

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 27 NOVEMBER 1946**

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became the basis for the National Security Regulations on this subject which applied throughout Australia during the war period. By reason of its being the base for the South-West Pacific operations no State had a greater problem in venereal disease during that period than Queensland, as over 2,000,000 members of the services passed through the State. This problem is shown in the annual reports of the Director-General of Health and Medical Services presented to Parliament in those years. The tenor of the Health Acts on the treatment of the disease places a definite responsibility on medical practitioners and others to maintain the confidential character of the treatment, and every effort has been made to see that these provisions are strictly observed. Any particular cases brought before the notice of the department illustrating that this is not being done, including the Hope street Clinic, will be immediately investigated."

PRINCIPAL, GATTON COLLEGE.

**Mr. MULLER** (Fassifern), for **Mr. MACDONALD** (Stanley), asked the Secretary for Public Instruction—

"(1.) For how long has the Queensland Agricultural High School and College at Gatton been carried on with an acting principal?"

"(2.) What steps (if any) are being taken to have a new principal appointed?"

**Hon. J. LARCOMBE** (Rockhampton—Treasurer), for **Hon. T. L. WILLIAMS** (Port Curtis), replied—

"1. Since 21 November, 1940.

"2. The principal of the Queensland Agricultural High School and College was on military leave from 21 November, 1940, to 31 December, 1945. He resigned in January, 1946. Applications were called for the position and will be considered shortly."

## WEDNESDAY, 27 NOVEMBER, 1946

**Mr. SPEAKER** (Hon. S. J. Brassington, Fortitude Valley) took the chair at 11 a.m.

### QUESTIONS.

#### TREATMENT OF V.D. CASES.

**Mr. DECKER** (Sandgate) asked the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs—

"In view of the increase in the incidence of V.D., and the State V.D. medical officer's statement that many sufferers did not report their infection because of lack of privacy in hospitals and clinics, can he give any indication of a programme of providing clinics and special resources at hospitals in different parts of the State where sufferers could be assured of treatment being carried out in strictest confidence?"

**Hon. D. A. GLEDSON** (Ipswich—Acting Secretary for Health and Home Affairs) replied—

"The Queensland system for the treatment of venereal disease devised many years ago has proved so effective that it

#### CHRISTMAS SUPPLIES OF MEAT.

**Mr. PIE** (Windsor) asked the Premier—

"(1.) Has his attention been drawn to recent Press reports that the likelihood of meat being in short supply here over the Christmas period is causing concern?"

"(2.) In view of this, has he anything further to add to the statement he made on his recent return from Canberra that the Christmas meat supply was assured?"

**Hon. E. M. HANLON** (Ithaca) replied—

"1 and 2. I invite the hon. member's attention to my Press statements published in the 'Telegraph' of 5 November and the 'Courier-Mail' of 9 November, respectively."

## QUEENSLAND'S SHARE, OVERSEAS SHIPPING SPACE.

**Mr. KERR** (Oxley) asked the Premier—

“Will he investigate the anomaly which gives to other States undue preference in the allotment of shipping space in overseas vessels, resulting in a severe loss of trade to manufacturers and exporters of this State, with a view to rectifying the position and placing it on a more equitable basis?”

**Hon. E. M. HANLON** (Ithaca) replied—

“Neither the State nor the Commonwealth Government has power to direct overseas shipping, this being a matter entirely for the companies concerned. I have received no complaint of the nature alleged by the hon. member, other than one relating to shipments for Singapore and the Far East. On this particular matter I instituted inquiries and received information from Sir Thomas Gordon, representative in Australia of the British Ministry of Shipping, to the effect that vessels are berthed from Queensland when the accumulated volume of cargo justifies such an arrangement. Within recent months two vessels were listed to clear all Brisbane cargo for Singapore. Sir Thomas Gordon advised at the same time that as additional vessels are released from their war-time commitments and returned to trade, the Eastern lines would undoubtedly revert to their regular pre-war schedules which give frequent opportunities of shipments from all main ports. I understand that ample tonnage has been allotted by the overseas shipping companies concerned to cater adequately for Queensland exports to United Kingdom, Continental, African, and Mediterranean ports.”

## MINES ON QUEENSLAND COAST.

**Mr. AIKENS** (Mundingburra), without notice, asked the Premier—

“Have the Government made any representations to the Commonwealth Government with regard to the clearing of mines from the Queensland coast, and what was the result of such representations?”

**Hon. E. M. HANLON** (Ithaca) replied—

“Representations have already been made to the Commonwealth Government, but there has not been time for a reply.”

## PAPER.

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Regulations under the Apprentices and Minors Acts, 1929 to 1945.

## PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS REGISTRATION BILL.

## THIRD READING.

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

## TEXAS MEMORIAL HALL AND OTHER LANDS BILL.

## INITIATION.

**Hon. H. A. BRUCE** (The Tableland—Secretary for Public Works): I move—

“That leave be given to introduce a Bill to divest from the present trustees thereof certain freehold land known as the Texas Memorial Hall, situated within the area of the Shire of Inglewood, and to vest such land in the Council of the Shire of Inglewood, and to divest from the present trustee certain freehold lands situated within the area of the Town of Southport, and to vest such lands in the Council of the Town of Southport, and for purposes incidental thereto.”

Motion agreed to.

## FIRST READING.

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr. Bruce, read a first time.

## SECOND READING.

**Hon. H. A. BRUCE** (The Tableland—Secretary for Public Works) (11.11 a.m.): I move—

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

Both the trustees and the local authorities concerned are prepared to take the action suggested in the motion. This Bill is along the same lines as that passed through the House yesterday on the motion of the Premier.

**Mr. NICKLIN** (Murrumba—Leader of the Opposition) (11.12 a.m.): I have no objection to the Bill. Its object is to divest from the trustees of the Texas Memorial Hall certain freehold land and vest it in the Council of the Shire of Inglewood, and to take similar action in regard to certain freehold lands at Southport. I take it that the public in both those localities have agreed to this procedure and have been consulted by the trustees of the respective properties concerned. As it is the wish of the public in these localities that the local authority should control the respective properties and lands and assume the responsibilities in connection therewith no objection should be raised by this House. This happens quite frequently in cases where because of lack of interest in a public institution, such as a memorial hall or an area of ground held for a particular purpose, the public do not accept the responsibilities set out in the trust and ask that the shire or town council, as the case may be, accept that responsibility and execute the trust for the public purposes for which it was set up. In my own electorate where this has happened the local authority has taken over the responsibility and it has often been to the advantage of the property concerned, especially when it has been a sports reserve; as greater facilities are obtained because of the transfer the people are willing to pay a small rate to improve it, and it then becomes of greater service to them than when subject to private trusteeship.

There is no objection to the provisions of this Bill, as it seems to meet the wishes of the public in the localities concerned and the respective local authorities are willing to shoulder the responsibilities it will place on them.

**Mr. MARRIOTT** (Bulimba) (11.15 a.m.): I should like some further information from the Minister about the proposal to divest from the present trustee certain freehold lands within the town of Southport and vest them in the council. I am not clear as to what is behind the proposal. Are there improvements on these lands that have been neglected by the council? Has it failed or been unable to carry out its duties, will it be able to carry out these duties after the land is vested in the council as freehold?

The whole business is entirely new to me; I know nothing of it. I am interested as a trustee in various properties in the Bulimba electorate, and I should like to have some particulars about those lands and the reason for the Bill. I have in mind the fact that a few years ago a Bill was brought down to take from certain trustees a property known as the Wilston School of Arts and place it under the control of the Brisbane City Council. Statements were made in this House that were not correct; the situation was not properly explained to the House, and misstatements were made; and the Bill was allowed to go through without the House's being informed of the true position. Later on we found, contrary to the statements made in the House when the measure was introduced, that the Brisbane City Council approached the responsible officer who by inference was accused of falling down on his job as a trustee of the Wilston School of Arts, and made him a paid officer, whereas previously he carried out those duties as a voluntary officer. I am wondering what is going on at Southport. I do not feel disposed to allow the measure to go through without information as to the position. Why is there a need for taking it from the council, as trustees, and vesting it in the council as freeholders?

**Mr. BRAND** (Isis) (11.18 a.m.): I have no objection to the first principle of the Bill, that certain freehold lands in the Shire of Inglewood area on which the Texas Memorial Hall stands should be divested from the present trustees and placed in the hands of the shire council of that area. I think that is a very good principle, because the local authority is a continuing body, and the Texas Memorial Hall will be held in trust by a continuing authority.

I have, however, an objection to the divesting of freehold lands in Southport from trustees and placing them in the hands of the council without some idea as to the reason for this action. The Minister should be able to tell the House exactly what the freehold lands are that are going to be divested from the trustee and placed in the hands of the council.

**Mr. Nicklin**: The council is the trustee already.

**Mr. BRAND**: I have not had time to look through the Bill. The purpose is to divest certain freehold lands in Southport from the trustee and place them under the control of the council.

**Mr. Hiley**: What are the trusts?

**Mr. BRAND**: That is what I should like the Minister to tell the House.

**Hon. H. A. BRUCE** (The Tableland--Secretary for Public Works) (11.19 a.m.): The position is quite obvious: the council is the trustee at the present time. Until it gets the land in fee-simple, until it is transferred to it, it is not willing to make the improvements several people have mentioned.

**Mr. Nicklin**: For what purpose are the lands used at the present time?

**Mr. BRUCE**: A reserve. The position is obvious. The council is trustee at the present time but until that land is transferred to it in fee simple it will not make improvements.

**Mr. Hiley**: What are the lands held in trust for at the present time?

**Mr. BRUCE**: A reserve.

**Mr. Pie**: A recreation reserve?

**Mr. BRUCE**: Yes.

**Mr. Pie**: Are there any improvements on the land?

**Mr. BRUCE**: The council is not willing to spend the money on it that it would if it was transferred from it as trustee to it in fee simple. The position is no different whatever from that at Inglewood, except that in the Southport case the Southport council is trustee of the land at present.

**Mr. Marriott**: It will not do its job as trustee?

**Mr. BRUCE**: The transfer to it of the land in fee simple gives it security and it will be able to spend the money of the rate-payers on improvements and have control over them. As trustee the council could spend a great deal of money on the land and the land could be transferred to somebody else. The Southport council has approached my department and asked that it be given the land in fee simple: that it be transferred from it as trustee to the council in fee simple.

**Mr. Hiley**: If it holds it in fee simple, will that give it the right to sell it?

**Mr. BRUCE**: Most of the land is held in fee simple and I imagine that it would give it the opportunity to sell the land, the same as any other council has.

**Mr. Hiley**: What would it do with the proceeds if it was sold?

**Mr. BRUCE**: The Brisbane City Council has power to sell hundreds of thousands of acres of land, but whether it will sell, of course, I cannot say. I cannot see into the future. Any council in Queensland has the right to sell land. The Government cannot control that. For instance, the Inglewood people may sell the memorial hall. There is

no difference whatever, except that in the Southport case the Southport council happened to be the trustee of this land. When the Inglewood council has the land at Inglewood transferred to it, or for that matter, when any land is transferred to a council, it can be sold by that council. The point is that councils consist of sensible men and are under the control of the Government with respect to the sale of land. We transferred land to the Brisbane City Council. Other properties have been transferred to the same council. Other bodies have actually transferred reserves.

**Mr. Hiley:** You cannot sell park lands for that purpose or lands set aside as recreation reserves.

**Mr. BRUCE:** It has been done in the past. The Brisbane City Council—

**Mr. Pie:** Park lands.

**Mr. Hiley:** For residential purposes?

**Mr. BRUCE:** Not for residential purposes.

**Mr. Hiley:** I can understand the State High School in South Brisbane.

**Mr. Maher:** Where is this land situated in Southport?

**Mr. BRUCE:** I could not say.

**Mr. Maher:** There should be a map.

**Mr. BRUCE:** The Bill is brought down at the request of the Southport council, which is at present trustee and wants the land transferred to it in fee simple. The intention is, that if land is so transferred, to go straight ahead with its development. It has a fairly large scheme of development in Southport involving the expenditure of a considerable amount of money with the idea of improving the place as a tourist centre. That is why it wants this land transferred.

**Mr. Brand:** Will you give the same consideration to any other council making a similar application?

**Mr. BRUCE:** Certainly we would. If a request was made to me by a council in a similar position of course it would get the same consideration. I think the Leader of the Opposition has the right idea. People nowadays wish to avoid trusteeships. In the past it was a pioneering service and many men did it from a sense of public duty; but to-day, with the growth of settlement and greater organisation of local government, the practice is dying out, as it were, and the sooner the local authorities take over these park lands the better.

Motion (Mr. Bruce) agreed to.

#### COMMITTEE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Mann, Brisbane, in the chair.)

Clauses 1 to 3, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4—Southport lands vested in the council of the town of Southport—

**Mr. DECKER (Sandgate) (11.27 a.m.):** We know that it is a common practice to vest Crown lands in local authorities, which act as trustees for recreation or other purposes. It is quite possible that under this clause the Government are handing over the fee simple in the land at Southport to the council which that body now holds in trust, or it may be that the council has it in trust for a special purpose but does not wish to continue to hold it for that purpose. It may be that it wants to use it for some other purpose and is seeking a title in fee simple so that it may have the right to do what it likes with it. The Minister tells us it is held in trust for recreation purposes. If that is so there is no need to alter the trust. There must be a desire to make some change in the trust, otherwise the council would not be seeking fee simple to this land. The Minister should explain what trust is being relinquished. When we understand why the trust is being relinquished we shall be able to vote in an intelligent way. So far the Minister has not given us the information we seek and should have before we can pass this clause. If the land is held in trust for recreation purposes that would not prevent the council from spending money on it or improving it. If the council wants to alter the trust then the need for the change must be there and probably the Minister will explain the point.

**Mr. DEVRIES (Gregory) (11.29 a.m.):** I think the real principle involved here is that the council, as a trustee, is not permitted to spend ratepayers' money on improving the facilities in recreation areas. If the council gets a title in fee simple to this land it will be able to expend money from its general fund in improving and expanding the recreational facilities. This point has arisen in western areas where local authorities have been trustees of reserves and their right to spend money from their general funds on these reserves was challenged.

I do not think it is permissible under the law and I believe that is the principle involved here. If the council gets the land in fee simple that will give it every legal right to spend money from general revenue on the land, which it cannot do at the moment under a trusteeship. We want to see the council given the right to expend revenue from general funds—in other words, money contributed by ratepayers—and I am sure that if hon. members consider the principle carefully they will see the difficulty at the present time in regard to the Southport Town Council.

**Mr. HILEY (Logan) (11.31 a.m.):** I agree that as Queensland develops we shall find ourselves progressively doing away with separate trust after separate trust because with the passage of years such trusts have proved themselves unworkable. I agree with the general principle to which this clause is trying to give effect, that is to say, the substitution of a clear trusteeship or control by the council which is a body corporate having

perpetual succession for individual trustees, in which deaths and removals of trustees and other contingencies cause difficulties in the constitution of the trust bodies and upset the execution of the trusts. In the Southport case, however, we are not changing from individual trustees to a corporate trustee; we are changing from corporate ownership subject to nomination of trustees to corporate ownership with unencumbered title. I am not at all impressed by the remarks made by the hon. member for Gregory because I think this council is the registered proprietor of the parcel of land in question with a nomination of trustees registered on the title. In these circumstances I cannot see that the council cannot spend money on that property. I suggest that the council is, at the present time, bound by the trust set out in the nomination of trustees, and I suspect that some of the trusts are inconvenient or unsuitable and the council prefers to be free to spend money in any way it thinks fit. So far I am in accord with the purpose of the clause, but my difficulty is that the land was apparently set aside in the early days as a recreation reserve, and I think it is a good principle in such cases that every care should be exercised to prevent the land from being lightly disposed of for private use. The simple vesting of the land in the council with no trust whatever and completely discharged from its present trust may enable the council to sell for private use a piece of land at present reserved for public use.

**Mr. Devries:** There is that danger in any case.

**Mr. HILEY:** If the present trusts are unsuitable or inconvenient, the way to overcome the difficulty is to abolish those trusts and put fresh trusts in their place and ensure that the land originally set aside for the use of the people in common is preserved to them.

**Mr. Devries:** You could only put improvements and other facilities on the land by public contribution and not out of council revenue.

**Mr. HILEY:** I do not agree. I think that the Chamber is entitled to have the position clearly demonstrated, if that is the reason why this is being done. If the existing trust is unsuitable for the use the council wishes to make of the land, the best thing would be to put a more suitable trust in the place of the existing one, and ensure that land set aside as a recreation reserve or for other public use will be kept for public use, and will not be capable of sale to a private person for the building of a house, for instance. That, as I see it, is the danger in the utter lack of protection that is characteristic of the clause.

**Mr. LUCKINS (Maree) (11.35 a.m.):** I too am concerned as to the effect of the clause. The Bill provides that certain freehold land known as the Texas Memorial Hall situated in the Shire of Inglewood shall be vested in the Council of the Shire of Inglewood. I do not know the property but I take it that it was obtained for a specific purpose and that it is subject to a trust. The land at Southport is similarly held but before we agree

that any land shall be taken from trustees and vested in a council in fee simple we must be careful to see that it continues to be used for the specific purpose for which it was obtained. The land at Southport has been held in trust for a specific purpose. The Minister has not given any real reason why there should be any change in, shall I say, the ownership of the land and before we can agree to the proposed change as set out in the Bill very sound reasons will have to be advanced for it. The Minister should have given them to the Committee. Trusteeship of a local authority is similar to ownership of a local authority but when the land is vested in the council in fee simple the council may do what it likes with it and may even use it for a purpose other than the specific purpose for which it was set aside. I should like to have the matter fully explained before the proposed change is made, otherwise there may be repercussions later. The present council may be determined to use the land in accordance with the existing trust but if the change is made and a new council is elected it may use the land for another purpose altogether.

**Hon. H. A. BRUCE (The Tableland—Secretary for Public Works) (11.33 a.m.):** It has been argued that the council or someone else may use this land for building purposes or something of that sort. Many areas are set aside throughout the State as public reserves and such land has never been alienated, except in the one instance, in which the Brisbane City Council used the land because of the extreme urgency arising out of the war. A great area of private land is held by councils, which they can sell for building purposes. Why should suspicion be cast upon the Southport Town Council only because it seeks to take control of this reserve in fee simple? Why should the Southport Town Council be more likely to make improper use of land held in trust than any other local authority? I am sure that Alderman Proud, the Mayor of Southport, would not feel very proud to hear the remarks that have been made today concerning the Southport Town Council. Why cast any reflection on this local authority? So far as I know, it has not been guilty of any villainy in this connection nor is it likely to be guilty of any in the future. Future councils, like future Governments, rest on the will of the people at large and the people must take the full responsibility for the councils or Governments elected by them. The position is that this land is held by the council under a trusteeship in accordance with the real-property law. The land is held as recreation land at Surfers' Paradise but in view of the limited tenure the council cannot use its financial powers in developing the reserve.

**Mr. Pie:** What is the tenure?

**Mr. BRUCE:** It is a very limited tenure, so limited that the Southport Town Council is not prepared as trustee to spend council funds on it.

**Mr. Brand:** You say it is not prepared or it cannot under the law.

**Mr. BRUCE:** It cannot, and it does not and will not. At present the council has the ordinary responsibility of any other trustee. There is nothing to bind the council, because it is a trustee, to spend money on improving the reserve. Take the two camping grounds in the Brisbane City Council area, where conditions are sub-normal, in fact worse than in New Guinea.

**Mr. Chandler:** They are under the control of the Commonwealth.

**Mr. BRUCE:** The responsibility for their condition is a matter for argument between the hon. member and the Commonwealth. It is true that they have been under the control of the Commonwealth during the war, but they are nevertheless reserves under the control of the Brisbane City Council. The conditions in those reserves would not exist in any civilised country.

The idea of the Southport Town Council is to improve the reserve in question, and it wants it transferred and it wants the trusteeship transferred with that object. I know that the Commonwealth took over land in the Brisbane City Council area for certain purposes, but some of the people camping on it have been there for over 23 years.

**Mr. Chandler:** We cannot take action against them.

**Mr. BRUCE:** I am not trying to pin anything on the hon. member. I am just trying to show what position arises when the local authority is not interested, even when it is the trustee. As a matter of fact, a local authority is the trustee of all land set aside for public purposes within its area. Many local authorities are unable to make the improvements that are necessary. The reserve in question within the town of Southport is a recreation reserve. This council wishes to beautify it and expend money so that it will be suitable for the purposes of recreation by people who go to Surfers' Paradise.

**Mr. Pie:** Whereabouts is it?

**Mr. BRUCE:** Honestly, Mr. Mann, I do not think that a Minister can be expected to know every recreation reserve on the South Coast. I could probably give the hon. member the number of it, but that would not improve the situation.

**Mr. Maher:** Do they not give you a map with your papers? There should be a map. (Government interjections.)

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr. BRUCE:** I do not mind if you are here till Christmas Day. Was a map asked from the Premier of land in respect to which a similar Bill was put before this House yesterday? That Bill merely sought to transfer the trusteeship of a block of land. Hon. members did not ask for the area then.

**Mr. Luckins:** What is the area?

**Mr. BRUCE:** I do not know what the area is. It is absurd to expect the Minister to know where the land is and what its area is.

**Mr. Maher:** You should before you grant it.

**Mr. BRUCE:** I know practically the whole of the South Coast. I have an idea personally where the land is.

**Mr. Marriott:** Tell us where.

**Mr. BRUCE:** I will not give the hon. member my personal opinion as to where the land is, and I am not going to go and have a look at it officially and come back next week and tell him where it is. Nor am I going to have the area surveyed or try to find it. The whole discussion has centred round the statement of the hon. member for Bulimba, who said he knew of a similar case in which the transfer was incorrectly made. He raised the question and asked for an explanation. I gave the explanation.

There is not the slightest difference between the handing over from the trustees to the local authority in that case and the handing over from the Southport council as trustee to the council as owner. The purpose is to spend money and improve the land as a recreation reserve, which it is at the present time. Take all the public lands from the Jubilee Bridge right through to "Sans Souci" and back from the Jubilee Bridge to the heart of Southport; if those lands were not owned by the council—if trustees had it—what sort of a state would they get into? The reserves are looked after and properly supervised by the council. The council wants to take over this land in fee simple so that it may look after it properly.

**Mr. BRAND (Isis) (11.47 p.m.):** I should like the Minister to know that the objection raised on this side of the House is not due to any lack of civic-mindedness in Alderman Proud or his aldermen at Southport. We have raised the objection on principle only. In order to get enlightened information on a very important matter that is passing through Parliament we are entitled to raise this objection. Three pieces of land are being transferred, a trust held by the town of Southport is being converted into ownership in fee simple by the town of Southport, and we ask whether it is the intention of the town of Southport to sell those lands for residential or business purposes. An area of a little over 4 acres is involved. The hon. member for Gregory intimated that there was good reason why it should be done because under the present trust it was impossible for the council to spend money from its general fund on the improvement of the land, the laying out of a park or gardens, or on building on the land. The Minister has indicated that is possibly so. He said that under the trust the town council would not spend any money.

**Mr. Devries:** It could not—only by public contribution.

**Mr. BRAND:** If that is the trouble there is some reason for the transfer.

**Mr. Farrell:** That is the real reason.

**Mr. BRAND:** Surely the hon. member for Maryborough would not expect members of Parliament to know these things? We have had no information given to us on the presentation of the Bill. We asked the Minister where the land was and he could not tell us except that it was in the area of the town of Southport at Surfers' Paradise. I hope the information given to us by the Minister is right and that the town of Southport does wish to beautify these lands for recreation and park purposes for the benefit of the people of Queensland. If that is so I have no objection to it.

**Mr. POWER (Baroona) (11.49 p.m.):** The Bill is a very simple measure. The local authority of Southport has asked the Government to cancel the trusteeship and vest the land in the local authority of Southport in fee simple.

**Mr. Decker:** It is still subject to registered lease.

**Mr. POWER:** That is all right; I am making the speech; I do not want any help from the member for Eventide.

The Minister explained that the desire of the local authority at Southport was to develop that land for recreational purposes. This was pointed out very ably by the hon. member for Gregory also. A number of the members of the Opposition, having been members of local authorities, should have some knowledge of the Local Government Act. As trustee the Southport Council has no power to spend any of the council's general fund on the development of this land, because the law will not allow that to be done; the Auditor-General would not approve the use of such money for the development of that land. If the Southport Town Council wishes to develop the land held in trust it at present has to obtain the money by public subscription or some other method. It has not been prepared to do that; at any rate it has not done it. It feels that if the Government will agree to its proposal that the land be transferred to it in fee simple it will have the opportunity of developing that land from money in its general revenue or loan funds.

**Mr. Maher:** There is nothing to stop it from selling the land.

**Mr. POWER:** I agree.

**Mr. Maher:** Under a trust it could not.

**Mr. POWER:** I again agree with the hon. member. But would anyone suggest that the local authority, in making representations to the Minister in charge of local government and giving as the reason for the transfer that it wants the land transferred to it in fee simple so that it can spend money on its development for recreation purposes, was not giving its true reason? I would remind hon. members of the Opposition that the undertaking has been given to the Government. Of course, I am well aware that the hon. member for Albert is not present and a number of his colleagues on the Opposition are attempting to make out a case in connection

with the matter with a view to looking after his interests. No doubt a record has been made of the interview by the representatives of the Southport Town Council with the Minister or his officers and of their statement that the intention was to use that land for a certain purpose; and if they desire at a later stage to sell that land the Government have the power of veto. The power of veto always lies with the Government.

**Mr. Maher:** Not over freehold land.

**Mr. POWER:** The Government have the right of veto of any action of a local authority.

**Mr. Maher:** You are not right.

**Mr. POWER:** I am right. The hon. member for West Moreton should make himself conversant with the Act. He would then discover that the Government, if they so desire, can veto any action of a council. They have that power. As a matter of fact there is evidence in support of my statement in the cancellation by this Government of a contract made by the Brisbane City Council some time ago.

At 11.53 a.m.,

**Mr. DEVRIES (Gregory)** relieved the Chairman in the chair.

**Mr. POWER:** The Bill is a simple one but there appears to be much noise about nothing. The Southport Town Council, a body of honourable men, want the trust abolished and the land transferred to the council in fee simple. It applied to the Government for this to be done. It proposes to spend certain money on improving the land but cannot spend money from general revenue on it at the present time. As I have said, as things stand, if the council desires to develop this land it must raise the necessary fund by public subscription or other methods. I have in mind an instance before the Brisbane City Council yesterday in which an attempt was made by that council to lease for a picture show a hall erected by public subscription for a public purpose. The council was unable to go ahead with the project.

In this Southport matter we can see nothing wrong with the development of the land by a local authority. I think the request is a reasonable one. Members of the Opposition have in mind that the local authority may be changed from time to time and at some future date the body of men comprising the local authority may have different views and wish to sell the land. The Government of the day have the power to veto any such action by the local authority.

**Mr. HILEY (Logan) (11 55 a.m.):** Can the Minister tell the Committee what are the general principles of this lease to which reference is made on lines 43 and 44 of the Bill, registered lease No. A394798 in the office of the Registrar of Titles at Brisbane? To whom is the registered lease given and what is the use to which the lessee puts these premises?

I move the following amendment:—

“On page 3, after line 17, add the following new sub-clause:—

‘(5) The land referred to in sub-clause (1) hereof shall be held by the council of the town of Southport in perpetuity for use as a recreation reserve.’”

I understand from the Minister that that clearly is the purpose to which the land is going to be put, consequently I suggest that the acceptance of this amendment will clearly record in the statute the information that the Minister has given us so clearly this morning.

**Mr. Collins:** Would not that prevent the council from mortgaging the land for the purpose of erecting certain improvements?

**Mr. HILEY:** It might, but above everything else it would prevent the council from selling the land for purposes other than a recreation reserve, and that, I take it, is the kernel of my objection to the clause as it is worded now.

I submit that the general purpose the Minister has in mind obviously has commended itself to hon. members, but we just have the fear that in carrying out this commendable purpose he proposes to give the council really too blank a cheque. He gives that body too great a power to dispose of land set aside for public purposes. He is enabling it to sell it for private purposes if it so desires. In order to guard against that possibility, I commend my amendment to him. If it is accepted this land will be used in perpetuity as a recreation reserve.

**Mr. MAHER** (West Moreton) (11.58 a.m.): I support the amendment. It really gets down to the meat of the whole question. We are concerned with seeing that lands set aside for special purposes, as for recreation areas or parks, are retained by the bodies concerned for those specific purposes. No evidence has been submitted this morning as to where these lands are situated. So far as this Parliament knows, they could be almost waste lands, or they could be lands with sea frontages or Nerang River frontages, they could be lands coveted by private individuals for residential purposes, for the erection of flats or for commercial purposes. Nothing has been submitted to the Committee to give any indication of where they are situated beyond the fact that there are three separate areas, and they could be of little value or of considerable value. Parliament is justified in taking the stand that the public are entitled to be protected in their enjoyment of lands that have been reserved for public purposes in the original plans of cities or towns. In this city we have evidence that park lands that in the past were reserved for the city of Brisbane for specific purposes were passed over by the aldermen to private commercial interests.

Valuable lands with river frontages, which would make ideal boulevards, parks

and lungs for the city people, may be passed over to commercial interests for commercial purposes.

**Mr. Luckins:** Hamilton Park.

**Mr. MAHER:** As the hon. member for Maree aptly interjects, Hamilton Park is a case in point. There are other cases in point. Valuable lands often become the envy of commercially-minded people who see the opportunity to establish themselves in a valuable position, and all sorts of tactics are often resorted to to gain the support of the majority of those who have the control of the lands in order to persuade them to sell them to private interests. I am not suggesting for one moment that anything of the kind is envisaged in this proposal. I do not say that there is a nigger in the woodpile, but Parliament is entitled to lay down the principle that lands reserved for use by the public as park lands or recreation grounds shall be used for that purpose. No power to sell such lands should pass to the local authority. If the original trust prevents a local authority from selling land that has been held in trust for recreation purposes we should in such legislation as this make sure that we are not making it possible for that council to sell this land if it finds it inconvenient to hold it or if pressure is brought to bear on the council to give possession of the land to private persons for a purpose far removed from that of the trust.

A very great principle is involved and one that should have the support and good will of every member of this Chamber. The amendment moved by the hon. member for Logan will test the bona fides of the Chamber and show whether hon. members mean business in a matter of this kind, which involves the transfer of land on a freehold basis to a local authority with power to sell if it feels disposed so to do. So far as this Chamber knows, the existing trust does not give the Southport Town Council the right to dispose of the recreation area.

It is astonishing, moreover, that a Government committed to the principle of leasehold tenure should agree to the transfer of land on a freehold basis. I should think that if the Government were consistent on their policy of leasehold tenure any such transfer would be on the basis of perpetual lease. Apparently the Government are not standing by their principle in that respect and are willing to transfer land now held under a trust to the Southport Town Council on a freehold basis.

Those are the points I hope the Minister might give some information to the House upon and I hope he will be prepared to agree to the amendment, at the back of which lies a very great principle, namely, that the Southport Town Council shall not be permitted, when this land passes to it, to sell that land, seeing that in the first instance it was specifically reserved for public use as a recreation area within the boundaries of the council.

**Mr. KERR** (Oxley) (12.5 p.m.): I support the amendment because it preserves in its entirety the original condition of the trust, and thus the Southport Town Council should have no objection to it. If the amendment is not accepted the Southport Town Council may be able to do whatever it likes with the land. We are told that this is an area of five acres of valuable land, and I suppose it may be worth £5,000, £6,000 or £7,000. Perhaps, too, many people are desirous of buying it. I am not insinuating or implying that the Southport Town Council would entertain any proposal like that, but there is always the danger, and so the amendment is designed to protect the original trust in the interests of the people of Southport. I think everyone will agree that that is the right thing to do.

As the land is held at the moment by the council as trustee, then if I as a local-authority auditor saw that the council was spending money out of its general fund on land that it held only as trustee I should raise immediate objection. It has no right to do that under the law, and if money must be spent on the land the council is perfectly justified in asking for the right to hold it in fee simple before entertaining any idea of spending any money on it.

The amendment is the correct one and it should be accepted.

**Mr. PIE** (Windsor) (12.8 p.m.): I want to be quite clear on this matter, and I want to help the Minister as far as possible, but there are certain things we must know before we can agree to the measure in its present form. The Minister has made it quite clear that this land was left in trust for recreation purposes, and so the amendment is required to see that it continues to be used for that purpose, that is, for the purpose for which the trust was created. But the Minister has not yet told us the basis of that trust. If he would come right out into the open and tell us that the basis of the trust was such-and-such, that the Southport Town Council had agreed to carry on the trust after eliminating this or that, then presumably we should have a different conception of what is required. It may be that this land was left to the Southport Town Council in trust, or it may be that it acquired the land over a period of years for back rates, or something like that. We should have that information, and I ask the Minister to come right out into the open and tell us the basis of this lease, which is numbered A394798—what strings are attached to it, what is the basis of the trust, how the Southport Town Council acquired it, was it bought by the council or was it a gift in trust. These are things that we want to know. If it was a gift in trust for a recreation reserve, then we must be completely behind the amendment, because there can be no other way out. If the land was a gift in trust for recreation purposes, then no council is entitled to acquire that land so that it may be sold for any other purpose. It may be that the land is ideally suited as home sites, but what right has anyone to sell it as home sites if it is held in trust as a recreation reserve?

I ask the Minister to come right out into the open and tell us exactly how the council acquired the land—to tell us the story about it. If he does I am sure the Committee will be much more appreciative of what he is trying to do. It may be that the Southport Town Council has every right to hold the land as it is proposed in the Bill that it should hold it, but we certainly want to know the basis on which it was acquired.

**Hon. H. A. BRUCE** (The Tableland—Secretary for Public Works) (12.10 p.m.): The hon. member for Windsor used the expressions, "Come out into the open" and "What strings are attached to it?"

**Mr. Pie:** I was not suggesting anything.

**Mr. Maher:** He wanted the conditions of the lease.

**Mr. BRUCE:** The position is that no strings are attached to it. There is no idea of doing anything other than what is proper.

**Mr. Pie:** I am not suggesting that.

**Mr. BRUCE:** The Southport Town Council originally bought the land for £700. I hope no one will ask me the date when it was bought.

**Mr. Pie:** It must have been a long time ago when they bought it for £700.

**Mr. BRUCE:** Instead of having the land vested in it in fee simple the council had it vested in it as trustee under the Real Property Act. As a result it cannot use its finances to develop the land. The Director of Local Government, Mr. Chuter, informs me that the Southport Town Council actually bought that land. We are given to understand that originally it was a reserve but it was not exactly set aside for beautification purposes. We understand that the council requires the powers we seek to vest in it in order that it may improve the property. Generally speaking, I do not object to the amendment but I do not think it right that such an amendment should tie up only one council. We have many similar instances. The amendment is hardly fair and must throw some reflection on the Southport Town Council.

**Mr. Hiley:** Now you have explained the source of it I will withdraw that amendment.

**Mr. Luckins:** It is quite clear what the intention is.

**Mr. BRUCE:** I am pleased that the hon. member for Logan has intimated that he intends to withdraw his amendment as on face of it it looks as if we were casting some slur on the Southport Town Council.

At 12.13 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

**Mr. HILEY** (Logan) (12.14 p.m.): In view of the explanation made by the Minister I ask leave of the Committee to withdraw the amendment I have submitted.

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

Clause 4, as read, agreed to.

Clause 5—Title to Texas Memorial Hall and Southport lands—agreed to.

Schedules I and II, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment.

### THIRD READING.

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

## WHEAT INDUSTRY STABILISATION BILL.

### INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Mann, Brisbane, in the chair.)

**Hon. H. H. COLLINS** (Cook—Secretary for Agriculture and Stock) (12.18 p.m.): I move—

“That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced relating to the stabilisation of the wheat industry and to provide for the control of production of wheat.”

The history of this matter goes back quite a long way because in any compulsory organising for the control of the price of wheat, you have to control the production of wheat in order to sustain the price. For many years now the marketing of wheat has been in a very uncertain and at some times a chaotic state.

Away back during the period of the last war, 1914-1918, we had the first compulsory wheat pool throughout the Commonwealth, and this served its purpose particularly well during that time. After the war was over the various States, with the exception of Queensland, went back to the old system of individual marketing without any control. For a few years the price of wheat met a buoyant market and the growers were very well satisfied; but as time went on the price fluctuated till round about 1930 it got down to such a deplorably low level that it was totally unremunerative to the growers. From then till 1939 prices remained unstable; and from time to time the Governments of the various States had to come to the assistance of the growers with large write-offs from public revenue. In other words, they could not meet their commitments to the Government and the only thing the Government could do was to write off the amounts they owed.

At the beginning of the 1939 war, as soon as the country was in trouble, the wheat-growers came back again to compulsory pooling of wheat and during the last seven years have found that stability was very much to their advantage. The result is that the growers of Australia have asked the Federal Government to bring about orderly marketing for the wheat industry and in order to do that the Commonwealth Government, who are the only Government who can do it effectively, have put through the Federal Parliament a Bill to acquire the wheat in Australia at certain fixed guaranteed minimum prices for a period of five years, with a possibility that that period

will be extended. A fixed minimum price will be paid to the growers, but there is no provision for a fixed maximum price, and the maximum price can be very much more than the minimum price.

Constitutional difficulties have to be overcome and that is very largely the reason for the introduction of this Bill. During the war the Commonwealth Government had the necessary power under the National Security Act to do many things and this was one of them, but they have not the necessary power in time of peace. As hon. members well know, a referendum was held a few months ago on the question of giving the Commonwealth the necessary powers which they desired, to market wheat or any other primary commodity both within the States and within the Commonwealth. At the present time the Commonwealth Government have the necessary power to market any export commodities, but have not the power to market that commodity within the various States of the Commonwealth. Each of the States has power within its own State over sales and dealings within its own State but has not the power to control interstate trade, nor of course overseas trade. The result is that in marketing in Australia there is a no-man's land and this the referendum sought to eliminate. However, the people rejected the proposal and consequently any arrangement to market the whole of any commodity within and without Australia depends on whether the Federal Government are willing to assume the obligation of undertaking that marketing and all the States are willing to give the Commonwealth Government that power.

**Mr. Brand:** Are the States willing to give the Commonwealth that power?

**Mr. COLLINS:** That can be discovered only by seeing whether the various States pass the various Acts to give it that power. I do not speak for any of the other States, but am placing this Bill before the Queensland Parliament in order that the Bill may meet with the approval of the people of Queensland at least.

**Mr. Brand:** Did you discuss it with the council of Ministers of Agriculture?

**Mr. COLLINS:** We have all discussed it.

**Mr. Brand:** What did they say?

**Mr. COLLINS:** The Australian Agriculture Council has approved of it, with the exception of the Minister of Agriculture of South Australia.

**Mr. Aikens:** The only Tory Government in Australia.

**Mr. COLLINS:** He was not in agreement with it, but I believe his and the objection of his Premier was overcome at the Premiers' Conference. The State Council of Agriculture reported to them but I have no knowledge of that. Whether that is done or not, unless the various States pass an Act of Parliament giving the Commonwealth Government power to acquire the wheat and to pay

the growers certain fixed minimum prices for their wheat, the Bill will just not come into operation at all.

The Bill has been asked for by the wheat-growing industry as it is organised throughout Australia. Consequently it has the approval of the body representative of the Australian wheat-growers.

**Mr. Nicklin:** That is questionable.

**Mr. COLLINS:** Not at all. I do not say that every member of the council is in agreement, but the council as a whole agrees with it. The Queensland Wheat Board has informed me that it agrees with this proposed legislation.

**Mr. Brand:** It is satisfied with the present price?

**Mr. COLLINS:** It is satisfied with the prospect of getting a minimum of 5s. 2d. f.o.r. export ports for five years. The Wheat Industry Stabilisation Act of 1946 is based upon a draft Bill prepared for all States by the Commonwealth Solicitor-General with the object of having uniform legislation passed in all States complementary to the Commonwealth legislation, passed by the Commonwealth Parliament to provide legislative provision for the stabilisation of the wheat industry throughout Australia.

The Acts that have been passed already by the Parliament of the Commonwealth are the Wheat Industry Stabilisation Act of 1946 and the Wheat Export Charge Act of 1946. The whole scheme resting upon the complementary legislation of the Commonwealth and the various States is designed not only to stabilise the industry in the Commonwealth but also to enable the Commonwealth of Australia to fulfil any obligations it may undertake in connection with the export of wheat as a party to an international agreement. Wheat is so important that it has often been referred to as the staff of life. We see privation and suffering in various parts of the world, and unless this great wheat-producing country passes the required legislation we as a nation cannot play our part in supplying our quota of the needs of those starving countries. The Commonwealth and State Acts combined provide for the continuance in all main essentials, after the expiration of the National Security Act, of the existing Wheat Industry Stabilisation Scheme, which is conducted under the authority of the National Security (Wheat Acquisition) Regulations and the National Security (Wheat Industry Stabilisation) Regulations. However, the main powers that are exercised by the Commonwealth Government in administering the existing scheme will revert to the States after the Commonwealth Government's emergency powers have ceased to have force and effect; consequently the proposed Wheat Industry Stabilisation Scheme will rely mainly for its authority on the laws of the States.

The Queensland Bill for the Wheat Industry Stabilisation Act of 1946 contains two main provisions. The first is provision that the person who owns wheat shall sell and deliver that wheat to the Australian Wheat

Board established under the Commonwealth Act and to no person other than that board. The second provides for the registration of wheat farms and the licensing of wheat-growers. Under this measure the State Wheat Board, operating under the Wheat Pool Acts, 1920 to 1930, shall cease to have any power of wheat-marketing in its own right for so long as the Wheat Industry Stabilisation Act of 1946 remains operative. The board shall become a licensed receiver for the Australian Wheat Board.

The classification of wheat and the determination of the premiums that may be payable for certain wheats, &c., shall become a function of the Australian Wheat Board operating under the authority contained in the Commonwealth Wheat Industry Stabilisation Act of 1946, which Act will supersede in this matter the powers contained in the Queensland Wheat Pool Acts.

**Mr. Brand:** Who will have the power of licensing these growers?

**Mr. COLLINS:** That will all come in due course. Do not ask me to anticipate. The Bill provides that the price that shall be paid by the Australian Wheat Board in respect of wheat delivered to it under the provisions of this Bill shall be such as is determined in accordance with the Commonwealth Acts. The Commonwealth Wheat Industry Stabilisation Act, 1946, provides that the basis of the price to be paid by the Australian Wheat Board for wheat delivered to it shall be at the rate or rates a bushel arrived at by reference to the net proceeds from the disposal of wheat, and for fair-average-quality bagged wheat shall not be less than 5s. 2d. a bushel free on rail at the port from which it is normally exported.

**Mr. Brand:** It can be more?

**Mr. COLLINS:** It can be considerably more; it might be double that.

The Wheat Export Charge Act, 1946, provides that 50 per cent. (or some lesser percentage) of the amount by which the price of wheat exported is in excess of 5s. 2d. a bushel shall be deducted and paid into a stabilisation fund.

The Commonwealth Acts may be discontinued by proclamation but not before 30 September, 1950. The scheme, therefore, guarantees a minimum price of 5s. 2d. a bushel f.o.r. ports, with at least a half share in realisations on export in excess of 5s. 2d. a bushel, for a period of five years from and including the 1945-46 season.

The registration of wheat farms and the licensing of wheat-growers is provided for in the Bill as an exercise of the power of the State but under the co-ordinating supervision of a Wheat Stabilisation Board appointed under the authority of the Commonwealth Act. The registration and licensing provisions are to be administered in Queensland by a Wheat Industry Stabilisation Committee to be

appointed by the Minister and co-operating with the Commonwealth Wheat Industry Stabilisation Board.

**Mr. Brand:** Thus you will have some control?

**Mr. COLLINS:** Quite a lot.

**Mr. Brand:** Of the registration of wheat-growers?

**Mr. COLLINS:** Yes, we shall be protected.

**Mr. Brand:** Are you sure you will be?

**Mr. COLLINS:** And the hon. member will be sure before I have finished.

**Mr. Morris:** The farther you are away from a port the less you get for your wheat.

**Mr. COLLINS:** The less distance you are away, the more you get. The purpose of the registration and licensing provisions is so to regulate the production of wheat that after the apportionment to the various States of any export quota that may be allotted to Australia under an international wheat agreement there will not be a surplus of unsaleable wheat on the domestic market. That is the reason for the licensing of wheat farms; we can regulate production of wheat in the same way as we regulate production of sugar.

**Mr. Brand:** You carry a surplus here.

**Mr. COLLINS:** We have a good deal of power as to that. There are many good things associated with the scheme and I shall enlarge on them in a few minutes if the hon. member is patient.

In agreeing to the stabilisation proposals Queensland has stipulated that the licensing provisions shall not operate in a restrictive way in any State where the production of wheat is less than that State's requirements of wheat for its own needs. The various parties to the proposals have agreed by resolution of the Australian Agricultural Council that the registration and licensing provisions in Queensland shall be applied in such a way that the normal development of the wheat-growing industry in Queensland may proceed without hindrance up to the planting of an area of one million acres. The licensed area for grain in Queensland for the 1945-46 season was 592,976 acres.

That in general is the outline of the principles of the Bill. As hon. members will see when the Bill is presented, we are well safeguarded in Queensland and if we can expand our wheat-growing area to 1,000,000 acres during the next five years I say we shall be very fortunate indeed, because we have never grown up to the present time anything like that amount.

**Mr. Morris:** What has been our maximum acreage?

**Mr. COLLINS:** The largest area licensed is 592,976 acres. On no occasion has the full licensed quota been grown. We hope that there will be a general expansion in wheat production in Queensland because as I have said before in this Chamber Queensland has

a great deal of land capable of growing wheat, much land more capable of growing wheat successfully than the millions of acres of wheat land now being used in the other States. That is why I—and my predecessor in office, the present Secretary for Public Instruction—have always been insistent that Queensland should not be denied the right to extend its wheat production in a reasonable way. The Bill will not prevent anyone from growing wheat for stock feed. A man can plant as much wheat as he likes to be used as a green crop to feed sheep, cattle, or lambs and he may plant as much as he likes to harvest for hay, ensilage, and fodder, but if he allows it to develop into a grain crop and desires to sell it as grain then he is restricted to the area specified in the licence granted to him by the Australian Wheat Board.

**Mr. Brand:** He can grow grain for his own purposes.

**Mr. COLLINS:** Yes, but when he comes to sell it he must have a licence. If a man grows unlicensed grain the board has power to take it, and will take it, and the grower will get 5s. 2d. a bushel, but no more.

**Mr. Brand:** In other words he will not benefit from the pool?

**Mr. COLLINS:** He will not benefit from the pool. He may get up to 5s. 2d. or he may not. If that price is not realised he will be penalised.

**Mr. Brand:** If the wheat was urgently needed in the community he would get the benefit?

**Mr. COLLINS:** Yes. We have power in the Bill to grant increased licences at any time. It must be obvious to anyone with a knowledge of wheat production and agricultural pursuits generally that any legislation of this kind must be rather elastic because no matter how we may scheme or whatever we may do or devise, in the last analysis the amount of wheat that is grown is largely determined by the seasons. If we find that the production is low, and things are going to be bad, and it is desirable to increase the quantity of wheat to be produced, there is power in the Bill to do it quickly.

We have received a great deal of benefit in Queensland from the Queensland Wheat Board. Queensland is the only State in the Commonwealth that has a permanent or semi-permanent Wheat Board and so we have made provision in the Bill whereby the Wheat Board may continue its operations to the extent that it may do so. The Queensland Wheat Board becomes the buyer and seller of wheat as the agent of the Commonwealth Wheat Board, and thus we have succeeded in providing that in the receiving, handling, and storing of the wheat the Queensland Wheat Board will have the protection of the Australian Wheat Board.

There will be a known price for the wheat to be produced. In providing for that we shall get over one of the big problems that confront the wheat-growers but of course that will not solve all their problems. Never in

the history of wheat-growing, except during the period of the two wars, have the growers known what price they were to get. It is now provided that they shall get the remarkably good price of 5s. 2d. a bushel, which is more or less a peak price; it is on record that on only one or two occasions in the last 25 years, and then for short periods, has the price gone slightly over that. On the other hand, the price has gone down as low as 1s. 3d. and 1s. 6d. a bushel. In consequence, many wheat farmers, particularly in the last depression, suffered greater hardships than any other people on the land at the time.

**Mr. Brand:** We ought to try to do as well for our wheat growers as Canada is doing for hers.

**Mr. COLLINS:** We are trying to do better. We are trying to stabilise the price at a minimum figure for five years. The wheat-growers and the Governments of the day in their wisdom are trying to bring about this very desirable aim. For instance, Queensland is very fortunate in the export price of wheat—I do not suggest that she is fortunate in wheat-growing at the present time—because we have no exportable surplus but under this Bill we do enjoy the benefit of the exportable surplus of any other State. Every wheat-grower throughout the Commonwealth growing wheat on licensed areas will enjoy the same price. By the export from other States we are enjoying the benefit while the price of wheat is higher than 5s. 2d., and we are not going to suffer when the export price from other States or from Queensland is below 5s. 2d. The effect of that can be gauged by the present price of wheat for exportable purposes, which is over 14s. a bushel. You can see the benefit that will accrue to the Queensland grower from sharing in the very high export price that obtains at present. It is most exceptional. It is due to the most tragic and unfortunate circumstances that exist throughout the world. We know, as realists, that wheat is not going to remain at that phenomenally high price for any number of years. We are now making provision for the future and benefiting from our experience in the past.

**Mr. Morris:** What was the value of wheat in 1938 and 1939?

**Mr. Hilton:** The world parity was down to 1s. 6d. then.

**Mr. COLLINS:** I shall have to refer to a table to give the hon. member that information. I am not going to do so at this juncture but I will have that information for him at a later stage of the Bill.

If the price for export wheat is over 5s. 2d. a bushel, the grower will get half of the difference between 5s. 2d. and 9s. 6d., the difference being placed in a stabilisation fund to be used in case the price of wheat for export goes below 5s. 2d. Anything above 9s. 6d. will be for the benefit of the grower.

**Mr. Brand:** What will happen if the price does not go below 5s. 2d.?

**Mr. COLLINS:** That would be one of the most glorious things we could imagine. I do not think it will remain at that price because history does not record it as remaining at a high price for any long period.

**Mr. Brand:** If there is any balance, will that go into consolidated revenue?

**Mr. COLLINS:** If there is a balance it will be in the hands of the Government of the day and the wheat-growers can decide what will be done about it. We have no need to fear. If there is no balance to pay the guaranteed price of 5s. 2d. the wonderful thing is that the difference between the price obtained and the guaranteed price will come out of consolidated revenue.

That in the main is a general outline of the principles contained in the Bill.

**Mr. NICKLIN** (Murrumba—Leader of the Opposition) (12.45 p.m.): Hon. members have to consider this measure from a number of angles. First, we have to consider the constitutional angle; secondly, we have to consider what will be the effect of our passing this Bill if the Federal Bill is amended in the Federal House, in which amendment we shall have no say. That is important.

First let us take the constitutional aspect. The purpose of the Bill is to overcome the section of the Commonwealth Constitution that still reserves to the States the right to control marketing within Australia. We are asked by the passing of this measure to divest ourselves of the right to market wheat and hand it over to the Commonwealth Government.

**Mr. Collins:** Under certain conditions.

**Mr. NICKLIN:** Under conditions laid down in the Bill, naturally.

What will be the position if we are the only State to divest ourselves of this right? That happened in connection with handing over the powers under the Constitution of Queensland Amendment Act. We do not want to find ourselves the only State in the Commonwealth to give the Commonwealth these powers. Judging by the outlook in the other States, however, we shall be. Apparently Victoria, South Australia, and Western Australia are going to throw this legislation overboard.

Then what will be the position in respect of this agreement we are ratifying if some Commonwealth Government in the future decide in their wisdom to amend their Act? Will those amendments, even though they may vitally affect this State and the wheat-growers, be submitted to this Parliament for approval? That is not clear constitutionally, and it is an exceedingly important point. As I see the Bill at the present time, the Minister is asking us to sign a blank cheque, handing over very undesirable powers to a body over which the growers of this commodity have no real control whatsoever.

Let us look at this agreement that we are asked to agree to this morning. Let us look at the plan that is envisaged in this legislation. Let us look at the principle behind

this plan. Let us look at the prices involved for the product concerned and the period for which this legislation will be enacted.

Judging by what the Minister has said, and from our knowledge of the Bill that was passed in the Federal House, there are only two objects in the plan behind this legislation: first, to expropriate the grower's right to his own product, and second, to bring about a very undesirable restriction of production. It asks us to expropriate the right of a grower in his own product. The only time when I agree to that principle is when the growers have a majority control of the organisation handling that product. It is in safe hands then because it is in the grower's own hands. If you expropriate the right of the grower to his product and hand it over—as we shall be doing in this Bill—to a Government-controlled board, which is directed and told what to do by the Minister in charge in the Federal sphere, that is fundamentally wrong, and will certainly not receive my approval or that of other hon. members of this side.

We have had experience of the effects of undesirable restriction on primary products in this Commonwealth. We are suffering from it now. We have had rationing and other things brought in when they would not have been necessary if the Government in charge of the affairs of the Commonwealth had a little vision and handled affairs properly and had not unnecessarily restricted production at a time when they should have been encouraging it. Fancy talking of the restriction of wheat at the present time when we cannot buy a grain of wheat to feed our unfortunate fowls and when stock throughout the length and breadth of the State cannot get one grain of wheat! Fancy talking at the present time of restrictions of wheat-growing when there is a world-wide shortage of wheat and when right here in our own State we are living from hand to mouth in regard to the meagre supplies that are coming to hand! World authorities at present state that certainly for the next five years it will be necessary to grow every grain of wheat we possibly can to meet world demands.

Mr. Collins: There is no restriction at the present time.

Mr. NICKLIN: Here we stand talking about adopting a policy of despair, the policy of restriction of wheat-production. That is exactly what this legislation provides for.

Mr. O'Shea: Where is the restriction?

Mr. NICKLIN: One cannot grow a grain of wheat without having a licence and the issuing of the licences is in the hands of a body not here in Queensland but away south at Canberra. We will not stand for any restriction of products at this time. At any time it is a policy of despair and it is something that never should be thought of, much less spoken of, much less legislated for at the present time.

Now let us look at the principle supposed to be behind this legislation. The principle is supposed to be the introduction of organised

marketing. But can we term the marketing that we have experienced during the war from these Government-controlled boards organised marketing? We have no control whatsoever. I would term it not organised marketing but bureaucratic marketing, and if we pass this legislation we establish another bureaucratic marketing organisation in Australia controlled by the Minister for Agriculture in the Commonwealth Government and his officials at Canberra. The growers will have a very minor say and will be merely the pawns in the game. After all, that is what they are when one examines the full implication of this legislation.

Let us look briefly at how the producers of this State have suffered as the result of this alleged organised marketing during the war period. Butter-producers in Queensland lost 4d. a lb. of butter. The Government got 1s. 11½d. and paid 1s. 7½d. The poultry-growers lost £500,000 in cold blood as the result of the marketing organisation that was set up allegedly to stabilise their industry. The wool-growers have been "stabilised" to the tune of £7,000,000 that the Government collared and pocketed. That is the principle behind this legislation that we are asked to agree to this morning and I do not think any hon. member will stand for bureaucratic marketing; and, after all, that is what it is. We stand for organised marketing—grower-control organised marketing—but not alleged organised marketing, such as is envisaged here.

I intend to deal with price and period in greater detail later but this Bill contains so many weaknesses that we should not for one moment consider its introduction in the form described to us this morning by the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock and in view of this I propose to move an amendment to the introductory motion that will, to a limited extent, give to the wheat-growers who are vitally concerned in this project some say in their own product and give them a fair price for their product. My amendment reads—

“Add to the question the words—

‘and to provide for (a) a guaranteed minimum price for five years of not less than 5s. 2d. a bushel, bagged basis, country sidings; (b) the exclusion of the 1945-46 harvest from the scheme; (c) losses due to sales at concession rates to be a charge upon consolidated revenue; and (d) marketing of wheat by a board having a majority of grower representatives thereon and free from Government direction and control.’”

When introducing the Bill this morning the Minister laid great stress on the fact that all this legislation was designed to protect the State and Federal Governments. We are not concerned with protecting the Governments; we are concerned with protecting the interests of the wheat-grower. The scheme that is being introduced by the Minister, instead of being an alleged stabilisation scheme, sacrifices the primary producers engaged in wheat-growing to save the Commonwealth and State Governments. It is stabilisation on the

cheap, because not one Government will be called upon to pay one penny piece within the period covered by this Bill towards making up any shortages. The whole of it will be borne by the growers, to their great disadvantage. It is a miserable scheme that should not be considered for a moment by any Parliament that has the interests of the primary producers at heart.

Let us look at the present prices of wheat. This Bill sets out to establish a guaranteed price of 5s. 2d. a bushel f.o.r. ports. On hearing the Minister's speech this morning one would think that for every bushel of wheat the grower produces he puts 5s. 2d. in his pocket. He gets only the price at sidings. He has to pay the rail freight to the sidings, and the price to the grower in Australia will be not 5s. 2d. but 4s. 3d., or thereabouts.

Let us look at the prices obtaining in other countries. The United States Government are guaranteeing their growers 12s. 6d. a bushel. In Canada they have guaranteed the growers 8s. 3d. until 1950 for home-consumption wheat, and the export price to places other than Great Britain from Canada is 12s. 6d. a bushel. The Government of Great Britain are guaranteeing 9s. 9d. a bushel.

**Mr. Collins:** They are losing money for their growers.

**Mr. NICKLIN:** They are prepared to pay a few shillings to help their growers, whereas our Government want the growers to carry the whole lot. The Argentine Government are guaranteeing 7s. 7d. for home consumption and 17s. 6d. a bushel for export. In New Zealand the Government are guaranteeing the growers 7s. 1d. a bushel for the wheat grown. Our generous Government made a deal with the New Zealand Government under which they sold them so many million bushels of wheat—our wheat, not Mr. Scully's wheat—for about 5s. a bushel at a time when the New Zealand Government are paying their own growers 7s. 1d. It may be a bit of a deal between friends, but the poor unfortunate wheat-grower loses the difference between 5s. 2d. and the 7s. 1d. that the New Zealand Government are willing to pay their own growers, and when they could not buy wheat on the open market at less than 10s. or 11s. That is the sympathy that the Federal Government have for the wheat-growers of Australia. At the moment the flour price in Australia is equal to 13s. a bushel of wheat. The present export value of Australian wheat is between 11s. and 12s. a bushel.

The Minister made much of the fact that over the years the wheat-growers have not received a very great price for their product. I have looked into the prices received, paying particular attention to the period after the last war, which is comparable to the present period. I have ascertained what price the growers have actually received for their product over a number of years, and I find that for the five years following the 1914-1918 war the growers received an average price of 5s. 8d. a bushel at sidings, a considerable increase on the present price of 4s. 3d. at

sidings. And for the 10 years following that war the growers averaged 5s. 5d. a bushel at sidings; and from 1915 to 1930, a period of 16 years, they averaged 5s. 2d. a bushel at sidings.

Going back as far as we can find records, we see that from 1888 to 1945-46, a period of 59 years, the average price received at sidings by growers was 3s. 11d. a bushel, which is only 4d. less than the guaranteed price provided for in this measure. The price in the measure is by no means a generous one when you take into consideration that it is admitted as a result of independent surveys in the four main wheat-producing States of the Commonwealth that the cost of production is 5s. 3d. a bushel. This generous scheme now being given to the wheat-growers gives them 1s. a bushel less than the cost of production!

Furthermore, when you take into account the present-day value of the £1 and the high cost of farming requisites I say that the wheat-grower is getting a very, very raw deal indeed. In fact, the wheat-grower is being sacrificed to protect the Federal Government from any obligation they might have had to one of the main primary-producing industries of the Commonwealth.

I repeat that the Minister time and time again in his speech made the point that the Governments had to be protected—

**Mr. Collins:** I said that the growers had to be protected.

**Mr. NICKLIN:** At the expense of the wheat-growers. We do not stand for that.

The central point in my amendment is the exclusion of the 1945-46 harvest from the scheme. Have you, Mr. Mann, heard of an alleged stabilisation plan that took into account the harvest already bagged and in silos and stores right throughout the Commonwealth?

There is a reason for this; it is evident to anybody who looks at the position that there is a reason and the reason is the fact that the Commonwealth Government by working on the 1945-46 harvest are going to grab £7,000,000 of the wheat-growers' money. That is what is going to happen as a result of the inclusion of the 1945-46 harvest in the scheme. There is a high export price and the Commonwealth Government could sell wheat at a remunerative price—unless they have some cobbles round about the countryside, such as New Zealand, to which they sold a big parcel of wheat under the price being paid in New Zealand. There are approximately 60,000,000 bushels available for export, and at present world price you will find that the wheat-grower is going to put into the Government's pocket £7,000,000 that should be going into his own pocket. I do not think any hon. member on this side of the Chamber can stand for that sort of thing.

There is one saving grace in the inclusion of the 1945-46 harvest, and that is that legally there is very grave doubt whether the Commonwealth Government will be able to take it

because the wheat is acquired under the National Security Regulations, which lay it down very clearly that the Government must pay a just price for that product. Legal opinion obtained by the Wheat Growers' Federation in the South shows that they have an excellent case against the Commonwealth, and no doubt if this legislation is put into force they will assert their legal rights in the court, and it looks very much like the Commonwealth Government's losing the case.

Now let me turn to the next point in my amendment—

“Losses due to sales at concession rates to be a charge on consolidated revenue.”

You know that there has been a practice of selling surplus wheat, surplus beyond human consumption, for stock feed and that sort of thing. These sales have been made at concession rates, with the result that the wheat-growers who produced the wheat have been paying these concession rates for the benefit of the rest of the community. Any proposal to help in the production of pig meats, poultry foods, and the like, which are needed at the moment, is sound in principle, but are the wheat-growers to be called upon to carry the whole of the burden? If the benefit is for the community generally, then the community should pay its share, especially when we find that wheat is being sold for the making of power alcohol at rates that will enable a white-elephant distillery established by the Federal Government to continue in the South. In addition wheat is sold at concession rates for the manufacture of gin and dog biscuits—gin and dog biscuits, mark you. If wheat is to be sold at concession rates for the manufacture of dog biscuits, the whole of the community should bear the cost; and that is exactly what we ask.

Time is getting on, and I want to touch on the last part of my amendment—

“Marketing of wheat by a board having a majority of grower representatives thereon and free from Government direction and control.”

That is the policy of the Country Party, and that is what we stand for in the marketing of primary products. We maintain that the persons who grow the products should have the major say in the sale of them. But what do we find? In the Commonwealth legislation we have set up a stabilisation board that controls the issuing of licences and all other things in connection with the growing of wheat. Its members are appointed by the Minister and remain in office at the pleasure of the Minister. In other words, they are the rubber stamp for the Minister. Then we have the Australian Wheat Board, which certainly has a majority of grower representatives, but it can carry on its work of administration in connection with the handling and disposal of wheat only subject to the direction of the Minister. Actually the board set up to control this legislation is tied hand and foot in all its decisions and all its actions because they are all subject to the Minister. The idea is that these members should act as the rubber stamp for the Minister, whereas the Minister should do the work himself. The

Minister claims to be setting up boards allegedly representing the wheat-growers of Australia, whereas he is doing nothing of the sort.

The legislation is not to the advantage of the wheat-growers of Queensland or the Commonwealth, and the Country Party will oppose it tooth and nail in the hope that the Governments concerned, both State and Federal, may see the light of day and do something of real advantage to the wheat-growers of this State instead of endeavouring to do as they are doing on this occasion, introducing legislation to provide for a stabilisation scheme that is stabilisation on the cheap.

**Hon. H. H. COLLINS** (Cook—Secretary for Agriculture and Stock) (2.25 p.m.): I propose to scotch the lies of the Leader of the Opposition in the early stage of this debate. I refer principally to the statement coming from him as to the prices growers have been getting for wheat over a number of years. He implied that the growers have been getting more than 5s. 2d. a bushel, and consequently the guaranteed price of 5s. 2d. is of no use to them. That is not true.

**Mr. Nicklin:** You refute that. That is your job.

**Mr. COLLINS:** I am going to refute that right here. In doing so I propose to take the price of wheat in the various States for a period of years, say 22 years. It will show that the price has varied to a very slight degree, not a great amount amongst the States. Rather than quote the figures for each of the States I will take the more or less settled wheat State of Victoria which is representative of the whole of the States. The average price that wheat realised in Victoria was 4s. 9.78d. a bushel, less railway freight, which varied according to the distance, and on an average works out at 4½d. a bushel. The Committee must bear in mind that this figure of 4½d. a bushel must be deducted from the following figures:—

	Average Price per bushel.	
	s.	d.
1924 .. .. .	4	8.75
1925 .. .. .	6	1
1926 .. .. .	5	10
1927 .. .. .	4	11½
1928 .. .. .	4	5½
1929 .. .. .	4	1
1930 .. .. .	4	1
1931 .. .. .	2	3½
1932 .. .. .	2	11.58
1933 .. .. .	2	7.58
1934 .. .. .	2	5
1935 .. .. .	2	10½
1936 .. .. .	3	4½
1937 .. .. .	5	2
1938 .. .. .	3	4½

That presents an entirely different picture from that unfolded by the Leader of the Opposition. It is a pity that on a very important Bill such as this, which affects the lives of between 65,000 and 75,000 wheat

growers of the Commonwealth, the true facts of the position should not be placed fairly and squarely on behalf of the wheat-growers.

**Mr. Pie:** What is the average price for the Commonwealth for that period?

**Mr. COLLINS:** I have not worked it out.

**Mr. Pie:** That is what the Leader of the Opposition has given.

**Mr. COLLINS:** I have figures to show that the figures presented by the Leader of the Opposition are far from being correct.

The amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition shows that he has not studied the Bill very well or has not a complete grip of the powers of our legislature. It says—

“Such Bill to provide for (a) a guaranteed minimum price for five years of not less than 5s. 2d. a bushel.”

We cannot fix the price of anything in the Commonwealth because the fixation of prices is a matter for the Commonwealth Parliament and it cannot be done by the States. That shows in a way that the hon. gentleman is simply begging the question.

**Mr. Nicklin:** Have we not fixed the price of wheat here for some years?

**Mr. COLLINS:** It is a Commonwealth function. What would be the use of piously passing a Bill that had no effect?

The amendment goes on—

“(b) the exclusion of the 1945-46 harvest from the scheme.”

That is an integral part of the scheme; and there will be very little difference in the receipts of the growers whether it is excluded or not.

**Mr. Nicklin:** Only a mere £7,000,000.

**Mr. COLLINS:** The £7,000,000 will go back to the growers.

**Mr. Nicklin:** Perhaps.

**Mr. COLLINS:** The amendment also contains the following—

“(c) losses due to sales at concession rates to be a charge upon consolidated revenue.”

I do not know what the hon. gentleman means by concession rates. Does he mean the wheat sold to the essential feeders in Australia—the dairymen, the poultry-feeders, and pig-feeders—should be sold at the overseas price, which at the present time is 14s. a bushel?

**Mr. Nicklin:** That is not what it says.

**Mr. COLLINS:** They are the people getting feed in Australia at concession rates.

**Mr. Nicklin:** For the benefit of the whole community.

**Mr. COLLINS:** The hon. gentleman suggests that he should either pay the 14s. a bushel, the overseas price—

**Mr. Nicklin:** No.

**Mr. Brand:** He does not suggest anything of the sort, and you know it.

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**Mr. COLLINS:** I do not know it.

**Mr. Nicklin:** 5s. 2d. is set out there in the amendment.

**Mr. COLLINS:** — or pay the difference out of consolidated revenue; in other words, charge 9s. a bushel to the taxpayer who has no interest whatever in raising pigs or poultry or butter.

**Mr. Nicklin:** 5s. 2d. is the basis.

**Mr. COLLINS:** He is getting that concession rate. The hon. gentleman apparently desires either to charge the difference up to the taxpayer or to charge the person using this feed the extraordinary rate of 14s. a bushel.

An Opposition Member interjected.

**Mr. COLLINS:** The wheat-grower is getting a stabilised price for his wheat.

An Opposition Member: 5s. 2d.

**Mr. COLLINS:** That is the best price he has ever got in the history of the wheat-grower over a period.

**Mr. Nicklin:** Nonsense.

**Mr. COLLINS:** It is not nonsense; it is a fact.

The amendment also contains this—

“(d) marketing of wheat by a board having a majority of grower representatives thereon and free from Government direction and control.”

Apparently the hon. gentleman does not know how the Australian Wheat Board is elected. We will examine the position. The millers' representatives on the board are selected by the Minister and there are seven others who represent the wheat-grower, but they are elected by the wheat-growers.

**Mr. Brand:** Quite right, too.

**Mr. COLLINS:** I am not saying anything to the contrary. Here we have an amendment to bring in what is already in the Bill. Why quibble about the Bill? The board that was nominated by the Government of which the Leader of the Opposition is the counterpart in the State Parliament was definitely dominated by the interests of the merchants and the flour-millers and not by the growers at all. Here we give the growers complete control over the Wheat Board and give them the right to elect the members of the Wheat Board. Could anything be fairer than what we are doing? How much more consideration do we, as the Labour Party, give to the growers in controlling their own affairs than the hon. members who through their party in the Federal Government gave the growers no control whatever over their affairs! Consequently I have no intention of accepting the amendment.

**Mr. McINTYRE** (Cunningham) (2.36 p.m.): In rising to address the Committee on this very important measure, I must say I subscribe to the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition.

There are features associated with this Bill that are peculiar when compared with any other legislation brought forward in this Chamber, because a Bill has already been presented to and passed by the Federal Parliament and now the States are asked to pass supplementary legislation. I suggest therefore that the Minister is presenting this Bill to us today in the spirit of "Take it or go without." We must of necessity subscribe to it or the scheme will not be operative. That is deplorable, and the present Federal Government would have been well advised before they placed legislation on the statute-book if they had at least obtained information from the State Parliaments as to what would be suitable for their particular circumstances.

The Bill deals with a very important subject that should be the concern of all, because wheat is the basis of the staple food of the people. Some few days ago we heard a very animated debate in this Chamber on the delivery of bread by bakers, but today we are dealing with an industry that makes the loaf of bread possible. It is therefore a very important measure.

Wheat, too, is second only to wool in establishing overseas credits, and we must therefore be very careful as to what we do about the development of our great wheat industry. At present we in this Commonwealth and State are unable to procure many commodities, including petroleum and oil, and it is very important we should today be increasing the volume of production in the wheat industry. As late only as 19 November last this article appeared in the Brisbane "Telegraph"—

"Wheat Drop May Cut Import Goods.

"Melbourne.—Federal authorities fear that Australia's chances of importing commodities in short supply, such as cotton, jute, and linseed, may be endangered if Australian wheat exports cannot be maintained.

"The Government, it was stated officially today, was taking a particularly serious view of the drop of nearly 20,000,000 bushels in the exportable wheat surplus because of drought.

"Australia's big contribution of wheat to India and the Far East helped considerably to obtain from those countries commodities and goods in limited supply here.

"A reduction in the local consumption of Australian wheat might have to be considered to meet the position.

"Earlier this year India had excluded Australia from a general embargo on the export of cotton piece goods because of the large quantities of grain and other foodstuffs we were sending her."

Our national economy is wrapped up largely in the development of the wheat industry.

Coming now to the restrictions of the past, restriction on wheat production in the Com-

monwealth has been unquestionably a suicidal policy, and particularly was this so during the war years. We remember that in the first Great War Lloyd George suggested that food was the major problem of our war effort, yet Australia foolishly during those war years restricted wheat production. We are feeling the effects of that today, and the effect is on a world-wide basis. Anyone with knowledge of world conditions must have realised that with a great war on our hands eventually we should require all the wheat we could produce. Reliable figures reveal that our Queensland consumption is stable at 8,500,000 bushels. There has never been a time in the history of Queensland when we have reached that yield. The Queensland Wheat Board never in any year accepted into the pool 8,000,000 bushels, and today our consumption is stabilised at about 8,500,000 bushels, therefore even in past years Queensland was not producing her own requirements.

The party with which I am associated approves of the stabilisation of our great primary industries, but it must be done on the basis of cost of production over a reasonable period and under complete control by the industry's own elected representatives, the price to represent cost of production plus a reasonable margin of profit. We must all agree with the principle of stabilisation of our primary industries, for those industries must have justice if the country is to prosper. I admit that conditions are better to-day than they were in some pre-war years, but I think we all agree that what happened in the past must not be allowed to recur. It is important that we have a system of stabilisation of primary industries. Of course, there are some who claim that the rights of primary producers are over-emphasised, but I cannot agree with them.

In stabilising the wheat industry three major principles should be observed. In the past the stabilisation of this industry has been carried out in reverse, in that we have decided how much a loaf of bread was to cost the consumer. That was always the first step. The bakers, of course, were allowed a margin of profit in that price. Then the miller has had to get his wheat at a price that would show him a margin of profit, and the primary producer has had to take what was left. That system was wrong. We should start at the bottom of the ladder, guarantee a reasonable price to the primary producer, and work up from there.

At 2.43 p.m.,

Mr. DEVRIES (Gregory) relieved the Chairman in the chair.

**Mr. McINTYRE:** Another important thing is price. The Minister has mentioned 5s. 2d. a bushel, but that figure is used loosely. He has not told us exactly what it means. At one time the hon. member for Carnarvon stated in this Chamber that the wheat-growers should be on clover now that they had a guaranteed price of 5s. 2d. Even some of the wheat-growers are of the opinion that from now on they will get

5s. 2d. for their wheat. It is a snare and a delusion to suggest that they will get that price. We all know that the 5s. 2d. is to be f.o.r. ports. This means that the farmer will get 5s. 2d. less unknown and varying amounts according to the bulk of production, the area of production, and the amount of transport involved. Experts assess the likely return to the grower at 4s. 3d., which is vastly different from 5s. 2d.

**Mr. Hilton:** Who is the expert?

**Mr. McINTYRE:** I am referring to those who have made a close study of the industry, not those who have a superficial interest in it and who make exaggerated and ill-considered statements. Those experts suggest 4s. 3d., and I agree with them. Any price on which the industry is stabilised should be f.o.r. at the grower's siding, then the grower would know where he stood.

**Mr. Collins:** Would you have control of production under those conditions?

**Mr. McINTYRE:** If the wheat-grower is going to budget for his years' activities it is essential that he shall have some idea of what his crop will realise. The dairying industry is an example of what should be done. The dairyman's price is fixed at 1s. 7½d. at his nearest point of delivery, and he knows exactly what he is doing. He conducts his business accordingly.

**Mr. Collins:** Do you suggest that all freights should be pooled?

**Mr. McINTYRE:** I am suggesting the point at which the price should be decided upon. The only common-sense way is to give to the grower a guaranteed price at his delivery station, as he would then know where he stood.

Let us look at the price of 5s. 2d. and try to find out why it was allotted. I do not know why and I do not think the Minister knows. It could have been decided by pulling a number out of a hat. I know at any rate that no attempt has been made to define the cost of production and to arrive at a price at which this industry would be stabilised. With the same Federal Government in power the cost of production in the dairying industry was assessed and a guaranteed price was then arrived at. That is the only sound and logical way of doing the thing. I submit that no effective stabilisation can be brought into being without first of all deciding the cost of production; it is one of the fundamental principles of any stabilisation scheme that we must find the cost of production first. And so I say the scheme stands condemned because the price was taken, so to speak, out of the air and it was on that price that the scheme was based. I say again that is clearly wrong.

Now let us look at this price of 5s. 2d. and find out what the conditions really are. I have been a grower and notwithstanding any figures mentioned in this Chamber by the Leader of the Opposition or the Minister I am going to say that for 10 years after

World War I. the Queensland Wheat Board paid to the grower an average price of 4s. 9d. f.o.r. grower's railway station. We find that if we are to return to the growers that price it is necessary to have our price stabilised at 5s. 8d. a bushel instead of 5s. 2d. I suggest also that during the years between then and now the purchasing power of the £1 has been very substantially reduced and therefore the price should be a good deal higher than that.

I should like to know how the price of 5s. 2d. was arrived at. I want to know, for instance, whether the 40-hour week was taken into consideration. We hear quite a lot about a 40-hour week being granted for the workers but has that been taken into consideration for the men who grow wheat? Are the workers in the industry expected to work 40 hours and the growers themselves to work the clock round? If you are going to bring a 40-hour week into operation for the man growing wheat, then I tell you that our price must be higher.

**Mr. Hilton:** Do you believe in the 40-hour week?

**Mr. McINTYRE:** I believe in a 35-hour week if it can be fitted satisfactorily into our national economy. If it fitted into the economy of the dairying industry the consumer would be paying 4s. to 5s. per lb. for his butter rather than the price he is paying. Is it expected that the growers work right round the clock to implement this scheme?

I believe that the five-year period of the scheme is totally inadequate. I know that the Bill to be presented here is complementary to the one which was passed through the Federal House and I have read and studied that Bill. I admit that there is provision to review the matter later but that in itself is of no value because any review will be subject to Party political expediency and will depend on the brand of politics in power at the time. My experience in regard to primary products is that what is done is done with a view to gaining seats at the next election.

All the available evidence suggests that world values will not fall below the stabilised price in five years. The "Courier-Mail" of Monday last, I think, published the statement by the Minister of Food in the British House of Commons that the present acute world situation was such that it was 10,000,000 tons of grain short. Therefore it will be seen that with the position in this country there is no possibility of the prices falling below the stabilised price in a period of five years.

Now I come to the question of the inclusion of the 1945-46 year, which I consider to be a gross injustice to the growers. After a period of lean years throughout the Commonwealth they had an opportunity to recoup their losses and I think that should have been extended to the 1945-46 year, but instead of that the legislation is to be made retrospective—always an undesirable principle in itself—so as to include that particular year. I believe that the legality of that action is

to be challenged in the courts, but even if it is proved to be legally right it does not make it morally right, because the Commonwealth Government acquired that wheat under wartime regulations that guaranteed the maximum realisation to the producers. However, legislation is being introduced to make the scheme retrospective to include the 1945-46 season. In view of the fact that in the present year we have no wheat at all, the scheme is for a period of only three years in Queensland. A scheme extending over 10 years might justify the inclusion of the 1945-46 year.

I come now to the question of the controlling authority, a very burning question in a primary-producer scheme, especially a stabilisation scheme. The scheme must be producer-controlled. The producers have demonstrated their ability to control their own industry, not only in co-operative enterprises but also in the State Wheat Board in Queensland. The State representatives are elected by the producers, but the chairman and miller representatives are to be appointed by the Minister for Commerce, and here is the nigger in the woodpile. The legislation provides that any action taken by the board shall be subject to the Minister's approval. Do you call that producer-control—that all action must be subject to the Minister's approval? On top of that, we have the Wheat Stabilisation Board, an overriding authority that controls production, registration and the issuing of licences, which board will be appointed by the Minister and be responsible to him. Anyone who has any idea about the basic principles of a producer-controlled organisation cannot accept that principle as laid down in the Bill because it is foreign to everything associated with producer control.

Then there is to be a reserve fund for the stabilisation of the wheat industry when the price of wheat falls below the suggested guaranteed price. At the present time in Queensland we know that the price to be paid by the millers must not go above 5s. 6d. a bushel if bread is to be sold to the consumers at the present price. That is admitted—the millers in Queensland are not required to pay more than 5s. 6d. a bushel for wheat while the price of bread remains at 6d. to the consumers. When the price of wheat falls below 5s. 6d. the flour tax becomes operative and that helps to make up the leeway. The growers down through the years have been accepting this price as the home-consumption price, irrespective of world values. Down through the years the growers have been compelled to sell their wheat at substantial rebates to the pig and poultry industries. While I am willing to admit that something may be said in support of this rebate to provide cheap bread for our people the point arises whether the wheat-growers should be expected to extend this privilege to our pig and poultry industries. This is what has been done for some years. In addition to making a sacrifice to supply cheap bread to the consuming

public the wheat-growers have been compelled to make a sacrifice to provide cheap eggs and bacon to the consuming public. If these concessions must be made for this purpose they should be borne not by the wheat-grower but by the Government. When we study the position down the years we find that some millions have been found by the wheat-growers to subsidise the consumers in order to provide them with cheap bread, eggs and bacon. If this practice is to continue under this scheme the Government must accept that responsibility.

Under the proposed scheme any surplus money after the payment of 5s. 2d. a bushel to the wheat-growers is to be paid into a fund to stabilise prices when the market recedes. That being so it is the duty of the Government to pay into this fund as the scheme progresses an amount equivalent to the difference between the world's parity price and the price at which wheat is sold under compulsion from time to time to enable prices to be kept down to the consuming public.

To summarise the proposal: the price leaves much to be desired, especially taking into consideration the period of the scheme. The method of control is out of all keeping with what might be desired and what is to be found in other primary-producing marketing efforts. Finally, Queensland must be allowed to grow sufficient wheat for her own consumption. The Minister mentioned that 1,000,000 acres would be licensed to grow wheat. This Bill contains no such provision so far as this State is concerned. That is only a promise made by the Minister for Commerce. Today we have a different Minister for Commerce.

**Mr. Collins:** You have not seen the Bill.

**Mr. McINTYRE:** Queensland should be allowed to grow up to 1,000,000 acres, but we have nothing definite as to whether she will be allowed to grow 1,000,000 acres or 600,000 acres. That is entirely at the discretion of the Wheat Stabilisation Board, which under this scheme is to be appointed by the Minister for Commerce and is to be directly responsible to that Minister. My point is that in Queensland we have no guarantee that we shall receive that maximum licensed acreage. The industry in Queensland, it is admitted by all who know anything about it, is capable of unlimited expansion. We have never produced sufficient wheat for our own requirements. It is possible for us to work up the industry to a greater extent than today. That will be beneficial not only to the wheat-growers of this State but to this great country of ours, especially in building up overseas credits, which are the very essence of our national solvency and prosperity.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at 3 p.m.