

Queensland



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[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 16 SEPTEMBER 1947

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

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

PRESENTATION.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that I propose to present to His Excellency the Governor, at Government House tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock, the Address in Reply to His Excellency's Speech agreed to on 4 September last, and I shall be glad to be accompanied by the Mover and Seconder and such other hon. members as care to be present.

QUESTIONS.

GASTRO-ENTERITIS AND MILK SUPPLY.

Mr. JESSON (Kennedy) asked the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs—

“In view of the alarming increase in the epidemic of gastro-enteritis amongst infants and adults, the probable cause of which may be dirty milk bottles, and having regard to the fact that milk has been known in the past to be the cause of other infections, will he take immediate steps to have inspections made of all premises where milk is being bottled and a check-up of milk vendors generally?”

Hon. A. JONES (Charters Towers) replied—

“There is no necessity to issue instructions regarding inspections, as two inspectors, commencing duty between midnight and 4 a.m. daily, examine milk carts for adulteration of milk, cleanliness of vehicles and milk vessels, and refilling of milk bottles. On the 10th instant a milk vendor was found to be filling milk bottles with raw milk and selling it as pasteurised milk. Inspectors regularly visit the three pasteurised milk factories in Brisbane, and regular visits are also made by inspectors to raw milk vendors' premises.”

IRRIGATION, UPPER BRISBANE.

Mr. MACDONALD (Stanley) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

“When is it expected that the Bureau of Investigation will commence its proposed investigation of the irrigation possibilities of the Upper Brisbane Valley?”

Hon. T. A. FOLEY (Normanby) replied—

“Some investigations have been undertaken by the Irrigation Commission in respect of individual pumping schemes for hilly areas in the Upper Brisbane Valley, but results were unfavourable. The direct use for irrigating in the Upper Brisbane Valley of water from the Somerset Dam has also been investigated by the Stanley River Works Board, but this does not

appear practicable. The Bureau of Investigation proposes investigation of underground resources, if any, in the Upper Brisbane Valley, along with numerous other areas in Queensland, but is unable at present to state when the availability of staff will permit a commencement in the Upper Brisbane Valley.”

TEMPORARY HOUSING, BRISBANE.

Mr. MARRIOTT (Bulimba) asked the Secretary for Public Works—

“How many applicants in the metropolitan area are now waiting for temporary housing accommodation to be supplied by the State Housing Commission?”

Hon. H. A. BRUCE (The Tableland—Secretary for Public Instruction), for Hon. W. POWER (Baroona), replied—

“Applicants who have been allotted temporary accommodation and who will move in as flats become available, 240; applicants who have asked for temporary accommodation, and court eviction cases falling due shortly, approximately 500; 1,165 families have already been accommodated.”

COAL FOR GAS, TOWNSVILLE.

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) asked the Secretary for Mines—

“1. Did the Government at any time offer to supply Queensland coal to the Townsville Gas Company in order to assist it in maintaining a supply of gas to the Townsville people?

“2. If so, was the offer accepted?

“3. How many cubic feet of gas can be produced at Townsville from one ton of (a) New South Wales coal; (b) Queensland coal?

“4. If New South Wales coal is considered by the Gas Company to be necessary to ensure a normal supply of gas, what percentage of normal supply would be generated from (a) Queensland coal; (b) 75 per cent. Queensland and 25 per cent. New South Wales coal; (c) 50 per cent. Queensland and New South Wales; (d) 75 per cent. New South Wales and 25 per cent. Queensland?

“5. What restrictions are being imposed on consumers by the Townsville Gas Company at present?

“6. Are any other gas companies in Queensland using Queensland coal?”

Hon. T. A. FOLEY (Normanby) replied—

“1. Yes, on at least three occasions.

“2. In respect of two previous occasions, during June and August of this year, the Townsville Gas Company indicated it was not prepared to use Queensland coals on the grounds that the plant was specially designed for the sole use of Maitland (New South Wales) gas coals, and, by the use of Styx (Queensland) gas coal the carbonizing capacity of the plant would be reduced

to the extent that gas-making capacity would be reduced to about 50 per cent. of the output obtained by the use of Maitland (New South Wales) coal, which would result in drastic rationing of gas to consumers. However, on the third occasion, on 12th instant, the company agreed to accept an offer to take delivery of 200 tons of screened gas coal from the Styx State Coal Mine, Ogmore, and such coal is now being railed to Townsville.

"3. (a) For the years 1944, 1945, and 1946, the gas made per ton of coal carbonized at the Townsville Gas Works was 17,545 c.ft., 17,802 c.ft., and 19,151 c.ft., respectively. For the half years ending 30 September, 1946, and 31 March, 1947, comparable figures were 19,228 c.ft., and 18,010 c.ft. (b) No figures are available.

"4. (a) It would be expected that, subject to carbonizing plant being increased and adapted to the use of Queensland (Styx) coal, an output of two-thirds of the present output obtained by the use of Maitland (New South Wales) coal would be obtained by the use of Queensland (Styx) coal. (b), (c), (d) No information is available. I am informed that the Townsville plant is specially designed for the use of New South Wales coal, and that where coal has to be blended it has been found that a blending plant is necessary and that there is no provision at Townsville for blending coals.

"5. Restrictions by way of reductions in pressure only are being imposed at present. The reduced gas pressures, as delivered from the gas works, are:—

LOW PRESSURE SYSTEM.

From—		
a.m.	a.m.	
4.30 to 8.0		Reduced from 50 tenths of an inch water pressure to 45 tenths of an inch;
8.0 to 11.0		Reduced from 45 tenths of an inch water pressure to 30 tenths of an inch;
a.m.	p.m.	
11.0 to 1.0		Reduced from 55 tenths of an inch water pressure to 45 tenths of an inch;
p.m.	p.m.	
1.0 to 4.30		Reduced from 45/50 tenths of an inch water pressure to 30 tenths of an inch;
4.30 to 6.45		Reduced from 68 tenths of an inch water pressure to 60 tenths of an inch;
6.45 p.m. onwards		Reduced from 40 tenths of an inch water pressure to 30 tenths of an inch.

HIGH PRESSURE SYSTEM.

From—		
a.m.	a.m.	
8.0 to 10.30		Formerly boosted to 2½ lb. per square inch; no booster in use;
a.m.	p.m.	
10.30 to 1.0		No alteration;
p.m.	p.m.	
1.0 to 4.50		Formerly 2½ lb. per square inch; no booster in operation;
4.50 to 7.0		Formerly boosted to 5 lb. per square inch; reduced to 3 to 4 lb. per square inch;
7.0 p.m. onwards		No booster in operation.

"6. Yes. The only gas companies in Queensland exclusively using New South Wales gas coals are those at Townsville, Charters Towers, and Cairns."

RAIL DELAYS, CABOOLTURE—GYMPIE.

Mr. LOW (Cooroora) asked the Minister for Transport—

"In view of the continual and serious delays to rail traffic on the North Coast Railway between Caboolture and Gympie—a paying section of railway carrying exceptionally heavy traffic—will he give favourable consideration to the duplication of this section?"

Hon. J. E. DUGGAN (Toowoomba) replied—

"The matter of duplicating portion of the North Coast line between Caboolture and Gympie already is under consideration by the department, but it is not a work which can be undertaken in the immediate future."

CO-ORDINATED SERVICE, TEWANTIN AND NOOSA.

Mr. LOW (Cooroora) asked the Minister for Transport—

"In view of the large number of people in North Coast areas who travel to Tewantin and Noosa, will he give favourable consideration to extending the sale of co-ordinated tickets to those places to passengers who join the train at Nambour and other places between Brisbane and Cooroy?"

Hon. J. E. DUGGAN (Toowoomba) replied—

"The issue of tickets to Tewantin and Noosa from Nambour and such stations on the co-ordinated fare basis, because of the comparatively short distance of the railway portion of the journey, would return to the railways such a low fare as to be out of all proportion to the service rendered, and therefore cannot be approved."

NUMBER OF RAILWAY EMPLOYEES.

Mr. LOW (Cooroora) asked the Minister for Transport—

"What was the number of employees of the Railway Department at 30 June last paid from (a) Consolidated Revenue, (b) Trust Fund, and (c) Loan Fund?"

Hon. J. E. DUGGAN (Toowoomba) replied—

"(a) Paid from Consolidated Revenue, 21,453; (b) paid from Trust Funds, 1,183; (c) paid from Loan Fund, 1,127; total at 30 June, 1947, 23,763."

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

Hon. V. C. GAIR (South Brisbane—Secretary for Labour and Industry) (11.15 a.m.): I move—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Industrial Con-

ciliation and Arbitration Acts, 1932 to 1946, in certain particulars."

The Bill I have the honour to submit for the consideration of hon. members of this Committee today provides for the amendment of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Acts in certain particulars. The chief feature or principle, as hon. members doubtless anticipate, is a provision for the reduction of the standard working week of 44 hours to 40 hours as from 1 January, 1948, without any reduction in wages or salaries. The court is specifically required to reduce the working week from 44 to 40 hours, and is authorised to vary and amend every award.

Mr. Wanstall: Without specific application?

Mr. GAIR: Not without specific application.

The days of the week on which the 40 hours are to be worked and the daily spread of hours are left entirely to the discretion of the court. The Bill in no way implements nor does it even indicate or suggest a 5-day working week.

Mr. Brand: It is left to the court?

Mr. GAIR: It is left entirely to the court. The Government believe that the national economy and the buoyancy of national revenue, the high level of productivity, the favourable position of the export market and export trade, and the present and prospective prosperity of the nation are favourable to the immediate granting of a standard working week of 40 hours, and that this reform will prove to be in the interests of the community and of industrial contentment and security. In this conclusion the Government are pleased to have the support of the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration, which tribunal, after a thorough and comprehensive determination of this question, has declared itself in favour of the introduction of a 40-hour week as from 1 January next year.

When this Government, after mature consideration of this vexed question, went before the electors of this State in May this year, they made the introduction of the 40-hour week one of the principal issues. In doing so, they asked for the endorsement by the electors of the considered opinion in Government circles that the time was opportune for the introduction of the shorter working week. The policy of the Government received the endorsement of the people at the general election; in other words, the popular will in this State endorsed the promise made by the Leader of the Government, the Premier, in his policy speech.

The popular will of the people should influence the Government in their decision on any major issue and we find that this vital change has behind it the popular will of the people—not only of Queensland but of the other States of the Commonwealth; in fact, it has been approved by the will of all the people of Australia and by the Commonwealth Government and all the State Govern-

ments in the Commonwealth. Four State Governments openly declared themselves in favour of it while the non-Labour Governments of Western Australia and South Australia took up an attitude that was not opposed to the principle of the 40-hour week. Western Australia's attitude was to leave the matter entirely to the court, and South Australia approved of the principle but objected to the time as being inopportune and inappropriate. Therefore, it is proven beyond doubt that the popular will of the people and the Governments of this country were in favour of the introduction of a 40-hour week. No Government, State or Federal, whether in the capacity of Government or as an employer, opposed this reform.

What was the attitude of the representatives of the Employers' Federation and similar organisations on this question? It was not one of direct opposition to the principle; in fact, according to the report of the proceedings before the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration on this vital question of the reduction of the standard working week from 44 hours to 40 hours we find that the only Queensland employers' organisations represented at that court in opposition to this reform were the sugar interests and the City Electric Light Company Limited. This would show that there was no strong objection to the introduction of this reform at this time.

Mr. Aikens: McCracken sat on the fence in the Federal Court.

Mr. GAIR: If one examines the records of the proceedings before that court—and I am prepared to make them available to the hon. member for Mundingburra—and if he believes in being fair to the people inside and outside this Chamber he will withdraw that remark tomorrow, because he will find that the reason I have given this morning as the Government's reasons for the introduction of the Bill are almost identical with the statement made by Mr. McCracken before the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration.

In the discussion that has centred round the principle of the 40-hour week it has been said that its achievement is the culmination of a battle that has been waged for the best part of 20 years, that is, since the claim of the workers for greater leisure was recognised by the introduction of the 44-hour week. I do not subscribe to that belief entirely, because I believe that the struggle for a shorter working week and greater leisure for the workers began more than 20 years ago. That is proved when we scan the history of the gradual reduction of the working week. When we do so, we shall find that we cannot afford merely to open our books at 1924 or even to go back to the turn of this century. The struggle for the shorter working week, in my opinion, began when the Industrial Revolution first cast up the new phenomenon in our social order, the propertyless proletariat, and when the workers started on their journey on the long road towards industrial emancipation.

Mr. Russell: Is that the distinction between workers—those who have no property and those who have?

Mr. GAIR: No, not necessarily.

Mr. Russell: What does it mean? Can you tell me?

Mr. GAIR: I will tell the hon. member at the proper time. At this stage, the introduction of this Bill, that question has no relevance.

Mr. Pie: You gave that impression.

Mr. GAIR: It is not very difficult to convey a false impression to the hon. member, because of his limited capacity of understanding.

Our research takes us back even to the first decade of the 19th century when the hours in Great Britain were completely unregulated, the period of which Thomas Carlyle could write—

“Half a million hand-loom weavers working 15 hours a day in perpetual inability to procure thereby enough of the coarsest food.”

The demand for cheap labour by the manufacturers led to the exploitation of children. “They were taken from the poorhouses and practically sold to the proprietors of the mills,” said a historian of the times. The cruelties inflicted on those helpless children, and the menace to the health of even the well-to-do from frequent pestilence, the result of bad housing as well as bad factory conditions, compelled the Government of the day, the Peel Government, to introduce and pass legislation in 1802. This law, which was very restricted in scope, fixed a maximum working week of 72 hours—six days of 12 hours each—for pauper apprentices in cotton mills only, and raised the minimum age of engagement of children to nine years.

Peel’s second Factory Act of 1819 was little better, particularly because of the absence of inspection.

The Act of 1833 merely limited the hours of children between 9 and 13 to nine hours on six days a week in the textile industry. The only reason why there was a 6-day week in Western Europe was the Biblical injunction to observe the Sabbath; otherwise a 7-day week would have been worked, as it is in the Eastern parts of the Continent, because of the absence of such a religious injunction.

The working week was subsequently reduced to 60 hours in 1847, to 56 in 1874, and to 48 and less in more recent times.

Despite the gloomy forecasts made at the time by the representatives of the employing classes, who denounced the 10-hour Bill as most iniquitous and destructive of the best interests of the community, and who described it as a delusion practised on the working classes, the reduction of hours of labour has obviously not ruined industry or shackled social progress as was forecast or expected by the opponents of this reform.

The most pronounced development of the shorter working week took place in the United States of America, with the reduction to a 40- and 35-hour week under the Roosevelt New Deal legislation, although some of that ground has been lost since. France, under a Socialistic leader, obtained a 40-hour week temporarily, and New Zealand, under Labour, has a statutory 40-hour week.

Mr. Kerr: They have gone back to 48 hours in France now.

Mr. GAIR: I said they had a 40-hour week temporarily.

Mr. Wanstall: What is the standard week in Russia?

Mr. GAIR: The latest information I have is that it is 48 hours.

The movement in Australia for a shorter working week has a history of its own, which I think is worth reading, because many of these vital records are not as accessible to hon. members as perhaps they should be. I ask you to bear with me, Mr. Mann, while I give a few brief details of the history of the shorter working week in our own country.

When gold was discovered in 1851 there was an influx of people from various countries who brought with them radical ideas generated by the bad industrial conditions they had left. In the following decade the aim of the trade unions was an 8-hour day, and their activities were directed to that end.

“There are two factors,” say Lightfoot and Sutcliffe in their work “The Historical Development of Trade Unionism in Australia,” that require notice—firstly, that it was the gold diggings that brought together a mass of democratic opinions; secondly, that this stream of advanced thought came just at the time when self-government was commencing in Australia. This advanced democratic thought found an avenue of expression in the trade-union movement.

In the Parramatta Hotel, in New South Wales, on 22 September, 1855, at a lodge meeting of the Operative Stonemason’s Society, Hugh Laundry proposed—

“That, in the opinion of this society, eight hours should be the maximum of a day’s work.”

This was carried unanimously, as we would expect.

The initial progress was fairly successful and most of the contractors conceded the stonemasons’ demand, despite opposition by Messrs. Tooths, who were building a brewery, and from whom the union transferred its labour to contractors who had granted the concession and were wanting men. In this way the 8-hour working day was established in Sydney and eventually spread to most industries.

In Victoria, the Stonemasons’ Society, which had been “adjourned indefinitely,” renewed its activities and on 5 February, 1855, James Stephens, Thomas Walter Vine and James Galloway were the most prominent members of the local union and urged the

claim for shorter hours. On 4 February, 1856, these and other pioneers assembled at Clark's Hotel, Smith Street, Collingwood, and from this date it can be said that the movement for the eight-hour day took definite form in Victoria.

The same union pioneered the 8-hour day in Queensland in 1865. In Tasmania the shipwrights struck in 1874 to secure an 8-hour day and were successful. In Western Australia eight hours became the standard working day in 1896.

In Queensland, Mr. Mann, the Industrial Peace Act of 1912, assented to on 7 December, 1912, made no reference to the maximum working week to be incorporated in awards made thereunder. The Industrial Arbitration Act of 1916, which was assented to on 18 December, 1916, for the first time prescribed the maximum working week and laid down the principal of the 8-hour day and the 48-hour working week. At the time of the passing of this Act very few industries in Queensland were working more than a 48-hour week. One or two, I believe, were working a 44-hour week. This Act at the same time, as does the present Act, conferred upon the court the power to make declarations as to the standard hours and permitted the court to exceed the statutory maximum working week in certain cases.

The Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment Act of 1923, assented to on 28 August, 1923, further extended the power of the court to exceed the prescribed maximum in respect of such necessary services as the court in its discretion may determine, as well as of a number of specifically itemised industries. The Act as it stood at that time was commented upon in August, 1924, by the then president of the court, the late Mr. Justice McCawley, as follows:—

“The law has since been amended in certain details,—”

he was referring to the 1916 Act—

“notably in the provisions relating to hours of work. As it stands today it confers undoubtedly the widest jurisdiction enjoyed by any Industrial Arbitration Court. Framed by one of the most able of Labour's political representatives and revised by a Parliament in which Labour was supreme, it yet follows closely on the lines of the existing New South Wales law—an indication of the extent to which not only the principles but most of the details of the Act are determined irrespective of party lines.”

The Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment Act of 1924, assented to on 30 October, 1924, which came into operation on 1 July, 1925, reduced the maximum working week to 44 hours but still preserved to the court the power to make declarations as to the standard hours and to exempt the same classes of employees as previously from the operation of the maximum prescribed working week.

The Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act of 1929, assented to on 23 December, 1929, and proclaimed to come into operation on 23 January, 1930, omitted all

reference to a statutory working week but required the court as soon as conveniently possible after the commencement of the Act to make a declaration as to “the maximum weekly hours to be worked in industry (called the ‘standard hours’).” It also empowered the court to declare the standard hours of work for any particular industry. Pursuant to the requirements under this Act, the court on 24 March, 1930, declared that the standard working hours should be 44.

While this Act superficially appeared to have left the court unfettered in the matter of the fixation of working hours, the true position was quite different. The Government who enacted this legislation went further and in 1931, by the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Acts Amendment Act of 1931, provided that—

“Notwithstanding anything contained in this Act or in any other Act or law or rule of law or usage or practice or process of law to the contrary, and notwithstanding any declaration made under section thirteen of this Act, where it is proved to the court or board that any industry is prevented from being carried on in this State, or if carried on in this State is prejudiced adversely by reason of the fact that any condition (other than wages) of the award which applies or would apply to such industry is less favourable to the industry in this State than any like condition of the award or awards made under the law of any other State or of the Commonwealth which apply to the said or any similar industry in any other State, and which is or may be in competition with the industry or prospective industry in this State, the court or board shall on application vary the award so as to approximate any such condition as nearly as maybe to the like condition of the award under which such competitive industry in another State is operated.”

Mr. Pie: The court has done that too.

Mr. GAIR: The court acted under that 1931 amendment and the effect of it can well be imagined. That was a positive direction to the court limiting the exercise of discretionary powers. It meant that if the employer submitted the plea that an industry in another State with which he was compelled to compete was working more hours than he was working here our court was required to increase the hours here. That was done by the Moore Government.

Furthermore, in cases where they were dissatisfied with the court's hours declarations, the Government of the day took the simple expedient of exercising the power which they had reserved to themselves to ensure that the court should “function as it was intended to function” and exempted entirely from the operation of the Act and the jurisdiction of the court quite a number of industries and callings.

During the period between 1930 and 1933 the court heard a number of applications for exemption from the general standard laid

down on 24 March, 1930, and during the years of depression declared a 48-hour week for several individual callings.

The Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act of 1932, assented to on 6 January, 1933, re-enacted the maximum 44-hour working week. That followed the defeat of the Moore Government and the return of the Labour Party to the Treasury benches.

That is the history in brief of the gradual reduction in the working week, not only in our own country but also in Great Britain, from which country most of our forebears came. It shows very clearly that at all times, whether today or a hundred years ago, the workers were required forcibly to agitate and demonstrate to obtain what they believed to be their rights in the matter of a shorter working week and greater leisure.

Notwithstanding the fact that great development and great progress have taken place over those 100 years or more, the attitude of the employing class would appear to remain unaltered, because to a great extent they are unwilling to accept reforms such as these with the graciousness that I think would be to their advantage.

Mr. Aikens: They have taken the guns and batons from them, that is all.

Mr. GAIR: I say without hesitation that today the employing class fortunately have learned the error of the ways of their fathers, and whilst we have some who stick to the conservative, rigid exploiting tactics of their fathers, the great majority of them today, from my experience, are willing to recognise the need to give a reasonable return for labour and proper working conditions.

Mr. Muller: It does not make any difference to the employers because the employees pay for this thing.

Mr. GAIR: Our friend the hon. member for Fassifern has clearly disclosed that he is simply not conversant with the question we are dealing with at the moment.

I was replying to the hon. member for Mundingburra and I said I believe there has been an improvement in the attitude of the employer in industry towards his men today as compared with that of his father. There is still room for improvement, and improvement can be best effected if the Employers' Federation and employers' organisations point out to their members the fallacy of intolerance towards their employees and impress upon them that after all men are human beings, not machines, that they have hearts and souls like themselves, and many of them wives and children of their own, and that under the grime on the face of such a man there may be the lines and wrinkles of a worry because of a sick wife or child, and that behind his greasy overall a heart is pounding with concern for a son or daughter in whose condition he has good cause for worry.

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr. GAIR: It is human beings who have built up the civilisation in which we live, and created the wealth of our nation and its communities. Yet we have a hon. member opposite who would seek to ridicule a sympathetic and kindly reference to the working-class people.

Mr. Aikens: You would best describe it as a callous cackle.

Mr. GAIR: An hon. member opposite seeks to ridicule my remarks because he does not subscribe to the belief that working men are human beings with hearts and souls like those of the employing class. He believes that they are merely units in the profit-making machine who should be required to work as long as the boss requires them to work for the least possible return.

Mr. Muller interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. GAIR: It would appear that I was over-generous in my remarks regarding employers generally. Fortunately, our friend the hon. member for Fassifern is not truly typical of the employer today, otherwise we should not today be introducing a Bill to provide for a 40-hour week. We should still be struggling, perhaps for the reduction of the 70-hour week or some other iniquitous unfair burden.

Mr. Pie: Are you going to introduce a 40-hour week to the country districts?

Mr. GAIR: Is the hon. member inviting me to introduce an award for the rural industries? If he is, it will be a matter to which I will give urgent consideration with a great deal of delight. I believe that if there is one calling in which people are exploited it is on our farms, where there is no control of hours of labour and wages.

The question is often asked: what are the reasons that have constantly moved the workers to seek a reduction in the hours over the long period that I have hurriedly and briefly traversed? In the first place, the workers claim the right to share in the wealth they themselves have helped to create. They claim also recognition of their right to enjoy the amenities of modern civilisation that are fashioned by their own efforts. They claim to have the fact acknowledged that man is not a machine, and in particular that modern man is not a modern machine and he cannot keep pace with a modern machine for the long hours that he is required to do so at the present time.

The Bill is the logical development of the rise and progress of the machine age, with its amazing capacity for mass production with the minimum of manual effort and the replacement of manual labour. In Australia, and particularly in Queensland, it is the fulfilment of a promise made to hundreds and thousands of men and women who cheerfully went to war with the promise ringing in their ears that they were fighting to make this world a better place in which to live, particularly to those thousands whose bones lie bleaching

beneath an alien sky; it is the fulfilment of a promise to tens of thousands of industrialists who did a mighty job on the home front during those years, that after the war there would be a new order of which they would obtain their just share. That was a promise I say, Mr. Mann, that we choose to remember and fulfil but others choose to forget.

I will content myself for the present with those remarks on the standard working week. The other amendments in the Bill are small and aim at correcting anomalies that have become apparent since the amending Bill of 1946 was passed, which experience alone could reveal and which we now hasten to correct. Such small anomalies are difficult to anticipate, but as they have been disclosed and submitted to me I have included in this Bill suitable amendments in the hope of an absolute correction.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba—Leader of the Opposition) (11.50 a.m.): The legislation that the Minister has introduced is of special importance in that when it becomes law it will have a very great effect on the economy of this State and, I say advisedly, the future development of Queensland.

The Minister gave us a very comprehensive review of the history of wage-fixation throughout the world. He did not go as far back as Adam and Eve, or of Noah and his ark, but he went well back into the dark ages. The hon. gentleman might as well have gone to the days of ancient Rome, when the people decided to do no work at all, with the result of which we are all aware.

The Minister said that he and his Government were of the opinion that the national economy of this State could stand this reform, and made the rather surprising statement that we in Queensland had reached a very high level of production. This, I think, indicates that he does not know the true position in many of our industries today.

He further said that the Bill would be in the interests of the community and would bring about industrial contentment. I shall later proceed to analyse whether this legislation will be in the interests of the community generally or in the interest of anybody at all.

The hon. gentleman went on to say that this Bill was introduced after mature consideration by his Government; but mature consideration of what? Was it mature consideration of the economic future of the State, the economic conditions that exist here and its future development, or was it mature consideration as to whether this 40-hour week would be a good election catch-cry? Examining what the Minister has told us, it is clear that the main consideration that induced hon. members opposite to introduce this legislation today was that they had to get some election catch-cry to go to the people in the last election.

Mr. Hanlon: We told them the truth, and we are keeping our word.

Mr. NICKLIN: The Minister said that the people of Queensland endorsed the policy of his Government in regard to the 40-hour week, but an examination of the figures of those who voted for the Government discloses that only 43 per cent. of the people of Queensland voted in favour of the Government's proposed introduction of the 40-hour week. A further analysis discloses that in those parts of Queensland that will be particularly vitally affected by its introduction the electors voted very solidly against the Government and their proposals for this reduction in the working week.

From the Minister's remarks and interjections coming from Government benches, one would imagine that we on this side were opposed to any improved conditions in industry.

A Government Member: There may be an isolated case.

Mr. NICKLIN: It is rather surprising to hear such a suggestion from an hon. member who never, or very seldom, employed anybody. Most of us on this side, not all, are employers, and the majority of our employees are quite satisfied with the conditions and treatment they get from us.

Mr. Hanlon interjected.

Mr. NICKLIN: The Government say that conditions in their employment are better than those outside the Government service, but judged on the statement of one of the major unions in Queensland the Government are the worst employers in Queensland.

The Country Party definitely is not opposed to reduced working hours or improved working conditions. Rather do we favour them, provided that those conditions can be produced without affecting production or reducing living standards. That is important. We do not object, either, if all sections of the community benefit equally and enjoy equally the advantages that may come from the reduction of the working week. That is particularly important to us because we believe that in a major reform such as this any benefits to be derived must be enjoyed by all sections equally.

When we examine this legislation from the point of view of those two principles we have very grave doubt as to whether it is fully justified at the present time. The Minister has endeavoured to justify its introduction by the fact that the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration has just pronounced a judgment stating that it is willing to fix a 40-hour week in its awards. That raises the further point, whether it would not have been more fitting to have asked our State Industrial Court to give a determination on the question of hours instead of asking this legislature, which is not a competent judicial body, to examine what the working hours should be in Queensland.

Let me revert to my first point, whether the 40-hour week can be introduced without affecting production or reducing living standards. When we realise that production trends in all industries at present are downward, under a 44-hour week, how in the name

of goodness can we expect that increased production, which is so essential to our national welfare, to come about with a shorter working week? That is a very hard question to answer. It is one to which no hon. member on the Government side has advanced any logical answer.

On our second point, that all sections of the community should share equally, it is very apparent that the introduction of this legislation will not bring about an equal sharing of any benefits that may accrue from it. It is apparent also that only a small section, comparatively speaking, will enjoy these benefits and a very large and important section will be denied them.

What are the conditions existing today? In the first place we have a condition of inflation that is not being checked, that is spiralling upward notwithstanding all the controls that Governments are endeavouring to apply. We find that we are going through a period of sky-high prices that are spiralling notwithstanding the fact that we allegedly have all the price-fixing controls in the world. In conjunction with it we have that fellow of inflation and spiralling prices—black marketing—that is so affecting the economy of our nation at the present time. And on top of that we have acute shortages not only of materials but of production. Production is falling instead of rising as it should be. These conditions are bringing about a condition of frustration and apathy, particularly amongst producers and workers of our community which, Mr. Mann, the introduction of this legislation will not in any way dissipate or remove.

For those reasons the Country Party definitely opposes the introduction of this legislation at the present time. Firstly, we oppose this Parliament's taking over the function of the Industrial Court in the fixation of hours and the conditions of employment. Secondly, we are opposed to this legislation because of its effect on production, which at the moment is a national necessity when we remember that everything we have and everything we hope to get comes from production. How, in the name of goodness, can we think of improving living standards and conditions, which this legislation is designed to bring about, when its effect will bring about a falling-off in production instead of an increase? Thirdly, we oppose this legislation because only a small section of the community will share in its benefit. Fourthly, and by no means the least of the reasons for opposing this legislation, we point to the detrimental effect it will have upon rural industries and the further development of the State. Bound up with that is the fact that it will bring about a drift of our population from the country to the cities—a drift that is alarming to all thinking people at the present time. The introduction of this legislation will give to a small section of the community advantages and will cause those who cannot get these advantages to come to the cities to seek them. As a result, the whole economy of this State will be upset

and instead of the rosy picture painted by the Minister this morning we shall find that there will not be those improved conditions that he envisaged.

Let us examine the first reason I advanced in our opposition to this legislation, namely, the taking over of the functions of the Industrial Court. The judgment of the Federal Court of Conciliation and Arbitration in favour of a 40-hour week strengthened the case against the practice of fixing hours by legislation. And, Mr. Mann, this practice of fixing hours by legislation is contrary to Labour's long-standing policy of industrial arbitration and was condemned in the past by such prominent Labour leaders as Messrs. Theodore, Forgan Smith, and McCormack, and by Ministers of the present Government, and also by that eminent Queensland jurist, the late Chief Justice McCawley, of the Queensland Industrial Court. It has been condemned more recently by Mr. Justice Jethro Brown, President of the Arbitration Court of South Australia. It is extremely unwise to take away the discretionary power given to the Industrial Court under the law in this State and to make a political football of conditions of employment, hours of employment and other things, as we are doing here today by the introduction into this Chamber of legislation of this kind.

When we look at the effect of this legislation we can only come to the conclusion that it will increase the existing disequilibrium between rural and city occupations; it will prevent tax reductions, add to transport charges and mean a heavy increase in production costs generally. It will inevitably reduce living standards and cause considerable dislocation and inconvenience in industry. The 40-hour week will not bring about the increased production envisaged by the Minister, but will reduce production when the outstanding need for an increase is evident on all sides, and, in addition, will raise prices, which are already at a very dangerously high level.

A moment ago I argued that it was wrong to submit this matter to Parliament for decision rather than to our properly constituted body, the Industrial Court. I have a number of Labour men behind me on that point. Here is what Mr. Theodore had to say on the point in February, 1923—

“There is no royal road to an industrial millennium. We have to weigh exactly the effects of every piece of legislation that we pass. Therefore, the passing of a statutory 44-hour week would have been very unwise. If they knocked off four hours, they would get lessened production, and that would bring about the economic consequences he has mentioned. It was not good policy by legislation to hamper or interfere with the free exercise by the Arbitration Court of its duties. The Legislature is not the instrument to effect that kind of reform. If it were, there would be no need for arbitration at all.”

Mr. W. Forgan Smith, another prominent Labour Premier in this State, speaking in this very Chamber on 6 August, 1924, had this to say—

“I do not, and never have, favoured the policy that Parliament should endeavour to fix wages. I have always believed in the principle that an Arbitration Court is the proper body to do such things—I am satisfied that the employees of the State would rue the day when the principle was laid down that Parliament should control or fix wages. That principle is unsound and contrary to Labour policy.”

“Unsound and contrary to Labour policy”! The Labour policy must have fallen quite a lot since those days.

I could quote the opinions of a number of prominent members of the Labour Party but I shall content myself with quoting what Mr. Chief Justice McCawley had to say on the point. He said—

“Arguments which may be suggested against direct intervention are (1) Parliament is not suitably constituted for the exercise of this specialised function; (2) a party political matter will be made of what hitherto has been regarded as in the nature of a judicial function; (3) wages may vary with the swing of the political pendulum. Political gains may be transitory, may be reversed by succeeding Parliaments, and may jeopardise the whole system of arbitration.”

Mr. Hanlon: That did happen, too.

Mr. NICKLIN: These quotations are sound arguments for our objection to having Parliament assuming the functions of the Industrial Court in the fixing of hours, wages and conditions, as it is proposed to do by this legislation.

My time is short and I shall deal with the elaboration of the other points that I mentioned on the second reading of the Bill. I want to touch now, however, on the point I mentioned, namely, the detrimental effect that this legislation will have on rural industries and the consequent future development of this State. I feel so strongly in regard to the effect this legislation will have on the rural industries that I propose to move an amendment at this stage of the Bill. I move the following amendment:—

“After the word ‘particulars’ insert the words—‘including conditions in primary industries which will ensure that primary producers will be able to provide terms and conditions of employment not less favourable than those in non-primary industries and callings.’”

That is very important.

Mr. Aikens: What is wrong with that?

Mr. NICKLIN: There is nothing wrong with that.

Mr. Hanlon: Could you not make it more definite?

Mr. NICKLIN: It is important that a large section of our community, the primary producers, who produce 80 per cent. of the

wealth of the State, should not be jeopardised or detrimentally affected by the introduction of this legislation. This morning, when an hon. member mentioned to the Minister something about rural industries, he did not seem very greatly concerned about them, but replied, “I will introduce a rural workers’ award if you want it.”

Mr. Gair: If you want it.

Mr. NICKLIN: No rural industry objects to any rural award provided the price it receives for its products enables it to pay that award.

Opposition Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. NICKLIN: That is the point. My amendment will, if carried, be an instruction to the Government to add to this legislation provision for such conditions in our primary industries as will ensure that they are able to give the terms and conditions of employment that may be set down in a rural employees award. That is what primary industries want. They want a price for their products that will enable them to give the very best conditions to their workers and also enjoy some of the leisure hours that we propose to give to some other sections of the community. To the Government it does not matter two hoots whether the primary producers work seven days a week and 12 hours a day on each of those seven days. That is of no concern to the Government at all, but it is of concern to this side of the Committee. We want to see the conditions in this legislation such that provision can be made for this very desirable factor in our primary industries.

Mr. Hanlon: Outline the conditions.

Mr. NICKLIN: I will later on; unfortunately my time is short. The Premier is trying to dodge the issue, in his usual way, by endeavouring to draw me off my track. I say very definitely that we members of the Country Party are very definitely opposed to this legislation if it does not give to the primary industries the same conditions as it gives to other industries.

Mr. Hanlon: Why do you not make that your amendment?

Mr. NICKLIN: That is the effect of it.

Mr. Hanlon: No.

Mr. NICKLIN: The primary industries should be placed in such a condition that they will be able to give terms and conditions of employment not less favourable than those in other industries. That is exactly what the Premier should want and that is exactly what we want.

I can see that the Premier and his Minister are a bit worried about this amendment because it is not their desire or function to worry about the primary producers, as long as they go on producing the real wealth of the State.

Mr. BRAND (Isis) (12.15 p.m.): I quite believe that the Minister in charge of this legislation will recognise the justice of the

amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition and endeavour to provide the amenities it contemplates for people who are on the land. I am sure, if he is going to fulfil what he said to this Committee this morning, that he will accept the amendment.

Mr. Hanlon: What does it mean? Tell us what it means.

Mr. BRAND: Before the last State election, when, as Leader of the Labour Party, the Premier was sorely pressed to know what election cry to go to the people with, he said that a reduction of working hours from 44 to 40 would increase production, so I am sure that he will be in favour of this amendment. I am sure in his own heart he would like to accept it.

Mr. Hanlon: What does it mean?

Mr. BRAND: I think the Leader of the Opposition was quite explicit in his statement when he moved the amendment; he desires to provide the same amenities for country people as the Government are going to give to other people. Evidently the Premier thinks that legislation of this kind, reducing hours from 44 to 40, is not going to affect other sections of the people. I can assure him that it is. I hope that the Premier, in introducing amenities for some people, does not wish to make it difficult for others. I feel that members sitting behind the Government have no desire to force some people to work longer hours so that a few may work shorter hours. From all the statements made from the hustings recently, all members sitting behind the Labour Party desire that all people shall have the benefit of this legislation, that amenities shall be shared by all people.

Mr. Aikens: Including the farmers.

Mr. BRAND: Including the farmers. That is what the amendment means—that the primary producers also can enjoy the amenities arising from leisure hours. Those who are engaged in the primary industries will welcome these amenities. What they do not want is extra duties placed upon them in order to allow some people to enjoy these amenities. I feel that the amendment is in keeping with the beliefs of all hon. members of this Committee—that all people shall share in them.

There has been a good deal of contention as to whether the 40-hour week can be made effective in some of the industries in our State, particularly during the harvest period.

The Minister this morning indicated that whilst the Government believe that they have a right and a duty to amend the hours of labour as they affect the employees of the city, they believe that the principle of the five-day week, which is desired by so many workers, should not be enacted by legislation but should be left to the Industrial Court to determine. In this respect the Leader of the Opposition was quite right when he said that the whole question of the hours and conditions should in the first place be left to the Industrial Court of Queensland, in the same way as the Federal Government left it to the

Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration to determine the principle of the 40-hour week, which determination was made last week. Had the matter been left to our own Industrial Court the court would have been able to work out a spread of hours that would be effective for all on a 40-hour week. In this respect I take it the Minister proposes that on the passing of this legislation the court will deal with the spread of hours as applications are made to it. That is certainly a benefit for some industries, but even so it can apply only to some employees and not all. We are concerned with the interests of the great body of workers known as the primary producers of Queensland and we feel that the Labour Party should stand behind us in our desire to give them some relief from the long hours of toil they must work in the rural districts. The amendment is very reasonable and I am sure that on reflection both the Minister in charge of the Bill and the Premier will feel justified in accepting it.

Mr. SPARKES (Aubigny) (12.23 p.m.): I am rather surprised that the Minister has not already jumped to his feet and said he would accept the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Hanlon: If we could get a meaning out of it, we should know.

Mr. SPARKES: Listening to the Minister introducing the Bill I became very downhearted at the picture the hon. gentleman painted of the bad and cruel old days. He had every one of us worrying about the bad old days of the past but we on this side are anxious to see, as the hon. members on the other side are supposed to see, that every section of the community enjoys this reform.

Mr. Hanlon: Don't make me laugh.

Mr. SPARKES: If ever the Premier made me laugh it was a few minutes ago when, perusing the amendment, he said, "I do not understand it." There are none so blind as those who will not see. Imagine the Premier not understanding a simple amendment such as this! It was so obvious that I could not help laughing and even the hon. gentleman himself had to laugh at the ridiculous statement that he could not understand it.

Are hon. members on the Government benches consistent? Do those who represent country electorates not want for their constituencies the same amenities as those enjoyed by the city people? We have heard so much talk from them of giving amenities to country people. Are not such statements everlastingly made in this Chamber? But what do we find? As soon as there are possibilities of their getting something, hon. members, such as the Premier, say that they do not understand what we really want. We want a fair deal for all sections of the community.

As soon as a shorter working week is introduced in the country and the cost of production increases, we hear a clamour from the cities for cheaper goods. Immediately the price of butter, onions or any other simple product of the country goes up there is a

clamour from the Government side for it to be pulled down. We on this side believe that the farmer is entitled to just recognition for his work. There are some hon. members on the Government side who represent country electorates and I ask them whether they will say that the farmer does not work long hours. Is there any hon. member on the Government side who would say that the farmers are not entitled to the same working conditions as the men in the city? Their silence clearly indicates that really they support the amendment. It would seem to me that I and others on this side are wasting the time of the Committee by proceeding any further because the Minister must accept the amendment with open arms. He spoke at length in an attempt to justify better conditions for the people and, that being so, hon. members on the Government side must vote for the amendment. We cannot understand any hon. member on the Government side saying, "We believe that the man in the city should have a better time and shorter working hours while the man in the country should work longer hours." Do they subscribe to that policy? Apparently they do not. In that case it would seem that the amendment so ably moved by the Leader of the Opposition is exactly what the Committee desires.

Mr. Roberts: Are you in favour of a 40-hour week for the cattle-raising industry?

Mr. SPARKES: We are in favour of the same conditions in the country as in the city. We believe that the man working in the city is not entitled to better working conditions or shorter hours than the man on the farm.

Mr. Hanlon: The Bill will provide a 40-hour week for men in the country.

Mr. SPARKES: The Premier will have an opportunity of telling us why he thinks the man in the city should have a much better time and much shorter working hours than the man in the country. It will be interesting to hear any hon. member on the Government side advancing reasons in support of such an argument. The hon. member for Carnarvon, the hon. member for Kennedy and others who represent dairying electorates know that dairymen work long hours. Is there any industry in which the people work such long hours so continuously as they do in dairying? Is it not only right that those people should enjoy some of the amenities provided for the cities? Why they were not included in the first place, I do not know.

I do not subscribe to the principle that Parliament should fix these hours and I am surprised that hon. members on the Government side see fit to support legislation for that purpose. It is the duty of the Industrial Court to fix the hours. As the Leader of the Opposition has said, the method being adopted is one-sided and subject to change. Apparently the Government had to do something, and as a way out they held out the bait to the elector, "If we are returned we will give you a 40-hour working week."

Mr. Hanlon interjected.

Mr. SPARKES: I hand it to the Premier that he was successful. I am not denying it, but he certainly got a close run for his money, much closer than he expected. Nevertheless, I say, whether rightly or wrongly, that it is my opinion that the bait the Government held out turned the tide in the industrial centres of this State. Had they not held out the bait, Labour would have been thrown out. The Premier did a good job for his party.

I am not with the hon. gentleman when he says, "What does this amendment mean?" I say that there is no man in this Chamber, nor is there any man in any such place in Australia, who knows better than the Premier what it means. He knows what it means, but he laughs it off, as if it were too ridiculous for words. The Premier knows that he has the opportunity before him of telling this Committee why he will not give us in the country the same conditions as prevail in the cities. I have pleasure in supporting the amendment.

Hon. V. C. GAIR (South Brisbane—Secretary for Labour and Industry) (12.32 p.m.): Mr. Mann, the amendment is meaningless. I have considered it since it was handed to me and I have endeavoured to ascertain its meaning or the thought that prompted its submission. Perhaps all hon. members have not had the opportunity of perusing the amendment, although we all heard it when it was read. It says—

"After 'particulars' insert—'including conditions in primary industries which will ensure that primary producers will be able to provide terms and conditions of employment not less favourable than those in non-primary industries and callings.'"

Mr. Pie: What is wrong with it?

Mr. GAIR: I ask the hon. member to wait. In the first place, let me say—and I say this definitely—that this Government believe, and I think I made it clear in the course of my speech this morning, that there is room for improvement in the working conditions of the people employed in rural industries. We believe also that if any section of the people have been and are still being exploited it is the section employed by the farmers of our State in many cases. (Opposition dissent.)

The hon. member for Aubigny says that we want to give a 40-hour week to those in the cities and deny it to the workers in the country. That is not true. Our Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act covers all industries, and for that reason the amendment is wrong because it endeavours to particularise. Our Act, I repeat, covers all industries, and it is competent for the workers employed in any industry to approach the court for an award governing their working standards and conditions. There is nothing to stop them.

Opposition Members: Then why not allow the court to do it?

Mr. GAIR: A moment ago hon. members opposite were complaining about the direction of Parliament to the court and pointing out

what the court should do and now they ask that the Act be amended to direct the court to provide certain conditions and hours of work. Their attitude, to say the least of it, is certainly contradictory and inconsistent. There is no section of workers that is not free to approach the court for an award covering the industry concerned. The Act applies to industry generally and there are no special omissions of any industry from its operations. The rural worker in common with any other worker in industry, is free to approach the court for an award. The Act is an Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act and there is no reference in any part of it to any particular industry, nor is any industry specially omitted from its operations. I repeat that fact because it is important.

Mr. Pie: It merely says that the hours of work shall be so-and-so?

Mr. GAIR: Yes. It gives the court discretionary power in certain instances in which it may decide not to follow the direction of the Act and declare a working week for the industry concerned. The amendment asks that the law be amended to direct the court to determine not only the working hours of an industry, but also the economic conditions of the industry. It aims at placing upon the court the responsibility of determining the economy of a rural industry so that it may be enabled to meet the 40-hour week or any other conditions declared by the court.

I repeat that the amendment is meaningless. Hon. members opposite would have you believe that their chief concern and interest are the rural worker, but their statements are not supported by their performances. The rural worker has the right, in common with any other worker, to go to the court for an award.

For those reasons I refuse to accept the amendment.

Mr. PIE (Windsor) (12.38 p.m.): I listened very intently to the remarks of the Minister in introducing the Bill and at this stage I do not intend to generalise or particularise in regard to the 40-hour week or to say whether it is right or not in our economy. At the moment I want to support the amendment.

I have always wondered how any Government could expect a 40-hour week to operate in a country area. I have had a little experience of farming, of poultry farming in particular, and from the point of view of hours of work it is a full-time job. A man working in a rural industry on his own property knows no hours whatever. He is really like a Minister of the Crown. Can any Minister of the Crown say that he works only a 40-hour week?

I say that even if he is lucky he works a 60-hour week. Can he say that because he works a 60-hour week he should be entitled to time and a half for all time over 40 hours? He knows very well that it would be impracticable for him to work a 40-hour week; he would not get through his job. The same remarks apply to rural industry.

But there should be some compensation to the man or woman who is willing to work 60 or 80 hours a week to produce for you and me, Mr. Mann, who work in secondary industries. You cannot legislate for one section of the community. In a democratic country law and regulation must apply equally to all people. That is the fault I have been finding again and again with the Federal Government—law and regulation do not apply equally to all people. If this Government are definitely bringing down a law that will not apply equitably to all people, and unless the Minister will come out into the open and say that this Bill will apply a 40-hour week to the rural industry and that he will allow, in the price structure of butter and other products, time and a half to the farmer or the people working in the industry, then he will be legislating for one section of the community only. If that did happen, as the hon. member for Aubigny said, and the price of butter went up to 3s. per lb. who would be the first person to moan? The industrial worker.

Does the Minister expect that the farmers and their families will be fools for all time? Does he expect them to work on a dairy farm 90 hours a week, including Saturday and Sunday, to provide the wherewithal for people working a 40-hour week? The price structure will have to be altered to provide for the payment of penalty rates to people engaged in the rural industry should they work in excess of 40 hours. If the dairy industry has to work 80 hours a week to maintain efficiency, a price will have to be fixed giving the people in it time and a half for all hours worked over 40 hours a week. Why not apply the same formula as is applied in secondary industries? If a secondary industry is compelled to work longer than 40 hours a week it has to include that extra time in its price structure, on the basis of time and a half. If it has to work double time, and gets the permission of the union to work it, all the extra costs are included in the cost of the article to the people.

Who pays these extra costs? Everyone, not only the people working in the industry but the farmer himself. The farmer has to continue working 80 hours, but has to pay the price of goods turned out by people working 40 hours. Truly that principle is wrong. A provision must be made in the price structure for time and a half over 40 hours to enable the farmer to get the benefit of the fruits of his hard labour. Then you will keep the spiral going up and up as it is now, when wages will have to be increased to meet it.

The point I make very definitely is: if we are to continue to disregard the rural industries then we shall have a continuous drift to the cities, as those on the land will desire to work a 40-hour week. The young farmer will say, "I will not work on Saturday and Sunday." The young man in the country will say, "I will earn more money in Brisbane working in a factory 40 hours a week, because the rural award does not give me any overtime for the extra hours I work in the country."

The Minister made a very important point unwittingly. He knows very well that in the rural award the week prescribed is a 56-hour week, whereas the working week in all other industries is one of 44 hours. Is he going to allow that to continue?

Mr. Gair: Actually there is no State award for the rural industries. There was one but the Moore Government scrapped it.

Mr. PIE: The hon. gentleman knows that is the general provision—that there was a 44-hour week and a 56-hour week was provided for in the rural industries. I have a copy of it at home—I think it is a Federal Award—and it provided for 56 hours for the rural industries, while the others provided for 44. Is the Minister going to allow that to continue? The drift to the city will be very apparent if he does. I know young lads who came back from the war and called at my office and said to me, "Can you give me a job in your place working 44 hours, because I am not prepared to go back on the farm and work all hours of the day and night." You cannot blame them. It is essential that we consider these things. If, as the Premier says, he wants an amendment for a 40-hour week in rural industries, provided those rural industries are compensated by increased prices, I shall be willing to move it. Then you will see what will happen. We will call the bluff of the Premier in that respect. If he wants an amendment moved for a 40-hour week and will make provision for increased prices to the rural industries or pay them time and a half for having worked over 40 hours I am 100 per cent. behind it. I have seen people on poultry farms and other rural industries working night and day and doing so willingly; but the time is coming when the man on the land will say, "I have had enough. While the men in the city are enjoying these reduced hours I am not going to continue working night and day unless I am paid for it." He will be right.

It is amusing to see the change of attitude that has taken place on the part of the State Government. When there was no election on the horizon, this is what the Premier of this State said—

Mr. Sparkes: Not the present Premier?

Mr. PIE: The present Premier. He said on 23 February, 1946, that the attitude of the Government was that the 40-hour week would receive their support if established on a national basis thereby preserving equitable competition between industries operating in the various States. "Established on a national basis," yet when there was an election on, this is what the Premier said in Bowen—

"Whether it would be a crime or not, the Labour Party intended to introduce a 40-hour week if it was returned to power."

"Whether I break the law or not, if we get back to power we will introduce the 40-hour week." That is what it means.

Mr. Aikens: Where was he when he said that?

1947—P

Mr. PIE: In Bowen. On 11 February, 1946, the Secretary for Labour and Industry—

Mr. Gair: 18 months ago.

Mr. PIE: You thought the people would forget it.

Mr. Gair: 18 months ago.

Mr. PIE: Do not forget that the Premier has been taking me back to what I said five years ago. I am going to quote something the hon. gentleman said 18 months ago. This is what appeared in the Press on 11 February, 1946.

"Fears were expressed to a deputation by the Minister for Labour and Employment today that a 40-hour week might keep new industries and factories out of the State."

And it did. If the 40-hour week had not been introduced on a national basis I will tell you right now that I know two factories that would not have come to Queensland. Listen to this—and I can imagine the hon. gentleman saying it—

"Before the Queensland Government would introduce a 40-hour week into this State, it would be necessary to examine the matter very closely and to consider every aspect very carefully."

That is not what he said during the election.

The next is "a beaut." The same Minister, the Secretary for Labour and Industry, said—

"Some people might argue that the Government itself should not legislate for a 40-hour week, as it is proposed to do next session, but should leave that matter also for the Industrial Court."

The very thing we are contending now; but the Minister is a bit worried because he says—

"Up to a point, I believe that all awards and conditions are dealt with more appropriately by the court."

That is the very thing the Leader of the Opposition is saying. He proceeds—

"The court also is the appropriate body to determine the basic wage, but I believe the position is different regarding hours."

How could the position regarding hours be different? Wages and hours are the same: there is no difference. Nobody can convince me that there is a difference. If a man works fewer hours it means that he gets more wages; there is no doubt about that.

The statement continues—

"There is nothing wrong with the Government introducing legislation to provide for a 40-hour week. Labour introduced a 44-hour week many years ago, but in 1929 the Moore Government legislated for the restoration of a 48-hour week.

"Labour believes that a 40-hour week is due to Queensland workers."

When there were no elections on the horizon the Minister said that the 40-hour week could be introduced only on a national basis. The Premier said it too.

Mr. Sparkes: When?

Mr. PIE: The Premier said it on 23 February, 1946.

I almost forgot what the Premier said; but this is his statement in Bowen—

“40 Hours no Drawback.

“This idea that the 40-hour week is going to stop production is just so much eye-wash.”

The Minister admits he could not get through his job in 40 hours; how then does he expect any other person who has work to do to get through his job? Then he says that production will not be affected. Would not the Minister's work be affected if he worked only 40 hours a week; would not his production decrease? There would be a smaller number of Bills coming before the House, less publicity in the Press. As I have said time and again, these Ministers are a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde Government. At one time the Premier says a 40-hour week can be introduced only on a national basis and the Minister backs him up and says that if they introduce the 40-hours and no other State does, factories will not come to this State. Immediately after that he kicks an electioneering football into the ground of politics; if ever there was one, it was the Government's statement that they would introduce it anyhow.

I feel that an apology is due to the Premier. I did not realise that he had a Canadian Liberal there before lunch when I was making such a vigorous attack on him and his Ministers. I can assure him that I should have waited till this afternoon if I had known the visitor was there.

I made the point that the Premier and the Ministers of State have no 40-hour week at all. They work when there is work to be done. That actually is the position of the man on the land; if there is work to be done he has to do it, just as the Minister must. Nobody can convince me that working reduces production. It does not. It increases production. Every man who has been successful in life knows that the backbone of it has been hard work, no matter what kind of business he has been in. I do stress that any hours worked over 40 hours should as a basic principle be included in the costs of goods. Why should the man on the land pay the increased cost of goods produced in secondary industry on a 40-hour week while the man engaged in secondary industry does not have to pay any of the increased costs incurred by the man on the land who is working 50, 60 and 70 hours a week?

Then there is the increased cost to the Government; who is going to pay for it? The man on the land pays in greater freight on his fodder and other things, as well as we in the city. I believe—and I have made it apparent before in this Chamber—that the future greatness of this State must be based on the proper relation of secondary industry and primary industry; they must work closer together if the State is to benefit. If we find one phase of industry working a 40-hour week and getting paid overtime for any

increased cost of production over 40 hours and another section not getting paid for that extra work, where are we going to finish?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have allowed the hon. member a great deal of latitude. I remind him that there is an amendment before the Committee.

Mr. PIE: This amendment says:—

“Including conditions in primary industries which will ensure that primary producers will be able to provide terms and conditions of employment not less favourable than those in non-primary industries.”

I am making out a case for more favourable conditions for the man on the land. It was wrong for this Government to make an electioneering football out of the 40-hour week. I repeat that any law or regulation must apply equally to all people in this country. No-one can deny the justice of that.

Mr. Moore interjected.

Mr. PIE: You would not understand.

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

Mr. PIE: The hon. member would not understand what anyone was saying. I sum up in this way: if you should bring in this 40-hour week in the city alone and do not give compensation to the rural areas you will have a drift to the city of the young men, and nothing will stop it. There is the question of breaking up the home life of the country. What is to happen when you have a young lad of 17 or 18 working hard up to 60 or 70 hours a week for what is virtually pocket money? He says, “Well, dad, I am off to the city where I can get £5 or £6 a week working 40 hours a week.”

Mr. Moore: What do you know?

Mr. PIE: I know more than the hon. member. My solution is this: assess the average number of hours worked in each section of the rural industry, then base the award on 40 hours and give time and a-half and double time for Saturday and Sunday and for anything worked over the 40 hours in the week; provide for that increased cost in the increased price of the product to the people who are getting the 40-hour week. We in industry know that immediately this 40-hour week comes into operation we have only to apply to the Prices Branch and we shall get higher prices for our goods. That has been made apparent. The point I make now is that the rural industry has a just case, in that you are bringing in a 40-hour working week and it is working 56 hours and it wants time and a-half and double time for the extra time worked, and we should assess that in the price we get from the man working on 40 hours a week. That is a logical conclusion and on that basis I have no hesitation in supporting the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. V. C. GAIR (South Brisbane—Secretary for Labour and Industry) (2.37 p.m.): I rise at this stage merely to answer

a few of the criticisms of the hon. member for Windsor, but before doing so I would point out that I and many other people in Queensland today would be very interested to have a definite statement from the hon. member for Windsor, in common with other hon. members opposite, as to whether they are or are not in favour of the 40-hour week. I challenge the hon. member for Windsor and members of his party to declare themselves today while this Bill is before the Committee. It is all very well for hon. members to dodge round the question and fail to say definitely whether they are for or against the issue. It is all very well for the hon. member with one face to represent himself as being the friend of the working-class people, but with the other face to oppose any reforms brought before this Parliament that may give the workers some additional improvement in their working conditions.

I have already dealt with the amendment, but I will return to it, much to the discomfiture of the members of the Country Party who supported the Moore Government who were responsible for the provision in the amending Act that removed rural workers from the jurisdiction of the Industrial Court. For the time being I will leave it at that, because it is my intention at the moment to deal with the hon. member for Windsor. He stated that it was wrong for the Government to make a political football of the 40-hour week.

Mr. Pie: So it was.

Mr. GAIR: Had the Government gone to the people without reference to the 40-hour week, and then come back and introduced this Bill, the opponents of the Government, including hon. members opposite, would have charged us with not having placed the facts before the electors at the general elections. Unlike members of the Queensland People's Party on the matter of the salary increase, we told the people that if we were re-elected we would introduce a bill for a 40 hour week in the first session. That was totally in contrast with the subterfuge of the members of the Queensland People's Party in the election campaign who sought political credit from the fact that they had refused to take the increased parliamentary salary or allowances but no reference to the fact that if returned they would accept it. They came back here and took the increase—without any reference to the people.

Mr. WANSTALL: I rise to a point of order. The statement by the Secretary for Labour and Industry so far as it applies to me is not correct. At every public meeting in my electorate I said definitely that I considered the Government were dishonest in their action in increasing parliamentary salaries without reference to the people, and for that reason I had refused to accept it; but if returned again as member for Toowong I proposed to take it.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask hon. members on my right and on my left to allow the debate to proceed without interruption. I cannot be continually calling hon. members to

order and I will name the first hon. member who refuses to obey my call.

I ask the Secretary for Labour and Industry to accept the explanation of the hon. member for Toowong.

Mr. GAIR: I do so gladly, but the hon. member for Toowong will agree with me, I am sure, if he is honest—and I believe he is—that that was not the general attitude of his party.

Mr. PIE: I rise to a point of order now on behalf of the Queensland People's Party. That was the general attitude of the Queensland People's Party and, without exception, every man made that point. I want to make it quite clear that in my own case I said I would not accept that salary on principle while wages were pegged.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the Secretary for Labour and Industry to accept the explanation of the hon. member for Windsor.

Mr. GAIR: Being an obedient member of the Chamber, I do as you ask. I was certainly of the opinion—and I think it will be the opinion of many more—that Mr. Taylor, the hon. member for Hamilton, was the embarrassing influence on the question of salaries. When elected as hon. member for Hamilton, he came in and, without hesitation, he took it because he believed that he was entitled to it. He took it, much to the embarrassment of those who had failed to take it and who had led the people to believe at the general election that they were the lily-whites—

Mr. PIE: I rise to a point of order. The Minister is just repeating exactly what he said before, and I ask that he withdraw it.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Minister has accepted the explanation of the hon. member for Windsor.

Mr. GAIR: It would appear that the subject of salary increases is one on which hon. members of the Queensland People's Party are very sensitive. I was not dealing with the hon. member for Toowong or the hon. member for Windsor; I was dealing with the hon. member for Hamilton, who showed good judgment and acted independently. He said, "Well, I am worth this salary and I will go and get it," and he did, and the others followed suit.

The hon. member for Windsor endeavoured to gain a great deal of political capital from statements made by me in February, 1942, according to his story.

Mr. Pie: December, 1946.

Mr. GAIR: Then 1946. He referred to statements by me concerning the introduction of the 40-hour week.

Mr. Brand: Do you not remember them?

Mr. GAIR: I do, and I do not deny having made them.

Mr. Sparkes: But you contradicted yourself.

Mr. GAIR: I did not. I made those statements and they were in accordance with Government policy, as well as in keeping with the conditions and circumstances obtaining in February, 1942.

Mr. Pie: In 1946.

Mr. GAIR: All right, 1946. It was just a slip of the tongue.

Mr. Pie: That is twice you have let it slip.

Mr. GAIR: The other day the hon. member for Toowong made a statement three times and then denied having said it. Then the hon. member for Windsor reads a statement of my attitude at the election in the fifth month of 1947.

Mr. Pie: It was the fourth month.

Mr. GAIR: All right. It was 16 to 18 months later.

Mr. Brand: What are you apologising for?

Mr. GAIR: Recently the hon. member for Windsor hit the headlines in the newspaper for having told the Premier to shut up or be quiet when he had the floor. He represented himself as being one who would not brook any interruption or interjection.

He told the Premier in great style where he got off. I do not propose to tell the hon. member to be quiet or to shut up, because his remarks have no effect upon me. I merely make reference to that incident to show that he is one-eyed and not fair.

Mr. Pie: You are getting red in the face.

Mr. GAIR: The hon. member need not worry about my mental or physical condition.

I am saying that in the 18 months a very marked change took place in this State. When I made that statement in February, 1946, the war had been over for only six months, and the demobilisation of our armed forces had not begun, and industry was still required to make the best use of war-time and female labour. Furthermore, I would say definitely that the popular will to which I referred in my opening remarks this morning was more definite in May, 1947, than it was in February, 1946. The Federal Court of Conciliation and Arbitration had declared its itself in October, 1946 in favour of the principle of a 40-hour week. The New South Wales Labour Government had introduced legislation for a 40-hour week in March, 1947, and—to use the argument that our friends opposite are using in connection with rural workers flocking to the city because of a discrimination in the length of the working week—I ask: would not the same position have obtained if New South Wales had a 40-hour week and Queensland a 44-hour week? Queensland workers would have gone to New South Wales to obtain their employment. That is the argument used by hon. members opposite in connection with country and city workers. That argument in connection with New South Wales and Queensland, destroys the

argument advanced by the Leader of the Opposition this morning. Since 1946 there has been a 10-per cent. increase in productivity per man hour, and that rate continues to increase steadily. It had a major and very important influence on the change of attitude of the Government and of members of the party.

Mr. Nicklin: If there has been an increase in production, where are all the materials that are being made? They are in shorter supply now than ever before.

Mr. GAIR: Those figures are accurate and sound.

Mr. Russell: Whose figures are they? The Commonwealth Government Statistician's?

Mr. GAIR: And supported by the State Statistician.

Mr. Sparkes: You know that food is in shorter supply in Britain today than ever before.

Mr. GAIR: As I was saying, it explodes the attempt made by the hon. member for Windsor to represent me as Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. I have given a very sound reason for the change of policy on the part of the Government and the change in statements made by myself and other members of this party.

Let me now deal with the members of the Country Party, and particularly those who, like the hon. member for Isis, were supporters of the Moore Government and who were strongly supported by the present hon. members for Aubigny and Murrumba in the 1932 elections. Let us see what the Moore-Country Party Government did in 1929 in regard to rural workers on farms. Section 6 of the Act for which they were responsible reads—

“Save as next hereinafter provided, this Act applies to all callings whatsoever and to all persons whomsoever:

Provided that—

(i.) Nothing in this Act applies to any State child within the meaning of ‘The State Children Act of 1911’ or to persons engaged in domestic service or as gardener or handy man or yardman in private homes, or to persons engaged in a managerial office, or to persons employed in work such as is usually carried on in farming operations on dairy farms, fruit farms, or agricultural farms, or to casual workers such as noxious-weed destroyers, scrub cutters, ringbarkers, suckerers, or to jackeroos, book and store keepers on stations; but this restriction shall not be construed to exclude from the provisions of this Act persons employed (a) in any capacity on farms in the sugar industry, or (b) in connection with shearing operations, or (c) in butter factories or cheese factories, or factories engaged in the manufacture of articles of commerce prepared by such process of manufacture from primary produce.”

Hon. members opposite, especially the hon. member for Isis, supported the Moore Government in excluding the rural workers from the provisions of the Queensland industrial laws, yet they come here today and represent themselves as the friends of the workers on the farms and the stations. So much hypocrisy and humbug has never been demonstrated before by that or any other political party in Australia. The section I have quoted demonstrates the attitude of the Country Party towards the workers employed by farmers, graziers and station-owners and clearly shows that they believe that they have the right to exploit such workers, to work them at their will without the observance of any industrial laws. Hon. members opposite stand condemned for their inconsistency at least and their pretence to want to bring such workers within the ambit of this measure, workers whom they exiled from the Industrial Court and excluded from the industrial laws. This indicates conclusively that they are not sincere, that they do not want it, and that they are satisfied with the present industrial set-up.

The hon. member for Windsor said that I, as a busy Minister of the Crown working perhaps 60 to 80 hours a week, could not hope to do all my work in a 40-hour week and suggested that was a sound reason why the working people of this State should be denied the reform that we propose to give them in this measure.

Mr. Sparkes: He did not say that.

Mr. GAIR: He did. He said that because I as a Minister of the Crown could not do all my work in a 40-hour week then Bill Jones working in the textile industry should not enjoy a 40-hour week either.

Mr. Pie: I never said that.

Mr. GAIR: I content myself at this stage with those few remarks.

Mr. EVANS (Mirani) (2.53 p.m.): I listened with great interest to the speech of the Minister in introducing the Bill, in the course of which he referred to the economy of the State and the oversea market. My main opposition to the Bill is that Parliament is usurping the functions of the Industrial Court. I take it that I am in order in dealing with the Bill generally now.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I desire to remind the hon. member that there is an amendment before the Chamber.

Mr. EVANS: I support the amendment because it is necessary to give protection to the primary producers of the State but I want to stress the fact that in introducing a Bill of this kind the Government are proposing to usurp the functions of the Industrial Court in that they ask Parliament to fix the hours of work and this limits the court's exercise of its discretion. The hands of the court will now be tied.

We have been asked by the Minister to declare ourselves on a 40-hour week but I want to tell him that I am not competent nor

is this Parliament competent to give a decision on a 40-hour week.

We have a court whose constitution and set-up are good. We accept its decisions and abide by them. (Government laughter.) One hon. member opposite is laughing, but that is a positive fact. We always accept the court's decisions. I know that the concerns I am connected with always accept and give effect to the court's rulings. The Government, by introducing this Bill, are merely giving effect to a resolution carried at the Townsville convention.

I have told the sugar-growers in my electorate that problems cannot be overcome and rectified merely by carrying resolutions. That is so with the motion before the Committee. I will quote better authorities than myself. The Minister went as far back as the Moore Government. I shall not go back as far as that, but I can go back to a statement by Mr. Forgan Smith, an ex-Premier, who said—

“He stood for the maintenance of the Arbitration Court, free from political interference, and which would adjudicate untrammelled upon the facts laid down before it in accordance with the provisions of the Act.

“Parliament was not in a position to fix wages.”

And I agree with that.

“Convention must face the facts of life as they existed. The system of arbitration adopted by the Labour Government was sound and just and none would regret it more than the workers if this structure was destroyed.”

Mr. Turner: He was talking about wages.

Mr. EVANS: This Bill affects wages as well as hours. The Bill will provide that wages must be the same for 40 hours as 44. You cannot dissociate one from the other.

I will go further and quote the remarks of the Treasurer. Speaking on a request by the railway employees for an increase in the basic wage, he said—

“When the Premier recently received the deputation of railwaymen, who explained to him their case for the restoration of the 5 per cent. salary reduction which took place in 1922, he informed them that the policy of the Government was conciliation and arbitration, and expressed the opinion that any attempt to fix wages by Parliament would be disastrous.”

There are the statements of a Minister of this Government!

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I should like the hon. member to connect up his remarks with the matter before the Chair.

Mr. EVANS: I will do so, Mr. Chairman. I am a representative of the primary producers. I am a representative of a section of the people who work hard and who work long hours. Therefore I must analyse this Bill from the point of view of how it is going to affect those primary producers. Legislation designed to protect one section of the

community is wrong. If at any time any legislation designed to protect one section of the people only is introduced it should be analysed to see just how it will affect the other section of the community. I speak for that section which produces 80 per cent. of the real wealth of this great State, that is, the primary producers. Has any consideration been given to the reaction that this 40-hour week will have on primary producers? I have in this session listened to speeches by the hon. member for Gregory, the hon. member for Barcoo, and the hon. member for Carpentaria. I believe they were all quite sincere. They almost cried on one occasion when they talked about the womenfolk in their electorates having to work 60 and 70 hours a week cooking and attending to their duties. Those people were in primary industries. The hon. member for Barcoo spoke also of the hardships suffered by the primary producers in his electorate. The hon. member for Gregory did the same. What will be the effect of this legislation on those people? It must increase their costs. Are the Government going to protect these people against increased costs that will follow this legislation? They are not. They will simply carry it out. The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock spoke very sympathetically the other day about the sugar industry on the Sugar Experiment Stations Acts Amendment Bill.

He told us how we had suffered, how competent we were, and how necessary it was for the $\frac{3}{4}$ d. a lb. to be restored to us. He went back to the year 1932 and told us that we suffered that reduction since then, and that production had suffered. And it has suffered. In my speech the other day I told you what had happened with the export position, to which the Minister dealt when introducing the Bill. I informed you that whereas we had a quota of 400,000 tons under the International Agreement our export today was down to 100,000 tons—possibly under that figure this year. Are we going to step up production by reducing hours? I say definitely today that it is a matter of more purchasing power for the people, more wages for the people. I do not believe that the basic wage is high enough; I believe the worker should get more than he is getting today; and it is the duty of the people of this community to get together and get production to hold those markets. If you do not hold those markets, what is the result going to be?

Mr. Aikens: That is a condemnation of the court. You were booming it up a while ago.

Mr. EVANS: I am giving an opinion. I say the court should make a decision. I rose the other day and attacked the Minister for under-paying the staff of the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations; and they are underpaid.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to keep to the subject before the Committee.

Mr. EVANS: I appreciate the latitude you have allowed me. I am a new member and I have read the Standing Orders and

the more I read them the less I know about them; but I do assure you I want to observe them.

I listened to the hon. member for Warwick the other day and he stated that in the dairying industry there was sweated child labour. Will this Bill not accentuate that position unless it is amended to give protection to those primary industries, and put these people on the same footing as others, and allow them to work lesser hours than they are working at the present time. The whole trend of the 40-hour week is to increase costs to the primary producer, and increase his hours and make him work harder; and he has no opportunity of passing it on.

Mr. DECKER (Sandgate) (3.3 p.m.): I rise to support the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition, on which the attitude of the Government greatly surprises me. I have been in this Chamber long enough to know when the Government are embarrassed, and it was evident that they were embarrassed this morning when the Premier and the Secretary for Labour and Industry pretended that they failed to see any sense in the amendment. The Minister may quibble about its phraseology, about the meaning of certain words, but at least he must know, from the speeches made from this side, the principle that is involved. The principle is of such importance that the Minister should have got up and said, "I am not able to accept the amendment as it is, but I will give favourable consideration to bringing forward an amendment based on the principle put forward by the Leader of the Opposition." That would have been a real approach towards making this Bill a success. I think that unless some form of amendment adopting the principle enunciated by the Leader of the Opposition is embodied in the Bill the Bill will be more or less a failure, because it will have tremendous effects on production.

The hon. member for Windsor put forward one principle that we cannot afford to neglect, unless we make a special provision for the workers in primary production—and that is embodied in this amendment—we are going to have a mad rush to the city industries.

From my experience of the farmers in my own area I know that for the past years their great trouble has been labour. The labour shortage is acute at the present time. It has become worse over the years and now when there is a definite shortage of labour in primary production we have the Government introducing a 40-hours-a-week Bill. If the Bill goes through without incorporating the principle provided in the amendment to meet that position conditions will become more acute and there will be a greater decline in primary production than we have already experienced. There is no question about that. This is a serious matter.

At present I am speaking to the amendment, because I am in favour of a 40-hour week.

Mr. Jones: But you have your tongue in your cheek.

Mr. DECKER: I have not, and if I may use the same expression I think the Government are doing that. A few moments ago we had the Minister drawing attention to the Country Party representatives of the Moore Government who excluded the rural workers from the provisions of the Act. But what are the members of that party doing today? They are merely endeavouring to have provision made for rural workers and we have the remarkable spectacle of the Minister denying the entry of this principle into the Bill. What sort of an argument does the hon. gentleman use? On the one hand he decries the attitude of the hon. member for Cunningham and on the other he stands for the very principle for which he condemns the Country Party. That is what it amounts to.

I make a plea to the Minister to give the most serious consideration to the principles involved in this Bill. It is absolutely necessary to do so in the interests of production, principally primary production, in this country. These are questions that bother the producers at the present time. In my district they want to know what will really happen when the 40-hour week comes into operation. They are fearful that the labour shortage will become more acute. Others who grow perishables are wondering what will happen if they can produce only for perhaps five days in the week. I know this matter is to be left to the Industrial Court to decide but it is these things that are unsettling the community, which is already suffering the disadvantage of a shortage of labour and reduced prices. I am a great believer in having to pay for what you get. As the leader of our party pointed out this morning, in his own field of industry as in all fields the extra costs are passed on to the consumer. Why is this policy not adopted for those in agricultural and pastoral pursuits? If it is fair for one it is fair for another also.

There is no doubt that this Government are influenced by pressure tactics. Industries are naturally located in the city and it is the city industrial industry interests that appear to be the predominating influence of the Labour Government: the farmer runs a dead last in every race. It is time that we bestirred ourselves to ensure that an even balance is maintained, that Bills passing through Parliament give equal treatment to city industrial workers and to land workers.

Mr. WANSTALL (Toowong) (3.9 p.m.): I should like to state my position towards the amendment for a number of reasons, the first being that a large part of my electorate consists of rural industries, industries embracing poultry-raising, the growing and marketing of perishables—vegetables, tomatoes, cut flowers—and the dairying industry.

Mr. Turner: How many employees have they?

Mr. WANSTALL: There are many employees in that industry. I know that as a result of the conditions operating against the primary producer in a locality so close to

the metropolitan area as mine the sons and daughters of many of the former employees of these people are now working in the city, travelling to their work in the city daily and in the evening returning to their farms.

So much is this so that a couple of years ago I had to take a deputation to the Main Roads Commission in order to get a workers' bus to bring these people to their jobs in the city. It leaves Upper Brookfield at 6 o'clock in the morning and brings in 20 or so of the sons and daughters of farmers to jobs in the city.

The principle of the amendment is vital to the health of the economy of our country. I agree with the hon. member for Sandgate that the Minister can quibble about the verbiage, that he can point the finger at the unhappy choice of phraseology if he wants to, but there is not one hon. member of this Committee today who is left in any doubt whatever as to the meaning of this amendment, nor is any hon. member in doubt as to the principle involved in it. I venture to say that no member of the public who reads this debate today, and who reads the wording of the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition, can be left in the slightest doubt as to what is the principle that we on this side are seeking to apply with equal impartiality to all sections of industry, be they rural, primary or secondary. That is why I desire to make my point very clear.

I cannot see how any Minister, pretending to be progressive and broad in his outlook, can fail to appreciate the justice of the claims advanced in support of the amendment. Even conceding that its wording may not be the best possible, that is entirely beside the point, because it is merely an amendment to a resolution for the introduction of a Bill. The spirit of the thing is there. It seeks to express the opinion of hon. members that the Bill should include this principle. The wording does not matter twopence. For heaven's sake, let us forsake these quibblings about whether the right word has been chosen or not. We all know what is intended and we know what is common justice. It is common justice to ensure that every progression, every improvement in the working conditions of employees, shall apply without discrimination to all sections of industry. It is no argument against this amendment to say that it adopts a dog-in-the-manger attitude, that it attempts to deprive the metropolitan workers of the benefit of improved conditions unless they can be granted to the country also. That is not the effect of the amendment. The effect of the amendment is to make sure that every step forward will apply to all employees equally.

My purpose in rising was merely to state shortly my attitude to the amendment. I support it entirely and wholeheartedly, but whilst I am on my feet I want to enter into the debate that took place between my leader, the hon. member for Windsor, and the Minister in charge of the Bill, concerning the Minister's attitude to the question of the 40-hour week. The hon. member for Windsor quoted a statement that the Secretary for Labour and Industry made in June last year,

and then contrasted it with the Minister's attitude as expressed in May of this year. The Minister came back and said, "But that was 18 months ago." In point of fact, it was 14 months ago. He then says, "Things have changed since then; there have been big alterations." Let us see what the Minister said in December, 1946. He was speaking on an amendment to the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act while it was in its second reading, and he was replying to the debate that had taken place. These are the very words of the very same Minister—

"The party to which I belong is in favour of a 40-hour week; the 40-hour week is a plank in the platform of the Australian Labour Party."

This will slay him, as Bob Dyer says—

"However, we do not believe that the present is an opportune time to include such a provision in the legislation before the House."

That was in December, 1946. Within a space of a short two months, in February, he was going out and advocating the introduction of a 40-hour week by legislation. I repeat that he said in December, 1946—

"However, we do not believe that the present is an opportune time."

December, 1946, was not the opportune time to include such a provision in the legislation before the Committee.

He went on to remove all possible doubt by saying—

"We all know that the Federal Court is at the present time considering the question of a 40-hour week, and, . . ."

Note the hypothetical way he expresses it, because he goes on to say—

Mr. Bruce: The man who never changes his mind is dead.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. WANSTALL: We are concerned with the motive that prompted him to change his mind. He goes on to say—

" . . . if there is to be a 40-hour week, it is preferable that it should be Australia-wide."

He was not compromising the Federal Court, which was then considering the matter. It was sub judice, before the Federal court. He said—

"and if there is to be a 40-hour week, it is preferable that it should be Australia-wide."

He goes to the hustings and backs up the Premier's statement, "Even if I have to break the law we will introduce it. If the Federal Court does not grant a 40-hour week, we will give it to you 'little' electors." (Interruptions.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have allowed the hon. member for Toowong considerable latitude to reply to points made by the Minister. I remind him that the amendment before the Committee deals with conditions in primary industries.

Mr. WANSTALL: I am pointing out that one of the arguments in favour of the amendment is the necessity to have a general application of a 40-hour working week throughout all industries. I was advancing the arguments used by the Minister only a few short months ago. I submit that that is a valid use of debate.

The Minister goes on to say—

"I believe that the Federal Court is the only logical and competent authority to investigate the introduction of a 40-hour week."

How strange that must sound? This was said in December of last year. He was, however, not satisfied with that, because he goes on to say—

"I could not subscribe to a policy of the introduction of a 40-hour week in Queensland alone at present because I believe . . ."

And then he goes on to explain in these words—

" . . . that Queensland and the Queensland workers would be greatly prejudiced as a result of unfair competition from industries in the other States of the Commonwealth."

This is the argument I am using in support of the amendment, namely, that employees in rural industries will be prejudiced in competition with their brothers working in the city and that there will be an overwhelming influx of workers into the city.

The Minister went on to say—

"I know that some supporters of Labour will say, 'What about when the 44-hour week was introduced? Queensland led the way then.' That is true, but I believe that Queensland suffered as a result."

(Opposition laughter.)

The next paragraph is not relevant, but this one is—

"I believe that one of the reasons why industry or captains of industry shied from Queensland was that the workers of this State enjoyed a statutory 44-hour week as against the workers of New South Wales and Victoria who had a 48-hour week. That is one of the reasons and ultimately these things react on the workers."

Of course, there was then no election round the corner.

The Minister further stated—

"On this question the policy of this Government is that we support the 40-hour week and to prove our bona fides we were represented before the Federal Court on this issue. We supported it but we believe that it should be on an Australia-wide basis, that all the workers of Australia should enjoy the improved working week if it is to be introduced and not one section only."

That is the whole crux of the amendment—we paraphrase the Minister's own words—

Paraphrasing the amendment we can say that we in this amendment are expressing our belief that all the workers of "Queensland"—instead of "Australia"—should enjoy the

improved working week if it is to be introduced, not one section only. The only word that needs altering in the Minister's own speech is the word "Australia," for which is to be substituted the word "Queensland." How then can the Government continue their opposition to the amendment?

Mr. PATERSON (Bowen) (3.21 p.m.): I am going to support the amendment but, like the hon. member for Toowong, I should like to see it phrased more concretely so that there would be no room for doubt regarding the meaning of the Leader of the Opposition. The amendment reads—

"After the word 'particulars' insert the words 'including conditions in primary industries which will ensure that primary producers will be able to provide terms and conditions of employment not less favourable than those in non-primary industries and callings.'"

I do not think that any hon. member can find fault with the aim of the amendment, namely, to ensure that all sections of workers in this State will be entitled to the benefit of a maximum 40-hour week or any other improved conditions that the workers in the cities and towns receive. That then is the aim of the amendment.

I do not think that any hon. member wants to see a state of affairs perpetuated in which any section of the workers are sweated or any section of the primary producers have to carry on by means of sweated labour. I certainly do not want that, but the important question remains: what must be done to avoid this?—and this is something that the sponsors of the amendment have not dealt with up to the present time. What must be done to produce or create the conditions in primary industries that will ensure that primary producers will be able to provide terms and conditions of employment not less favourable than those in non-primary industries and callings? That to me is the most vital part of the amendment. It is true that it is important that we should aim at the elimination of sweated labour from all sections of the people but it is more important to determine how we are to achieve this. So far I have not heard one speaker for the amendment deal with that problem, so I propose to deal with it.

First of all, I feel that it is essential that there must be such a well-organised system of marketing in this country that the primary producers will be guaranteed minimum and maximum prices, that is, that there will be guaranteed minimum and maximum prices that will ensure, irrespective of the state of the market, irrespective of whether there is a shortage or a glut, that the income of the primary producer will be sufficient to enable him to give to those whom he employs the highest wages and the best possible conditions.

That brings me to this very important question: how are we going to achieve such a stage of organised marketing in this Commonwealth? Can it be introduced purely on a State basis? I say emphatically no. Of

course, so long as we cannot have it on a Commonwealth basis, then we have to content ourselves with the next best step, namely, organised marketing on a State basis. But I repeat that the only way in which we can effectively solve this price problem is to have organised marketing of primary produce on a Commonwealth-wide basis. I feel that I should be failing in my duty if I did not point out to hon. members that it was those in the Opposition who have spoken most strongly in support of the amendment who most strongly opposed the attempt at the last Commonwealth referendum to bring about this desirable state of affairs. Let us be perfectly consistent in this matter. I wholeheartedly agree with the aim of the amendment, but I go further and say that we must introduce the necessary state of organised marketing which will ensure that the aim will be achieved.

Let me go a little further. Not only is it necessary to have the sale of primary produce placed on this basis, but it is equally necessary that other effective steps be taken to see that, when this organised system of marketing gives the primary producer a better price, no parasite steps in to consume the greater part of the increased price at the expense of the primary producers and the workers.

In other words, if we are anxious to bring about those desirable conditions we must take steps to deal with the parasites.

One of the first parasites obviously is the great big monopoly millionaires who control the banks and industrial monopolies of this country. Who are those who are most violently opposed to bringing about complete control of those millionaire-controlled banks? Again those who have spoken so far in support of this amendment. But, surely, if we are to bring about this desirable state of affairs, we must be prepared to control the whole financial institutions of this country, and to control the rates of interest, so that these financial institutions will not be able to fleece the farmers with high rates of interest or onerous terms and so on, when they do receive high prices for their products.

I mentioned the other day when speaking on one aspect of nationalised banking how, for instance, the private trading banks had dictated to graziers and station-managers in the West regarding when they and their families could go to town, what they could eat, and what clothing they could wear. The same dictatorial powers are exercised by those banks over the farmers, the other section of the primary producers. If, therefore, we mean what we say when we assert that we want to bring about conditions that will enable primary producers to provide terms and conditions of employment not less favourable than those in non-primary industries and callings, then we must be prepared to strike a blow at the financial institutions and take away the dictatorial powers they have been able to exercise in the past over the primary producers, graziers and managers of pastoral properties. These measures will

assist us at least to pave the way to creating the state of affairs that this amendment seeks to create.

There is a further point I want to make. The Leader of the Opposition and some of those who spoke in his support have criticised the Bill on the ground that Parliament seeks to fix the maximum working week. They suggest that the court should do it. Strange to say, this amendment is asking this Parliament to pass or amend a law in order to provide terms and conditions in the primary industries that will ensure that primary producers will be placed in not less favourable conditions of employment than those in non-primary industries and callings, and I agree with that. I agree that Parliament is the proper body to do it, just as I stressed in this Chamber in December last and on a previous occasion that Parliament is the proper body at all times to fix the maximum hours of the working week. I agree, too, that Parliament is the proper body to lay down also definite laws and regulations that will bring about a state of affairs in which these desirable conditions can be created or produced.

Again we have to be consistent. It is wrong for us to say in one breath that Parliament should not fix the hours of labour and in the same breath move an amendment to a Bill that seeks to fix the hours by Parliament and ask Parliament to fix conditions or arrange conditions in primary industries that will enable primary producers to provide their employees with good terms and conditions of employment. Therefore I am going to ask the Leader of the Opposition to give serious consideration to the logical results of the amendment he has moved. I am going to ask him whether, in the light of that amendment, he should not be more frequently supporting the stand I take in this Chamber on this and similar questions. He should not become a very ardent supporter of Parliament's having those powers set out in the amendment and oppose them in principle in other respects. I ask him whether in view of the logical position he has got himself into he should not take a more definite stand against financial institutions and monopolies, great agricultural machinery combines and big fertiliser companies.

They are the people who frequently exploited the primary producer, robbed him, and deprived him of the means that otherwise he would have had to enable him to give to his workers or employees decent wages and conditions.

I do not think the Leader of the Opposition or any of those hon. members who have spoken in support of the amendment suggested that all primary producers are in the unhappy state where the economic position does not allow them to give decent wages and conditions. That there are some there is no doubt. The dairying industry was mentioned, and I think we have to admit that it is an industry in which it is impossible, so long as the present methods of marketing and prices exist, to give to the primary producers and their employees the

favourable terms and conditions we want. Very well, the dairying industry is one whose economic position is to be improved, and it is the duty of this Parliament as the supreme legislative body in this State to see that the dairying industry in this State has its economic conditions improved.

It is not only the dairying industry. In my electorate there are a large number of tomato-growers. Strange to say, in this present tomato season, which has not yet come to an end, many of them are beginning to realise that the high prices that ruled during the war are gone, and that they are receiving prices that make it very difficult for them to carry on. Recently I led a deputation from two farmers' organisations in Bowen to the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock to ask him to go into this problem and to see if we could not devise ways and means of overcoming these low prices. It came up clearly at that conference—particularly as most of the tomatoes in the Bowen district are sent outside the State—that it is impossible to solve the marketing of tomatoes properly unless we put it on a Commonwealth basis. This State has no power whatsoever to regulate the marketing of tomatoes the moment they go over the Queensland border. Seeing that the biggest proportion of tomatoes produced in Bowen or in North Queensland are sent over the State boundaries it is impossible to solve satisfactorily the problem of the tomato-grower as far as prices and marketing are concerned, unless we have marketing organised on the Commonwealth-wide basis.

Again I say to the Leader of the Opposition that if he really means business with this amendment he should admit that he and his party were wrong in the last referendum when they opposed the move to give the Commonwealth Government power to organise marketing on a Commonwealth-wide basis. He must admit that he was wrong, because if he does not do so he finds himself in the position where he says: "I accept the present system." If you accept the present system you leave the State unable to deal with the vital problem that arises the moment her products are exported over the State borders.

So I have risen to support the amendment not only, as I said at the outset, because I agree with its aim—and its aim is that every section of the workers should get the highest benefit this Parliament can give them in relation to hours, wages, and industrial conditions—but because I wanted to stress the need for putting into operation a Commonwealth plan for the realisation of the desirable aims contained in the amendment itself.

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) (3.34 p.m.): The Minister mentioned that the advent of this legislation was entirely due to continuous efforts by Labour throughout Australia. The first point that strikes me is the fact that if anyone has achieved anything it was done by Fallon, Healy, and Thornton. These men pressed the Government prior to the recent election for the introduction of the 40-hour week.

A moment ago the hon. member for Toowong indicated quite clearly that the Minister himself did not favour the introduction of a 40-hour week as late as December last. The amendment is designed to ensure that primary producers will not suffer by comparison with workers in other classes of industry. We are not opposed to the 40-hour week, provided all industry is dealt with equitably.

The Minister said that in his opinion production had increased by 10 per cent. within the last 12 months, but before replying to that statement I should like to comment on the remarks of the hon. member for Bowen.

Mr. Gair: It was not my opinion, it was statistics.

Mr. MULLER: That is so, and I will deal with it from a statistical viewpoint.

The hon. member for Bowen shed tears about the conditions of the primary producers, and said it was the duty of the Country Party to ensure that those who exploited the primary producers were dealt with first of all. He endeavoured to point out that we were exploited by a lot of parasites who were taking the rake-off between the price the primary producer got and what the consumer paid. I would remind the hon. member that during the last five years the only parasite we had of which we are aware has been the Commonwealth Government, because the whole of our produce has been acquired by that Government. These supposed parasites therefore had no opportunity of operating within that period.

Some people become confused between socialised marketing and organised marketing. The policy of the Country Party is quite clear and definite; we have advocated organised marketing for a number of years, and still do, but we are opposed to socialised marketing, and within the last five years we have had socialised marketing. By comparison we suffered considerably more under a system of socialised marketing than we did in the bad old days when we had an open slather. We do not wish to return to this position at all, and so if this legislation is necessary we think there should be no discrimination between people engaged in primary and those engaged in secondary industries, but we will prove to the Committee that the figures supplied by the Minister, the Commonwealth Statistician's figures, do not agree with those of the State Statistician, I ask you, Mr. Mann, to look at the figures compiled by the State Statistician only a few weeks ago. These are they—

Sheep: At 31 March, 1947, the total number was 16,084,000 as compared with 25,650,000 in 1943—or a decrease of approximately 9,000,000 sheep in four years. The present number of sheep is the lowest for 30 years.

Cattle: 5,945,000 at 31 March, 1947, the lowest since 1933.

Dairy cattle: A decline of 110,579 in the past 12 months, which is about equal to the decline in the previous three years since 1943. Calves have declined to a level which is

insufficient to maintain even the present low level of dairy cattle.

Horses: 343,172 at 31 March, 1947, as compared with 700,000 in 1918. The decline for 1946-47 (24,000) is the greatest since 1918.

Figs: In the 12 months to 31 March, 1947, declined from 415,000 to 340,000.

At 3.39 p.m.,

Mr. HILTON (Carnarvon) relieved the Chairman in the chair.

Mr. MULLER: There was a shortage in other directions—houses, schools, hospital accommodation, other public works such as roads, water and sewerage, &c., household amenities (refrigerators, radiators, vacuum cleaners, baths, sinks, stoves, &c), furniture and other household requirements, tools of trade, clothing, and other rationed goods.

Labour: The Railway Department is asking employees to postpone recreation leave because of shortage of staff. The nursing position is still acute. Practically all primary industries are short of necessary labour. Factory employees and domestic help are also in short supply, &c., &c.

In order that we might have a practical illustration to support the Commonwealth Statistician's figures, I ask the Minister to give us only one line in which production has increased. If there has been any increase at all, it is not noticeable.

Mr. Turner: Butter and wool have increased.

Mr. MULLER: I have quoted the State Statistician's figures. Everyone admits that they are correct. Farmers who are wanting roofing iron or barbed wire know only too well that these articles are unprocurable. If the Minister's assertion that production has increased by 10 per cent. over the last 12 months were correct, there might have been some justification for the introduction of the 40-hour week, but we deny that there has been any increase. If the Minister's figures were correct, then perhaps the same objection would not have been raised on this side of the Chamber.

I was amused at hearing the Minister speak of the continuous improvement in the conditions of the working people. He went back to the days when even children worked for 72 hours a week. Nobody wants to see that type of thing, but it must be remembered that you can go back to the days of the creation of the world, if you like, when God laid it down that we must work.

Mr. Moore: On how many days a week?

Mr. MULLER: On six days a week, and rest on the seventh. I am not suggesting that we should work 12 hours a day, as they did in the old days, but it must be remembered that by the sweat of your brow you shall earn your daily bread. If the Minister's argument that 40 hours are better than 44 is sound, then the unions would be justified in saying that 36 hours are better than 40 and that 25 are better still. It is Parliament's

duty to improve the conditions of our people wherever that is possible, but we must all appreciate that there are limitations to what can be done.

We have seen the interesting experience of Great Britain within the last 12 months. We know how production has fallen there, and we know who has been affected most. We are not so much concerned about the primary producers when we move this amendment as we are about the effect the 40-hour week might have on the economy of the State. The primary producer is not obliged to remain in primary production all his life. If he sees a better job offering he is entitled to take it, and it must be remembered that he will take it. If primary producers cease producing, what are we to do? We all know that primary production has fallen, we appreciate how short supplies are, we know the long hours that primary producers work. Let me point out to hon. members also that the committee that investigated the cost of producing butter was told by the Commonwealth Government that a 56-hour week would be a fair basis to work on for the dairying industry. This means the dairymen will be directed to work 56 hours a week. The committee found also that dairy farmers are working anything from 60 to 80 hours a week; from the finding it would be safe to say that the average working time is 70 hours a week. How can we expect anyone to continue working for 70 hours a week producing the necessities of life if other sections of the community are going to work only 40 hours a week?

I do not know, Mr. Hilton, where this type of thing will lead us. Let us go to the pioneering days when people went out into the bush and onto the land. Why, if they had been told they were to work a 40-hour week there would have been no development of this State. We probably should now be still in the days of the aboriginal, when he lived on goannas and yams. (Government laughter.) Hon. members opposite can ridicule that if they like. If no inducement was offered to people to go into the bush, they would not have gone to it. With all his weaknesses, we cannot call the Minister a fool. He must know that no man will engage in primary production and work long hours if he can get a job with 40 hours a week and better conditions in the city. I say if it is right for one section of the community to enjoy a 40-hour working week it is right for every other section to enjoy it. The Government are not game to give the whole of the community a 40-hour working week.

The point made by the hon. member for Bowen is not a solution of the problem, because primary producers are not being exploited by middlemen. We are quite capable of looking after ourselves. We have been able to establish commodity boards and organisations in such a way as to cut out the profiteers, the sharks, and the exploiters referred to by the hon. member. What happened to the dairying industry during the war? I will give hon. members of this Committee facts as to what happened to that and other industries and I take the cattle

industry. During the last five years the Government bought tallow at £25 a ton and sold it at £120 a ton. Who got the difference? Who was the profiteer? There was a profit of 500 per cent., yet hon. members get up in this Committee and tell you that we are being exploited by profiteers. Heavens above, we are not a pack of fools; we know on what side our bread is buttered. We are quite capable of looking after ourselves. We want to be left alone by the Commonwealth Government. We are asking them to keep out of the way. The reason why we opposed the powers the Commonwealth Government asked for in connection with organised marketing on a Commonwealth-wide basis was that we saw the socialistic idea behind the proposal. We asked to be given the power to control commodity boards and that that power should not be given to the Government.

We have to remember that if we are to produce the necessities of life somebody has got to work, and if you do not there is only one thing that can happen. I do not care whether you fix prices or you do not fix prices, because if you fix prices and there is a shortage of goods it will lead to black-marketing no matter how many inspectors you engage. If on the other hand you legislate for a 40-hour week it means that the cost of living must go up. When this Bill becomes law the people who are supposed to benefit under it will pay for the legislation—they will pay for it in the shape of increased prices. If you genuinely want to help the wage-earner, why do you not increase his wages? Nobody is asking for shorter hours. Everyone of us must realise that each person is entitled to his hire. If you set about restricting work you restrict production and if your restrict production you must increase living costs. There is no argument against that.

All we ask by this amendment is that the Bill be applied to the primary industries.

If it is to apply to the primary producers, then sooner or later prices will rise automatically, but they will do so whether you say it is to apply or not, because you will not attract labour to the rural industries unless you pay wages somewhat comparable to those paid to workers engaged in the cities. I think that the people of the country realise that the time is not opportune to introduce a 40-hour week into all industries, and I have no hesitation in declaring where I stand on the matter. The Minister challenged us to say where we stood in this connection, and I can only say that notwithstanding the fact that we live in a machine age no industry can stand it, and until we have sufficient supplies with the shorter working week it would be a retrograde step to introduce a 40-hour week and if it must come then I repeat that it should apply not to one section only but to every section.

Mr. RUSSELL (Dalby) (3.52 p.m.): I have listened with great interest to the comment of hon. members on the other side of the Chamber, and I cannot help feeling that the Minister has not a correct appreciation of what is happening or what will happen in rural industries when the 40-hour week is

introduced. He went back into history, drew upon the archives and spoke of sweated labour in England and other places, but the only sweated labour in this country is the sweated labour of the women and children on dairy farms, and that situation will have to be altered.

The idea that the dairying industry is a poor industry seems to be common amongst many people, simply because it has always been there, but there is no justification for it. If the 40-hour week and the increase in wages and the living standards of the industrial section are not applied equally to the people engaged in the basic industries the effect on the country is going to be very serious because it will help to widen the existing disparity between living conditions in the country and towns.

The introduction of a 40-hour week comes at a most inopportune time, and I say quite positively for the Minister's benefit just where I stand in the matter. I will oppose the introduction of the measure at this stage, although I speak in support of the amendment. I emphatically support the amendment because I fear that the introduction of a 40-hour week for a section of the people alone will widen the existing disparity between the conditions in the country and the cities and will aggravate the existing drift of population which has been the subject of so many talks in this Chamber.

I want to point out to members of the Government party that not only the wage-earners but also the vast majority of farmers are workers in the real sense of the word. In the discourses that one listens to on labour problems a difference is drawn between primary producers and workers, but the Government should realise that the vast majority of primary producers are workers and that most farmers and dairymen work harder than the majority of their employees, and they have no 40-hour week. If they had, then the price of butter would be more like 4s. a lb. than 2s. per lb.

Certain sections of workers are far more privileged than the primary producers, and I refer particularly to people like wharf-labourers and coal-miners, who have far better conditions and are able to amass for themselves a better estate than the vast majority of rural workers and rural producers.

It seems to be the belief of some people in this country that the difference between an employer and an employee is the difference between those who work and those who do not.

This is a very unhealthy state of affairs and leads to misunderstanding and lack of co-operation. I believe that many hon. members on the Government side are guilty of keeping alive and stirring up this atmosphere, which may be referred to as class hatred.

The 40-hour week may have the effect of raising the living standards for certain sections of the community who will have greater leisure, but at the expense of the rural workers in particular. I will attempt to show how this is brought about. This is where I feel that the Minister has not a proper appreciation of what is happening to the economy of

the country. The national income should provide equitable standards of living for all the great industrial groups. I want to demonstrate that by broadly dividing up the community into four main groups.

We have these four groups:—

1. The secondary industrial group.
2. The transport people.
3. The Public Service.
4. The country people.

It would be reasonable to argue that people engaged in the basic real-wealth-producing industries should get the lion's share of national income, if there is any lion's share to be had. What do we find? We find quite the reverse. The secondary-industrial workers, and all those engaged in secondary-industrial activity are protected by the tariff wall, which keeps up their wages to a level above the rest of the community. That standard is maintained also by better and more efficient organisation. The transport group, by reason of its monopoly, is able to do the same thing. The Public Service, by reason of the training of its members, is able to do likewise.

Where does the extra share of income come from? It does not come out of the air. No; it comes out of the share belonging to the disorganised rural group. Thus the disparity of their living standards is ever widening. The 40-hour week is only applicable to well-organised industries. The well-organised industries are able to pass on the costs until those costs come back onto the basic industries, which are unable to pass them on.

I have heard it said that the 40-hour week will not increase costs. Even the Premier said it. I was surprised to hear the hon. gentleman say that a 40-hour week will not lessen production. That is a stupid and unreasoned statement because production very largely depends on the speed and capacity of machines, and obviously it must be affected.

Most industries in New South Wales, where this principle already has become law, are carrying on under the same hours as they worked previously. That is to say, they are working a 40-hour week plus four hours' overtime. That shows that this legislation is equal to a rise in wages, and it is going to increase costs.

At this stage I should prefer a rise in wages rather to a lowering of our production effort, because of the lag in production that exists today. Our money is not able to buy the things it should buy. There is a constant increase in the cost of living and as the hours of production become shorter the harder it will be to catch up.

In any case, both shorter hours and higher wages are inflationary and will, I think, add to the dangers of general inflation and lead to more and more of the controls that we find so objectionable.

Dealing more specifically with the amendment, I want to point out that the higher costs are passed on till they come back to the rural industry, and unless you help the rural industries to get a better price for

their products these costs are going to be felt principally by the people who work in them. The 40-hour week is not applicable to the great majority of primary industries, by reason of the very nature of their work. They can get very little benefit out of it, and unless the Government accept the amendment these rising costs are only going to widen the disparity now existing between the country people and those in the more closely settled areas; and we shall get a greater drift of population.

I want to say a word about the method of fixing wages. This is vital to the point and explain why there is the disparity in living standards that we have noticed. There is a different approach to the fixing of wages of country workers. When the case is considered by the Industrial Court all other costs, such as rents, rates and railage, are considered as fixed and unalterable. If those costs were reduced, or the fixed price of primary products were allowed to rise, the primary producers would be in a far better position to pay wages.

What do we find today? We find—and you, Mr. Hilton, as a country member know this is true—that the prices of primary products are held below world parity while the price of secondary industrial undertakings are held up, so as to give a higher wage standard to those people. I remind the Committee what the hon. member for Warwick said during the debate on the Address in Reply. He said that in 1946 the wheat-growers had subsidised the economy to the extent of £30,000,000. This means there is not sufficient money to pay the level of wages necessary to give the same benefits to our people as it is proposed to give to other sections of labour and industry.

It seems to me to be strange that the Government, with so many members representing country districts, should have neglected the rural workers to such an extent as they have, and that they should have carried out a policy of taxing rural enterprise to the extent that the small margin left prevents a decent wage standard from being paid in the rural industry. The solution of providing equitable living conditions does not lie with the shortening of hours and the raising of wages, but rather with the reducing of costs. I have pointed out before how wages costs are largely based on prices—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to connect his remarks with the amendment.

Mr. RUSSELL: It is a question of the cost of living. I want to show how the disparity exists in the wage standards of the country and in the secondary industrial groups. Of the four groups of people the rural group is having to pay for every bit that is chiselled or gained by the other groups; it comes out of the country group.

It is obvious that we must get a higher price for our products if we are to pay these higher costs, which will inevitably be passed on to us.

Mr. Gair: You are free to go to the court.

Mr. RUSSELL: As I have pointed out, the court fixes wages after considering all the other costs. The price for our products, which is the wherewithal from which to pay these wages, is held down below parity as, for instance, in the wheat industry to the extent of £30,000,000 in the year 1946.

As a Country Party member I claim to represent also the country worker and I believe that the Labour Party have completely dumped the rural workers. The country worker should be placed in a position where he has the opportunity to get something for himself and build up a capital. If the worker had this objective today we should get very much better results.

If the Government insist on bringing in the 40-hour week I hope it will be fair enough to bring pressure to bear on the Federal Government to ensure that the low prices for primary products are raised so that farmers and their wives can enjoy a 40-hour week.

At 4.7 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. RUSSELL: I should like to point out too that many of these people do not even enjoy the present basic wage, although they work long hours, and I would stress again that many dairies in the country are carried on by the sweated labour of women and children.

The unfair part of it is the holding down of the prices of primary products while the prices of products of secondary industrial activity are held up.

I would suggest too that if the Government insist on bringing in this measure, as I presume they will, they give consideration to the provision of additional recreational facilities so that the people generally will be able to use more profitably the leisure they will get. They will be well advised so to educate public opinion as to encourage cultural schools, which are at the present time totally inadequate. At present the great mass of the public have to rely on the races, the dogs and the pubs and I can foresee a harvest for these people on the introduction of the 40-hour week. The introduction of the 40-hour week will automatically draw our people from the country to them, where the living conditions will, temporarily only, be very much better. They cannot last.

In conclusion, I would point out that I am completely in accord with any move to raise the living standards of the people generally but while production is so low, so far behind demand, it is a most inopportune time to introduce this Bill. I must say again if the Government persist in introducing it, I hope it will protect the interests of the country people. Therefore, I urge the Minister to include in the Bill the amendment proposed by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. TURNER (Kelvin Grove) (4.19 p.m.): I oppose the amendment because I contend that the scope of the Act does not provide for an amendment such as that moved by

the Leader of the Opposition. If the hon. gentleman is serious in his desire to have the rural workers brought under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act he should get them organised. They could then make application to the Industrial Court under Part III., Sections 28 to 30. They could register as an organisation and apply to the court for an award.

The 40-hour week is a very urgently-needed condition in all industry if we are to continue the policy of fixing wages and conditions according to the prosperity of industry, and I sincerely hope that before very long legislation will be introduced to provide for a shorter working week for females in industry. When we consider that females, whether married or single, have a good deal of housework to do after returning home from work we must appreciate their need for a shorter working week. I hope that the Act will be amended to provide a maximum working week of 30 hours for females.

What are to be the effects of the enormous and unprecedented power over nature that man has recently acquired by technical developments and the use of labour-saving machinery? Are they to contribute, as they ought, to bringing humanity more wealth and more leisure, or are they to be allowed, through some maladjustment, to make the workers slaves to the machines and yield instead a harvest of poverty and distress? The paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty is sufficiently widely appreciated to need no elaboration here. Let me quote the following very impressive passage from the report published by the Commission of Technocracy appointed in New York as far back as 1920—

“It is shown conclusively and clearly that if the United States were to use the whole mechanised and motive power at their disposal, electricity, steam, and so on, and develop that to the fullest extent, the United States would be able to produce all the manufactured foods they require in the course of the next decade, with 10 per cent. of the available labour they have at the present moment, throwing 90 per cent. of the available labour on the unemployed market.”

Is it not time that we gave some consideration to providing for those people who are thrown out of employment as a result of the introduction of modern machinery? Are we going to allow the captains of industry to enjoy all the benefits and advantages of the introduction of modern machinery and at the same time throw 90 per cent. of the workers on the scrap heap to scramble for a living as best they can? If some means can be found to maintain in full employment those workers who are thrown out of employment by the introduction of modern machinery, all other problems will solve themselves.

The article continues—

“Many possible methods of curing unemployment have been suggested, and it is not surprising that among them should be that of modifying, at least, the headlong race of the machine.”

I am not one to subscribe to that idea. We cannot stop progress and any machine that can be introduced to lighten the stress of labour should be encouraged, but the people who own those machines should not be privileged to take all the advantages at the expense of those who are thrown out of employment.

The article goes on to say—

“A century ago the labourers of England and the Continent were smashing up machines which were throwing the old hand workers out of employment. To them it seemed an obvious economic truth that the machines that enabled their employers to turn them out of work were a misery and a curse. On the other hand the employers held that any means of increasing production and diminishing labour costs must in the end add to the total of human wealth.”

That is the whole reasoning of the Opposition's argument this afternoon—human wealth. To-day modern technique has made fresh advances that our forefathers could not have dreamed of. New machines are being invented almost every day, throwing thousands of workers out of employment. The following are a few of the instances I could quote:—The number of employees a week required to manufacture a car at the Austin Motor Car factory was 55 in 1922 and that figure was reduced to 24 in 1923. In two years, by the introduction of modern machinery, the company was able to reduce the number of its employees by 31, which shows the advance made by machinery. The figure was further reduced to 17 in 1925, to 12 in 1926, and 10 in 1927. The figure has since been still further reduced.

I will give particulars now of the time taken to make an engine-bearing bolt. In 1888 it took 115.5 minutes to make this bolt—

Mr. Sparkes: Why do you not make your case instead of reading your speech?

Mr. TURNER: I am quoting statements of fact—statements given in evidence by responsible people who know what they are talking about—not irresponsible people.

In the making of an engine-bearing bolt the time taken in 1890 was 98.2 minutes; in 1900 it was 28 minutes. It had dropped 70.2 minutes in 10 years. In 1910 the time was 15.5 minutes, in 1920 12 minutes, in 1930 7.7 minutes, but in 1947 they were making three bolts a minute.

The CHAIRMAN: I would remind the hon. member that we have an amendment before the Committee.

Mr. TURNER: I am opposing it.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member to connect his remarks with the amendment before the Committee.

Mr. TURNER: I am opposing the amendment. I have not heard one hon. member of the Opposition support it. They have all given reasons against the introduc-

tion of the Bill generally, but I am leading up to reasons for the introduction of the 40-hour working week.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member to connect his remarks with the matter before the Committee. There is an amendment before the Committee and we are dealing with the amendment first.

Mr. TURNER: Then I will save my remarks for a later stage.

Hon. members opposite made quotations from what certain people had said from time to time to the effect that industry was not able to afford a 40-hour week and that the introduction of a 40-hour week would decrease production. I intend to quote what captains of industry in other parts of the world have had to say. Mr. Bosch, Director of Kelloggs, U.S.A., had this to say—

“In view of the present conditions of the labour market, no lengthy proof is needed of the fact that, with the existing means and methods of production, it will soon be impossible to find employment for everyone in any occupation unless we decide to lower the number of working hours per day. We may perhaps have to come to the 6-hour day in place of the eight, which is at present the rule.”

This is what Dr. Vernon had to say in his report on the health of munition workers—

“That from experiments spread over a period of thirteen and a half months upon the output of workers, a reduction of working hours was associated with an increase in production, both relative and absolute.”

Also in that report he stated this astonishing fact—that a larger output, not only per hour, but per week, has been made since lower hours have been worked. He said that an employer stated that a gradual reduction of working hours to 40 resulted in an increase of 44 per cent. in his weekly output. According to statements made by hon. members opposite this afternoon, the introduction of a 40-hour working week will mean that production will be decreased.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope the hon. member will deal with the amendment.

Mr. TURNER: I am replying to the contentions by hon. members opposite that a reduction in hours means a reduction in production and I am pointing out also that captains of industry have already proven that a reduction in hours does not necessarily mean a reduction in production.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member can deal with that aspect of the matter on the main question, after the amendment has been disposed of.

Mr. TURNER: Hon. members opposite contend that the 40-hour week should be applied to rural industries but they say also that a 40-hour week will mean reduced production. I am pointing out that the contrary has been the result. I agree that we should apply the 40-hour week to the workers in

the rural industries. However, Mr. Manx, I must comply with your ruling.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member can deal with that matter on the main question, after the amendment has been disposed of.

Mr. TURNER: I would favour any move to extend the 40-hour week to rural workers, but this Act cannot be amended so as to protect the employers in rural industries. They can seek protection through their various organisations and the rural workers can organise themselves into an industrial organisation and apply to the Industrial Court to have it registered as an industrial union.

Part III, Section 28 of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, provides—

“The Registrar may, on application made as prescribed, register as an industrial union under this Act any industrial association or trade union of employees.

“On such registration the industrial association or trade union shall be an industrial union until such registration is duly cancelled.”

That is the only way in which they can get this benefit. The Minister cannot legislate along the lines of the amendment.

Mr. Sparkes: The Minister is getting worried about you.

Mr. TURNER: The Minister is no more worried about me than the hon. member is. If hon. members opposite are anxious that a 40-hour week should apply to workers employed by them in their industries then they should advise such workers to join the Australian Workers' Union, which caters for rural workers, and thus restore to the rural workers the conditions taken from them by the Moore Government in 1929. The Minister has already explained what happened on that occasion. At that time the rural workers were organised into an industrial union working under an industrial award, but by one stroke of the pen, by the mere issue of an Order in Council, not by an approach to the court or by an amendment of an Act in Parliament, the then Secretary for Labour and Industry, Mr. Sizer, abolished the Rural Workers' Award, and since then those workers have suffered.

I will reserve any further remarks that I have to make until the main question is before the Committee.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR (Hamilton) (4.23 p.m.): I want to address myself to the amendment. I feel it an honour to be singled out by the Minister for special reference in this debate—it is almost like being mentioned in dispatches—and I should like to have the opportunity of saying something in reply to the Minister's statement after I have dealt with the amendment. The amendment was moved by a practical farmer and I guarantee that it is understood by every farmer in the countryside. I am amazed that the Premier and the Secretary for Labour and Industry should express themselves as being unable to understand it.

Mr. Gledson: Do you understand it?

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: Of course I do. The amendment is simple and clear. It aims at providing terms and conditions of employment for primary producers not less favourable than those in non-primary industries and callings.

For a dozen years or more I moved and lived among primary producers of every description. They were my customers; they were my friends. I was an employee selling merchandise to farmers, and I lived in the houses of farmers. They were good enough to give me a meal and consequently they became my hosts. I lived with the farmers in the cane areas. I am sorry that the hon. members for Herbert and Kennedy are not present, because I intend to describe them as the "kiss and make up with enemy alien" members of this Chamber.

Hon. members have not appreciated the amendment sufficiently. I believe that hon. members on the Government benches are not able to appreciate it because the majority of them have no association with rural interests. Thirty-three and a third per cent. of them are members for metropolitan electorates. We must take into consideration the fact that those who represent such cities as Toowoomba, Ipswich, Maryborough, Rockhampton, and Townsville, with representatives of other urban areas, are interested only in the welfare of their electors. I am quite satisfied that before the recent election the Government, headed by the Premier and the Minister who introduced this Bill, were quite concerned as to the possibilities of their failure; and the other day the hon. member for Baree told us that the great Socialist demagogue in Queensland was not able to go to Geneva, as he had to stay here to conduct Labour's election campaign. Labour's appeal at the election was made to a section of the people only, and the interests of the rural section were not considered. They believed that an appeal to the section in the urban areas would win for them the Government benches again. It did win for them the majority of the electorates.

A Government Member: Hear, hear!

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: Fancy saying, "Hear, hear!" I want to distinguish between the majority of the electorates and the majority of the electors. I admired the knowledge of the psychology of the people who had a vote at the last election, particularly those who had been in the services and had never previously had a vote. The Government's appeal was directed to the younger generation going to the ballot for the first time.

A Government Member: What has this to do with it?

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR: It has a great deal to do with this question, as many of them came from the country. In studying the psychology of that section of voters the Government realised that one appeal that would find favour was the promise of more leisure time. I can assure the Committee

that 9 out of 10 people desire more real wages, not more leisure time. That is the desire of people engaged in rural industry. The Government, in their election campaign, treated the electors like greedy children and offered them something they thought would be snapped up and result in their being returned to power again. The Government, in representing their case for a 40-hour week generally, and neglecting the interests of the rural people, as has been suggested by the Leader of the Opposition, did not tell the whole story, as they should have done.

I do not wish at this stage to digress to the Bill because I want to speak on that too. I wish to emphasise the points I raise for two reasons: first, because I have lived amongst these country people and I know how difficult it is for them to get their livelihood and what a struggle it is to get the requisite amount of revenue in order to live satisfactorily. They are concerned with more real wages rather than with more leisure.

I also wanted to say to the Minister—and I hope you will grant me permission to say this, Mr. Mann—that I was no embarrassment to my party in reference to the salary I decided to take. I made it clear that if the people decided to re-elect the Government, then the people's will was what I should follow, and take it that they endorsed the Government action. When I was asked a point-blank question by a newspaper reporter, I did not shuffle because I have not learned the art of shuffling that is so characteristic of some people. I want to assure this Committee that the leader of my party has never yet taken that increased money because he is sticking to a principle that when the wage-pegging is lifted he will take it. The other members have agreed to accept it because it was the decision of the people. My party, like the Country Party, stands to recognise the interests of all the people and obey the will of the people.

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) (4.32 p.m.): I will not keep the Committee very long in speaking in favour of the amendment. I have rarely listened to so much arrant nonsense and so many irrelevancies as I have listened to today. The Minister, when introducing the Bill, said that during the war the people were promised a new order. I would remind the Minister that as far as I am concerned the promise of a new order applies to the farmers as well as the workers.

I want to say in reply to the taunt—a well-directed and probably well-deserved taunt—thrown by the Minister at the Leader of the Opposition, that I wholeheartedly support the 40-hour week, but that I want it for everyone and I want everyone to benefit by increased production and productivity in the economic standards of the State.

Here is the arrant nonsense that I heard primarily from the hon. member for Fassifern and from the hon. member for Dalby and various other members of the Country Party and some members of the Labour Party—they believe the farmer can receive a higher return for his labour only from an increase

in price. That is pure bunkum. It is bunkum to suggest that the only extra return the farmer can receive is by an increase in the price of his products. I am astonished; as a matter of fact, I am more than astonished. I am utterly depressed at the lack of knowledge of elementary economics displayed by some members of the Country Party. I am distressed to think members who come in here as representatives of the people cannot rise above the Primer III. standard of knowledge of economics.

The real solution of the problem is to see that the farmer gets a bigger net return for his labour. I do not know what the farmer gets for butter. Suppose he gets 1s. 3d. To grant an increased return to the farmer it is not necessary to give the farmer 1s. 4d. a lb. for butter and pass the extra penny on to the workers; the solution lies in not allowing so many parasites to fatten and batten on them both.

Mr. Muller: Who are they?

Mr. AIKENS: I know the hon. member for Fassifern is trying to interject but he has not the remotest chance. Members of this Committee interject only when I want them and allow them to interject.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I am sure that "Häusard" will find great difficulty in taking down the hon. member for Mundingburra, with all the noise on my left, and I ask hon. members to desist from interjecting and allow the hon. member to proceed uninterruptedly.

Mr. AIKENS: If I had the time this afternoon I should feel disposed to give a lesson in elementary economics to hon. members of the Opposition. As I said once before, the economic fabric of any country should be shaped like a cone with a great base of producers at the bottom tapering away to the non-producers at the top. Unfortunately, we have reached the stage in this country where our economic fabric is shaped like an inverted cone, with only a small number of producers on the bottom and a great body of non-producers and parasites on the top. It includes not only the retailer and the wholesaler and the merchant, many of whom are necessary but also the parasites who fatten and batten on the farmers. In our present state of economic society, it is necessary to have wholesalers, retailers, and transporters, civil servants and office workers, but we have reached the stage where we have too many of them. Can anyone tell me, for instance, that when we are going home this afternoon—and I suppose the House will adjourn by 5 o'clock—that it is necessary for the economic security and balance of this country for all these thousands of people who will pour out of the various Government and other offices, to be congregated in the city? Who finds their wages, feeds and clothes them? Who builds their homes? No-one but the primary producer. He is the rock on which our economic foundation is based. I can see by the look of dawning intelligence on the faces of the hon. member for

Dalby and a few others that what I am saying is beginning to percolate into their otherwise ossified brains.

Let this message burn into the brain of every member of this Assembly: if you destroy or impoverish your farmer you destroy or impoverish your country. That is a first lesson in elementary economics. On the prosperity and wealth of your farming community is based the prosperity and wealth of your country. If we are to have a 40-hour week in this country—and I believe the time is rotten-ripe for it—we must ensure that the cost of the 40-hour week will not be borne by the farming community alone. That is the purpose of the amendment.

Mr. Russell: Speak up.

Mr. AIKENS: I will speak up as I am doing now if I find it necessary to drown the cackling of a dill. It is only from dills that we get cackling. I am determined to make myself heard in this Chamber and I will make myself heard despite the callous cackling of members of the Opposition. I will vote with them on this motion because I know there are certain members of the Opposition who are genuinely sincere in their desire to help the farmers. Unfortunately they cannot see eye to eye with me and the hon. members for Bowen and Bulimba on the real way to help the farmers. The only way to help the farmer is not to keep on piling up prices; if we increase the price of any commodity that price is borne by the consuming public throughout the State and is passed back to the worker and starts the vicious cycle; consequently there will be a spiralling of prices and wages like a snowball until the whole financial fabric of the country is overwhelmed. What we must do is to eliminate as far as possible the parasites who exist—and they exist in every section of the community—between the producer and the consumer.

Unfortunately, Country Party members, and particularly Queensland People's Party members, will not face up to that elementary fact that the economic fabric and structure in this country is becoming grossly overloaded—we have too few producers and too many people living on the people who produce. Nevertheless, because the intention of the amendment, like Mary's—and you know the story about Mary and how good her intention was—is good, I intend to support it.

Hon. V. C. GAIR (South Brisbane—Secretary for Labour and Industry) (4.40 p.m.): It is not correct for hon. members of this Committee to convey the impression that there is a section of employees in this State who are being excluded from the provisions of the proposed legislation, the chief feature of which is the 40-hour week. I say emphatically that no section of workers or employees is excluded from the provisions of the measure, nor is any such exclusion intended. That being so, it is not right for hon. members to get up in this Chamber and say that we are introducing legislation on a sectional basis to the exclusion of the primary producer.

The amendment of the Leader of the Opposition does not include the employees of farmers, the rural workers whom he and his party exiled from the Industrial Court by their measure of 1929. There is no suggestion in his amendment that they be brought under this measure. As workers and employees, they have the same right as any other worker to go before the court and obtain an award to cover their calling. The amendment deals with the farmer himself. We have to determine whether he is an employee within the meaning of the Act or whether he is just as much an employer as a member of a chamber of commerce or of an employers' federation.

Hon. members opposite know also that there is also such a thing as a rural award pronounced by the Federal Court of Conciliation and Arbitration.

Mr. Muller: With a 56-hour week.

Mr. GAIR: That is true. I remind hon. members that that Federal award does not govern the farmers. It governs only the people employed by the farmers, whereas there is nothing in this amendment to deal with the employee of the farmer. It refers only to the farmer himself. It throws on the court the responsibility of determining conditions in primary industries that will enable them to enjoy a 40-hour week for themselves. It throws on the court the responsibility for the economic security of their calling.

I merely rose to clear away the false impression being conveyed by hon. members opposite and the hon. member for Mundingburra that we were definitely and deliberately excluding a section of workers from the provisions of the proposed Bill. That is not so. Every section of the workers in the State has a right to go to the court and apply for an award if the calling is not already covered by an award.

Mr. Nicklin: What do the words "provide terms and conditions of employment" mean?

Mr. GAIR: But before that, the hon. gentleman's amendment asks the court to determine the conditions of primary industries. The court must determine that in such a satisfactory way as will enable the farmers to give terms and conditions of employment not less favourable than those given to secondary industries.

Mr. Nicklin: How can they do it if they do not get the price?

Mr. GAIR: How can the court give them the price?

Mr. Russell: Because the court fixes wages on the ability of industry to pay.

Mr. GAIR: But the court does not fix the price the primary producer shall get for his butter or beef on the capacity of industry to pay.

After having heard all this hysteria about the effects of this legislation on primary industries, I find on reading the judgment of the Federal Court of Conciliation and Arbitra-

tion that an opinion is expressed by Professor Wadham in these words—

"If it is desirable that the change should be made from the point of view of rural industry, not only is the present time a suitable one but it is difficult to foresee a more favourable one."

That is the opinion of Professor Wadham, whose opinion must be accepted. He was giving evidence at the hearing.

The hon. member for Fassifern, who is typical of hon. members opposite, said, "Give me one industry in which production has increased." I will give him the figures for the sawn-timber industry. (Opposition interruptions.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. GAIR: Immediately I start to do this we have yells sufficiently loud to drown or destroy the effect of my case. As I was saying, in 1938-39 production was 177,000,000 super feet and in 1946-47 200,000,000 super feet. The hon. member for Fassifern asked for one case and I have supplied him with it.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke about the decline in productivity. I will at a later stage of this Bill produce figures that will prove my case and establish the basis that has justified the Government in submitting this legislation today.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at 4.50 p.m.