contrary, it seems to me that it will create greater trouble. The imposition of all these penalties on the cold milk supplier is unjust.

I think that the task could be done in a much better way, and with more equity and less trouble. I believe that this Bill will only create more trouble.

On the introductory stage I said that it would have to be amended within, I think, I said, five years. I am now of the opinion that it will have to be amended within 12 months, because by that time it will be found to be anything but a success. Its effect will be to encourage one section to grow and expand. This must mean that the other section will be penalised in that they will not be able to sell their milk. The chairman is to have control over the cold milk supplier. The more warm milk that is produced the more the chairman will have to tell the cold milk supplier that his delivery must come down.

After all is said and done, milk is a seasonal product. If we are going to have a Milk Supply Bill that will prevent the waste of any surplus, it is essential that we remember that both the supply and consumption of milk fluctuate. In my opinion, it will be a big task to give equity to everybody who is interested in sending the best possible quality milk to the city in such a way as to ensure that the producer gets the highest possible price while the consumer buys it as cheaply as possible. In my opinion, this Bill is only playing with the question. I was very disappointed when I saw it. Everyone says, "Well, you have been crying for a Bill for years." The reason why the cold milk suppliers have been wanting a Bill is that up to the present they have had neither security nor stability.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: You do not want to give them security and stability now?

Mr. PLUNKETT: Will this Bill give it to them?

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: It will, and you know that it will.

Mr. PLUNKETT: I have been talking for 10 minutes, saying that I do not think that it possibly can do that.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: Because you are speaking from a political and not an honest point of view.

Mr. PLUNKETT: I resent that remark.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I hope the Minister will withdraw that remark.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: I withdraw.

Mr. PLUNKETT: One of the reasons why I am speaking so seriously about this is that there are a number of cold milk suppliers in my area. I am not thinking about them only, however; I am thinking of the consumers of Queensland as a whole. If all suppliers of milk were to be brought under this Bill, I could support nearly all the clauses contained in it.

I am 100 per cent. with the Minister on the question of hygiene. I think that the people who pay a good price for their milk should get good milk, that it should be the best of milk; but I will not agree that this Bill is a solution of the problem when it deals only with the cold milk supply.

Mr. TAYLOR (Enoggera) (12.26 p.m.): I, for one, can see in this Bill a culmination of efforts I have made in this matter for the last six or seven years.

It has come as quite a surprise to me to listen to hon. members of the Opposition attacking the Bill in the manner that they have, representing, as they do, the people who are directly concerned in the production of milk. They put me in mind of the society lady who for a long time yearned for a baby, but when it arrived she found it interfered with her social life and did not want it. They find, now that the Bill has arrived, that they are deprived of a few stones that they have been able to hurl at the Government for the last six or seven years. That is one of the reasons why there is so much criticism of this Bill by hon. members of the Opposition.

I know some of the great hardships that could be caused to the consumers in the city by a Bill of this kind, if the Government did not watch their step in framing the Bill, and I know what a job the Minister has had in framing a Bill to meet all the contingencies of the case and the needs of the different sections of the community that are interested in the milk supply. This is a city of 340,000 people, and, of them all, the only ones interested in milk production are those who own dairies. That is one of the difficulties in the application of the Bill to those who produce warm milk.

The dairies in the city of Brisbane can sell direct to the consumer as soon as milking is

finished. They are controlled by the City Council under its health ordinances, by the Department of Health and Home Affairs, and by the inspectors of the Department of Agriculture and Stock, who can call on them at any moment during the distribution period. Those are facts that hon. members opposite have not introduced into this discussion. The warm milk supply is more controlled than any supply in Brisbane at the moment, and the cold milk supply has to be controlled in the interests of the producers, because the experience of the last six or eight years, particularly during the depression, shows that the vendors who were distributing in Brisbane were going outside the boundary of the city, to Strathpine, Samford, Bald Hills, and other places near by, and offering 6d. and 7d. a gallon for milk. The producers had to take it, because there was no way of getting an equitable price.

Now, the Government have stepped in to prevent that kind of thing. You cannot throw a brick through a window, unless you are prepared to supply another pane of glass, but hon. members opposite have been throwing a brick without any offer to replace the provisions they criticise. This Bill has been framed to meet the requirements of only a third of a million people, and therein lies one of the difficulties in solving our problems. There is not the huge demand here that is created by population of a million and a-quarter in Sydney or Melbourne, where distribution can be organised on a large scale.

The milk supply of Brisbane has been patched up, as it were, from year to year.

In the past anybody with any old horse and a cart for half-a-sovereign could go to the Department of Health and Home Affairs and get a license to sell milk, provided he could get milk adjacent to the city. There was no regulation of distribution other than what was involved in seeing that the milk conformed to health requirements. This system led to tremendous overhead costs in distribution. No-one can justly claim that a scheme is economic if it takes a milkman half a day to distribute 20 gallons, and half a day to get his supply from the producers outside the city.

We speak about an equitable price for the producer, but before we can arrive at an equitable price as between the producer and the consumer the cost of distribution will have to be cut in half. To-day the distributor is paid 6d. a quart and he in turn has to pay as high as 1s. a gallon for the milk. It is preposterous that it should cost 100 per cent. to distribute milk. The cost of selling goods in any other industry does not approach anything like that figure. That is one of the problems to be solved by the Bill. Hon. members opposite want the Minister to introduce a Bill that will give their constituents the whole axe, head, and handle with which to smack the consumers of Brisbane.

Mr. Brand: We do not want to smack them; we want to protect them.

Mr. TAYLOR: The consumers of Brisbane will have to be educated to the fact that

if they expect milk at an equitable price they must be prepared to take it in large quantities and from one man, not three or four. That is going to be a big job for the Milk Board, but I dare say it will be able to do it.

Mr. Brand: Do you not believe in a reasonable wage?

Mr. TAYLOR: Decidedly. I say quite candidly that I do not think that milk is worth producing at less than 1s. a gallon.

Mr. Brand: It is not asking too much.

Mr. TAYLOR: No, and I have said so for years in this Chamber. Probably we shall finish up with the best-controlled milk supply of any city in Australia, but we certainly first have to step off. If the producer gets an average of 1s. a gallon for his milk he gets an equitable price, but we cannot expect the consumer to pay another 1s. a gallon for it. That is the point.

Mr. Brand: The producers are not asking for that.

Mr. TAYLOR: I know they are not. We must alter the present position so as to bring about something that will be of value to both the producer and the consumer. We are not concerned with the middle-man. Sooner or later he will have to be eliminated. If the cold milk suppliers could bring their own milk to the city they could oust the wholesale distributors, but they have not attempted to do that. They have been in the hands of the wholesale vendor for the past 20 years.

Mr. Brand: The hon. member for Kennedy said that we should have to consider the wholesale vendors.

Mr. TAYLOR: We have to consider them to-day because they control the distribution, but no attempt has been made to control them. The board will have to decide what is a fair quantity for any one distributor to sell over a given area. I do not think that any man can distribute less than 30 gallons under existing conditions and make the business pay, yet there are 10-gallon runs in the city to-day. That is one of the troubles of the producer.

At the latter end of the depression and running into 1933, the yodeller appeared as a milk vendor, because a person holding a license and a cart could go to the cold stores and buy milk that had been in cold storage for three or four days at 7d. a gallon and go out and yodel it at 4d. a quart. How can we expect the producer to get an equitable price for his milk when vendors can buy it at that price? We must recollect that the cold stores have to get their charges out of the price this milk is sold at. The Minister has realised all these facts over a number of years and to-day is making an honest endeavour to remedy the position. In considering all the circumstances we must remember that there are 340,000 consumers in this city. The Government have done a good job in getting as far as they have, and I have been surprised to hear the criticism of the Opposition.

Milk is now recognised as an essential food for the young. That is a big issue. That being so, a wholesome and pure milk supply is essential. We must take this fact into consideration, and the other fact that during the past 10 or 12 years considerable activity has been shown in medical circles with a view to seeing that people are supplied with nutritive food. The British Medical Association's Nutrition Council, as well as the nutrition councils in Australia, has discovered that milk is one of the finest foods produced for babies and our youths. That being so, it is our duty to see that the milk supply is pure and wholesome, otherwise more damage will be caused than it is worth as a food.

The health inspectors controlling the milk supply to-day have to be on duty at 3, 4, and 5 o'clock in the morning. It is their duty to hold up milk carts and take samples. Milk contains in the vicinity of 87 per cent. of water, but there is another problem to be solved, and that is the chap who wants to make 1½ gallons of milk into 2 gallons with the aid of the water tap. He must be handled as well. That is a question the Milk Board will have to take in hand. It must control the milk from that angle. The Department of Health and Home Affairs is doing its best to-day in that direction, but it has a tough job. It does not matter in what walk of life we look, we always find a man who is prepared to "have a crack" at the law. The milk industry is no exception. We can pick up our papers any week and find two or three prosecutions for adulteration of milk.

A commission of inquiry that was set up by the Minister endeavoured to formulate a basis on which the Government could bring down this Bill. It discovered that 22 to 22½ per cent. of the total milk supply of this city, despite the regulations of the department, was unfit for human consumption. The department then set about controlling this defect at the point of production by an examination of the herds.

That brings me to this point: there is in the city of Brisbane a number of warm milk suppliers. There is evidence that their dairies will become certified dairies sooner or later. In fact, there are now a number of certified dairies to-day in the metropolitan area. Only consumers who can afford to pay an additional 1d. or 2d. a quart will be able to avail themselves of this supply. The average worker cannot do so. He must get his milk at the minimum price the board fixes. No-one will quarrel with a system that will give certified milk to those people who can afford to pay an additional 2d. a quart for it.

The chief purpose of the Bill, however, is to provide for the needs of the masses of the people. That is what is being done. I think the board will find as time goes on that it will be able to eliminate the warm milk that comes in from outside the Greater Brisbane area by classing it as cold milk. All milk that comes from outside the Greater Brisbane area should be classed as cold milk.

There are numerous other factors that require consideration. There are numbers of

men selling milk for vendors who are not earning anything like the basic wage; they work for £1 or 30s. a week. That practice will be eliminated. The board will be able to compensate owners for uneconomic runs, and amalgamate two such runs in order to make one economic run. Probably, in the near future—within a few years at any rate—we may see the block-run system that is now operating in Auckland and Wellington in New Zealand operating in Brisbane. Those changes will cheapen the cost of milk to the consumer, and at the same time increase the price to the producer. It is in the distribution of milk that economies can be effected.

I recently read an article in "The Contemporary Review" dealing with the nutrition problem, and some of the statements contained in it are worth reciting. Sir John Orr, director of the Rowett Institute for Research in Animal Nutrition, is reported as having said that there were 20,000,000 people living below a proper level of health and energy, and it would be advisable to increase the consumption of milk by 42 per cent., particularly as it contains vitamins, carbohydrates and phosphates.

That statement refers to the British Isles, and what applies there applies to Australia. The fact that health experts consider it necessary to increase the consumption of milk in the British Isles by 42 per cent.—and butter and eggs by 25 per cent.—is evidence of the wisdom of the action of the Government in introducing this Bill, which will set up a board to control the supply of milk to the city and advertise the importance of milk in diet, thus increasing the consumption.

The article I have referred to dealing with the situation in England says—

"Infant mortality has decreased from 105 per 1,000 live births in 1910 to 57 per 1,000 in 1935."

The child is a wasting asset. According to this article there were 12,000,000 children up to 15 years of age at that time, but that number has decreased and it is estimated that in 1951 there will only be 6,500,000 children. We are faced with that problem in our own country. The Commonwealth Government have taken cognisance of it during the past six or eight months, and have pointed out that the British nation is deteriorating in physique. If they desire the youth of this country to grow to sound manhood they should organise society in such a way as to provide a standard of living that will produce a people on which the nation can rely.

If vitamins are so absolutely necessary as has been said by eminent authorities, the Government are handling this job as well as possible under the circumstances by the introduction of this Bill.

I believe a Milk Supply Bill would have been brought down in 1935 had the producers then shown as much sense as they did in 1936 and 1937. Having had years of experience with milk producers, or dairy farmers, as they are termed in the Bill, I can assure hon. members that they are the hardest people on God's earth to organise. No doubt the reason

for this is that they have been more or less reared in an atmosphere of suspicion of the fellow on the other side of the boundary fence.

I have attended monthly meetings for months on end and listened to their talking. On more than one occasion I have seen men walk out of a meeting. I have gone into a meeting of factory suppliers and have noticed the milk suppliers sitting on one side and the directors on the other, and the chairman has said to me, "Sit where you are, in the middle; you will stop a brawl." After some years of constant effort at organisation by a group who realised the facts of the position, he has developed sense. He became more or less a unionist in outlook till he has reached a stage at which he was prepared to refuse to supply this city with milk. To me that was the best indication that the producers intended to do something for themselves and that the Government could handle the milk supply through the provisions of a Milk Supply Bill. A supplier from the Samford district said to me, "We are going to have a strike." I said, "For Christ's sake, hurry up and have it."

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. TAYLOR: That is one of the reasons why a Milk Supply Bill was not brought before Parliament earlier.

Several hon. members opposite who have spoken in this debate want the Government to deal with this business on the basis that now exists in New South Wales. Sydney has a larger population and a greater demand for milk, and, consequently, there the supply can be handled more economically than in Brisbane. Moreover, one should not destroy without being prepared to substitute something for the thing destroyed. It must also not be forgotten that a story lies behind the operations of the Milk Board in Sydney during its infancy, but such a state of affairs will not be possible in Brisbane.

Hon. members of the Opposition representing suppliers would do well to say at the outset that they welcome this Bill as a basis of greater and better things for the milk supply of the city of Brisbane.

Mr. WALKER (Coorooora) (12.45 p.m.): At the outset let me say that I recognise the difficulty the Minister is having in drafting a Milk Supply Bill. There are many important phases of the question, and the difference of opinion is surprising. I have been through it all.

The criticism from this side of the House has been severe but straightforward, and I can assure the hon. gentleman that our only object is to endeavour to amend the Bill with a view to making it a better measure.

I know the difficulties. After organising for months and months, getting producers to attend meetings and come to certain resolutions, I found that some weaknesses were discovered or pressure was brought to bear on some large organisation which waited on the Minister and all that had been accomplished

was upset. I went through the same process in 1929 and therefore understand the feelings of the Minister, who is a particularly busy man with a hundred and one problems to deal with. Naturally, he does not like to have his arrangements upset.

I should have liked to see something entirely different from this Bill. That remark is really made because I believe it is well to express opinions freely and not because I desire to obstruct the Bill. Brisbane should have the best supply of milk it is possible to give.

The hon. member for Enoggera said that a similar scheme is in operation in New South Wales. That is not so. With the population we have here we have an excellent opportunity for inaugurating the best system in the world. Having had the pleasure of going into the question in England in 1924, I am of the firm opinion that Brisbane could well profit by experience over there, that the Minister could do worse than follow their example and introduce a comprehensive Bill covering the supply of all milk. This would be not only of benefit to the producer, but of wonderful advantage to the consumer also.

Listening to hon. members opposite this morning, I thought that there the watchword seemed to be, "consumer." I do not blame them for that, but they are going the wrong way about helping the consumer. The only way in which they can do that is to give him better milk and cheaper milk, and that can be done only by eliminating the present waste. This is done in other towns and countries of the world. There are systems in operation under which it has been possible to reduce the difference between the price received by the producer and that charged by the wholesaler from 1s. 2d. a gallon to 7d. If it is possible to save 7d. a gallon, surely both consumer and producer must benefit?

It must be remembered that we have hospitals, clinics, and an enormous number of invalids who should have milk, and I understand it is the Government's policy to give milk to those unfortunates who are unable to buy it. Milk could be put up in waxed cardboard containers and distributed at picnics, schools, shows, and public gatherings. We know that it is distributed now in dust-proof containers but we want to follow the system that is in operation in other cities of the world, even in a small country like New Zealand. We should inaugurate such a scheme here immediately. Our objective should be to see that the consumer gets cheaper milk and more milk. As the hon. member for Albert pointed out, it is good for both consumer and producer if the consumer is able to buy more.

I am of the opinion that we want something better than this Bill, or, at any rate, we want so to amend the Bill as to make the measure worth while.

The Minister has said that under the Bill the board will obtain about £6,000 a year for the organisation of the industry. I should prefer the Minister to go to the Government for £100,000, which would be ample for

inaugurating the scheme that is in operation in other towns. The interest on that £100,000 would be only about £4,000 and we could do something by way of creating a redemption fund. If the Minister did that he could inaugurate a scheme of which we could feel proud. It would enable us to establish one or more large distributing depots with the most modern equipment. If you will allow me, Mr. Speaker, later on I will try to give some idea of its principles, because I think it ought to be made common property.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. WALKER: Naturally I would not do so without your permission, Mr. Speaker. That is what was in my mind—a scheme that would embrace all milk.

At present I can see the prospect of no end of trouble within 12 months. We are leaving out warm milk and pasteurised milk, which are supplied in great enough quantity to break up the board, no matter how it is composed. The whitest and most conscientious man as chairman would still have a hard time in keeping prices at a level equitable to consumers and producers and retailers. A difference of about 4d. or 5d. a gallon between cold and warm milk is too great to be played with. It is a wonderful pull on the other fellow. What is more, the certification of warm milk will be carried out by the Department of Agriculture and Stock and not by the Milk Board. Those suppliers will see the advantage of having "Certified Milk" on their carts, and that, with the aid of a little advertisement from time to time, will capture the public interest.

The Government are not giving the industry a fair run if they allow suppliers of pasteurised and warm milk to kill this Bill. The certifying of milk will come within the province of the board. I object to that because it is placing too much responsibility on the chairman. That certification should be carried out solely by the Department of Agriculture and Stock. Otherwise you have a duplication of veterinary officers, the expense of which devolves upon the board and has to come out of its income of £5,000 or £6,000. The people who use the services of the Department of Agriculture and Stock for tuberculosis-testing so that they can advertise tuberculosis-free milk will do so without levy.

The constitution of the board worries me very much. I was surprised to hear the Minister speaking last night of the difficulty of getting all the milk sellers in on the board. Boards that have been constituted in the past have embraced all the producers concerned. I should like to see a consumers' representative on the board. An ideal board would be one constituted by the appointment of a consumers' representative recommended by the Brisbane City Council, not necessarily an alderman, a distributors' representative, a representative of the warm milk suppliers, two representatives of the cold milk suppliers, a representative of the Department of Public Health and a representative of the Department of Agriculture and Stock. That would be an ideally balanced board, with all sections represented and all thoroughly capable of

carrying out their important respective duties in this big problem.

The board proposed in the Bill will be altogether out of balance, because, for instance, much of the work involving delicate negotiations and decisions will fall on the shoulders of the chairman. The chairman of the present provisional board has done a great deal of that delicate and important work up to date, and I doubt very much whether we could get another man like him. If possible, I should like to see him appointed chairman of the Milk Board, unless, of course, the Minister is prepared to accept amendments in Committee to alter its constitution. If we are to have pure milk distributed on a properly regulated basis we shall have to have a well-balanced board.

In New South Wales it is compulsory to have certified milk for distribution, and we should adopt that principle here. The Minister knows very well that we could determine that in two years' time not one quart of milk should come to Brisbane unless it was either certified as free of disease or pasteurised. Why not start off with that ideal now? Let us provide that not one drop of milk shall come to the city under the supervision of the board unless it is either certified or pasteurised. See what a boon that would be to the babies, the little children especially at picnics, to invalids, and to other people who need large quantities of milk, but who, on account of their delicate digestions or other disabilities, are unable to buy the article now sold with confidence. If we did that we should be doing something big. This has been done in other countries, and it should not be very difficult to model our scheme on theirs and profit from their experience. Such a scheme would be a success not only from the point of view of a fair return to the producer and a reasonable price to the consumer, but also in the interests of the health of the community. In addition, an enormous amount of good could be accomplished under a scheme for the proper bacteriological and pathological examination in the interests of public health.

The Bill provides that licenses are to be issued to carriers. It will be good to have milk carried speedily from the point of production to the centre of distribution, but we shall have to have regard to the cleanliness of the vehicles used in the trade. I think that that matter must be controlled by the Health Act, because I fail to see any provision in this Bill dealing with the cleanliness of vehicles. We shall also have to see that the railway vans are properly equipped for this trade, and perhaps insist that special rolling-stock shall be reserved for the conveyance of milk.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. WALKER: The question of quality comes in here. The Minister, by interjection, and also in the course of his second reading speech, said that the butter-fat was not the only thing to be determined when analysing milk. I say it is entirely so, and the higher the butter-fat content the greater the value of the milk. In

proof of that, one has only to illustrate what is happening in other countries, where payment for milk is made on the basis of the butter-fat content. As a result, we find that the butter-fat content in those countries ranges from 4.2 per cent. in the summer months to 4.7 per cent. in the winter months. Compare that percentage with our prescribed percentage of 3.3 per cent.

The reason for the higher butter-fat content in milk in other countries is due to the encouragement given to dairy owners. There is an incentive to them to increase the butter-fat content, because they get a higher price for their cream, and at the same time the consumers get the benefit of the richer milk. That should be the object of all dairy boards. There is room for an amendment of the Bill in that direction.

When we see that there is a margin of 7d. a gallon between the price received by the producer and the price paid by the vendor, we must realise that that sum is absorbed in distribution costs. This is another fact that should be considered, with a view to benefiting both producer and consumer. In a scheme like this, factors too numerous to mention will be introduced for the benefit of all concerned, and this is one of them. The Minister has made provision for the establishment of depots for receiving the milk. Personally, I desire to see these depots fulfilling the requirements of the Health Act. Provision to that effect may be made in this Bill.

This Bill also provides that uneconomic runs may be bought by the board, as its finances permit. When we realise that the maximum amount the board can expect to collect in levies is £5,000 or £6,000 per annum, one can easily conjecture that, after all administrative expenses have been paid, very little money will be left for the purchase of uneconomic runs. It would be far better if the board at the outset was able to go to the Treasurer and obtain a loan of, say, £30,000 to inaugurate a scheme for the general distribution of milk on an economical basis.

Very little encouragement is being given in the Bill to vendors who will distribute milk in sealed containers. It is very necessary in a tropical climate like this that milk should be distributed under the most hygienic conditions it is possible to have. This matter should not be lost sight of.

Then we find that payment for milk is to be made on the basis of quantity and not on butter-fat content. Anyone can see the advantages of payment on butter-fat content, especially the consumer, who wants the very best article. What a wonderful opportunity exists for the Minister's department to bring this about, because, under those conditions, no-one would dare to water milk, because payment would not be made for it, but according to analysis. Even separated milk can be added, provided the standard is not reduced below 3.3 per cent., and, under the principle adopted in the Bill, that would still be possible. The result of a system of payment on the butter-fat content would be a richer milk at a minimum cost to the consumer.

I hope that the Minister will be prepared to accept amendments in the directions I have indicated. If so, he will lift the industry to a higher plane, and bring about more hygienic milk supplies, particularly if payment is made on the butter-fat content. That would obviate infringement of the law of a dangerous, and even criminal, character. The hon. member for Enoggera referred to a prosecution last week for the sale of milk that had a very low butter-fat content.

It is only a few years ago that the receiving depots for milk were very unsuitable and unhygienic. People who were familiar with good milk classed it as ropey milk, because it looked like rope when you stirred it up. The Bill does not go far enough in this respect. We should have the most modern depots with glazed walls and ceilings and furnished with the best British machinery for the cleaning of bottles and containers by steam and the drying of them by hot air. If all these things are done the health of the people will be protected; and if at the same time we can give them a reasonably priced article it will be a great advantage.

The small farmer should never have been allowed to carry on inside the Greater Brisbane area. I was pleased that the Minister introduced legislation a few years ago placing the responsibility for these dairies on the Brisbane City Council.

By having payment based on the butter-fat content you can base the price of this year's milk on last year's butter-fat content. In order to get over all the difficulties, it may be necessary to go a bit further and inaugurate a scheme to provide a plentiful supply of milk for the people and do away with the quota system altogether, which is one of the most obnoxious systems I have ever heard of. Suppliers should be encouraged to send it all the year round, and if there is a surplus of milk it could be converted into butter.

All these matters may be dealt with as a result of the passage of this Bill. The Bill will be a step in the right direction provided amendments are accepted. Whereas, if it is scrapped, it is difficult to say whether the people will get pure milk. According to the statement made by the Minister about the purity of milk it is obviously a matter of grave urgency to improve the purity of the milk supply.

To be quite candid, I prepared my notes on the Minister's speech, and I have been doing my best to keep within the rules of debate, but it is difficult to do this when one is endeavouring to follow the Minister. Last evening the Minister went all over the place. Certainly, it was important information and gave us a great variety of information on the matter.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! If an hon. member goes outside the principles of a Bill it will not be necessary for the hon. member to draw attention to it.

Mr. WALKER: I admit that, but draw your attention to the fact that, unfortunately,

you were taken from the Chamber for an hour this morning.

I realise that a number of amendments must be made in the Bill if we are to have a pure milk supply. Here are some figures regarding pure milk: in 1917-18 847 samples were taken, and 193 or 23 per cent. failed to comply with the standard prescribed; in 1928-29 of 1,716 samples only 34, or 2 per cent. failed to comply, and in 1930-31 all milk samples came up to the requisite standard. That shows plainly that we can have a pure milk supply provided production and distribution are on sound lines.

I should have preferred the Minister to bring down a comprehensive Bill providing for modern conditions and up-to-date equipment. We have the guidance of the other countries of the world and we realise the danger of a bad milk supply. The difficulties confronting the consumer and producer are also common knowledge, and had a Bill been brought forward that represented a real endeavour to solve all these problems, Queensland would have had something to be proud of. In the meantime we are determined to help the Minister as far as possible by practical suggestion to put the Bill into such shape that it will work more efficiently than at present.

Mr. NIMMO (Oxley) (2.17 p.m.): This is a problem that has been exercising the minds of many gentlemen who have been in charge of the Department of Agriculture and Stock in Queensland, and to my way of thinking the Minister is making an attempt to do some good for the cold milk supplier.

As long as I can remember the suppliers of cold milk to Brisbane have been asking that a board or something else be constituted in order to give them the protection they think is necessary. There has been no such outcry from the suppliers of warm milk. They have not asked for a Milk Supply Bill, or the setting up of a board, and I see no reason why they should be interfered with at all.

There are many factors that must be taken into consideration in connection with the warm milk suppliers. The speeches of some hon. members would suggest that nobody should be allowed to produce milk in the Brisbane area, and that to my mind displays a lack of knowledge of the area or that some hon. members are not seized of the importance of the problem. In the Brisbane area there are some large farming districts that are second to none in Queensland.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: Where are they?

Mr. NIMMO: At the Seventeen-mile Rocks. Grindle's property at Wacol, is equal to any property that is in Queensland. There are a number of good properties in Brisbane.

Mr. Walker: They run a boarding-house.

Mr. NIMMO: That is not so, one of them supplies most of the warm milk to the hospital.

The Minister has supplied the information that of the milk consumed in Brisbane 30 per cent. is warm milk. Why is there such a demand for this milk? Because the public ask for it. Some countries in the world handle the problem in a very much bigger way than we are attempting to do here. In Canada I found the Government had control of the milk supply. Shops for the sale of milk were registered, and a label, presumably issued by the Government, was placed on bottles and guaranteed that the milk was no longer than eight hours from the cow. Infringements of this guarantee, I understand, meant prosecution. Many things have been done there in recognition of the undoubted fact that the consumer likes to get his milk as soon as possible after it is drawn from the cow. Those people who have to take cold milk need some protection, although I question very much whether the Minister is going to succeed in giving them that protection under this Bill.

There is no need to worry about the warm milk supplier, because, as the city of Brisbane grows, land will become more valuable and the warm milk vendor will gradually discontinue his operations. Hon. members who are opposed to the warm milk supplier must remember that he is paying heavy rates to the Brisbane City Council. I can assure hon. members that these men are doing great work for the public of Brisbane in carrying on as they are.

I know that the Minister is anxious to free all herds from disease, and I compliment him for that. It is important that this should be done.

If warm milk suppliers are to be brought under this Bill, will every cart that is operating in Brisbane be expected to have a meter?

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: Every cow!

Mr. NIMMO: At any rate, on every cart because the majority of warm milk suppliers actually milk their own cows. How are we to find out how much milk is sold by each vendor? That would be extremely difficult and I do not think that it would be at all satisfactory to bring these men under this Bill. The warm milk supplier has many problems to contend with. He is expected to deliver milk to the consumer as soon after it is drawn from the cow as possible. I know that with my own supply. There has been no trouble. Everything seems to be delivered in good order.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: It would be a criminal shame for the milk produced by the man who supplies you to lose its identity in a common pool.

Mr. NIMMO: Exactly. Several attempts have been made to deal with milk supplies. I remember that at one time a proposal was put forward for the dumping of all milk at one central depot. I think that depot was to be Birt's at South Brisbane. The milk was to be delivered from there on blocked runs. Milk that was produced by a man who was jealous of the quality and health of his

cows would have had to be mixed with inferior milk.

Mr. Walker: When was that?

Mr. NIMMO: That was Mr. Simpson's suggestion. Inferior milk was to be mixed with good milk. Such a scheme would tend to retard the efficiency of dairymen.

We must give the warm milk producer every encouragement we can. Something has to be done to protect him and I hope that some protection will be given under this Bill, although I have some grave doubts about some of its clauses. I know of several men who had to buy feed during periods of drought. These people have not only spent all their cash but have also accumulated a heavy debt for feed by the time the drought is broken. It takes them a long time to pay off that indebtedness, and men who will do this in order to supply milk of high quality should be given every encouragement and protection. Will this Bill give them such protection?

The Minister has overlooked many factors in framing the Bill. For instance, he has made provision for a system of quotas. There is a loophole at once. I can name one or two wholesalers whom it would be pretty hard to bring within any price regulation.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: They must obey the law.

Mr. NIMMO: I believe that the quota system, under which a man is allowed so many thousand gallons a month, is unsatisfactory. If a producer wants to sell milk to the wholesaler he will be told, "I am fully supplied," but it will be suggested that more could be taken at a cut price. Instead of sending 400 gallons in to the wholesaler the producer quietly sends 450 or 500 gallons, and I do not see how you can check that. The Minister might register routes and check carts coming in, but it is going to be very difficult.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: Have you looked at the audit clauses of the Bill?

Mr. NIMMO: Yes, I have, but there are one or two men, whom I have in mind, whom it would be very difficult to control in that regard.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: If they do not play the game they will probably find it difficult to get licenses.

Mr. NIMMO: That is probably the only clause that will give the Minister control over them. The fact remains that it will be very difficult.

The hon. member for Cooroora and others have dealt with the question of standardisation of milk. Encouragement should be given to produce the very best quality of milk. Some people will tell you that they are running Illawarras or Friesians, and would not have Jerseys because they produce milk of too good a quality. They say, "The butter-fat test is too high, and we do not get the volume of milk."

In London I got up very early several mornings to see how they dealt with their difficulties in milk distribution. I found that the retailers supplied the milk in bottles, which they carried round on little carts stacked tier upon tier with half-pints, pints, and quarts. I spoke to one of them and said, "What price do you get here?" He said, "We sell the milk in three grades; we have fourpenny milk, fivepenny milk, and sixpenny milk." I asked him to show me the difference. It seemed that the better the milk the more cream you would find on the top of it. In that way the producer was paid for quality.

Our law provides for prosecution, with the liability of a severe fine, of anyone who puts 3, 4, or 5 per cent. of water into the milk, and rightly so. However, a good deal of the milk coming into Brisbane to-day is separated. I have never found where it goes, but on making inquiries I find that some milk coming in has considerably more than 3.3 per cent. insisted on by the department. Someone is very clever, because some of the milk is separated and added to the unseparated milk, which has a very much higher butter-fat content.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: That practice, as a sustained practice, disappeared three or four years ago.

Mr. NIMMO: It is still being done.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: It may be done, but only in very rare instances.

Mr. NIMMO: The producer should get the advantage of the better quality he produces.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: If you will give me a case I will take it up immediately.

Mr. NIMMO: I am glad to hear that, and I will certainly give the Minister some information in regard to the practices that are going on.

Speaking of cold milk, I contend that the producer should have its full value allowed to him, and there should be some way of ensuring that the full value of the milk is passed on. I do not know how milk is going to be standardised.

I rose principally to congratulate the Minister upon deciding not to include warm milk suppliers under the Bill. During the flush season the cold milk suppliers went to certain people in the Brisbane area seeking their patronage, but when they were told by the firm approached that it was getting its milk at a certain price these suppliers agreed to reduce their price. If I had my way I should have given these people very effective protection, not by the establishment of a board, but under a system providing for the issue of an order by the department that no cold milk could be supplied in the Brisbane area at less than 1s. a gallon to the producer.

This is how it would have worked out: big companies like Finney, Isles, and Company,

Limited, and other big business places that buy large quantities of milk daily, would know that they had no option but to pay 1s. a gallon for it. That system would also have a tendency to improve the quality of milk and thus the producer would get the price that he deserves.

Mr. Plunkett: The warm milk supplier?

Mr. NIMMO: No, I am talking about the cold milk supplier. The warm milk supplier can look after himself. He does not want any help or any board or any other protection. There is no need for it. He is not going to jeopardise the interests of the cold milk supplier.

I hope that the Minister achieves his objective by the Bill. I hope to have one or two amendments accepted during the Committee stage, but apart from those I shall help the Minister all I can to pass the Bill.

Mr. DART (Wynnum) (2.32 p.m.): The Bill is long over-due, but on behalf of the people of the city I welcome it and congratulate the Minister upon bringing it forward. The Minister explained that milk varied in quality, like any other food, and that 30 per cent. of Brisbane's milk supply was warm milk produced within the city area, while the remaining 70 per cent., described as cold milk, came from outside areas.

When a milk supply control system was under consideration in Wellington, New Zealand, the authorities gave consideration to the interests of the warm milk suppliers, and decided to exercise control over the supply of cold milk from country districts and to allow warm milk suppliers to carry on their business in the usual way.

I congratulate the Minister upon considering the interests of all sections before drafting this Bill. He decided not to exclude the country people from the milk market of the city, or to give a monopoly to milk suppliers within the city area. There are a number of areas suitable for dairying within the Greater Brisbane area, but the farmers who are carrying on their business on the farm lands within the city require protection. They are producing milk under very satisfactory conditions, as is apparent from the results of the strict supervision exercised by the health authorities.

Cold milk and warm milk are commodities of different quality, but the object of the Bill is to control the milk supply, not to disqualify either one section or the other. We know full well that milk deteriorates if it is delayed in transit, and as the cold milk must compete with warm milk in the city it is very necessary to lay down what is warm milk and what is cold milk, and so give them their rightful places in the milk trade. If milk is allowed to remain on the roadside in cans for 10 or 15 hours after it comes from the cow it loses some of its food value, and is not as good as when it came from the cow. Therefore, this Bill is very necessary.

The board provided for will have power to draft regulations, for the approval of the Government, in order to deal with the pas-

teurisation of milk. All milk should be pasteurised after a certain period has elapsed. Milk contains a certain number of bacteria, which increases with its age. These bacteria also increase as the milk is changed from one can to another, and from one utensil to another. Therefore, unless this cold milk is pasteurised it must contain a number of bacteria that is injurious to health.

It is conceded by all authorities that pasteurisation detracts from the nutritive value of milk, but the vitamins thus lost can be restored. On the other hand, it is an acknowledged fact that the quantity of germs decreases with pasteurisation. As it is very necessary that these germs should be extracted by pasteurisation, attention must be devoted to replacing the lost vitamins. That can be done by taking a little orange or tomato juice.

Milk that is carried a considerable distance from the source of supply to the city loses much of its value. Warm milk supplied from dairies within the metropolitan area has, therefore, a great advantage over such milk. It is absolutely necessary that the city should have a warm milk supply. We know its health-building properties. That is why the dairies in the metropolitan area are such a valuable adjunct to the city. Warm milk, particularly if it is certified, is in much demand, particularly for young children and invalids.

This Bill goes much further than providing for the necessary supply of milk for the requirements of the city. It provides for the establishment of a board responsible to the Government to see that those requirements are fulfilled. On that board three particular interests will be represented—namely, the producers, the wholesale vendors, and consumers. It is reasonable and fair that all sections should always be represented on such a board. The consumer plays an important role in this Bill. Therefore, the Government must see to it that his interests are fully protected. His interests can only be protected by direct representation on the board. I hope the Minister will reconsider clauses of the Bill when it is being considered in Committee with the object of making provision for better representation of the consumer as well as the representation of the supplier and wholesale vendor. The wholesale vendors will be in a strong position on the board; they are to be given representation on a 50-50 basis with the producers. In most instances the middleman farms the other fellow—he is taking profits that should belong to the producer. If we could evolve a system that would eliminate most of the middlemen we should be doing a service to the consumer and the producer. The producers are the most important section; if it were not for them we should not have the product to deal with; therefore, they should have more representation. The object of the Bill is to give the producer a better deal, and, in order to attain that objective, he should have a majority representation on the board. The middleman is of little benefit to the community. The difference between the price received by the producer and the price paid by the consumer

is very considerable; so many are riding on the backs of others.

Mr. Gledson: Go easy on your mates.

Mr. DART: This is a non-party Bill and should be discussed from that point of view. The Bill is one that will give better protection to the producer. We all know that during periods of drought, the producer has to pay big prices for fodder for his stock, and he is entitled to special consideration. The producer should be given a price that will represent a living wage. To-day, there are some producers in the Greater Brisbane area who are only receiving 8d. a gallon for their milk. Some profiteering is going on, and it is to be hoped that the Milk Board will be able to eliminate it. I should not make that statement if I did not have the facts to support it. It is high time a Bill of this nature was introduced. Last month, the producers received 8½d. a gallon, and they have had notice this month that they will receive 8d. in the future. There is a tremendous discrepancy between the price paid to the producer and the price paid by the consumer, which suggests that profiteering is indulged in by some people.

I am pleased to know the city is able to find a market for all the milk produced in this area. It has been mentioned that the Brisbane City Council have given notice to many dairy farmers in the Greater Brisbane area to remove their stock to outside the area. I was a member of the council when those notices were sent out, and a member of the committee that decided to give notices to four dairy farmers to go further out. We decided that four would be enough for the time being, but others would receive notice later. There will be ample room for many of them further out for years to come. Even now, there is land in its virgin state in and around the Greater Brisbane area on which dairying could be carried on with advantage to the producers and to the consumers.

I hope the Bill has the effect of giving the producer a reasonable reward for his labours and that the consumer will reap the advantage, perhaps, of a cheaper price for a pure milk. Some amendments may be necessary, but I trust the Bill will have the effect desired by the Minister and that on the board to be constituted there will be representation of the consumers.

Mr. RUSSELL (Hamilton) (2.46 p.m.): As a representative of a metropolitan constituency naturally my duty is to the consumers.

I recognise that in framing this legislation the Minister was confronted with some very difficult problems. In 1932 a committee of investigation took voluminous evidence, but up to the present nothing had been done owing, I dare say, to conflict of opinion.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: No two sections have the same view on that evidence.

Mr. RUSSELL: As a matter of fact, under the Moore regime there were many investigations, and it was found impossible to reconcile the interests of the warm and

cold milk suppliers. At that time it was impossible to devise any scheme that would satisfy both parties. If the Minister can bring better conditions to the industry he is to be complimented. At that time, I suppose, the main question that troubled the investigators and the interests of the warm as against the cold milk suppliers was the matter of blocked runs, on which no agreement could be come to. Nothing was done, although it was generally recognised that some workable basis was required in order to put the industry on a stable footing. There is no doubt that it has been in a very chaotic condition. Although in the last 12 months conditions have probably been better, the industry is in such a parlous condition that it is essential that legislation be enacted to satisfy the claims of all parties.

Country suppliers are unable to obtain an economic price for their article and there is cut-throat competition between the vendors in the city of Brisbane, some of whom of course can claim that their greatest bugbear is bad debts. No Bill can take that factor into consideration. If a vendor makes bad debts that is his own lookout and he must provide against them. The insane competition that exists between the vendors to-day greatly increases the overhead costs, so that some are very heavy losers and others are not making very much.

It is interesting to note that the "Courier-Mail" made an investigation in 1936 and some very remarkable figures came to light. At that time it was stated that approximately £1,500,000 was invested in the production of milk, approximately 150,000 acres of land was either owned or leased by 700 farmers and their families, and probably another 100 families were working for them. There were nearly 1,000 dairy and other hands employed in the business, and approximately 800 persons engaged in the handling, vending, and distribution of milk. There were approximately 30,000 cattle on those farms. The consumption in Brisbane at that time was about 20,000 gallons a day. It was estimated that probably 50 per cent. of this was warm milk. The Minister says now that warm milk constitutes about 30 per cent. of Brisbane's supply. That shows that the supply of warm milk is decreasing. It is natural that as the city expands a great number of these areas that are now used for dairying will be found to be too expensive to work. Therefore, as time goes on, and as the population increases, suppliers of warm milk will be a declining quantity.

What the consumer wants, of course, is pure milk at a reasonable price. In order to get that we have to reconcile the interests of the consumer with those of the producer and the distributor. This Bill attempts to solve the problem by constituting a board that will be representative of the cold milk producers and the vendors. I do not ask that the consumers have representation on the board at all, because I think that in the Commissioner of Prices ample protection against being unduly exploited is accorded the public. I do not think that any board should be encumbered with too many representatives.

Therefore, I think the consumers will be satisfied that the Commissioner of Prices will see that they get a fair deal.

Many solutions of the problem are offered. We know that the Brisbane City Council are enamoured of the principle of control by municipalities. I should hesitate, however, to grant that power to municipalities. We have an excellent example, of course, in the scheme that is in operation in Wellington under the control of the municipality, but I do not think it desirable that any municipality should create a new department for the distribution of foodstuffs. To my way of thinking it savours too much of socialisation, and I want to avoid that as much as possible. What applies to a municipality, of course, must apply to a Government.

I think that in all these matters all that we need is not Government control but Government guidance. To-day, in all our main industries if the Government would apply themselves to giving guidance to private enterprise, we could achieve the best results and we should also be able to steer clear of the socialisation of the distribution of foodstuffs.

The Government's proposal is to have a control board representative of the producers and vendors with a Government nominee as chairman. The Minister has endeavoured to justify his attitude in not constituting a commodity board for milk. We know that the executive of the Country Milk Association at the Brisbane Ward Conference in 1935 was strongly in favour of making milk a commodity to be controlled by a commodity board under the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: On a ballot the proposal was defeated.

Mr. RUSSELL: A resolution to that effect was carried at that conference of the Country Milk Association. That resolution was supported by representatives of more than 200 milk producers and representatives of local producers' associations in the East and West Moreton and part of the South Coast districts.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: You know that on ballot it was defeated, don't you?

Mr. RUSSELL: Whether it was defeated or not, that was the proposal. The Minister decided a few days later that the establishment of the commodity board would not cover all phases necessary for an adequately organised milk supply. He further said that the commodity boards that were in operation at the present time were handling products vastly dissimilar from milk. A commodity board was concerned with the marketing of its commodity, but a milk organisation must be concerned with both hygiene and marketing phases. There could not be any satisfactory form of organisation by the establishment of a board under the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act. The Minister has said exactly the same thing on this Bill.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: I believe that to be true.

Mr. RUSSELL: Yes, and I dare say that that is the view held by the Government. I should like to know what is the vast difference between milk and any other commodity that, in the Minister's view, would preclude the establishment of a commodity board under that Act? We know that the purity of the supply must be taken into consideration by the board, but that was the excuse offered for the refusal of a commodity board.

We have a very excellent Sub-Department of Health and Medical Services, in the charge of a capable director, and I contend that it has ample power to exercise the necessary supervision over any commodity offered to the people, and there is no reason why, with their well-equipped staff, they should not deal with the hygienic phase of milk distribution. Therefore, I see no reason for giving to this board powers already possessed by the Department of Health and Home Affairs. The board should be concerned only with marketing problems. The main function of the board should be to regulate supplies and prices. There is no reason why a section of the work of the Department of Health and Home Affairs should be handed over to the Department of Agriculture and Stock.

I favour a board that would represent the producers. There is no reason why there should be representatives of the vendors on the board at all.

Mr. Maher: Hear, hear!

Mr. RUSSELL: I entered the same objection in regard to the Fish Board. Milk is a commodity, just the same as butter, cheese, wheat, or anything else, and there is no reason why milk producers should not be entitled to have a board for the marketing of their products without the intervention of vendors, whose interests might be diametrically opposed to theirs.

Mr. Maher: Hear, hear!

Mr. RUSSELL: I propose that the board be limited to representatives of the producers. They should be entitled to elect their own chairman the same as any other commodity board in Queensland. Of course, the Government have the power to appoint to every marketing board a representative whose duty mainly is to see that the public are not unduly exploited and, if public money is involved, to see that there is a careful handling of the finances. Under this scheme the finance required for this organisation will be found by the people interested, and no Government money will be involved. But for all that I think we can agree that the Government are entitled to have a representative on the board as on every other commodity board in existence in the State.

The chairman of this board should be one of their own number elected by the board. I object to the appointment of a Government nominee as permanent chairman. This man will be endowed with absolutely autocratic powers and will be able to fix the price to be paid to the producer by the vendor and by the vendor to the consumer. What is the good of a board at all? We do not want

a board at all, if the chairman is to be endowed with those enormous powers. If the board does anything wrong the Minister in charge of the department can intervene to see that the interests of the public are fully protected. I regret to see this new departure in the appointment of this commodity board.

It seems to me that this board is the forerunner of control by the Government absolutely. Not only have they power now in connection with the fixation of prices, but eventually, possibly, it will be found that they will amplify their powers by distributing milk themselves. We may even see Government farms, Government cattle, and Government dairymen and others employed in the distribution of this commodity, because the Minister himself admitted that milk should be treated as a public utility, the same as water and electricity. Well, if that is his idea, we should resist to the utmost any attempt to socialise the distribution of a primary commodity, because if it is right for the Government to control milk it may also be right for them to control every other commodity.

I certainly object to the appointment of this board, its constitution, and its powers. The Commissioner of Prices is there to protect the public, and it is wrong to make him the permanent chairman of the board. It is his duty to intervene if the producers or distributors attempt to fleece the public. He has power to do that with any commodity board, and, as the representative of the Government, he has ample power to prevent the public from being exploited.

In other countries of the world, notably Great Britain, a good deal of interest is taken in this question of vital concern to the public. I quite admit that milk is entering into the daily diet of the people more and more. At a world congress of milk producers at Berlin in August last year figures quoted established the fact that owing to the enormous propaganda undertaken in Germany there is now one milk shop for every 575 of the population in that country. That shows how popular milk drinking has become in that country and how the public are supporting the industry. Even in Australia we notice the enormous growth in the consumption of milk and, as I said previously, milk is an item of food that enters into the daily life of the people. Therefore, it is the duty of the Government to see that the public get a good commodity at a reasonable price.

That leads me to the legislation that is now operating in Great Britain. Some years ago the milk industry there—and this is illustrative of the point I wish to amplify as to what class of board should be appointed and how the industry should be managed—was faced with a crisis owing to enormous importation of milk from European countries, which was detrimental to local producers. Under The Agriculture and Marketing Acts of 1931-33 the mechanism was provided for organised producers to set up a marketing scheme for any agricultural product and to compel any minority to come into line. We are doing the same here. The milk marketing

scheme in England, Wales, and Scotland was the outcome. The Milk Marketing Board operating under the English scheme was set up as a statutory body and a self-governing organisation of producers. The board negotiates the wholesale liquid milk prices each year with the Central Milk Committee, which represents distributors and manufacturers. The board also fixes minimum retail prices. Its decisions are subject to appeal to the Ministry of Agriculture and to the committee of investigation. The Milk Marketing Board is composed almost entirely of producers' representatives from the 11 areas or regions which form the board's total area. The board is a party to all wholesale contracts made by producers for the sale of liquid or manufacturing milk.

All payments by wholesale purchasers are made to the board, which sends all cheques to the producers in due course. That is to say, the marketing board, the board representative of the producers, collects all moneys from the sales of milk to the distributors and manufacturers and pays the proceeds to the suppliers in a similar way to the butter factories in Queensland. That system has worked remarkably well in Queensland. These people have been prudent enough while controlling the manufacturing end to work in with the producers on the basis of the prices fixed by the Milk Marketing Board.

Each region has its regional pool to which the proceeds of sales for liquid or manufacturing purposes are credited plus certain contributions from producer-retailers. Producers in each area are paid from the pool in their area an average price, regardless of whether their individual's contribution of milk has gone to the liquid or manufacturing market. To lessen the gap between the return to producers in each of the several regions an Inter-regional Compensation Fund gathered from a levy on liquid milk sales is used.

By arrangement with the Commissioner for Special Areas, who has made a contribution, expectant and nursing mothers, and children under five, may obtain milk at reduced rates in certain circumstances.

The National Milk Publicity Council has just organised its scheme for supplying milk to workers in factories, and this has already met with considerable success. In the Old Country the methods of milk marketing are very modern, and I think we should be very wise to copy their methods, which are very applicable to Queensland.

I was very interested in the decision of the Minister to exclude the warm milk producers from the operations of the Bill. Although some of our country friends are inclined to think the board cannot be successful unless that class of milk producer is included, I am inclined to think that as it was impossible to reconcile the interests of both these classes and as the warm milk producer was excluded from the operation of the Bill we are wise to go on with the organisation of the other milk producers; because, after all, the warm milk producers represent a declining factor. It might be found necessary, if the competition of the warm milk producers became

very pronounced, to declare a price for warm milk also. That seems to me to be a fair compromise in regard to the complaint made by country representatives who desire that that class should be included.

I know very well the difficulties that have existed for years. After all, half a loaf is better than no bread, and it is wise to make a start now with the organisation of the cold milk producers, and if we find the warm milk producers are competing too actively they can be dealt with by other legislation.

I was glad to learn that it is not the intention of the Minister to advocate a scheme for Brisbane that will compel the public to consume pasteurised milk. To my way of thinking it is a difficult thing—

The Premier: You are like an old Scotch minister, you take four points before you come to the final.

Mr. RUSSELL: I am on the final now. I am glad to see the Minister is not pressing for the monopoly of pasteurised milk or seeking to compel the public to drink pasteurised milk. No municipal scheme can be successful unless all the milk is delivered at the central depot and pasteurised and distributed in bottles, and that is the difficulty associated with such schemes. While there is a big demand for raw milk the public should not be denied the right of obtaining that class of milk. Medical evidence on the question of raw milk versus pasteurised milk differs very much; and while medical evidence differs we should hesitate before we compel the public to buy pasteurised milk.

I alluded just now to the world's Dairy Congress that took place in Berlin on 27 August last year when the question of pasteurised versus raw milk was keenly debated. Both sides were loud in their praise of the respective types they advocated. One of the reports upon the nutritive value of milk and milk products was presented to the Congress by a representative from Helsingfors, Finland, a country much advanced in legislation in regard to milk supply and distribution. The paper was a survey of reports received by speakers from different countries, and offered facts favourable to both fresh milk and pasteurised milk. He declared that natural milk of impeccable hygienic quality is always to be preferred to milk that is rendered hygienically unobjectionable by heating. There are many authorities that back up that view, and as so much doubt exists about the advantage of pasteurised milk over raw milk it is wise that we should not rush into any scheme such as the Wellington scheme, where all milk is pasteurised. The interests of those who want raw milk have been protected in the Bill, and that is a very commendable feature of it.

Boiled down, as to the constitution of the board to regulate the production and distribution of milk, the whole business should be taken charge of by the people most closely interested, the producers themselves, who should be quite competent to form a board to control these two phases of the industry. All

that need be done is to appoint a competent manager to manage their affairs, the board to merely act in a consultative capacity, the Government being represented by their nominee, and the chairman elected by the board. The vendors, the distributors, can be trusted to form their own organisation to look after their own interests. The Commissioner of Prices will protect the public interests, and there is the Minister as the final court of appeal.

With all its defects, the Bill should be supported, and although it is not likely that the Minister would agree to any radical alteration in this Bill, at the same time I think it is wise that the public should be acquainted with our views. Before long it will be found that the board we, on this side, advocate, is more compatible with our ideas of what should be done with commodities in Queensland that we consider should be controlled by boards in order to give a fair deal to the producers and to prevent the exploitation of the public.

Motion (Mr. Bulcock) agreed to.

COMMITTEE.

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

Clause 1—Short title—as read, agreed to.

Clause 2—Application of Act with respect to milk and cream—

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) (3.19 p.m.): I move the following amendment:—

“On page 2, lines 7 to 15, omit the paragraphs—

‘(i.) Milk or cream which is sold by retail directly to the consumer or user thereof by the person who produces such milk or cream; or

‘(ii.) Milk or cream produced within a district and sold wholesale and delivered at the place of production directly to a retail vendor by the producer thereof and which is sold by retail in such district directly to the consumers or users thereof by such retail vendor; or’ ”

This clause deals expressly with the classes of milk that are to come under the control of the board. There is scarcely any need to repeat the arguments I advanced during the second reading stage. I feel that if we fail to include under the scheme the whole of the milk suppliers, the control must break down. The very wide discussion that has occurred proves beyond doubt that any board that endeavours to control the sale and distribution of a commodity must fail if a part of the commodity remains outside its control. In this instance it has been demonstrated that no less than about 30 per cent. of the supply will not be controlled.

The Minister told us this morning that one reason for excluding this 30 per cent. was because the warm milk suppliers had never asked to come under this Bill. Whilst we must have regard to the claims of every section of the community, we must remember, when we are dealing with commodity boards,

that we cannot be influenced by a small section, that we must take the broad view.

The Minister used the word "conscription" this morning. I should not like to use that term, but at the same time the fact remains that if 70 per cent. of the milk producers are of the opinion that it would be in the interests of their industry to set up some system of organised control, we cannot be influenced by the other 30 per cent.

In addition, I submit that at least a very large proportion of that 30 per cent. would willingly come under this control.

I feel, too, that the warm milk vendors are not in a position to-day to say just how they may be affected if they are allowed to remain outside the scope of this Bill. The point is that if the proposed board is successful and is able to carry on effectively the warm milk suppliers will derive a benefit without making any contribution and that is one important reason why they should be brought under this scheme.

I shall endeavour to point out to the Committee that if they are excluded the warm milk suppliers will get a benefit without making any contribution, and that, of course, would not be fair. It has been proved already that they will benefit to the extent of about 5d. a gallon and one can readily understand, therefore, the reason why some of the warm milk suppliers have decided at least to ask the Minister to allow them to remain outside the provisions of this Bill. The fact that they derive this benefit should be all the more reason why they should be under the control of this board.

When undertaking a task such as this we should include all the milk or none. Our experience in endeavouring to market any commodity during the last few years has been that when even a small proportion of the producers remain outside of the control of the board its operations have been seriously embarrassed.

Therefore, without any further argument, I think that it must be conceded to have been proved conclusively that we are reluctantly compelled to include the whole of the milk or none.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. T. A. Foley, Normanby) (3.24 p.m.): The Minister in charge of this Bill has been called away for a brief period, but he has informed me that he has considered the amendment, and he advises me that no real purpose would be served by accepting it.

Mr. BRAND (Isis) (3.25 p.m.): The Minister's reply is not satisfactory. The object of the amendment is to include warm milk sold either direct to consumers or through a retail vendor. That is vital to the satisfactory working of a milk board. The mover of the amendment pointed out that if this milk is not brought within the control of the board the requirements of the producers will not be met.

The whole object of the amendments moved by hon. members on this side is to endeavour

to bring the producer and the consumer closer together for their mutual benefit. They both gain a direct benefit from a Bill such as this, but the Bill will not be effective unless this clause is amended as we suggest. I trust that the Minister can give us a satisfactory reason for not accepting the amendment.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba) (3.27 p.m.): This is a very important clause, and, as the hon. member for Fassifern said, if a large section of the milk is outside of the control of the board it will be difficult for the board to operate effectively.

There are other points in connection with the clause that need some elucidation. At present, there seems to be a good deal of doubt as to who is really excluded from the Bill. To my way of reading the Bill, the producer-retailer and those within the boundaries of the city of Brisbane will be excluded. Although this amendment is for the purpose of bringing those men within the ambit of the Bill, there are many warm milk suppliers to the city who are just outside the city boundary.

When I asked this question yesterday on the second reading, the Minister seemed to give the impression that those men would be excluded from the Bill, but I doubt very much whether they will be. I am sorry indeed that he is not here to make that point clear. I hope that the Minister in charge will be able to give further consideration to this amendment.

Many commodity boards have been seriously hampered because a small proportion of the commodity they are handling is outside of their control. To have as much as 30 per cent. of the milk outside of the control of the board may cause the breakdown of this legislation, and the Opposition do not want to see that. We want to see the Bill working effectively, and that is the purpose of our amendment. This is a vital principle. We hope the Minister will give it further consideration.

Mr. MAHER (West Moreton) (3.30 p.m.): I quite recognise the difficulties that any political party has in trying to compose all the differences of all persons concerned in the sale and distribution of milk.

To make a success of a milk control Bill it is absolutely essential to include both the warm milk supplier and the cold milk supplier, in fact to control the sale and distribution of milk within the metropolitan area. This question of milk control has been before the public for many years, and it has been extraordinarily hard to reconcile all the different interests, but it seems a pity, now that the Government have tackled the job by deciding to bring down a Bill, that they have not gone the whole hog and brought all parties under control.

The great difficulty is that whilst the cold milk supplier is under all the prohibitions and restrictions provided in the Bill, his rival in the business, the warm milk supplier, is absolutely unrestricted and uncontrolled. Anybody with an understanding of the milk business must recognise that the institution of a board that imposes control upon the

cold milk supplier only must play right into the hands of the warm milk supplier, and that his opportunities for extending his operations and increasing his trade are greatly facilitated. The warm milk supplier, seeing the opportunities that exist from the absolute lack of control, is able to improve the shining hour by increasing his herd and making better provision for winter feeding so that he can take the cream off the milk market, if I may express it in that way. Whilst I am not desirous of setting interest against interest—I am not desirous of gaining any advantage for the cold milk supplier at the expense of the warm milk supplier—I do think it is necessary for a board to be so constituted as to be able to hold the scales of justice evenly between these two important milk supplying interests in the metropolitan area.

According to figures given by the Minister the warm milk supplier furnishes something like 30 per cent. of the milk used in the metropolitan district, and under the advantageous position that will be created for the warm milk supplier when this Bill becomes law, I have not the slightest doubt that he will be in a strategic position to increase his quota progressively at the expense of the cold milk supplier.

It is important, in fact, vital, from our point of view that the Bill should cover both of these important sections of the trade, and it is a matter for distinct regret that when the job was being tackled the Government were not able to do it properly by exercising control over the producer of what is termed warm milk within the metropolitan district. I regret that under the present condition of things it is necessary for us to oppose this provision, which seeks to control one section only. It releases the warm milk supplier from the conditions laid down by the board.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. T. A. Foley, Normanby) (3.35 p.m.): This matter has been fully investigated in conference between the producers and the Minister. Ultimately the conclusion was arrived at that there must be some starting point. That starting point for the control of milk was decided upon as it is outlined in this clause. The Minister feels that this is as far as he is prepared to go at the present time, but in the light of experience gained from the working of the measure as time proceeds consideration will be given to the inclusion of the warm milk suppliers under the scheme.

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) (3.36 p.m.): I am sorry that the Minister is not present when this important clause is being discussed because almost the whole support of the scheme is dependent on it. If this important section of milk suppliers is to be free from control by the board it will virtually cut the ground from under the feet of the board. The Opposition's attitude is an honest endeavour to help the Minister to realise his objective of regulating the supply and sale of milk in the city area. When we decide at the outset to omit a considerable percentage of the suppliers from the control of the board I fail

to see how we can look for the success of the scheme.

The Minister has told us that a start must be made from some point. We appreciate that. We hope to be able to help the Government to formulate a satisfactory scheme to control the supply of milk, but if all the milk producers are not brought within the ambit of this Bill we shall get nowhere. If we omit the warm milk producers it will be scarcely any use for the board to attempt to function. Its efforts will be practically resultless. It is a great pity that in setting out on this important question we do not attempt to handle it properly. If we are to wait until we see how the scheme with its present limitations operates then I am afraid it will break down in the meanwhile and the time to perfect it will never arrive.

Question—That the paragraphs proposed to be omitted from clause 2 (Mr. Muller's amendment) stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 29.

Mr. Bedford	Mr. Marriott
„ Brown	„ McLean
„ Bulcock	„ Mullan
„ Clark	„ O'Keefe
„ Collins	„ Riordan
„ Conroy	„ Slessar
„ Cooper	„ Smith
„ Copley	„ Walsh
„ Dunstan	„ Wellington
„ Foley	„ Williams, H.
„ Gair	„ Williams, T. L.
„ Gledson	
„ Healy	<i>Tellers:</i>
„ Hislop	„ Hayes
„ Larcombe	„ Keogh
„ Mann	

NOES, 10.

Mr. Clayton	Mr. Plunkett
„ Daniel	„ Walker
„ Maher	
„ Moore	<i>Tellers:</i>
„ Muller	„ Brand
„ Nicklin	„ Yeates

Resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba) (3.44 p.m.): I should like some information from the Minister with regard to the position of the warm milk suppliers situated outside the boundary of the milk district proclaimed by the Bill. I do not know whether the Minister is aware that a big proportion of the warm milk coming to the city comes from suppliers outside the city area. I take it that according to the clause we are discussing that milk will be excluded from the operations of the Act. What is going to be the position of the milk suppliers who have not established quotas as suppliers of milk? That is an important matter and there is a number of such suppliers.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, Barcoo) (3.45 p.m.): If the hon. member reads clause 2 he will find there the answer to his question. He speaks of people in intermediate districts and the protection of their interests. We are not oblivious of the fact that the Country Party members voted in

favour of including them as cold milk suppliers. If the hon. member desires that they should be cold milk suppliers—

Mr. Nicklin: I take it they are.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: If they are cold milk suppliers, the hon. member is satisfied.

Mr. Nicklin: But they have no quotas.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: That will be arranged.

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) (3.47 p.m.): I move the following amendment:—

“On page 2, lines 17 and 18, omit the words—

‘dried milk, or ice cream,’

and insert in lieu thereof the words—

‘or dried milk.’”

The amendment deals with milk for the manufacture of ice cream, which as the clause stands, is excluded from the control of the board. If that milk is excluded I repeat there will arise a very real problem for the board. A large amount of milk is being used in the manufacture of ice cream, and it will be difficult for the board to say what quantity is really being used for this purpose, and what amount is “rung in.”

There should be a definite understanding of the position in regard to this clause. Personally, I think the board should decide a question such as this, as a number of other problems will also arise in the distribution of milk that can be dealt with effectively only by the board. To take away from the board the control of this milk would militate against the success of its task. I have no objection to leaving questions such as this to the control of the board, but if we legislate to take away a part of the milk supply from that control, the board's position will be extremely difficult, and as I said previously the ground will be cut from under its feet.

We had exactly the same difficulty in the marketing of butter, and if the ice-cream manufacturers were allowed to buy unsalted butter for their purpose, outside the jurisdiction of the Butter Board, it might as well resign, and the same thing will apply in this instance. I am rather disappointed that the Minister has taken up a dogmatic attitude in regard to this clause, because we are sincerely making an honest attempt to help him.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, Barcoo) (3.50 p.m.): Hon. members opposite seem to be oblivious of the fact that this is a Bill to deal with milk, not with the products of milk. Because that is so, there is very sound argument why milk and cream designed for ice cream should be excluded.

Let me say, in the first place, that the organisation for the collection of cream and milk for the manufacture of ice cream is an excellent one. It involves the collection of milk and cream from selected farms, and,

running to regular schedules and time-tables, and that is an excellent reason why this Bill provides that milk and cream that is used for ice cream manufacture shall be excluded from the operations of the Act.

Mr. Muller: Can you police that?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: Care will be taken to see that it is adequately policed. If the hon. member will read the clause he will notice that it is very carefully worded. It is not worded to say that milk and cream intended for use as ice cream shall be excluded; if I remember rightly, it says, “Milk or cream that is used in the manufacture of ice cream.” That is an entirely different thing, and I can assure the hon. member that it will be policed.

I should like to say, in passing, that there are real reasons, quite apart from the one that I have given, why milk and cream intended for use in the manufacture of ice cream should be excluded from the operations of this Bill. During the day, hon. members opposite have been quoting extensively from the Sydney regulations and practices. I do not want to cover the whole of the Sydney system, but I do desire to tell hon. members that an effort to bring milk and cream used in the manufacture of ice cream under the provisions of the Sydney board has been attended by a disaster that may possibly become a very big question in the butter industry in New South Wales. I have no doubt that the hon. member for Fassifern has some knowledge of what is happening in that regard.

I do not want to go into that sort of trouble, nor do I want to give a legacy of trouble of that description to this newly-constituted board. I assure hon. members that we will police this, and I very earnestly suggest that the proper course to pursue at the present time is to agree with me that milk and cream to be used in the manufacture of ice cream should be excluded from the operations of this Bill.

Mr. Muller: Would it not be preferable to leave it to the board and let it decide if it is necessary to exclude that after?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: Why not omit it from the Act and so shorten the Act and at the same time save needless trouble?

Amendment (Mr. Muller) negatived.

Clause 2, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 3 to 6, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 7—Constitution of Board—

Mr. PLUNKETT (Albert) (3.54 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

“On page 4, line 14, omit the words—
‘the seven’

and insert in lieu thereof the words—

‘six of the.’”

We think that the board will be lopsided if the vendors have as much representation as the producers. We do not seek by this amendment, however, to give the producers a majority on the board. We are of the opinion that the chairman, who has a casting vote as chairman, will be able to even up matters, and that the good will of those who will have to operate under the Bill will be fostered if they feel that they have three producers' representatives to two representatives of the wholesalers and the chairman. I have another amendment later on paragraph (c).

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, Barcoo) (3.56 p.m.): We have had a very protracted debate on this principle, and I do not propose to accept the amendment moved by the hon. member. I know of no board in Australia, and indeed I know of no board in the world, where the majority representation is granted to the producer. I think that hon. members may have lost sight of the fact that this is not a producer board nor a sectional board. The board obviously must exist in the public interests.

Some 12 months ago there was a crisis in the industry. I brought both sides together, the producers and the wholesale distributors. I saw them separately and together, and eventually we evolved this scheme whereby three wholesalers, three producers, and an independent chairman constitute the board.

In my discussions with the board, over a long time, they have never expressed any dissatisfaction with the constitution of the board, nor have they asked me at any time to alter it. The board has done excellent work. Constituted as it is, it has done yeoman service for the milk industry, though it has been trammelled by want of legislative power, and has had to rely on things other than legislative power. It had a great many obstacles to contend with, but in spite of them all the board has distinguished itself by manifesting a capacity to find a solution of the problems that must be met in the initial stages of such a venture.

I have every reason to have faith in the members of the present board. I assure hon. members that I have watched the work of the board very closely, and have been in personal consultation with its members and with Mr. Lindsey, its chairman, on very many occasions. I am convinced that they are doing a good work.

There is an old axiom about not changing your horses when you are crossing a stream. I do not believe that the board has yet got over all the difficulties associated with this work of organisation; in fact, I know it has very difficult times ahead of it. In the early days of the functioning of the board under its own legislation, it is desirable that the wholesalers and producers should work in harmony and co-operation as much as possible. I believe that that view is shared by the majority of the cold milk producers, because otherwise they would have made representation to me in an endeavour to have the basis of that representation altered. I

believe that they concur in this basis of representation, and, I believe, that it is right and proper at the present juncture, bearing in mind of course that the chairman is an independent chairman who represents the consumers and has certain other functions that I am quite sure he will discharge admirably.

When the board is next constituted there may be some change. I do not believe that this is the end of all milk legislation. I have been rather struck with the impatience of hon. members opposite who seven years ago preferred to sit down and to do nothing rather than to face this problem. They would not introduce the Bill that they had drafted.

Mr. Moore: You know that before a Government will introduce a Bill they must have a majority of their party in favour of it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: The majority of the members of the hon. gentleman's party in those days—

Mr. Moore: Did not want the Milk Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: Did not want the Milk Bill?

Mr. Moore: No.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: That is all right and I am glad that the hon. gentleman has said it. I want to say that the Milk Bill drafted by the then Secretary for Agriculture and Stock, Mr. Walker, was an excellent measure.

Mr. Moore: A good Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: Yes, but the majority of his party did not want it.

Mr. Moore: That is so.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: They did not want milk controlled.

Mr. Moore: We did not have a majority in favour of it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: I am not concerned about that. All that I am concerned about now is to point out the very great difficulties that the Moore Government encountered in those days.

Let us try to be fair and get away from the political side of the question. I am afraid that it is being looked at from the political angle instead of the social and economic angle. I want to be perfectly honest in this regard. A certain board representing both interests was constituted. It did yeoman service but there is a tremendous volume of work yet to be done. The knowledge of the practice of the wholesalers has, I think, been of immense value to the producers. The producer representatives always had the right to come to my office, either personally or through their chairman, Mr. Lindsey, to discuss any matter. They could have done that if they had felt that certain disabilities existed in connection with the composition of

the present board, but they did not do so. As they have not done so I can only assume—I think the assumption is a justifiable one—that at this stage at least there is no desire on the part of the cold milk suppliers to alter the constitution of the board.

It may be that in the years that are to come the composition of the board may be materially altered. Provision is contained in the Bill for the alteration of the board. It will remain as it is for 12 months. That was done deliberately because I personally want the services of every man who has been on that board for the last 12 months. I think that in grappling with a problem of this description Parliament should not handicap me by depriving me of experienced men and substituting at least less experienced men to engage in the conduct of this very important business, and in building an organisation that will require wisdom, experience, patience, and knowledge. Therefore, I believe that for those reasons of efficiency it is best to maintain the board as at present constituted. If at any time a representative body of the cold milk producers desire to discuss this or any other phase of the Bill with me I shall be always prepared to do so. I realise that a start has to be made somewhere.

The ex-Premier said that he could not get the Bill that he had drafted through his party. It is obvious that the real reason why he could not get the Bill through his party was because, in the opinion of the members of his party the Bill went too far. I think that is a fair assumption.

Mr. Brand: No.

Mr. Moore: There was not a majority of the members of my party in favour of the Bill, but there would have been a majority in favour of it if we had had the support of the Labour Party then sitting in opposition.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: I was very enthusiastic about it.

Mr. Moore: You are now.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: And have been for a long time. I do not think that it is quite fair for the ex-Premier to say that, because my record in opposition will show definitely that I supported those things that I believed to be in the best interests of the State.

Mr. Brand: You never voted against your party once.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: Has the hon. member ever voted against his party? That is by the way.

The difficulties that confronted the Government led by the hon. member for Aubigny are the difficulties confronting all Governments on this vexed question. Every speaker on the Opposition side who has addressed himself to this question offered some new solution to the problem. That is a fair and true statement. The hon. member for Cooroora wanted to do this; the hon. member for Murrumbidgee wanted to do that; the hon. member

for Albert wanted to do something else; the hon. member for Fassfern had certain other ideas, and the hon. member for Wynnum had different ideas again. That is all right, but you have only to multiply these instances by the number of producers in order to get some idea of the complexity of the problem that has confronted me.

In view of all the circumstances I desire to retain the experience and judgment of the men who have been associated with me during the last 12 months, and that being so, I am very reluctant to alter the constitution of the board. Parliament will not grudge me the aid of these men in the difficult task that lies ahead of me.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumbidgee) (4.6 p.m.): I do not agree with the Minister that we are approaching this Bill from a political angle. The whole effort of the Opposition is directed towards improving the Bill if that is possible. That is the reason for our amendments. We may have expressed different ideas when speaking on the general principles of the Bill and how the board should be constituted, but it must be admitted that every hon. member on this side of the Committee is of the opinion that there should not be equal representation of the wholesaler with the supplier.

The Minister mentioned that no board that he knows of at the present time has predominant producers' representation, but there is no board that he knows of at the present time that has any representative of the wholesalers on it.

Although I quite appreciate the desire of the Minister to continue the services of the board that is now operating for the first 12 months of the Act's existence, there is no reason why the same proportion of representation should be retained on future boards. If he thinks that the consumers should have greater representation on the board than at the present time, then he should make some provision for increased representation on subsequent boards. That would be satisfactory to us. Almost every hon. member on the Government benches who spoke on the second reading debate showed great concern for the consumer. That being so, why is there not a consumer's representative on the board?

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: Is not the Government's representative a consumer's representative?

Mr. NICKLIN: He probably is. With the present composition of the board the chairman will occupy an unenviable position. Every important question will have to be decided by his casting vote. Let us cast our minds back a few years. In 1933 the Minister appointed a committee to inquire into the milk supply of Brisbane. That committee made certain recommendations. It suggested the constitution of a milk board as follows:—

One member to be appointed by the Governor in Council to be chairman;

One member to be appointed by the Governor in Council to represent the consumers;

One representative to be elected by "indirect" suppliers of milk; and

One representative to be elected by "direct" suppliers of milk.

The terms "direct" and "indirect" supply might be used to advantage in classifying milk in lieu of the present terms hot or warm and cold milk respectively.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock:

Do you think a board composed on that basis would be satisfactory—for the Government to have two votes out of four?

Mr. NICKLIN: No, I do not say that is altogether satisfactory. Again, in 1934 we find a report published in the "Courier-Mail" headed "Party Decides on Bill." That Bill was to be introduced and a board constituted along the same lines. The Minister said a moment ago that the hon. member for Aubigny had difficulty in getting a Milk Bill through his party, but evidently he struck a spot of bother in getting a Milk Bill through his party.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock:

As a matter of fact, you know more about it than I do. I remember a bit about it and I disclaim all knowledge of the truth of it.

Mr. NICKLIN: I do not think the Minister had altogether a happy experience in getting his party to agree to a Milk Bill.

Everybody realises the great importance of the composition of the board. A committee that inquired into the milk supply in Melbourne furnished a very comprehensive report on the milk supply to the city, and it dealt extensively with the composition of the board.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock:

There has been trouble with the boards in Perth, Melbourne, and Sydney. That is not a good augury for constituting our board in the way they are constituted.

Mr. NICKLIN: The decision of this committee did not favour a board constituted on the same basis as the Melbourne board. It arrived at the decision that the ideal board should consist of a chairman who should have expert knowledge but no financial interest in the production, treatment, or distribution of milk, and who would be a capable administrator, two representatives of the producers, one representative of the distributors, and one representative of the consumers. The Government of the day appointed three men who were more or less independent of either the producing or consuming interests. It must be admitted that nowhere have the wholesalers as much representation on the board as they have in Brisbane. Our amendment aims at giving the producers an extra vote.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock:

Which would give them the dominant position.

Mr. NICKLIN: Not exactly; the chairman has a deliberative vote as well as a casting vote, and that places him in a dominant position; and on occasions he will have the onus—if the amendment is not accepted—of

deciding very important questions on his casting vote.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted from clause 7 (Mr. Plunkett's amendment) stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 28.

Mr. Brown	Mr. Larcombe
" Bulcock	" Mann
" Clark	" McLean
" Collins	" Mullan
" Conroy	" O'Keefe
" Cooper	" Riordan
" Dunstan	" Smith
" Foley	" Walsh
" Gair	" Wellington
" Gledson	" Williams, H.
" Hanlon	" Williams, T. L.
" Hayes	
" Healy	<i>Tellers:</i>
" Hislop	" Marriott
" Keogh	" Slessar

NOES, 11.

Mr. Brand	Mr. Russell
" Daniel	" Walker
" Deacon	
" Moore	<i>Tellers:</i>
" Muller	" Clayton
" Nicklin	" Dart
" Plunkett	

Resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba) (4.19 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"On page 4, after line 33, insert the proviso—

'Provided that one of such members shall be a representative of co-operative associations registered under The Primary Producers' Co-operative Associations Acts, 1923 to 1934, which are wholesale vendors within the meaning of this Act.'"

I have no wish to belabour this question. It is a principle on which I am certain the Minister and I at least shall be in accord. It is highly desirable that we should have a co-operative association registered under the Primary Producers' Co-operative Associations Act engaged in the wholesaling of milk in this city. It is desirable from the point of view of both the producers and the trade in general, in that the whole of that association's efforts will be towards improving conditions for the producer and for the trade as a whole. At the present time there is only one co-operative association operating in Brisbane and there is very little hope under this Bill as at present framed, that any co-operative association will have a representative on the wholesale section for the reason that other wholesalers will be able to outvote them completely.

Co-operative associations have interests other than the making of profits. They set out to improve conditions for their suppliers and for the trade. To give one example of what the only company operating in Brisbane is doing, I should like to inform the Committee that that company does not enforce the provision for paying the suppliers 1d. a gallon less for the milk that is supplied to it. Then, too, it is working up an excellent trade in the exporting of milk to the East. I think

the Minister will agree that it is a good principle to follow that if there are co-operative associations engaged in the wholesaling of milk they should be given some consideration so far as representation on this board is concerned.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, Barcoo) (4.22 p.m.): I think we can accept as a general principle that this Parliament, unless it specifically says so, should not agree to give a monopolistic seat on any board to any individual or company. So far as I know the Dayboro' Co-operative Association is the only co-operative milk company operating in Brisbane. If I accept this amendment it will mean that a representative of the Dayboro' Company is appointed to the board automatically.

When new boards are appointed a ballot is necessary. Provision is made in this Bill for a ballot. It would be unfair to the producers to say to them, "You cannot vote on one person because that representation is fixed by Parliament."

Mr. Nicklin: The producers will not vote on this.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: The producers elect their three.

Mr. Nicklin: But we are concerned with the vendors' three.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: And you want to say that one of the three shall be a representative of the Dayboro' company.

Mr. Nicklin: No, of a co-operative association.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: That means of the Dayboro company.

Mr. Nicklin: At the present time.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: So that it would mean that we should restrict the choice under the franchise to two general representatives and one who will automatically represent one particular company and one particular interest.

Mr. Nicklin: That would be the position at the present time.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: Yes, and I have had no hint that that position will be altered in the near future.

Mr. Nicklin: There has been talk of other co-operative companies.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: When they are formed and when there is some competition it will be time to consider such amendment as this. I am disinclined to accept an amendment that will create a monopolistic seat on the board.

Amendment (Mr. Nicklin) negatived.

Clause 7, as read, agreed to.

Clause 8—Members of second and subsequent Boards—

Mr. BRAND (Isis) (4.25 p.m.): I move the following amendment:—

"On page 5, lines 5 and 6, omit the words—

'an equal number of representatives shall be so fixed for each such class'

and insert in lieu thereof the words—

'the number of representatives of producers shall be one more than the number of representatives of wholesale vendors.'"

The Minister has been very hostile to what we call adequate representation of primary producers on the first board. He said that Parliament should give him the advantage of the advice of men who have been with him for the last 12 months, and he claims that they have done a great deal of useful work.

Argument has already been advanced that it is desirable that on all boards the primary producers should be in the majority. The Minister a few minutes ago when replying to the hon. member for Murrumba said that at some future time, when the second board is established, there may be some change from the constitution of the first board. That indicated, in my opinion, that behind the Minister's mind was a desire to see carried into effect the suggestions and the arguments we have used in this connection. Those of us who have seen the Minister bring down legislation affecting primary industries and establishing commodity boards, feel that in his heart he believes that for the better success of the board there should be a preponderance of primary producers' representation on it: at least, that they should have a greater say than the vendors or wholesalers who, we have contended, have really no interest in the matter at all.

It has been the sole aim of primary producers' organisation legislation for the last 15 years to give to the primary producers enough representation to ensure that they shall not be exploited by what both Labour Party and Country Party have called the middleman. The wholesaler has always been the middleman that exploited both the consumer and the producer. The amendment proposed will give one more representative to the primary producers than to the vendors, which, as of all other boards controlling the sale of primary products, is the minimum representation of those interests that can safely be allowed on it.

Recently there has been some indication by the Government that some primary producer representatives on boards have not carried out the business entrusted to them to the best advantage of the community as a whole, but I am of the opinion that there is not one board constituted solely by primary producer representatives, whether Sugar Board, Butter Board, Wheat Board, or any other, that has not had full regard to the wishes and best interests of the consumer. In fact, the producers themselves realise the importance of

giving a fair and square deal to the consumers, because they constitute the home market, and that is the best market for primary produce.

I hope that the Minister will change his attitude on this Bill and that at least he will allow members of the Country Party to help him make it a better one. It has been his practice to accept fair and reasonable amendments, and here is an opportunity for him to continue it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, Barcoo) (4.32 p.m.): To hear the hon. member for Isis one would think that this clause seeks to express an entirely new principle, which, of course, is not so. I need only turn to the sugar industry, in which the hon. member is interested, and recall to his mind that the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board, constituted under the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act, consists of equal representation of each group and a judge as chairman. I should also like to remind the hon. member that the Sugar Advisory Board consists of two millers' representatives and two growers' representatives drawn from the industry, with myself as chairman. Dr. Kerr is also a member of that board. This clause does not involve any new principle at all.

Let us see what would happen if I accepted the amendment at this juncture. It has not been an easy thing to get harmony and co-operation between the wholesalers and producers. I have seen in earlier days distinct evidence of hostility between these two groups, but I think that hostility is diminishing very rapidly and that they now sit in harmony round the conference table in a way that they never did before. What sort of a board would it be if it was constituted with a preponderance of representatives of the producers?

Mr. Brand: Very good.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: The experience of the sugar industry has shown that a board constituted by equal representation balances very nicely, but if I accepted the amendment it would immediately destroy that atmosphere of confidence that is rapidly blossoming amongst these people and the result would be that from the start the board would be sour. What good could you hope to get from a board so constituted?

Mr. Brand: Where is there a consumers' representative on the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: I am contrasting the millers' representation and the growers' representation with the producers' representation and the wholesale organisations. The analogy is a very complete one. I want co-operation. I am sure the cold milk suppliers want co-operation and I feel quite sure that I should be doing these people a disservice if I agreed to a subsequent board that would create antagonism by reason of the brute voting

force prevailing. I cannot accept the amendment.

Amendment (Mr. Brand) negatived.

Clause 8, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 9 to 11, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 12—Disabilities of members—

Mr. MOORE (Aubigny) (4.37 p.m.): I move the following amendment:—

“On page 7, lines 4 to 6, omit the words—

‘An insane person within the meaning of the laws in force for the time being relating to insanity’,

and insert in lieu thereof the paragraph—

‘a mentally sick person within the meaning of The Mental Hygiene Act of 1938.’”

Is the Minister going to accept the amendment?

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: I cannot. The hon. gentleman knows I cannot accept it.

Mr. MOORE: Why?

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: My adviser informs me there is no such Act as The Mental Hygiene Act of 1938 until it receives the royal assent.

Mr. MOORE: I do not know what the position will be when this Bill receives the royal assent. There will be no disqualification of a mentally sick person. An insane person will not be known in Queensland then. Therefore, this part of the clause will be entirely wrong if it is not amended by a subsequent amending Bill. I only suggest that this amendment be made to conform to the Mental Hygiene Bill, which was passed through this Chamber the other day. The idea underlying that Bill was that the word “insanity” should be taboo and the words “mentally sick person” substituted for “insane person.” Then an insane person will not be placed in an asylum, but a mentally sick person will be placed in a mental hospital. If this alteration is to be made in one Act—the principal Act—and not made in others, I do not know what the position will be. This Bill would be more effective if it was brought into line with the Mental Hygiene Bill now. Probably the royal assent will not be given to this Bill until after the assent is given to the Mental Hygiene Bill of 1938. Therefore, the amendment will be perfectly in order by the time the royal assent is given to it. Otherwise, after this Bill is assented to the Act will contain a clause that apparently will not have any definite meaning.

My object in moving the amendment was to bring the Bill into line with another Bill that has been passed, and which, under ordinary circumstances will receive the royal assent before this Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, Barcoo) (4.41 p.m.): There is a real case against my accepting this amendment. The Act to which the hon. gentleman referred to has not yet received the royal assent, and, therefore, the Act does not exist. An Act does not come into being till a Bill has received royal assent and has been proclaimed; therefore, I am unable to accept the amendment.

Mr. Yeates: Will you not have that any minute?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: The point is I am assured by the Parliamentary Draftsman that the Acts Shortening Act takes care of the contingency the hon. gentleman has raised.

Amendment (Mr. Moore) negatived.

Clause 12, as read agreed to.

Clause 13—Constitution of Boards, &c., for other districts—as read, agreed to.

Clause 14—Duties and functions of the board—

Mr. WALKER (Cooroora) (4.42 p.m.): I propose to move the following amendment—

“On page 7, line 43, omit the paragraph—

‘Make provision for a laboratory for the chemical, bacteriological, or pathological analysis or examination of milk and cream or of samples taken from any place where milk or cream is produced, kept, stored, or had in possession, or from any vehicle used for the carriage of milk or cream.’ ”

I know that there is co-operation at the present time between the Department of Health and Home Affairs and the Department of Agriculture and Stock with a view to eliminating duplication. Are we going to get another authority under this board?

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: We are not.

Mr. WALKER: The clause states that it can establish another authority. There should be some arrangement between the departments.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: There is, definitely.

Mr. WALKER: It is a pity the Bill does not make it quite plain. In view of the information the Minister has given that there will be no additional expenditure, and that the staff of his department will be used for that purpose, no good purpose would be served by pressing the amendment; therefore, I withdraw it.

Mr. PLUNKETT (Albert) (4.43 p.m.): I had an amendment on this clause on the same lines as the one moved by the hon. member for Cooroora, but if the Minister gives us an assurance that no additional authority will be set up under this board I will not move the amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, Barcoo) (4.44 p.m.): I wish to assure hon. members that I do not propose, nor have I ever contemplated, setting up a separate and independent authority. The work will be done conjointly; it will be done by my department; the laboratory facilities available in my department will be the facilities used by the board, except in one instance that makes this clause a necessity. It may be that under the terms of section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution, an attempt may be made to evade the provisions of this Bill by bringing milk in from the Northern Rivers. The road from the border is an excellent one and I think that milk could be brought in from the border to Brisbane early in the morning in not less than an hour and not more than an hour and three-quarters. We shall have no supervision over the source of that milk, and, because of that, an extra duty would devolve upon someone to see that milk coming to the State from sources that my department has no means of investigating shall be pure milk. I think hon. members will see the implications involved, and, as it will be necessary to examine certain milks bacteriologically, will agree that it is more a job for the board than for us, in view of all the complexities.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumbidgee) (4.46 p.m.): We had drafted a further amendment to this clause on line 17, but what has been said previously I think takes care of that which we were aiming for by this amendment.

Clause 14, as read, agreed to.

Clause 15—Notification of milk and cream routes—as read, agreed to.

Clause 16—Condition of diversion of supply by producer—

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumbidgee) (4.47 p.m.): I move the following amendment:—

“On page 10, after line 16, insert the following new subclause:—

‘(3.) No wholesale vendor receiving milk or cream from a producer shall, without the permission of the board, cease to purchase or reduce the quantity purchased of such milk or cream unless he shall have first given to the producer concerned 14 days’ notice of his intention so to do.’ ”

On the second reading I forecast the reasons for this amendment, which are, however, obvious. The clause provides that a producer shall give 14 days’ notice before changing from one vendor to another, but we are of opinion that before a vendor ceases to take a supply from a producer it shall be necessary for him to give 14 days’ notice to such producer.

Of course, we quite appreciate the fact that the quota system will more or less deal with this problem, but there may be a loophole, and I desire the assurance of the Minister that the present practice, under which a vendor says to a producer one morning when he arrives to pick up the milk, “We will not

want any more for a week," shall cease, and the producer will have some reasonable assurance of the continuity of the right to supply that he obtains under the quota.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, Barcoo) (4.49 p.m.): Subclause (2) requires that 14 days' notice to vendors shall be given of diversion of supplies. The proposal now is that no wholesale vendor receiving milk or cream from the producer shall, without permission of the board, cease to purchase unless he gives 14 days' notice of his intention so to do.

This is a very difficult question. I desire to get stabilisation, and my first intention was to do something in the direction indicated by this amendment. With varying conditions of weather and population, with big peaks of population and great diminutions of population the application of a clause of the description proposed would be unfair and perhaps unworkable. In order to overcome that difficulty this quota system was devised, and I think that it will be found in practice that it will meet the requirements of the producer.

Mr. Moore: It cannot apply to the seaside places that have a big influx of population.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: Exactly: Look at the influx of population at Southport, say, which is mainly drained from Brisbane. It is a big thing to determine just what would be required for the increased population at Southport and what the decrease would be in Brisbane. I prefer to remain on the quota basis, and if that does not work—but I think it will—further consideration will have to be given to this question.

I am aware that it would be fair to protect the supplier to the degree that is contemplated by this amendment, but for the life of me I cannot see how it can be administered equitably. I think that the quota system will give the producer protection to the same degree and it will work with the same degree of fairness as is sought by hon. members opposite. I do not propose to accept the amendment, but I will use every endeavour to see that continuity of supply is safeguarded for the producer.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba) (4.52 p.m.): As the Minister appreciates the position, and in view of his assurance that he will see that the present conditions will be obviated as much as possible, I desire to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment (Mr. Nicklin), by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 16, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 17 and 18, as read, agreed to.

Clause 19—Chairman to determine price for milk and cream—

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) (4.53 p.m.): I move the following amendment:—

"On page 11, line 37, omit the word—
'chairman'

and insert in lieu thereof the word—
'board'."

I hope the Minister will see fit to accept this amendment. It is not going to make any material difference except that it will recognise the powers of the board. It certainly seems wrong that one member of a board of seven should have the right to fix prices without consulting the board. I know that towards the end of the Bill there is another clause that provides that although the chairman may vary the price he is in duty bound to submit it to the board for its approval, and therefore I do not think that there should be any serious objection to this amendment. It is wrong in principle to vest that power in the chairman. I am sure that the producer would accept with good grace the fact that he was being placed on equal footing with the chairman.

After all, if there is any difference of opinion between the wholesalers and producers the chairman would be the deciding factor. Whilst I have every regard for the chairman, and whilst I feel confident that he will make every effort to do the right thing, I think that in the interests of the chairman himself this amendment should be accepted.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, Barcoo) (4.55 p.m.): On the second reading of this Bill hon. members opposite lost no opportunity to point out to me that a board constituted of three wholesalers and three producers, whose interests would be antagonistic, could never arrive at any decision with regard to price. I think quite a number of hon. members made that suggestion, and I accept it. I realise that if you have a board consisting of three sellers and three buyers, you are not likely, under a static law of economics, to arrive at a conclusion. Mr. Lindsey, who will be chairman of the board, is skilled in price determination, having been associated with price determination for many years. The position will resolve itself into this: Mr. Lindsey will hear members of the board on both sides, who will appear before him in the capacity of advocates, and he will make a decision and issue his determination.

Mr. Moore: The Milk Producers' Association will appear before Mr. Lindsey?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: He will have power to call any witnesses he may desire. He is the price-fixer under this Act. After all, it is a very common principle in the administration of justice that one person gives a decision on certain matters. The whole of our judicial system is based on that principle, and personally I see nothing wrong with it. Therefore, I do not propose to accept the amendment.

Mr. MOORE (Aubigny) (4.57 p.m.): I do not quite see the force of the objection of the Minister. The Cheese Board and the Butter Board, for example, have been very fair in the fixing of prices and have not taken advantage of the fact that there was a majority of primary-producing representatives

on them in order to exploit the community. As a matter of fact, the Butter Board for quite a long time was selling butter in Queensland at such a price that it would have paid it better to export it.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: That cuts both ways. There was a long period when it was not.

Mr. MOORE: I recognise that, but the producer in Australia has to pay through the nose, because he has to pay for the tariff policy and also for the arbitration policy of Australia, by which everything is fixed for the consumer, but very little is fixed for the producer. The producers have been eminently fair in fixing the prices of their commodities and have recognised as a principle that if you make the price too high sales will fall off, as with any other commodity.

It may seem all right to provide in the Bill that the chairman shall from time to time determine the price, but it would look much better from the point of view of the producer and it seems fairer, to recognise the board in accordance with the amendment of the hon. member for Fassifern, although there are three vendors and three producers on it. The chairman might in the end fix the price, but the acceptance of the amendment would give the appearance that the board had a say in it. They would have to take the responsibility for it.

The Government have always fought shy of allowing the Commissioner of Prices to come in after a board has fixed too high a price. They have never wanted to bring him in to cancel a price fixed by a board. Here they have got over the difficulty by giving the Commissioner of Prices authority over the board by making him the chairman of it, and giving him the right to fix the price. It is a very cute way of getting over the difficulty. I suppose that hon. members opposite who supported this measure were afraid that the consumer might have to pay a little more for his milk after the passing of this Bill, and, consequently the Government decided to get over the difficulty by appointing the Commissioner of Prices as chairman of the board and providing that the chairman, and not the board, shall fix the price.

The result would be the same if the Minister allowed the board to fix the price, and it would look better from the point of view of all concerned. It would indicate, at least, that the Minister was confident that the board that he had appointed would act equitably and honestly. The amendment would not make the slightest difference to the meaning of the Bill, but it would make it appear better from all points of view. It would give the board a better standing amongst the community and the board would not have to be content with the position of inferiority suggested by the clause.

I do not, moreover, agree with the Minister's contention that it will be impossible for a board constituted by three representatives of the vendors and three representatives of

the producers to agree. I think it is possible for them to agree in certain cases.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: They never have in the past.

Mr. MOORE: I think that they can agree. If the amendment is accepted the result will be the same, because if they do not agree the chairman will fix the price. The amendment would make things look better than they are now.

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) (5.2 p.m.): I make a further plea to the Minister to accept the amendment. He said that it was generally admitted that the members of the board were likely to be at variance on a question like this.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: I quoted your saying it.

Mr. MULLER: Yes, but the hon. gentleman endorsed the suggestion. I think that is generally understood. The wholesalers may agree with the producers that the time has arrived for an increase or a decrease in the price of milk, and if the board unduly increased the price the Minister has his own remedy, because he has the final say in the matter. Therefore, no injustice would be done. Why place the members of the board in a humiliating position by saying that they shall have no say in determining the price? It is the most humiliating position in which the members could be placed. I am sure that these duties would be accepted by them with a very much better grace if the board was allowed to exercise that authority. I am rather disappointed that the Minister will not accept the amendment.

Amendment (Mr. Muller) negatived.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba) (5.4 p.m.): I move the following amendment:—

“On page 11, line 41, after the word ‘them’ insert the words—

‘The chairman at such times shall also fix the corresponding prices which wholesale vendors may charge for such milk or cream.’”

This clause gives the chairman power to determine the price that shall be paid to the producers for milk and cream. It gives the chairman the right to stabilise the industry by fixation of price, but in order to do the work completely he should be empowered to fix the prices that may be charged for milk and cream by the wholesale vendors.

Mr. Moore: So that the prices will bear a relation to each other.

Mr. NICKLIN: As the hon. member for Aubigny reminds me, one should bear a relation to the other. That is, the producers' price should be fixed, the wholesale price should be fixed, and the retail price should be fixed. The amendment makes provision for the fixing of the price of the wholesale vendor by the chairman. That is one of the functions of the boards in Sydney and Melbourne. The price that was fixed in Sydney five years ago still prevails, a proof that it must have been very

satisfactory. If this board is to fix the price for one section and leave the other uncontrolled we may have a price war in the wholesale section that would nullify all the good results achieved by fixing the producers' price.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, Barcoo) (5.7 p.m.): We do not require redundant legislation. For the information of the hon. member, I should like to inform him that the provision he seeks to insert in this clause is already established in the Profiteering Prevention Act.

Mr. Nicklin: It is the function of the Commissioner of Prices.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: Definitely so. Therefore, the question raised by the hon. member, although not taken care of in this Bill, is taken care of in other legislation. Under the circumstances I cannot accept the amendment.

Mr. Dart: Is that price fixed on the farm, or in the city, or where?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK: The fixation of the wholesale price of milk lies within the discretion of the Commissioner of Prices. The Commissioner is charged to take into account the cost of transport and various other factors associated with it. The retail price is fixed on a similar basis.

Amendment (Mr. Nicklin) negatived.

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) (5.9 p.m.): I move the following amendment:—

“On page 11, lines 48 and 49, omit the words—

‘Every wholesale vendor or other person shall pay the producer, and’

That would be followed by another amendment to insert after the word “deduction” on page 12, line 3, the following paragraph:—

“Every wholesale vendor or other person as aforesaid shall pay to the board on behalf of the producer concerned the amount owing to such producer at the price so determined for all milk or cream supplied by him to such wholesale vendor or other person.”

This is rather an important clause in the policing of the Bill as to quantities. The Minister should accept this clause to prevent any abuse of the provisions of the Bill. It is a fact that at present some wholesalers are able to receive from certain suppliers greater quantities of milk than are paid for. We are endeavouring to guard against that practice. The prevention of this practice might entail a little extra work and expense, but if the Bill is to be worth anything to us then we should do the work properly. There are many ways whereby a wholesaler can evade the provisions of the Bill in this respect, if some attempt is not made to put down this practice. A producer in an attempt to overcome competition and become established on

the market is sometimes prepared to make all kinds of concessions. If he were to accept a lower price than the board fixes he would get into trouble. He may get over his difficulty by giving the wholesaler a greater quantity of milk than he is paying for. The only effective means of preventing such a subterfuge is to place the control entirely in the hands of the board. We are asking that the board should pay the producers for all the milk they produce. It is not a very difficult matter; it is merely a question giving the board greater power.

As I said this morning on the second reading stage, the Butter Board was forced to take action along these lines to guard against that kind of thing. I hope the Minister will seriously consider the amendment, and if it is not exactly to his liking he may suggest an alteration that would make it suitable to him. To leave the matter open between the producer and the wholesaler would lend itself to all kinds of abuses, and that is something the Minister and the board wish to avoid. I feel sure the Minister will be prepared to accept this amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, Barcoo) (5.12 p.m.): The amendment in effect seeks to make the board a bank—a financial clearing house for the producers. In the first place I believe it would not be competent for me to accept the amendment, because it is beyond our order of leave; and in the second place, I do not think the board could discharge its functions under the amendment with the revenue that is provided. It is obvious that a minimum amount of levy is to be imposed for the conduct of this board—I am proposing ¼d.—but to do so, as the hon. gentleman suggests would materially increase the costs of administration. I do not think that is desirable.

I believe that the difficulty is overcome in the Bill. Possibly the provision for bonding will make these wholesalers more careful about whom they deliver milk to. That, in conjunction with the provision for the audit of the books, which gives the board very wide power, will, I believe, overcome the difficulties the hon. member contemplates. I believe we should have to double the levy at least in order to do what he suggests.

I do not think at this stage we should undertake functions that might be beyond the capacity of the board to discharge. I was in Sydney recently, and the system the hon. member suggests is the system in operation there; and the first thing that struck me was the colossal staff required to discharge the functions that it would be necessary for our Milk Board to discharge if this amendment was agreed to. I do not think the end would justify the means; therefore, I do not propose to accept the amendment.

Amendment (Mr. Muller) negatived.

Clause 19, as read, agreed to.

Clause 20—Wholesale vendor to furnish bond—as read, agreed to.

Clause 21—Power to audit books, &c., of producers and wholesale vendors—

Mr. PLUNKETT (Albert) (5.15 p.m.): I move the following amendment:—

‘On page 14, lines 1 to 10, omit sub-clause 3—

‘(3.) It shall be the duty of every manager or other principal officer of any bank with which a producer, wholesale vendor, licensed carrier, or other person as aforesaid has deposited any moneys whether in his own account or in any general or separate trust account, to disclose every such account to the person authorised as aforesaid, and to permit such person to make and take away with him an extract from any book or copy of any such account, or a copy of any document or writing relating to any such account.’”

This is the most important amendment brought forward this afternoon because the clause brings into the Bill a principle that is foreign to the banking practice of the people. I regret very much that the Minister felt it necessary to include such a subclause as this, inasmuch as it destroys the confidence of the clients of banks. There is ample provision for obtaining such information as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Bill without having recourse to a man's financial dealings with his bank. It creates much suspicion if there is power to visit a bank and take from it information and figures which its clients regard as being their own private concern. On this occasion I do more than suggest—I appeal to the Minister to take this subclause out of the Bill.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: It would destroy this clause of the Bill if that was done.

Mr. PLUNKETT: Well, all I can say is that if it is going to destroy the clause it is a pity it does not destroy the Bill altogether, if it is necessary to go so far as this sub-clause goes in order to make the Bill effective. The Minister is giving power for a client's figures to be obtained from a banker merely to prove that such client is not carrying out the provisions of this Bill. If that is allowed there must be something wrong with the whole system.

There may be a thousand and one different matters that a client has with his banker, and to give the power contained in this clause will destroy confidence and create much suspicion. The principle is wrong. One might imagine such powers being given in an income tax Bill, but not in a Bill of this simple nature. We are getting away from the secrecy that people want in connection with their business.

I suppose it is no use appealing to the Minister to take it out of the Bill, but I take it that his idea was to create good will and that the initial stages of the administration of the Bill would extend over a long period and that it would be necessary to amend the Bill from time to time in the interim. Is there any reason for him to have this extraordinary power in the Bill at this stage?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND STOCK (Hon. F. W. Bulcock, Barcoo) (5.20 p.m.): This clause was very designedly placed in the Bill. Hon. members opposite have been reiterating the need for conferring the maximum amount of protection on the producer. During the day I have received a liberal education by learning that there are very many devices that might be adopted by the wholesaler to defeat the ends of this Bill and rob the producer. I have heard hon. members speaking of this practice and that practice. I want to make this Bill as protective as I can.

And this clause is by no means a new principle. If my memory serves me rightly, the hon. member noted this clause with approbation in the Dairy Products Stabilisation Act. I know that the hon. member is very keen on the Dairy Products Stabilisation Act. A similar provision appears in the Auctioneers and Commission Agents' Act, the Trust Accounts Act, the Farm Produce Agents Act, and in the Income (State Development) Tax Bill that we passed quite recently. Most of those Acts have been in operation for a considerable time. The hon. member knows as well as I do how valuable this provision is in the Dairy Products Stabilisation Act. In view of certain difficulties that have developed in recent times, this is a very good power to possess. The hon. member knows what I am referring to now.

If we find that it is desirable in one, two, three, or four Acts, it may be essential for the successful administration of any Act. It would be impossible to trace defalcations unless we had the power contained in this clause. I do not propose to accept the amendment.

Mr. MOORE (Aubigny) (5.22 p.m.): I do not agree with the Minister that this power is desirable. It does not seem at all right that it should be included in this Bill. Here is a board that will have authority to go to the bank, with the approval of the Minister, and investigate the accounts of any vendor. One vendor, who may be a member of this board, can obtain an authority, with the approval of the Minister, to obtain information that he would otherwise be unable to get about another vendor who may be in competition with him. That person may be able to get information to the detriment of one or more other vendors. Certain of the members on the board will be vitally interested in what all the other vendors are doing, and this gives them an opportunity of obtaining information that they could not get otherwise. It is not fair, with a board constituted in this way, that one of its officers should be able, with the approval of the Minister, to get this information.

Under the Official Inquiries Evidence Act, if there is a defalcation, the police have a right to get the information. If a breach of the law is involved, the police have every right to get whatever information they can, but under this Bill those members of the board who are in competition with other people can get information, with the approval of the

Minister, of the financial position of a man who is conducting a business in competition with them.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: It cannot be done without my authority.

Mr. MOORE: But it can be done with the Minister's authority. The Minister does not know what motive may be behind the request for the authority to get this information.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: The Minister would require to get the fullest possible information before he would give the authority.

Mr. MOORE: The Minister is a busy man and has a great deal to do in the Department of Agriculture and Stock.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: I would never sign an authority to investigate books without knowing the full circumstances of the case.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. gentleman might know the full circumstances of the case as they are put before him, but it does not follow that he will know the circumstances in the minds of the people asking for the information.

The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock: Surely I have some sagacity in that regard!

Mr. MOORE: The hon. gentleman may think so, but he has a great deal to do. The Department of Agriculture and Stock is not concerned only with the Milk Board, and often Ministers are hard put to it to find time for all that has to be done, having many officials, and having departments with so many ramifications. It seems to me that we are giving too wide a power to a board constituted such as this, even with the care that the Minister thinks he can take, when we enable men in a certain line of business to get information concerning their competitors compulsorily from the banks.

It seems to me that the Minister could get all the information he wanted and could administer the Bill quite satisfactorily without that power. I think it is a very dangerous power to have in a Bill such as this, considering that the men who can use it would have a vital interest in getting that information.

Amendment (Mr. Plunkett) negatived.

Clause 21, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 22 to 28, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 29—Report—

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba): I move the following amendment:—

“On page 18, lines 34 and 35, omit the words—

‘The board shall, in every year, prepare a report to the Minister of its operations,’

and insert in lieu thereof the words—

‘The board shall, within 30 days after the first day of August in every year,

prepare a report to the Minister of its operations during the year preceding such date.’”

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 29, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 30 to 42, both inclusive, and Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, with an amendment.

The House adjourned at 5.34 p.m.